

MARCH 2018

Sussex Learning Trust NEWSLETTER



From the CEO's Desk



Dear Pupils, students, parents and friends of Sussex Learning Trust,

I hope that this, our second Trust newsletter, conveys the vibrancy and purposefulness that exudes from all our academies. I never cease to be amazed at the ingenuity of our wonderful staff as they find engaging ways in which to teach our children and young people. The media is awash with stories about under-funding, teacher work-load and the teacher recruitment crises and these are very real issues, however, all of our academies are improving their already high standards in every aspect of school life. This is down to the dedication of our staff, our most important resource by far, who strive to ensure your children get the very best education possible.

The number of cross-academy projects and initiatives involving staff and pupils and students is growing every month. There is an excellent sense of collaboration between our Headteachers and we meet formally every other week to support and challenge each other with the sole purpose of making our academies 'even better.' Every single reported aspect across all of our academies

is rated as 'good' or better by OFSTED. Within the next three years each will be visited by inspectors and we are confident that we can turn the vast majority of grades to 'outstanding', if not all of them. I have talked about our wonderful staff but we have truly amazing children and young people too! They are a credit to you as, of course, parents are the prime educators of their children. Our Headteachers report that overwhelmingly our parent body is hugely supportive of all our efforts. As such, the relationships between home and school are ideal platforms for the child, at the centre of the relationship, to thrive in their academic and personal development. Thank you for sending us your children and for your ongoing support.

The single most issue and question parents raise with me when I meet them relates to sixth form provision in Haywards Heath. The Trust has no more information than you on the future of the Haywards Heath Sixth Form building. We have been clear that with improved 'seed

funding' we would dearly love to create a dynamic and successful post 16 provision for the town. We have shared a vision for the college and the learning that should happen there. We contend that the old college 'failed' partly due to a curriculum not entirely suited to the area combined with a drop in standards. At the moment I understand the local authority are working on a plan, but we are not party to this. I was disheartened to read that at a recent meeting West Sussex thought the solution to be 3 -5 years off being realised! I would encourage you to make your views known to the local authority to assist their thinking.

Our new academy on Hurstwood Lane, Hurst Farm Primary Academy, has a branding and a logo (see below) which reflects the curriculum design that the Secretary of State was impressed by during our submission. The Department of Education does not permit opening dates to be published, so all we can say is that we will keep you informed on progress!

First indications show that all of our academies are over-subscribed with applications to join in September 2018. It is great to have such confidence shown in what we do with local people keen to commit themselves and their children to the ethos of the Trust and its individual academies.

Many of you will know Jonathan Ash Edwards, our extremely committed and experienced Chair of Trustees and Chair of the Governing Body for Warden Park Secondary Academy. Jonathan's excellence in all things to do with academy leadership has been recognised by the Secretary of State and he has been awarded a commission to establish Governor training open for any schools or academies to benefit from with no charge.

Bearing in mind only 5 contracts were issued nationally to deliver this training, and to 'massive companies' such as Capita, Jonathan has done unbelievably well but the award is thoroughly deserved. We are very fortunate that Jonathan is our Chair.

Jonathan was designated as a National Leader of Governance at the same time I was commissioned as a National Leader of Education. These roles are not widely understood outside of the education world. Essentially it means that we are approved by the Department to support schools in need, or lead training for them. In my case, I can claim fees back into the Trust's budget for my time which goes directly back to be spent on the pupils and students. At the same time, hopefully, we are helping in the wider enterprise of school improvement outside of our Trust.

More congratulations are due to Mr Davies and his team at Warden Park Primary for the successful opening of our first Nursery provision. We believe that our successful model of Early Years teaching needs to begin before year R and our new academy will benefit from a Nursery accordingly. The pupil numbers have well-exceeded our ambitious plans and there is lovely atmosphere in our new facility created by our superb new and highly experienced staff.

I hope you enjoy reading the following 'snap-shots' of life at our academies and, once again, thank you for your support.



Jonathan Morris
Chief Executive Officer



Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Chair of Trustees



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WELCOME

to Hurst Farm

Our New Logo



Our logo draws its inspiration from the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) 'flavour' of our planned curriculum. The cog represents technology and engineering whilst the DNA helix, which has mathematical resonances, weaves into a leaf thereby depicting two aspects of biological science. The colours of the new academy will be purple and green. Much nearer to opening we intend to consult over uniforms etc

and we will be running information events so that local people can hear our plans and contribute to them.

Once a fortnight our Headteachers and CEO formally meet to discuss opportunities to collaborate, this is our 'Heads Forum.' Below is an example of what can be generated when more than one leader in school has an idea.

