

Link Academy Trust

Spring 2021 CEO Newsletter





Dear parents, carers, trustees, governors and members of the community,

What a very strange term with lockdown meaning that from January until 8th March we have been teaching online to all but our keyworker and vulnerable children.

Thankfully we, as teachers and leaders across the whole Trust chose to spend the autumn term 2020 adopting a Digital Blended Learning Plan, we worked in collaboration to set out our priorities that we would need to achieve in order to be able to best deliver online learning in the future. We all helped each other to do the best for the children and this was so important when we came to January and faced a long lockdown.



1 - Bearn's Primary School learning with lego

A major starting point was to analyse everything you said in the parent/ carer survey to try and understand your home learning situation from the first lock down and make significant improvements.

We also used the Autumn term to work with pupils to ensure we had taught the rudiments of how to use Microsoft Teams and ensure staff were trained and able to support all children to make best use of this Learning Platform. While this meant a slightly painful change from E-schools, Seesaw etc, the advantages were significant. Teachers were then able to access pupil's work and give highly responsive

feedback and analyse next steps. We also achieved consistency across all Academies to enable comparison and collaboration. This did enable us to start to share resources and slightly reduce teacher workload which had become an issue as teachers were not only delivering online, they were also continuing to support pupils in the classroom- as well as home schooling in many cases.



2 - Ilington CofE Primary School 'yomp' through the woods

The proof of the pudding is now in the eating! Children are back with us and initially were very excited to see their friends and catch up on all that had been happening for them. They have come back into school a lot more confident as they have been able to access online provision and have become more independent and resilient in their learning. We have yet to assess how much educational progression has been achieved and feel that this is something that can happen at a later date. As a Trust we felt we should use the end of this term to provide some stimulating learning and collaboration before we start to try and identify progress.



3 - Cheriton Bishop Primary School Eco Council

The Recovery Curriculum for the last few weeks was designed around Science Week, with a focus on investigations and practical sessions, giving pupils the opportunity to re-establish their peer relationships and really enjoy the experience of learning. We have found the children across the Trust

have really appreciated and enjoyed this approach. It has certainly fed into the wellbeing which is so important going forward.



4 - Red nose day at Lansdove CofE Primary School

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you as parents and carers for your support to our schools- it has really ensured your children have engaged positively and enjoyed online learning provision and in many cases the learning has continued further with the additional experiences you have provided. It is one of the main reasons that our schools have been so effective against the odds, so thanks to everyone involved with children's learning.



5 - Broadhempston Primary School getting musical

Similarly, all the staff have gone 'over and above' in taking on board a new approach to learning, their own learning curve has been very steep indeed! And our pupils have adopted the new online learning approach with real maturity.

As previously said, I would also like to mention out Trustees and Governors who continue to work closely with Academy Heads and the Leadership Team to plan strategically for the academies within the Trust- more important than ever in these tricky times. They are volunteers and do an amazing job for no remuneration. Cheryl Mathieson has taken up the reins as Chair of the Trust from Isabel Cherrett and has already put her individual and positive stamp on proceedings- I am sure as things get easier, we will see more changes and improvements driven forward by our governance personnel.



6 - Harbertonford CofE Primary School meeting the Spring lambs

Moving forward, the staff across all academies are now working hard to look at what positives came from lockdown practice which we can retain. They are also looking at how the use of digital technology can continue to enhance classroom learning based on our belief that Quality First Teaching is central to all we do.

We have produced a Digital Learning Strategy for the next 3 years which will plan out how we can continue to upgrade our IT resources and internet connectivity while also extending our CPD and training to ensure teachers continue to use the Learning Platform to its potential.



7 - Drake's CofE Primary School

As we look forward to a summer term of learning with children in schools enjoying their learning experiences, we will continue to improve the educational provision within our academies.

Overall, it is just exciting to look at the summer term in school with our children enjoying their education with their teachers and peers.

Have a super Easter Break- hopefully the sun will shine!

Kind regards,

Nicky