

Winter Newsletter



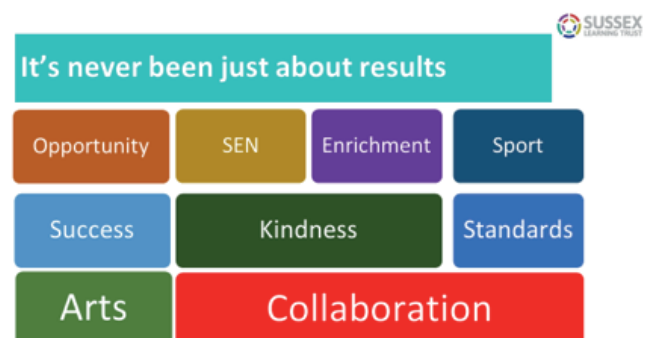
Dear Friends of Sussex Learning Trust,

As ever, during this term, our academies have been thriving hubs of activity and learning. We were delighted to start the new academic year with very positive public examination results (GCSE & SATS) and these encouraged our staff, pupils and students onto fresh challenges to continue striving for 'even better'.

A couple of weeks ago our staff, Governors and Trustees gathered for our annual conference where our professionals share best practice and think and learn together. It is good just to appreciate the number of colleagues that are committed to working together for the benefit of our learners. This year our keynote speaker, Robin Launder (worth looking up on the web) spoke on metacognition, that is, learning how to learn and in

particular he shared great strategies for enhancing our children's long term memory within the classroom.

The conference also gives me the opportunity to remind colleagues of the Trust's performance, vision and priorities. I was able to share data of children's outcomes which demonstrate significant improvement from strong starting points in 2018. In the main, our further improvement relies on marginal gains or doing 100 things 1% better, rather than anything more dramatic. All our academies are in a 'good or better place' in this regard. However, as this slide from my presentation reminds us, SLT academies have never only been focused on academic outcomes:



You may be interested to follow the links to one of the videos I used to illustrate the point 'Every child needs a champion' - https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?referrer=playlist-tv_special_ted_talks_education and 'Character and kindness' - Possibilities to live into <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBc2kw8aHRM>





Our priorities going forward, beyond continual improvement, include

- Increased alignment across our academies in ways of working, curriculum planning, ethos, opportunities, professional development and just about any way which will 'add value' to what we do for the children.
- Character Education. So important to our vision and for young people living in this complicated and challenging world. Our academies must explicitly teach the strategies and opportunities for thriving, not merely surviving, and therefore maximizing individual potential and collective responsibility. We have great leaders in each academy driving this initiative and we are committed to developing this aspect of the curriculum further.
- A secondary school to join us. We have seen amazing work between our two primaries and then with or secondary academy. An additional secondary would certainly enhance this model of collaborative school improvement. One such opportunity is the new secondary school that will be built in Burgess Hill. We will be making a strong bid to the Secretary of State and West Sussex to be commissioned to establish a fantastic new school which will immediately have the backing of our Trust and Warden Park as an equitable partner.
- The realization of a new Primary Academy for Haywards Heath, at Hurst Farm on Hurstwood Lane. We have been ready to get on with this for some time now. The delay largely centres around negotiations between authorities for the transfer of land. Increasingly we expect the opening to be pushed back to 2021, although we fear such a delay will put pressure on school places before then.
- The Apple Distinguished School designation WPSA achieved (only 400 schools world-wide are so designated) has inspired us to widen this Trust wide. We continue to use technology as a 'tool' to enhance learning rather than anything more, but technology undoubtedly adds benefit to our pedagogy.
- School funding continues to be extremely tight and the likelihood is this won't be improving any time soon. Therefore, we will continue to seek ways to maximize savings across Trust budgets by 'doing more together', and ploughing any savings directly back into learning and teaching budgets.
- We are already significant system leaders in terms of national initiatives of helping all schools improve. This last calendar year we have supported 15 schools outside of our Trust sharing what we know to work in curriculum and leadership aspects. There is a benefit to our children too as there are always things to learn from other schools, great ideas to 'maggie' and networks established that arise from our outreach work. The funding allocated by the Department for Education or County Council for this work goes directly into individual academy budgets or the central Trust budget.

