



Aspire

Educational Trust

MAT Newsletter July 2016

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Welcome to our first Trust Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for the academies within the Aspire Educational Trust and those about to join. My name is Sue Bowen and I am the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Trust. My background is as a Primary School Improvement Officer in Trafford, and prior to that as headteacher of a primary school in Stockport. I retired in 2006 and before I knew it I was involved as Chair of Governors at Ash Grove Primary School in Macclesfield. After our second Ofsted inspection, receiving a judgement of Outstanding in every category, we decided to convert to an academy and were quickly asked by the Department for Education to become a Multi Academy Trust.

I am really proud of what we have already been able to achieve within the Trust to ensure that the children get better life chances through the excellent practice we have put in place. It is exciting to be able to share ideas across the Trust and learn from each other. We can see many advantages of being a Trust, such as a shared vision that puts the children at the heart of everything we do.

Sue Bowen
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My name is Kevin Simpson and I am the CEO / Executive Principal of the Aspire Educational Trust. I can only reiterate what Sue has said above. I am immensely proud to be involved in the organisation and would like to thank the dedicated staff we have in all our academies – they really are making a big difference to the lives of the children and communities we serve.

We hope you enjoy reading about the exciting things happening within the Trust and if anyone would like to have a chat about the work we do please give me a call or drop me an email.

Kevin Simpson
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Research and Development latest from the Aspirer Teaching School Alliance.

Over the past year the Aspirer Teaching School Alliance has established a strong framework for innovative research and development, supporting our Alliance Partners to be involved in a range of cutting-edge projects. On a national basis, we have continued to be involved with a number of large Education Endowment Fund trials. The Switch-On Literacy trial has just finished the data collection process and the final report will be published soon. We are now recruiting for two new Education Endowment trials (Zippy's Friends and Grammar4Writing) and are awaiting the outcome of a project submission (more to follow). Smaller scale research studies, including three trials funded (and published by the NCTL <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closing-the-gap-test-and-learn>) have allowed us to study our practices within school and we have been sharing our findings presenting at the Sheffield Hallam Research Network and the National Handwriting Association Members Day.

More locally, we have seen the Research2Teaching Seminars become a regular feature and proved very popular, with up to 70 teachers attending each time. The aim of these seminars is to give teachers the opportunity to hear about the evidence from the researchers themselves and we have been delighted to welcome speakers such as Emeritus Professor Morag Stuart and Professor Jane Oakhill. There is an exciting range of seminar planned include talks on mathematics, teaching children with EAL and dyslexia. Watch the website for further details.

On a practical level, the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have developed a practical and supportive framework to explore the translation of the research evidence into practice in the classroom. Developed as a practical application through the EBT-ACCESS project run by MMU and NCTL, each SIG gives teachers the opportunity to work together, observing, talking, reflecting and supporting each other. More SIGs are planned for the next academic year, in a range of topics. Please get in touch if you are interested in being involved.

Megan Dixon, Research and Development Lead

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This year has been the first in which the Aspire Educational Trust has trained new primary teachers through "Aspirer School Direct" Initial Teacher Education.

Twenty three new teachers will enter the teaching profession having gained their initial qualification through Aspirer in partnership with Edge Hill University.

We call our "trainees" Associate teachers because they start on day one of the Autumn Term and spend the majority of the year in one class learning to be a teacher and being mentored by the class teacher their 'Learning Coach'. They are considered part of the school from the very beginning.



Holly, one of the Associate Teachers, said "The small, bespoke and select course offered at Aspirer was far more attractive than a traditional PGCE. I chose Aspirer as being an Associate Teacher rather than a student particularly appealed and this unique feature has enabled me to have more confidence and recognition/status from school/parents which has better prepared me for having my own class ... I have felt part of the school staff from the beginning.

Following a School Direct model, I thought I would gain far more hands on classroom experience allowing theory to be put into teaching practice immediately. Unquestionably, this has been the case!"



