

Our Community Matters

June 2024
Issue 20



The latest news, views, and announcements for the
Community Academies Trust



#catschools/#schoolscat

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www.thecat institute.org

INSIDE

Message from
Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Ensuring Excellence

Snapshots of School life
across our trust

Introducing

Brenda McGinley, HR
Business Partner

Education Matters

Top 20 Educational Blogs

**CAT Institute of
Education Matters**

Supporting GGP with new
Teacher Toolkit, Playbook
and Support Staff Toolkit

**Expert/Network Group
News**

Events, competitions,
workshops and everything
you need to know about
CATalyst24!

I'm sad to report that we have to bid farewell to Andy Mitchell, the Headteacher of Woodloes Primary School. Over the years, I've had the pleasure of working with Andy on teacher recruitment, and his unwavering support for developing homegrown talent has been truly inspiring. As Andy heads into retirement, he's taking on one final adventure: the "Race the Sun" challenge. This involves cycling around the Brecon Beacons, hiking up Pen-Y-Fan, and canoeing across a lake, all in a single day to raise funds for Action Medical Research, a charity dedicated to funding medical research for children's health. You can support Andy's cause if you feel so moved by visiting his Just Giving page: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andymitchell2024?utm_source=whatsapp.



This issue is packed with exciting content. We're eagerly awaiting news on whether the Polesworth students have won their competition with the Gallery of Living History. Additionally, we're excited for Stoneydelph Primary School's elephant "Forget-Me-Not" to join other elephants this summer in honoring St. Giles Hospice in Tamworth.

For those setting GGP goals, the CAT Institute of Education (IoE) has developed comprehensive toolkits to aid in self-reflection. Access the Teacher Toolkit and Playbook, as well as the Support Staff Toolkit, via the IoE section of this issue. Please note that these resources are on the secure area of the website, so you'll need your school's access code.

Lastly, stay informed about CATalyst24, upcoming workshops, and enrichment events planned for the rest of the year. Join in, participate, and most importantly, have a wonderful summer break when it arrives.

Michelle Borders
Editor



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Welcome to this last OCM of the year.

Our education system and schools in our trust are facing some significant new challenges as the 'social contract' between families and schools has changed post COVID. This is also compounded by the context of a likely change in government that has impacted education policy for a considerable amount of time. It is a time of uncertainty.

Every year there are successes and achievements in our schools - I think this year, given the context, those achievements are the most significant for many years - probably save for the challenge of managing COVID itself.

I recognise what you have done this year to respond to these challenges and, despite the context, I know more children have benefitted hugely from the way you have made adjustments, innovated, and gone that extra mile to understand and respond to the challenges.

My personal thanks for all you have done this year to make sure our schools continue to provide the best education and positive, caring, and supportive environments for the young people in our care as well as for each other.

I hope the term ahead goes well for you and for the pupils, and importantly that when the summer break arrives, you get some quality time to rest.

Very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip'.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Ensuring Excellence

Snapshots of what our schools have been up to this half term.

Woodloes Primary Scores Big in Promoting Lifelong Physical Literacy! By Miss Cirin



At Woodloes Primary School, we have been especially proud of all the children, who have embraced PE and the opportunities that we offer them towards life-long physical literacy - the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person. We are very proud of the range of opportunities that we offer the children.

Every class has one PE session per week with professional coaches. This is throughout the whole school, from our pre-school - Saplings - through to Year 6. This year, we have set up a Year 5 and 6 girls' football team, which has encouraged girls who had never thought about playing football to get involved! We have then taken part in competitive matches and tournaments, with all of the girls being given an opportunity to play. The growing teamwork, resilience, and skill they are developing is a pleasure to watch.

Not only have we taken part in Inter-school athletics events, where the children have showcased their athletic talents, it has also allowed the children the opportunity to be a team player and be supportive of other schools and also give them encouragement.

We are very aware of our school context and relish the opportunity to bring in external visitors, which allow children to access sports and experiences they otherwise may not have been able to. This year, this has included archery, fitness circuits, Personal Best challenges, orienteering challenges, dance and free-dance sessions. Alongside this, we offer a range of lunchtime and afterschool clubs, including dance, gymnastics, judo, football and multi-sports.

Through assessment, we have identified those children in KS2, who are not yet secure in their fundamental skills and offer them booster sessions during lunchtimes with a professional coach to build those skills.

To support children with being physically active for at least 60 minutes during the school day, we have purchased a range of playground equipment, including table tennis tables, basketball hoops and tennis nets and equipment, with playground pals, to ensure that playtimes and lunchtimes are active times.