I want to pick up on the priority to align our cross-phase collaboration as this has driven our current consultation regarding places for year 7 at WPSA. The rationale for this alignment can be found [Click here](#), within the consultation paperwork. We want to strike a balance between doing what is the best for the children with our Trust schools but also ensure we do our best to support the local education landscape. Our intention is that local people will still be able to access places at their village school. The numbers we shared in the consultation demonstrate that unless something unexpected happens, local children would expect to get a place. The consultation was run for a longer period than statute provides, i.e. we ran it for 6 school weeks as opposed to calendar weeks. When we establish a consultation we do so with transparency. We ask the question and will always pay due heed to the opinions we receive back.

Haywards Heath Sixth Form

We were obviously disappointed to be dis-allowed to bid for this much needed provision on the grounds that we don't have a current post 16 offer. However, we have always said that 'we don't mind who runs it as long as it is great' and we are currently asserting our views in terms of what the provision needs to be to satisfy the town's need. We are disappointed that the decision making process does not currently allow for appropriate 11-16 school representation and that the three preferred bidding institutions have not proactively sought the views of local Heads. I am continuing to raise these points to whoever in authority will listen!

Finance

Within this newsletter are some words from our joint ACEO Colin Granlund regarding our very positive, recent audit. It is testament to Colin and his team's work that in such straightened times we remain solvent and in a contextually stable financial position. That is not to say we don't continue to support the 'Worthless?' campaign, we do so whole-heartedly.



Trust Annual Review

Last week we had our Trust Annual Review with the Regional Schools Commissioners office. I am pleased to report that they remain very happy with our performance as a Trust and are keen that we extend our reach to add to the collective benefit. They said it was 'obvious that we had strong leadership, including Governance'. That we have such strength in Governance is because we have committed people willing to volunteer their time to ensure that the Trust stays true to its stated aim of running academies for the public benefit. 'Thank you' to our Governors, Trustees and Members.

It remains for me to wish you all the very best to you and yours for a peaceful and joyous Christmas. Thank you for your support, we couldn't do it without this and your wonderful children!



Jonathan Morris,
CEO

Northlands Wood Primary Academy

STEM Filming: Curiscope

Northlands Wood welcomed in Curiscope and a filming team from The Telegraph during the first week of December. They spent time with our children exploring how Virtual Reality can be used as a stimulus for learning. Curiscope produce a range of activities which children interact with via technology and we have been using their products for a while at school, with great success. The company have recently branched out into new areas of the curriculum and we were privileged to work with them on testing these new resources and seeing how children engaged with them. One of the features involved looking inside a human body and also monitored heart rate. We found this promoted exercise in the children which is something we are always looking to develop. STEM is an ever expanding area of our curriculum and this was a fabulous opportunity for NWPA. Our visitors were very impressed with both the curiosity of our children and their behaviour and approach to STEM based activities.



Forest School

We have had a very exciting first term of Forest School at Northlands Wood. Led by a remarkable team of qualified Forest School leaders, all of our children have enjoyed three morning sessions across the Autumn Term. During these times they have operated within a child led approach, choosing to undertake activities including: Den building; pond dipping; creating constellations by sawing wooden discs and then hammering nails into it; developing their fire lighting skills; camp craft cooking; and also a variety of art based experiences. The feedback from the pupils and their parents has been overwhelmingly positive and their personal development has soared as a result. Our staff have grown in confidence and also improved their own techniques in many of these areas. External training has been undertaken, including Outdoor First Aid, how to organise and facilitate team building exercises and we have also been in receipt of some successful grants to support the development of our programme.





Hour of Code

For the second year running, children, parents (and even grandparents!) came in to code alongside our staff. This global project brings together coders of all age with a shared goal of enabling every person to do an 'hour of code'. The Grinch was the popular choice for many of our coding gurus as it required blocks of code to be snapped together with the aim of collecting and then delivering Christmas presents whilst avoiding obstacles. This was another great opportunity whereby our wider community came into school to learn together and share successes - partaking in something new which was perceived as challenging before.