This first cohort of Learning Coaches has been fantastic in helping to shape this new school led method of training teachers. We asked them to understand that it is different from "having a student" and they responded by offering their ideas and perspectives but also their dedication and commitment. A massive thanks to the Learning Coaches for that!

The Associate Teachers have been enthusiastic and open minded, taking on board advice from their Learning Coaches and working really hard in the weekly "University" sessions. Although validated by Edge Hill, these have been led by staff from Aspirer, including some Headteachers and Class Teachers from Partner Schools.

Holly said, "The hardest part has been meeting assignment deadlines and the best experiences the PD days, the Research to Teaching seminars and not feeling just like a number/student on a course but as developing teacher being guided and supported individually. My personal areas of professional development have been identified and addressed through close relationships established with tutors achieved by tutors getting to know ATs personally, weekly (not just by email or the occasional visit)."

The AT's worked particularly hard on the dreaded assignments but can, hopefully, use what they have learned to inform their practice when they are in their own classrooms.



Some of the Associate Teachers were recent graduates but School Direct particularly appeals to people who want to take the step into teaching from a previous career.

For next year, we will be working with a new University partner, Sheffield Hallam, which is fast becoming one of the most forward thinking and visionary Universities in Education.

In the following year, 2017/18, we intend to expand our programme again so if you are thinking about making the change, or if you know of someone who is, tell them to apply early in October 2016!

Mark Avis, ITE Lead

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News from our academies



Ash Grove Academy – “Child Take Over Day.”



school.

We are proud of the contributions our children make to school life and we ensure we provide opportunities to allow them to take on roles, develop their levels of responsibility and place them in decision making positions. To promote this further, we opened our doors to the children and allowed them to take over adult roles in

After the initial invite to children to apply for an adult role, we had 48 pupils who got involved. Children took on roles of principal, vice principal, class teachers, office staff and learning mentor. Children wrote lesson plans or prepared an outline of how they would develop their role for the day and prepared relevant resources ready for the take-over day. The creative ideas and detail were really impressive and well thought out.

The new principal (a year 4 pupil) and vice principal (a year 3 pupil) had prepared and led a whole school assembly on anti-bullying. They set each class a challenge to record all the pleasant comments exchanged between members of the class and record them on the friendship chart. The class with the most comments by the end of the day won a box of chocolates. After the assembly, up to 40 children taught a range of lessons across the year groups for the whole day. These included 6 sentence stories to yr. 1 in yr. 4, measuring in maths to yr2 by Billy in yr. 5, 3d drawing to yr. 6 by Reuben in yr. 5, Ancient Egypt to yr. 1 by James in yr. 4.



Alongside the lessons, the school anti-bullying and e-safety ambassadors led the way developing their focus. The anti-bullying ambassadors wrote a pupil policy for anti-bullying and the e-safety pupils wrote an e-safety policy and were timetabled to deliver e-safety talks to each class.

Child Take Over Day was fun, exciting and hugely successful. The teachers noted how engaging and creative children had been with their lesson preparation and numerous children commented on how there's so much to do being a teacher. The day provided children with an insight into the world of work and making decisions. Children are more than enthusiastic to do this

and we look forward to running this in the summer term.

Heather Jackson,
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Peover Superior Endowed Primary School – “Superior at sport!”

Macclesfield Small Schools Football Tournament

On Wednesday 23rd March our Yr5/6 A team ventured to the AstraZeneca site at Nether Alderley to take part in the Small Schools football tournament. It was a lovely venue and made a refreshing change to play on some excellent grass pitches.

Our team consisted of Captain Johnny Ardern, Riley Gordon, Ted Whitby and Sam Gibbs. Yr5 players included Dan Teste, Sam Croxton, Rory Fitzgerald, Hedley Nightingale and Jack Kennett. Matches were 6-a-side and 12mins long. In my time at Peover Superior I haven't been involved in the Macclesfield Small Schools football so we were unsure of what or who our opposition would be like.