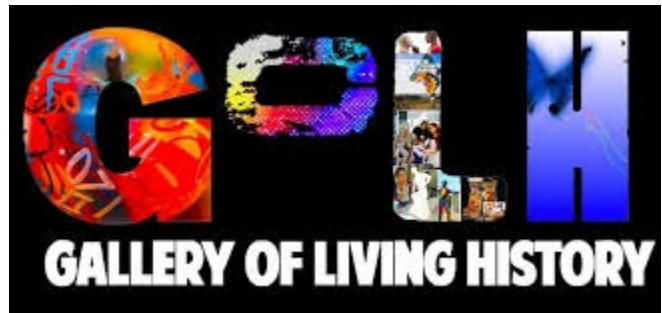
Our most recent external visitor was Felix Clements, a PE teacher who appeared on BGT and was a semi-finalist in 2023. He shared his passion for dance, which all of the children and adults also shared, having learnt to do a break-dancing routine, along with his fantastic attitude to life, reminding us all that you always need to challenge yourself to be the best you can be.

We have many more events to look forward to before the end of the academic year, including free-style footballer Ash Randall - Guinness World Record holder - coming to visit us, sports day, dance sessions, a colour run and skipping sessions, as well as continuing everything else to ensure that we give our children the best starting point to ensure life-long physical literacy.

At Woodloes, we strongly believe that **“Education is for improving lives and leaving your community and world better than you found it.”** and continue to strive to achieve this.

Polesworth Y10 art students shine in National Art Competition By Mr Atkins and Miss Thompson

The Polesworth Art Department was thrilled that not one, but TWO Year 10 Art student teams were shortlisted for the final three in the prestigious Gallery of Living History Competition! This national competition, founded by BAFTA award-winning actor Andy Serkis, will see him judging and unveiling the winning entry in Coventry city centre this summer.



Our talented students are creating AI and virtual artwork to honor an unsung hero, with both teams choosing to celebrate Polesworth’s own Shirley King, a member of the school’s facilities team and a dinner lady, beloved of staff and students alike, for her immense contributions to charity, Polesworth School, and the local community.

The winner will be decided by public vote. The two teams that made it through are 'Mrs. Shirley King - The Shirleys - Polesworth School' and 'Mrs. Shirley King - The Chosen Ones - Polesworth School.' The winning team will have their concept brought to life, a fantastic opportunity for Polesworth students.

The schools’ competition required the young participants to recognise the importance of **listening to and engaging with others**, rather than pursuing a singular route that only recognises one argument.

The young people have worked very hard to produce their ideas for soundscapes with visuals which capture a local unsung hero. This is what they were asked to think about:

- 1. Why this specific unsung hero?**
- 2. Is their idea and the information clear?**
- 3. Is it an imaginative idea?**

The winning entry will be announced on the GoLH website and then displayed on the plinth in Starley Gardens, Coventry, which was sponsored by the founder actor of Gallery of Living History, film-maker and director, Andy Serkis!

You can watch the videos via this link <https://www.galleryoflivinghistory.com/schools-competition>.

Whilst voting closed in May you can still make your own mind up as to which team you think will take the prize.

The school hopes that with two out of the three finalists, they have a chance to secure 1st and 2nd place in this competition. Our students are not only representing Polesworth School but also honoring the incredible Shirley King - a true legend in Polesworth village and school!

Chadsmead Primary Academy and our work to support Social, Emotional and Mental Health by Helen Cadman



Chadsmead Primary have successfully worked closely with the Schools Work Trust over several years. The trust's mentoring project - 'Engage Youth Mentoring' has 25 trained volunteer mentors working in ten local primary schools to support social, emotional mental health needs both of a group and individual basis. Currently Chadsmead has three trust volunteers working within our school providing weekly 1 to 1 support for children that require additional support to build positive relationships, raise self-esteem, gain confidence or who simply benefit from time with another adult to overcome barriers, provide a safe space to talk and share their thoughts and ideas and to create a positive sense of wellbeing and trust.

The trust has supported Chadsmead previously providing well-being workshops, mental health workshops and this year, is providing a transition workshop with ex pupils from the local high schools who can positively talk about and share their experiences of high school with Year 6. In addition, the charity has also bought to Chadsmead its 'Shepherd's Crook Puppet Team' to perform their interactive play 'Carols and Kings' based on the Three Wise men and the Epiphany at Christmas; Children in Year 4 visited Wade Street Church at Easter to take part in a drama performance and undertake Easter themed activities that provided and members of the Trust also work closely with Mrs Dennis our Religions and Worldview leader on Friday lunchtimes with our 'Urban Saints' groups, where members of the organisation provide a welcoming place for young people to meet with their friends, make new friends and take parts in social skills based activities whilst eating lunch together.