Sport: Promoting healthier lifestyles and improving well-being

Sport at Northlands Wood has gone from strength to strength during the past 12 months. The staff and students at WPSA have been fabulous role models, encouraging Northlands Wood to take more opportunities in this area and further develop the work they are doing. As a result, we were awarded with the Platinum School Games

Mark which recognised the successes we have had as a school, but also the level of engagement now shown and the participation from pupils and staff from across the whole school. The transformation of our netball team has inspired children in all year groups to want to get more involved in sport and has driven children to compete at levels which before they were resistant to do so. Parents are now volunteering to help at Sports clubs and we have recently taken up the challenge of 'Active Advent' - a Mid Sussex Active initiative which encourages everyone to complete a daily 'exercise challenge'.

Whole school Space topic

The first half of the Autumn Term saw every class and year group sharing a common topic: Space. This was kick-started by a stunning start during which a huge inflatable planetarium took up residence in the School Hall and opened its door to the children. Each class paid it a visit, during which time they learnt all about the solar system and life on the International Space Station. Following this, classes worked together on some collaborative learning, children buddied up to build Moon buggies, and writing was aimed at audiences of younger and older children.



Parents loved it as an idea as it meant that siblings in different year groups could have shared conversations at home and the number of joint projects which came in from home, having enhanced learning, was phenomenal. Year 4,5 and 6 also had the opportunity to visit Cineworld, Crawley as part of National Schools Film Week. They watched a 3D film in the IMAX screen all about space and the awe and wonder elements. They also had a bespoke talk from an engineer linked to cutting edge space work.

Paul Johnson - 1 Term in as Deputy Head Teacher

In our school, the Early Years Team run a "one term in" session for parents to understand how their children have settled at school after- you guessed it- one term! Well, as a Deputy Head Teacher, here's my "one term in". To be fair, it's not really one term but it is the first term I've ever had without being responsible for a class and allowing me to focus on being a Deputy Head.

The biggest difference has been that I've been able to get a broader picture of school and indeed other schools in the Trust and the area. For example, I've seen how the fantastic work the teachers do with children in Early Years, and all the years in between, has a direct effect on how the children approach moving onto secondary school.

Moreover, through a number of projects with Warden Park Secondary Academy, I've seen how the secondary schools further develop our children and equip them for adulthood. It's quite humbling to see a child's initial mark making slowly transform into a piece of writing worthy of publishing over just 11 years!

That said, I've never been too far from a classroom. Being without a class has enabled me to move around the school and spend time with all the children- and they've certainly kept me on my toes! In the morning I may be getting the children to count on in ones or twos, after break it's exploring division facts of multiples of nine and in the afternoon we're using algebra - I should point out that (despite how smart our children are) this isn't with the same class!

So one term in - settled in, operating strategically and everything going rather well.

Mr Sears

Head Teacher

Warden Park Primary Academy

The 'Iguanodon Restaurant' comes to Warden Park Primary Academy

The children of Warden Park Primary Academy were delighted to welcome Iggy the Iguanodon in September. The Iguanodon Restaurant is an outdoor theatre performance set in a life size dinosaur. The show lasts for 35 minutes and tells the story of the birth of geology in a fast and furious romp through 60 years of scientific discovery. As the story unfolds eccentric characters emerge from history; they compete for fame, laying claim to the biggest and most famous bones. They posed new questions that shook society: How come these creatures no longer exist? What does this tell us about the world we live in? And how old is humankind?

Iggy was a spectacle to behold for the whole school community, children and adults alike. Aside from the excitement of the sight of a 30+ foot tall dinosaur, the children were enthralled by the show and learnt a huge amount. It was great to raise the children's awareness of the links to our local area.



Emerald Ant does an admirable job of acquiring funding to make the cost nominal to the school. The team were warm, personable and talented. Emerald Ant, (www.emeraldant.com), engages schools and communities in their local history and heritage through hands-on, creative projects and large scale art. They work in partnership with non-arts organisations and heritage experts, and employ artists to deliver participatory workshops and creative experiences.

Character Education takes shape at Warden Park Primary Academy

Character is a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce emotions, inform motivation and guide how we behave. Character education includes all educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues. Children are encouraged to decide wisely the kind of person they wish to become and to learn to make positive choices about their behaviour. Our ultimate aim of character education is the development of good sense; knowing how to choose the right course of action in different and often tricky situations, something we are sure you will also be doing all the time at home.