Our first match was against Mobberley and a fairly even game until we found our feet and dominated the second half. A great goal from Johnny and some great defence from Dan led us to a 1-0 win. Our second match saw us beat Adlington 4-0 with goals from Johnny (3) and Sam (1), plus four shots on target saved by their goalie. Our third match, where I played all our Yr5's plus Sam G, which turned out to be against the toughest opposition was a fantastic game to watch. We were off to a shaky start but as we found our stride we displayed some of the Yr5's best skills and talents so far this season. Amazing teamwork, super determination and over flowing with passion and good sportsmanship!! Great goals from Dan and Jack but credit to the entire team who were truly brilliant - even the Yr6's could not fault them from the side lines! A well-deserved 3-2 win.



Our last game was against Nether Alderley and it was a comfortable game with a 5-0 win. As it was the Yr6's last football match representing our school they chose their final positions and stayed on the whole game, with the Yr5's swapping through positions. What a lovely way to end a fantastic tournament and ending on high as we were the undefeated champions!! It was a pleasure to coach, to watch and to see such brilliant talent from such a lovely team of young gentlemen. Well done lads!!!!

Macclesfield Small Schools Swimming Gala

On a late Thursday evening on 17th March six of our best swimmers took part in the annual small schools gala. We were against Adlington, Bosley, Kettleshulme, Mobberley, Nether Alderley, Pott Shrigley/St John's, St Gregory's and Wincle. There were freestyle, breaststroke and backstroke events for both boys and girls, with two heats for each race and the fastest six made it through to the finals. There was also a mixed relay event with two heats.

Hannah Clark had a superb evening winning both the heat and final in freestyle and backstroke. Ted Whitby came 3rd in both heat and final for freestyle. Charlotte Ridley, our youngest competitor, gained invaluable competition experience and came 4th in her heat for breaststroke. Johnny Ardern came second in heat and third in the final for breaststroke. Rory Fitzgerald had a super swim and came first in both heat and final for backstroke. Our relay team consisted of Hannah, Ted, Johnny and Hedley Nightingale. A fantastic team effort, staying cool under pressure, saw them power their way through to a first place in both heat and final.

Such a fun evening and enjoyable event. A huge thank you to the parents who go out of their way to get their children to the venue in the evening.....a shame there isn't a gold medal for the best supporters! All our swimmers had a fantastic evening and showed just how much progress can be made in just a few months of lessons. I was a very proud teacher and delighted with all the efforts and results!

Lisa Hesmondhalgh,
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Sandbach Primary Academy – “Quality Mark Science”



As a school, we are passionate scientists and having gained our Gold Primary Science Quality Mark in 2014 ensure we continue inspire our pupils to have a love of science. This academic year have a whole school focus on the Principia Mission, where British European Space Agency astronaut Tim Peake is living and working onboard the International Space Station.



Back in December the whole school watched Tim's launch, either in school or as part of a local schools' Space Fest. The highlight of the Space Fest was the launch of a huge weather balloon. Attached to the balloon was a pay load carrying equipment to collect images and data from the flight. Some of the images we now have are quite literally out of this world.

Each participating school brought along their own carefully designed parachute to carry a raw egg and a water rocket to enter the inter school competitions. Sandbach Primary Academy was the last school to launch their water rocket and was declared

the winning team by just a few centimetres.

Throughout Tim Peake's stay on the ISS, the school has participated in The Tim Peake Primary Project working with European Space Agency trained Space Ambassadors. As part of the project year 5/6 spent a day at MMU working alongside students from the Exercise and Sports Science Department on STEM based activities including visiting Star Lab. Another memorable event was the arrival of a used NASA spacesuit which every child had the opportunity to try on.



At present we are in the process of growing rocket seeds as part of a national research project giving our children the chance to learn how science in space contributes to knowledge of life on earth. A portion of the planted seeds have spent a period of time on the ISS. Amazingly, our experiment results will be contributing to research as to whether we can sustain human life in space through the production of our own food.

Wow, what an opportunity for a small school in Sandbach, Cheshire. Tim Peake is our school hero and it is evident that he is raising the aspirations of our pupils.

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