Together with our school's local offer for social, emotional and mental health provision, the Lichfield Christian Schools Work Trust helps Chadsmead Primary meet the needs of our pupils and provides them with additional support and opportunities to help them on their life journey. Their support at Chadsmead has immensely benefitted our more vulnerable children and been crucial to supporting and developing their self-esteem as well as individual needs within our school.

Stoneydelph Primary School's Elephant Sculpture Shines in Community Art Project!



From 1st July to 8th September, the streets, parks, and open spaces of Lichfield, Tamworth, and Sutton Coldfield will be adorned with over 60 beautifully designed elephant sculptures. This stunning display features 30 large elephants crafted by both local and national artists, ranging from well-known favourites to emerging talents. Additionally, you'll find more than 40 mini elephants, each designed by local schools and community groups.

Stoneydelph Primary School is thrilled to participate in this project with their own baby elephant sculpture, lovingly designed and decorated by the pupils. Every child in the school submitted a design for the competition, and the winning entry was created by Ruby-May in Year 5. Her design beautifully incorporated the school's values and the motto "grow and achieve."

A team of Year 5/6 pupils brought Ruby-May's design to life on the sculpture named "Forget-Me-Not," with every child in the school adding their fingerprint to the final piece. The result is a true work of art that embodies the spirit and creativity of the entire school.

The pupils at Stoneydelph Primary School named their elephant "Forget-Me-Not" as a tribute to those we have loved and lost, aligning with one of their core values: being 'community champions.'

This project also honours St Giles, an organization that has provided immense support to families in the school, particularly around bereavement.

The creativity displayed by the pupils during the design process has been remarkable, and the finished sculpture incorporates contributions from every child at Stoneydelph Primary School.

The school eagerly anticipates seeing "Forget-Me-Not" on the trail this summer and sharing it with their families and the wider community.



Cheers for Mr. James! National Recognition for Football Champion of Telford and Wrekin

By Richard Thorpe

Grange Park Primary School are thrilled at the national recognition for their very own Mr James!

Lee James sent a detailed application to the English Schools' FA to nominate his school for the Special Recognition Award, due to the huge amount of footballing activity they host. He copied his Headteacher into the email, who in turn replied to the ESFA along with another member of staff, to say that it was Lee himself that should be nominated as none of the activity would go ahead if it wasn't for him and his dedication to football across Telford.

Lee launched a girls' football programme at Grange Park School in 2014 and, after seeing how much the pupils were enjoying it, he reached out to other schools in the local community. In 2014 he instigated the first Telford & Wrekin girls' 5-a-side tournament, with only 6 of the 61 invited schools in attendance. Since then, he has worked with other colleagues within the district to promote the girls' game and to create girls' 7-a-side football leagues.

The league entries have grown from just 17 teams in 2017 to 49 in 2023 and has led to girls developing their love for the game and filtering through to play for district representative sides and beyond. Lee's dedication to schools' football, particularly for girls, has led to over 2,500 girls playing regular, competitive football within Telford & Wrekin. He has also hosted 2 ESFA Premier League Primary Stars (previously Kickabout) tournaments in his area, always registers his school for the ESFA Panini Classroom Challenge activities and throws himself into

Schools' Football Week activity every year.

He makes football fun and accessible, not just for children at his school but throughout the whole district, supporting and creating not just local, but also national ESFA activity. **Such a well-deserved nomination! Good luck at the Awards Evening on Saturday 15th June at Villa Park!**

SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING REFRESHER

Accredited by the Safer Recruitment Consortium, this course supports the requirements in KCSiE. Suitable for anyone involved in interview planning, advertising, interviewing and decision making.

Led by CAT Director of Behaviour and Safeguarding, Jo Howell and CAT Human Resources Officer, Sam Sweet

THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2024

ONLINE

9.00 AM - 1.00 PM

TO BOOK:

IOE@CATSCHOOLS.UK

Safer Recruitment Refresher Training

If it is coming up to three years since you last undertook this training, then you should consider booking yourself onto this training on Thursday 11 June 2024 (9.00-1.00). This will be a virtual session on Teams.

Our next full two-day course due to take place 4 and 11 July - this will be a face to face event and will either be at the IoE or Dordon Primary School depending on numbers.

Open to anyone from our trust community, this course is accredited by the Safer Recruitment Consortium and supports the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

If you wish to book onto either of these sessions, please email ioe@catschools.uk.

OCM Issue Twenty June 2024

The Wilnecote School Shines in National Intermediate Mathematical Challenge

by
Carl Savage

Wilnecote School students are celebrating an impressive performance in the Intermediate Mathematical Challenge (IMC), a prestigious national mathematics competition.



The IMC, aimed at students in years 9 to 11, tests their mathematical problem-solving skills with a challenging multiple-choice format under timed exam conditions.