What does this look like at WPPA?

Our approach at WPPA is based on the program designed by the University of Birmingham and the Jubilee Centre (<https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/432/character-education>). We have been teaching character education both in class and through whole school assemblies. Each month we have learnt about a new virtue and children have been encouraged to think about how they can make positive choices linked to each virtue. The following virtues have been covered in the Autumn term – courage, respect, co-operation and fairness. Parents support by talking to their children about the monthly virtue and thinking about why it is important. You can find out more by visiting our website <http://www.wardenparkprimary.co.uk/curriculum/character-education>.

Children at Warden Park Primary Academy recently enjoyed the second in a series of 'Aspiration Days'.

The children spent the day learning more about their future life when they leave WPPA. Staff and visitors ran a variety of workshops based on a wide range of possible careers/vocations. The visitors were engaging and interesting and the children learned a lot. They shared with the children some excellent tips to help them think about the behaviour and attitude needed to fulfil their potential.

The day was a huge success and the school was filled with chefs, computer game designers, athletes, linguists, detectives, hovercraft drivers and environmentalists - and that was just the children. The feedback from the children has been brilliant. We aimed to raise their aspirations and help them to 'reach for the stars'. One of the children told me that she had never thought about being a boss of a company but after today said "why not me?" - how fantastic!

Mr Davis
Headteacher



Warden Park Secondary Academy

Apple Distinguished School status

Warden Park Secondary Academy is pleased to announce that it has been recognised as an Apple Distinguished School for 2018-2021 for its development of digital learning using iPad.

Apple Distinguished Schools are centres of innovation, leadership and educational excellence that use Apple products to inspire creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. They showcase innovative uses of technology in learning, teaching and the school environment, and have documented results of academic accomplishment.

Dom Kenrick, Headteacher, says this accreditation as a centre of excellence is testimony to the successful research, development and implementation that has gone on over several years to embed the use of digital technologies into our teaching and learning processes. Through the use of digital technologies our teachers are providing innovative new learning opportunities that are empowering our students to deepen their learning, extend their creativity and develop their independence. The accreditation of Warden Park Secondary Academy as an Apple Distinguished School highlights our success as an innovative and compelling learning environment that engages students and provides tangible evidence of academic accomplishment. Warden Park continues to uphold its traditional values whilst ensuring that students leave with a strong digital learning background enabling them to work and collaborate in an increasingly digital world.



New colleagues join the WPSA Leadership Team

We are delighted to welcome Mark Sorrell and Debbie Wheeler to WPSA and to their new posts on the Leadership Team. Mark joins as Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Students' Welfare. Debbie, takes on the role of Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Students' Progress in Key Stage 3.

Under Mark's leadership this term we have made improvements to our safeguarding procedures through the introduction of CPOMS safeguarding and child protection software. This online system is helping with the management and recording of child protection, behavioural and domestic issues information.

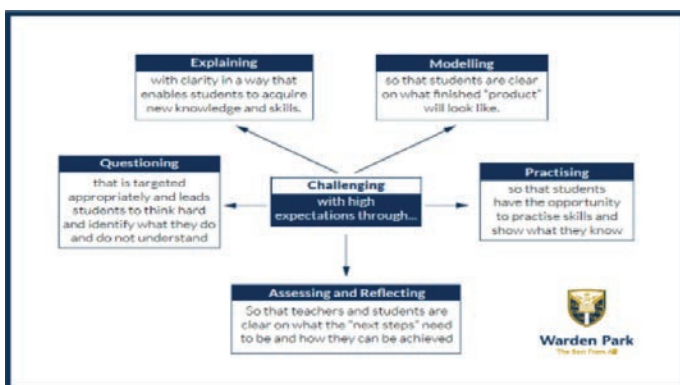
A major aspect of Debbie's role is to help ensure that students' progress is sustained as students transfer from primary school into WPSA. By aligning curriculum and

implementing common practices we are focused on ensuring that there is no fall off in students' progress during Key Stage 3. Initial focus is on preparing schemes of work for the summer which focus on developing a common language and common skills that will better prepare students for Key Stage 3; implementing Master Classes in English, Maths and Science for the most able students; developing teacher practice through cross-phase observations and the sharing of strategies and resources.