2018 Equality

At Heads Forum we agreed that we would like to make 2018 a year in which we overtly promote equality.

SLT is keen to mark some key anniversaries in terms of improved equality of opportunities, i.e.

- February 2018 - 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act 1918, which enabled all men and some women over the age of 30 to vote for the first time;
- April 2018 - 60th anniversary of the Life Peerages Act 1958, which allowed women to sit in the House of Lords;
- July 2018 - 90th anniversary of the Equal Franchise Act 1928, which gave women the right to vote at age 21 on the same terms as men;
- October 2018 - 60th anniversary of women sitting in the House of Lords for the first time;
- November 2018 - 100th anniversary of the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918, allowing women to stand for election to the House of Commons;
- December 2018 - 100th anniversary of all men and some women voting for the first time, in the general election of December 1918

These anniversaries are of significant gender inequalities being addressed, or at least the journey towards it. There are, of course, many forms of discrimination and derived inequality of opportunity, i.e. race, pay, sexuality, disability to name but a few. It is an important aspect of a rounded education that pupils and students are informed on social injustices and are challenged to support the rights of each individual and group for equality. Therefore, this year our academies will be especially minded to find ways in which stereotypes and inequalities can be challenged through the curriculum. For example, WPPA is held an Aspiration Day in which some aspects of gender career stereotypes were scotched. WPSA has annually



challenged girls to become more involved in technology with aspirations for their future careers accordingly. They have recently participated in a key event coming up at the AmEx to further promote this. At NWPA Mr Sears held a special 100 years votes for women assembly, during a Greek topic the notion of fair vs unfair 'democracy' was explored and again, pupil leadership opportunities have been widened amongst other curricular and extra-curricular initiatives.

Our individual academies will keep parents informed of activities directly or indirectly aligned to our Year of Equality which we are calling e18. Each academy Head will be open to ideas that parents and friends might have to contribute to this initiative.



Staff Services

Sussex Learning Trust has over 300 employees all determined to create the best learning environments for our pupils and students. The Trust is proud of its 'education for local people by local people' ethos. We would like to reward our staff and build links with local companies and service providers who would be keen to attract more customers by offering reductions in charges or bespoke services to our staff. In the first instance we thought we would share this idea with our parent body as we know so many run local businesses. We intend to build a portfolio of local companies who we would recommend to our staff in each town. For example, Bolney Grange Garage gives a 10% discount on servicing costs and a 'pick up the car' from school service. We think there might be a local restaurateur keen to attract more customers discounting their prices to SLT staff, a dry cleaner willing to pick up and return once a week, a spa offering attractive rates,

a beautician willing to attend school for teacher's free periods/breaktimes, discounted plumbing or electrical work, hopefully you get the picture? We guess that for any discount given, potentially this business 'loss' would be easily gained back as another customer who otherwise may not have frequented your company, has! Businesses that join this scheme would get wall space in staff rooms for business cards/flyers, the opportunity of reduced rates of advertising at academy events or a reduced rate banner on our 3G pitch widely rented to local groups. In addition, in the termly Trust newsletters emailed to the families of 2000 pupils and students we would include your name on a 'our supporters' page.

If you are interested to discuss this opportunity further please contact Howard Collins at hcollins@sussexlearningtrust.co.uk.

WELCOME

to Northlands Wood



Mr Sears Writes...

'As we approach Easter it feels unbelievable that we are almost at the point of celebrating our first year as an Academy within the Sussex Learning Trust. My first two terms as Head Teacher have been amazingly positive, with the school moving forward in so many areas and providing opportunities and experiences aplenty. Children and parents are regularly commenting on how much belonging to this school means to them; something which fills me with a huge amount of pride. My staff have flourished as leaders and they are thriving

thanks to the professional relationships they are building with colleagues from WPSA and WPPA, resulting in further chances for children across all the schools to work collaboratively. The Summer Term promises to continue in a similar fashion as we look at launching our Forest School programme and focus on capitalising on high quality sports coaching as we go into numerous sporting festivals and competitions.'

Safer Internet Day

Tuesday 6th February was Safer Internet Day. Children from across Northlands Wood received key messages linked to remaining safe when online. Shared learning occurred between staff and children to further expand on their knowledge of how to communicate safely over the Internet and what details to share and those which should remain private. Parents were also extremely grateful for the materials which were sent to them so they could review their current practices and consider how their family could be more digitally responsible. Digital leaders from across the school will follow up on this work by producing a survey to ascertain which element of online safety should be focused on next as we implement more training and support.