Wilnecote School entered 30 students into the competition, and their hard work paid off. A remarkable two students achieved gold certificates, placing them among the top 8-9% of participants nationwide. Five students secured silver certificates, and a further eight earned bronze. Additionally, fifteen students received participation certificates for their commendable effort.

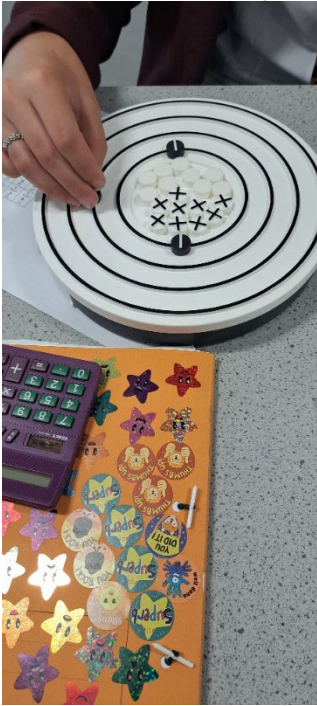
The school is particularly proud of its year 9 students who made the significant step up from the Junior Mathematical Challenge to the more demanding Intermediate level.

Special recognition goes to Joey C, who achieved the highest score in year 10, and Kai W, who not only topped year 9 but also emerged as the school's overall champion.

Mr Mulhall and the entire mathematics department at Wilnecote School congratulated all participants for their dedication and success. They highlighted the students' achievement not only in terms of their mathematical prowess but also in demonstrating the maturity and resilience required to compete at such a high level.

The school looks forward to reporting on the upcoming Junior Mathematical Challenge results later this year. This early success in the Intermediate Mathematical Challenge bodes well for Wilnecote's aspiring mathematicians.





The Polesworth School Year 7 Aspire Class Masters Atomic Structures

by Mrs Broome

The Year 7 Aspire class has been delving into the fascinating world of electronic structures.

Using atomic structure kits, students have been constructing detailed models of elements from the periodic table. They calculate the number of subatomic particles—protons, neutrons, and electrons—for each element, adding protons and neutrons to the nucleus and applying electron shell filling rules to determine electron configurations.

This hands-on approach has made complex concepts more accessible and engaging, allowing students to visualize atomic structures and understand the properties of different elements. The excitement is palpable as they piece together the fundamental components of matter, fostering curiosity and a deeper appreciation for the microscopic world.

Unlock Your Benefits: Introducing the CAT Vivup Platform

by Zoe Parton

Get ready to experience a world of perks with our upcoming CAT Vivup Benefits platform. We've curated a fantastic selection of employee benefits, covering health, wellbeing, and finance, all conveniently accessible in one place.

Through the Vivup platform, you'll have access to rewards and a comprehensive package of employee benefits, available 24/7, 365 days a year via an intuitive online portal.



Keep an eye on your work email for an invitation to register and start enjoying the rewards.

Don't have a work email? No problem! You can register yourself on the website cat.vivup.co.uk or reach out to the Vivup Customer Services Team by phone at 01252 784540 or via email at customersupport@vivup.co.uk.

So, what rewards can you expect? Our Lifestyle Savings feature a diverse range of discounts and redemption options, ensuring there's something for everyone among the UK's major retailers. Plus, take advantage of our Cycle to Work scheme, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for confidential support, and Health Cash Plan for everyday healthcare expenses.

But that's not all! Coming in September, get ready for even more exciting benefits, including home and electronics savings with top retailers like Currys and John Lewis, discounted gym memberships at over 3000 locations nationwide, and the opportunity to participate in our electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme in partnership with Tusker.



Introducing....

Brenda McGinley HR Business Partner for our trust. Brenda celebrates a year in this newly created role in the HR Team and works with our Director of HR to ensure the maximum positive impact on the pupils who learn in our schools.

I joined the Trust on 2nd May 2023 in a newly created role within the HR Team. Partnering with the Director of HR, my mission is to deliver an effective HR business partner service to the trust, aiming to positively impact the students in our schools. This role involves continuously improving people-related practices to support the Trust's strategic goals, and I'm deeply passionate about making a difference in the education sector.

My HR experience spans the Public and Voluntary sectors, with a notable assignment at a Global Civil Aerospace organization. This experience provided valuable insights into the private sector's performance-driven environment and the balance between targets and social responsibilities.

Additionally, I have worked with third sector regulated organizations, gaining firsthand experience with the Quality Care Commission and Ofsted, and understanding the regulatory frameworks and requirements these bodies enforce.

I have also worked with third sector regulated organisations that have involved the Quality Care Commission and Ofsted, so firsthand experience of the regulatory framework and requirements.

Every day has its challenges and rewards but there are 2 specific achievements that I would like to share.