Teacher Professional Development

Year 2 of our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has been launched. This year's themes have emerged from the work undertaken by the Teaching and Learning committee during last year.

The committee also looked at establishing a consensus with regard to the features of excellent teaching that we should be prioritising in order to establish excellence across the school. Following a review of current research and a reflection on ideas and issues the below have been identified as priority aspects to develop.



These six characteristics along with Flipped Learning, Extended Writing and Metacognition will make up our nine PLC groups this year. Flipped Learning and Extended Writing are continuations of PLC groups from last year.

The committee also worked on developing our understanding of 'personal empowerment', our overarching priority for students, which has been

established through stakeholder discussion. Through this a need to focus on developing within our students a broad range of character attributes has been identified and this work is being taken forward by John Tarrant, English teacher.



The Professional Development budget continues to support a range of training that is essential for curriculum delivery, the effective operation of our business and for maintaining our statutory duties. At the beginning of this term there has been a greater need for subject leaders to attend courses run by the awarding bodies due to the major changes to the specifications and examinations. Colleagues have also attended update courses on Exam Access Arrangements, Finance conferences, safer recruitment and safeguarding training. The Technology team also underwent a full day Health and Safety training to update their certificates.

This term WPSA has also funded a variety of external training that further develops aspects of our work and allows us to collaborate with other professionals. e.g.

- Leading Learning at Durrington High School (various sessions throughout the year)
- Getting to grips with accountability measures run (ASCL)
- Reduce anxiety in students and boost learning (HGC)

- Emotionally based school avoidance (WSCC)
- Embedding Formative Assessment (SSAT)
- Apple ADS presentation and conference (APPLE)
- Sussex University mentors training (University of Sussex)
- Ski Leaders course (Surrey County Council)
- Aspiring SENCO (WSCC)
- Various conferences and network meetings for school leaders

Also this term we have run a series of sessions both in school and online covering the following topics:

- Autism spectrum conditions and social communication
- What to do when someone has a seizure
- GDPR
- Awareness of type 1 diabetes
- Managing complex needs students
- Building positive relationships

Working with local businesses

In November WPSA hosted a network meeting of the Haywards Heath Business Association. As an active member of the association WPSA are seeking ways to work in partnership with local businesses they are supportive of their priorities whilst providing opportunities to improve opportunities and outcomes for our students. During the evening attendees were surveyed for their perspective on what the relative priorities are for our education system and for their views as to the most important character attributes that the look for when recruiting young people. The finding are will help inform our thinking in ensuring our students are well-prepared for the world of work.

Mr Kenrick

Headteacher

Inspiring Young Minds to Broaden Horizons



At SLT we are determined to do all we can to help young people take control of their own futures, realising dreams and setting a course for their personal development.

We have excellent partnerships with many organisations and individuals who give freely of their time to inspire youngsters but we could always do with more! For example, many young people say they have an interest in joining the emergency services. If you are a firefighter, ambulance medic or police officer, it would be wonderful if you could spare an hour of your time to meet and inspire our children. We have children who have

expressed a dream to become lawyers, nurses, musicians, entertainers, gardeners, chefs, and every other career you can think of! It would be fantastic if we could arrange in school a meeting so that you could share your routes into your profession, your experiences, successes etc. We particularly want to inspire learners whose socio-economic situation might not afford them the advantages that so many of us living in Sussex enjoy, so there will be increased 'moral purpose' to your donation of your time. If you are interested to learn more or just discuss further please email Mr Morris' PA, Anne Stoneley

Random Act of Kindness Week of 28 January 2019



SLT Trust wide RAK week (Random Acts of Kindness) across our academies we will enjoy a week where all community members will be encouraged to perform a RAK each day. The intention is to remind each and everyone of us that to be 'kind' is to be fully human and what an impact our behaviours towards others have

on our communities and environments. Parents and careers are welcome to join in in their places or work too! Could be part of a sustainable NYs resolution! Date to be announced early in January. Any queries to jmorris@sussexlearningtrust.co.uk



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