Defibrillators in the Community

Dignitaries, guests and the local press visited Northlands Wood on Wednesday 31st January for the official presentation of our defibrillator. Monies raised from last year's fundraising venture allowed us to purchase two defibrillators; one which will be installed here and the other gifted to Warden Park Primary in recognition of the shared works we are doing since joining the Sussex Learning Trust. In addition, we were also able to hand over a cheque for £1000 to the British Heart Foundation. Thank you again to everyone who has helped us achieve this great feat - we are eternally grateful. Thank you especially to Mrs Hastings for her dedication to this cause and for ensuring everything ran smoothly and logistics were in place for the day.





Fire Safety

Northlands Wood pupils were joined by West Sussex Fire Service as part of their safety initiative for EYFS, Year 2 and Year 5 children. The classes thoroughly enjoyed listening to the fire fighters as they spoke about staying safe and the role of the fire service. The children had the

opportunity to try on the uniform and one lucky boy, James, even had the fire officers sing happy birthday to him! Outside, they had a tour of the fire engine and even sprayed water from the hose. We want to say a huge thank you to the Fire Service for arranging this.



Thank You For Your Support

We are keen to receive feedback from parents on how we are matching up to your expectations. Our most recent survey of parents was phenomenally positive, and thank you for your encouragement. It means a lot!

WELCOME

to Warden Park Primary Academy



Mr Davis Writes...

The primary school attainment league tables measure school performance data. This is statistical information showing how well pupils in England have done in public examinations taken at key points during their school careers. At primary level, these are the national curriculum tests, or SATs, taken in Year 6 at the age of 10 or 11. For further information, please visit

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>.

We are delighted that our school improvement strategies are having the desired impact in raising attainment, both in the proportion of children reaching the expected standard and those exceeding this standard. The Trust is delighted to note our position in the league tables which compare WPPA with other similar schools - 19 out of 125 similar schools.



Bike Donation - Halfords

Children at WPPA were left 'wheeling for joy' after receiving 18 free bikes and helmets from Halfords. The scheme is aimed at encouraging more children - who may not necessarily have access to bikes - to cycle. We are so excited to receive the donation; this is a fantastic opportunity to support the children in learning cycling proficiency skills. The bikes will be used by children in KS2 and we will share our plans on how they will be utilised with children and parents in the new year.

Each bike has been collected from customers who donate unwanted bikes through Halfords' national trade-in events and has been reconditioned through a rehabilitation programme Halfords runs with Onley prison. 80 stores across the Halfords group regularly take bike donations for Re-cycle so if you have a bike that you would like to donate, please visit www.halfords.com/re-cycle1.

For more information visit www.halfords.com or www.halfordscompany.com



Nursery opening – January 2018

We are delighted to announce that our new nursery provision opened on Thursday 4th January 2017. Our experienced team is led by Mrs Rebecca Herrera, the Nursery class teacher who is ably supported by Mrs Shelley Wass and Mrs Nicky Cable. The children in the nursery benefit from the excellent resources Warden Park Primary Academy has to offer and have already got off to a flying start. There are a small number of places still available. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please visit the website for more information <http://www.wardenparkprimary.co.uk/warden-park-nursery-1>.

A note received from a parent of a child in the nursery:

"Just a quick email to say thank you to all the staff who have my child's nursery experience amazing. He has settled in so well and really looks forward to going each day. He has become so much more independent in the past two weeks and his conversational skills have broadened."

Albion in the Community – Premier League Stars at Warden Park Primary

Albion in the Community are currently delivering the Premier League Primary Stars programme with a small number of primary schools across Sussex and we are delighted that Warden Park Primary is one of them!

Premier League Primary Stars is an education programme designed to use the appeal of the Premier League and professional football clubs to inspire children to learn, be active and develop important life skills. The programme sees a Primary Stars Sports Mentor work with different schools each term and in the Spring term the children in Firefly and Puma classes have been taking part.

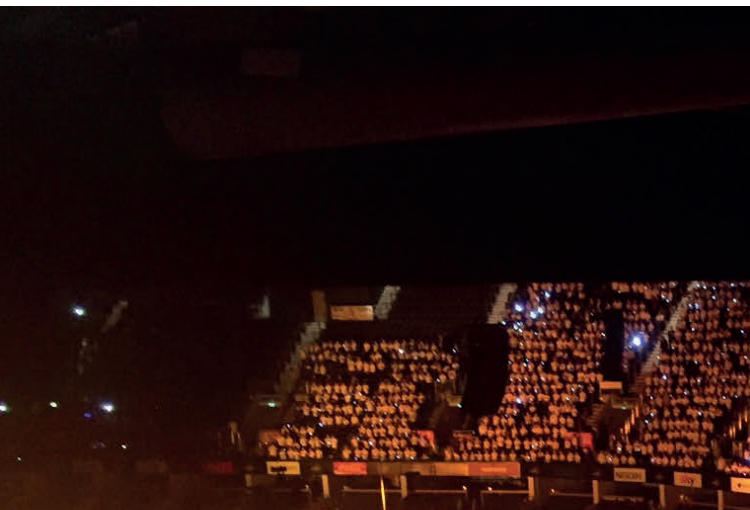
The Primary Stars Sports Mentors deliver fun, educational sessions in a range of subjects that inspire and motivate all pupils. These high-quality interventions are targeted at whole classes, small groups and individuals and include:

- Supporting individual pupils with specific needs during their normal timetabled lessons improving their confidence and engagement with school
- Delivering high-quality PE lessons that increase teachers' confidence in PE and develop pupils' physical literacy
- Use football to engage pupils in literacy and develop their resilience in PSHE
- Deliver enrichment activities outside of curriculum time.

To start the program, children in Puma and Firefly classes visited Brighton and Hove Albion's home ground, the Amex stadium on Friday 12th January.

Young Voices

On Tuesday 6th February, 25 children from WPPA's Key stage 2 choir went to the O2 arena to perform in the Young Voices Concert. They prepared 15 songs to sing with the other 7,981 children present. The opportunity to perform at the O2 really is special and the children sang their hearts out and behaved impeccably.

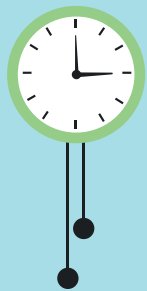


WELCOME

to Warden Park Secondary Academy

Mr Kenrick **Writes...**





Quality of Teaching



Developing the quality of teaching is the single biggest priority in WPSA. In support of this our training programme is focused on teachers working collaborative in Professional Learning Communities developing their expertise in relation to the following important aspects of teacher practice: Challenge for all; Effective explanations; Extended writing; Feedback and follow up; Flipped learning; Know your students; Peer assessment; Plenaries; Questioning; Student well-being. Throughout this year teachers will be working collaboratively, engaging with research and undertaking action research projects in their classroom to help develop and improve their practice.

Summer 2018 will see the vast majority of the reformed GCSE courses come to examination for the first time. English Language, English Literature and Maths were the first reformed GCSEs in 2017 reported on the new 9-1

grading system. This summer the majority of students will have all of their GCSEs graded 9-1. The transition to the reformed GCSEs has been the biggest change and challenge in the education system for many years and I have been hugely impressed by the dedication and professionalism of teachers here at WPSA in managing the change and preparing students so effectively.

All of our work at WPSA is focused on improving opportunities and outcomes for students. This year, for example, we are working with the Brilliant Club, a national charity focused on supporting young people in achieving their ambition of progressing to highly selective universities. This term a group of our students have visited Royal Holloway University in London and are now working with a PhD student to develop the skills and capabilities through writing a 'dissertation' with the aim of 'graduating' from the programme around Easter.

Digital Technologies:

Here in the Secondary Academy we are committed to developing the use of digital technologies to help develop students' capacity as learners. Last month we hosted a visit from Apple's National Learning Development Manager as part of us considering applying to become an Apple Distinguished School. Currently there are only

30 such schools in the UK and 400 worldwide. The visit included classroom visits, discussion with students and meetings with senior colleagues. Feedback from the visit was extremely positive and we will now move towards preparing an application in the summer term for Apple Distinguished School status.



Enrichment and extra curricular activities:

In my first two terms as Headteacher I have been particularly impressed by the number of students who are committed to broadening and developing capabilities and interests by participating in our extensive extra curricular programme. Before and after school there are very large numbers of students engaging in sports clubs and we have an extensive fixtures programme. As I write we are approaching the final stages of cup and league competitions for the winter team sports and we have numerous teams now in county finals.

WPSA were represented for the first time in The Rock Challenge at the Hawth theatre, Crawley. The Rock Challenge is an international anti-drug and crime prevention initiative that takes the form of a performing arts competition for secondary schools. It is organised by the Be Your Best Foundation whose aim is to encourage young people to lead healthy lifestyles and to be their

best without the need for tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. On the evening several schools receive each of the awards given. WPSA performance won four awards one of which was the Spirit of Rock Challenge award which is only given to one of the seven competing schools.

An enormous cast contributed to two sell-out nights for the school production of Grease. A real highlight in the year and testimony to the depth of acting and musical talent within the student body. We are all looking forward to the forthcoming annual Dance Show on 27th and 28th March 2018. Providing opportunities for students to participate in school trips provides a valuable enrichment to the curriculum. During the recent February half term break a very successful ski trip to Bardonecchia in the Italian Alps involving 40 students took place. As I write we have a group of students in Seville, Spain developing their languages skills.