- I am a Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. I gained Graduate status, undertaking this qualification at the same time as my BA Honours in Business and Finance (for those who know me the finance element still requires ongoing development!), which I did on a part time basis. I have reached a significant milestone this year and have just received a certificate in recognition of 30 years which I am very proud of to be a member of organisation that services the HR profession and being a true ambassador for that profession.
- I have also spent a significant part of my professional life with 2 police forces, the last being a HR Manager supporting the uniformed division of the force. Following 6 months of intensive support to Managers and staff, attendance was significantly improved (ensuring appropriate support and interventions were explored and implemented on an individual tailored approach). Attendance was a key performance indicator for the force, and they were held to account in a public forum for this. I was unexpectedly awarded an Assistant Chief Constables Commendation for 'making a significant contribution to improving attendance at work and operational resilience'. I was not front line, however, the work I undertook was acknowledged in supporting the Officers in protecting the public!

I relish the opportunity in providing support to the Trust and being part of a team that makes a difference to each and every 'starfish' that we can.

Education Matters



If you haven't downloaded our App onto your phone yet, you can do so directly by accessing the OCMJ on the web here: <https://www.theocmjournal.com/> As usual control and click on the pictures below to access the full story. If you would like to submit an article, we would love to hear from you. Email: communications@catschools.uk

Top Teacher Blogs for Inspiring Professional Development in 2024

Teacher blogs remain a reliable and valuable source of free professional development (CPD), offering peer-to-peer insights, practical advice, and reflective content. Despite the plethora of online CPD options such as EduTwitter, Facebook groups, Edutopia's YouTube channel, and resources from NCETM and ResearchED, teacher blogs continue to provide deep, personal insights into classroom practices and innovative ideas. This roundup highlights the best teacher bloggers of 2024 who inspire and influence the education community.

You can find a list of what Third Space Learning consider the top 20 teacher blogs of 2024. It does have a slightly maths bias. [Here!](#)



Michelle Borders 
6 minutes ago · 3 min

**Quality Over Quantity:
Enhancing Maths
Learning Through...**



Through practical strategies shared by Beth Worlock, Mathematics Lead at Torriano Primary, this blog article, from the EEF, and sourced from the providers listed in the top 20 blogs listed above, provides actionable tips on establishing talk guidelines, using sentence stems, managing talk ratios, and encouraging participation reflection.

These insights are designed to help teachers create a classroom environment where every student can contribute and engage meaningfully in discussions, ultimately enhancing their mathematical understanding and learning outcomes.

Click on the picture to read this article....

CAT Institute of Education Matters



A spotlight on the trust's Centre for Teacher Training, Professional Development and school improvement by Alexis Rickus, Director of Institute of Education

This term, not only have we been busy developing our Trust's first ever networking conference, CATalyst24, details of which are in the following pages, but we've launched the **Teacher Toolkit & Playbook**, and will be launching the **Support Staff Toolkit** at the Support Staff Conference. Both toolkits are designed to help you with your GGP Goalsetting, and we've developed an interactive goal setting tool for both Toolkits to support you with that as well.



We've developed some handy videos to help you to navigate the GGP Tools which are available on our website (www.thecatoinstitute.com) or simply click the relevant picture. You'll need your school's access details to watch them though, as you won't find them on the public areas of the site. Your Headteacher has the details if you need them.

Our next steps for developing the GGP suite of Toolkits will be creating a Leadership Toolkit, and a Teaching Assistant Toolkit. Currently, if you are a TA, you can use the tools in either (or both) of the above Toolkits to help you with your self-reflection. Use whichever one(s) you feel would be more appropriate for your professional growth.

Whilst you're thinking of your professional growth, if you're looking at developing your leadership skills, there are four opportunities to play a pivotal role within our networking groups. Chairing a network group provides ambitious individuals to excel and make a meaningful impact on our communities of schools and pupils. The closing date for applications is 7 June so if you want to embrace the challenge of leadership, and make a difference in our trust, then get those applications in. Further information on any of the posts detailed in this advert can be obtained from ioe@catschools.uk.

Alexis Rickus
Director, CAT Institute of Education

WE'RE HIRING!

We're Looking For You

2 Specialist Network Chairs
Attendance
Pupil Premium

2 Curriculum Network Chairs
English (Primary)
Science (Primary)

Requirements:

- ▶ Strong organisational skills
- ▶ Experience of collaboration
- ▶ Inspirational leader

Closing date for applications: 12.00pm Friday 7 June 2024

Interviews: Friday 14 June 2024
at CAT IoE, Polesworth

Letters of application to:
ioe@catschools.uk

Exciting opportunity to shape the future of our Trust



CATalyst 2024: A day of networking, workshops, and conferences

Bookings have now closed for these events.

Thank you for all your support in attending these events. Your network groups are thrilled that so many of you have signed up.

Delegates will be contacted shortly by the IoE in respect of each of these events, with further details.

For Teaching Assistants, Helen Cadman, Chair of SEND Network Group has put together a list of valuable online training courses and references you can use.

You might also want to use this time to explore the SEND provision pages in the Teacher Toolkit & Playbook for the wealth of information you can find.

CATalyst24
Ensuring Excellence through Networks
Martin Bailey
Animate2Educate

ENSURING EXCELLENCE IN THE COMPUTING CURRICULUM

21 June 2024
9 am - 2 pm
Birchwood Primary School
Birchwood Avenue, Dordon, B78 1QU
ioe@catschools.uk

Lots of practical and hands on activities across the day!

Computing Advisor, Martin Bailey will share a range of practical and innovative ideas for ensuring excellence and progression of skills across all strands of primary computing.

The workshop will be packed full of ideas and resources that can be used immediately, in any setting.

Martin will share his experience of supporting more than 1,000 schools across the UK to develop subject knowledge and expertise in this area.

REGISTER NOW
LUNCH PROVIDED

www.thecat.institute.org

CATalyst24
Ensuring Excellence through Networks
Sarah Dennis
RE Group Lead

SHARING R.E.

21 June 2024
9 am - 2 pm
Chadsmead Primary Academy
Friday Acre, Lichfield WS13 7HJ
ioe@catschools.uk

A networking opportunity not to be missed!

An opportunity to network face to face, exploring resources, and ideas.

Dive into Sarah's interactive workshop filled with:

- Crafting wish lists, trading resources, and making connections
- Navigating assessments, acing tasks, writing reports, and finding those golden nuggets
- Tackling cognitive overload, mastering vocabulary, and sticking knowledge like a pro
- Supporting every pupil, with a spotlight on PP and SEND
- Decoding the mysteries of the National Contents Standard
- Crafting action plans for subject leaders
- Exploring Culham St Gabriel's online courses for RE
- Defining GGP Objectives
- Immersing in REHubs
- Putting the toolkit and online playbook to the test

REGISTER NOW
LUNCH PROVIDED

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CATalyst24
Ensuring Excellence through Networks
Nik Caldwell & Angus Hammersley

STUDYING LOCAL HISTORY AS PART OF A FULL HISTORY CURRICULUM OFFER

21 June 2024
9 am - 2 pm
Tithe Barn
Hall Court, Bridge Street, Polesworth, B78 1DT
ioe@catschools.uk

A practical workshop providing strategies and techniques to boost confidence and engagement when planning local visits.

Explore a range of different activities and historical enquiries that can be carried out when exploring the varied surroundings of our trust schools.

Join Nik and Angus on a walking tour of Polesworth Abbey, incorporating the skills you've previously acquired right in the heart of the village. After lunch, colleagues will come together to share insights about their own areas of expertise, ranging from historical societies to noteworthy locations. This initiative is a key part of our strategy to enhance history education comprehensively across our trust!

REGISTER NOW
LUNCH PROVIDED

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Rebecca Kennedy
Independent English Consultant



BUZZING ABOUT BOOKS!

Organised by the Literacy (primary) expert group

21 June 2024
10 am - 12 pm

Remote Session
Register for a link to join this session
ioe@catschools.uk

A fascinating workshop on how adults can meaningfully engage in book talk with young readers

REGISTER NOW

In his book, *Tell Me, Children, Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment* (2011), Aidan Chambers describes how important a trusted, committed and experienced reader is to a child's reading journey.

The Reading Framework (DfE, 2023) identifies, 'Emotional engagement makes a key contribution to pupils' development as readers.' Informal book talk between readers plays a key role in this engagement and in encouraging and sustaining the habit of reading.

In this session, we will investigate ways in which adults can meaningfully engage in spontaneous book talk with young readers. We will explore practical strategies to support these critical conversations around books to encourage a love of reading. Delegates will be given opportunities to ask questions and reflect on the use of strategies in their settings.

 www.thecat.institute.org



Vanessa Smith
Early Years Group Lead



SUPPORTING EXPLORATION OF PURPOSEFUL AND POWERFUL PLAY IN EARLY YEARS

21 June 2024
9 am - 2 pm

Birchwood Primary School
Birchwood Avenue, Dordon, B78 1QU
ioe@catschools.uk

A workshop exploring the power of play, the cornerstone of childhood development

Play is a powerful tool through which children explore, learn and grow, but how do we as educators ensure that play is purposeful and powerful? How can we create environments to inspire curiosity, creativity and critical thinking?

Join Vanessa in this workshop as she delves into the theories and research underpinning play-based learning.

Participants will leave with a solid foundation to understand the significance of play within the EYFS framework.

REGISTER NOW
LUNCH PROVIDED

 www.thecat.institute.org

Gramatically Grounded: Strategies for SPaG Learning

Delivered at Dordon Primary School, on Wednesday 3 July 2-3, the English curriculum network group are delighted to be hosting this one-hour face to face workshop.

Rachel, Clarke, the brilliant mind behind the National Literacy Trusts primary oracy course, will be unlocking Grammar Gold as she talks about how to use grammar to captivate audiences rather than teaching isolated units.

If you're a TA, an ECT, HLTA, SENCO or simply interested in English teaching, then this is a session not to be missed.

Book by 15 June to reserve your space as we dive deep into the strategies that make grammar unforgettable, ensuring SPaG rules stick with our pupils for the long haul.



GRAMATICALLY GROUNDED:
Strategies for Sticky SPaG Learning

"Unlocking Grammar Gold!" Get ready to be inspired by Rachel Clarke, the brilliant mind behind the National Literacy Trust's primary oracy course, as she delivers the English Curriculum Group's next meeting on using grammar to captivate audiences, not just for teaching isolated units.

Join us as we dive deep into strategies that make grammar unforgettable, ensuring SPaG rules stick with students for the long haul.

 ON WEDNESDAY,
3 JULY 2024

 START AT
2 PM - 3 PM

 THE STUDIO, DORDON PRIMARY
SCHOOL, ROMAN WAY, DORDON,
TAMWORTH, B78 1PJ

RACHEL CLARKE
PRIMARY ENGLISH EDUCATION CONSULTANCY LIMITED

The English Curriculum Network Group invite you to spend an hour in the company of Rachel Clarke, at their next network meeting, which will be face to face, on Wednesday 3 July at the slightly earlier time of 2.00pm. Rachel's approach is very much that grammar should be rooted in texts and used authentically. "I'm "big" on teachers knowing about the authentic uses of grammar for purpose and audience rather than the teaching of grammatical units without context"

Anyone teaching English, TAs, HLTAs, ECTs, SENCOs would benefit from attending this event.

[BOOK NOW](mailto:email:ioe@catschools.uk)  email:ioe@catschools.uk





Network and Expert Group News

Joining Link for the next Expert Groups Meeting on Wednesday 3 July 2024 at 3.40pm is [here](#). Please register, then join your session.

Network Groups Update by Neil Coleman

Professional Networks

From September 2024, the network groups and expert groups will come together and will be known collectively as the Community Academies Trust Professional Networks.

Each of the Networks will aim to meet remotely once a term to discuss and share new research, updates and relevant issues, share good practice, analyse improvement priorities and promote continuous improvement in their areas. At the end of the school year, each of the networks will have the opportunity to organise specialist CPD, meeting face to face in planned workshops as part of our Trust Day.

The Professional Networks will be split into two sectors: Curriculum Network Groups and Specialist Network Groups. Curriculum Network Groups will meet in the first half of each term. These cover all National Curriculum subject areas. The Specialist Network Groups will meet in the second half of each term. These cover generic areas such as assessment, SEND, EYFS. Please see below the planned dates for next year's Professional Network meetings:

Curriculum Network Meetings: 3.40 - 4.40pm

Autumn 1 Curriculum Network meeting - Wednesday 25th September 2024

Spring 1 Curriculum Network meeting - Wednesday 29th January 2025

Summer 1 Curriculum Network meeting - Wednesday 21st May 2025

Specialist Network Meetings: 3.40 - 4.40pm

Autumn 2 Specialist Network meeting - Wednesday 27th November 2024

Spring 2 Specialist Network meeting - Wednesday 19th March 2025

Summer 2 Specialist Network meeting - Wednesday 25th June 2025

The aim of holding the curriculum and specialist network meetings separately is to support staff to attend other areas that they have a responsibility or an interest.

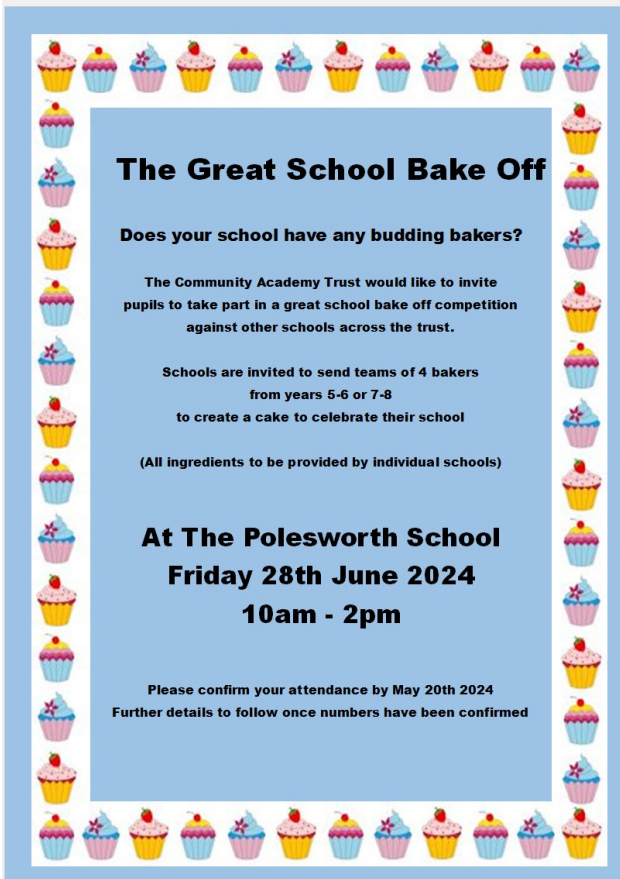
Due to a restructure and change in focus, there are a number of new Professional Networks starting next year:

- **Attendance Specialist Network Chair**
- **Pupil Premium Specialist Network Chair**
- **Science (Primary) Curriculum Network Chair**
- **English (Primary) Curriculum Network Chair**

Advertisements for these posts have already been sent out to all CAT schools. If you are interested in applying for the role of Chair in any of the networks mentioned above, please send in an application to ioe@catschools.uk by 12 pm on Friday, 7th June 2024.

'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success' - Henry Ford.

Why not sign up for these interschool competitions?



Battle of the Bakers: School Edition

The ultimate baking showdown at The Polesworth School on Friday, 28th June, takes place from 10 am to 2 pm! This is to make sure that schools can travel to and from the event within normal school hours.

The D.T network extended an invitation to schools to send teams of 4 students to compete. Schools were invited to send multiple teams, with the ideal setup including a staff member to support each team. Whilst the closing date for entries was May 20th, if you still wish to enter, please contact Network Chair Hannah Clarke: clarke.h@welearn365.com

Participants must bring their own ingredients for the 'Bake Off,' while The Polesworth School will provide all necessary equipment.

Get ready for a deliciously fun competition!



CAT Art Competition 2024

The Art Curriculum Network Group are excited to announce the **CAT Art Competition 2024**, inspired by the upcoming 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France! This is a fantastic opportunity for pupils to showcase your creativity and artistic skills.

- Entries can be any kind of artwork, (painting, drawing, sculpture, digital art, etc. The more creative, the better!), in response to the theme '**Olympics**'.
- Artwork should be entirely the pupil's own work.
- Entries can be any size

Closing date for submissions is Wednesday, 26th June 2024.

- **KS1 and KS2 overall winners** will receive a Paris 2024 Olympics Plush Mascot, a craft pack and sketching pencils.
- **KS3 and KS4 overall winners** will receive a Paris 2024 Olympics Plush Mascot, a craft pack, sketching pencils and water colour pencils.
- **Second and third** place winners will each receive a craft pack and sketching pencils.

We can't wait to see your amazing creations! Best of luck to all participants!



EARLY BIRD NOTICE

SEND Law, Funding and Myths

With Garry Freeman

If you are working with children with additional needs, and they are reliant on receiving effective additional provision and support, this training is a must. Understanding SEND law is vital to ensuring your SEND children and families receive all they need to make progress and thrive.



Garry is a SEND consultant with a significant number of years' experience, both as a school leader but also on a national level, working alongside the DFE and NASEN.

The aim of the session is to promote:

1. An understanding of what SEND Myths are and why they are an issue;
2. A working understanding of the main aspects of SEND law on funding and EHCP process as it applies in England.
3. Confidence and insight to discuss these aspects and challenge LAs/professionals where appropriate.
4. The knowledge and references to inform work done by parents/professionals.

Essentially, Garry will share a wealth of knowledge about how SEND law can support schools, parents, children and families in ascertaining appropriate levels of funding and provisions for the children and young people you work with.

If you are interested in booking a place, please click the link below.

Book your place at ioe@catschools.uk

TRAIN TO TEACH



COMMUNITY ACADEMIES TRUST
Institute of Education

Our Half Term in Pictures



And finally.....

Hopefully you found us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/schoolscat/> (#schoolscat) as well as on Twitter @SchoolsCat (#catschools). Follow us and we'll follow you back. You can also find us on our App via the Wix Spaces, Our Community Matters.

The Wilnecote School @wilnecoteschool · May 3
The recent Value Point Focus Week saw the top VP awardee in each year group invited to attend the library at tutor time today for a hot chocolate and muffins with Mr Foskett. Mr Foskett made each student a hot chocolate and then chatted with them about their achievement.



Stoneydelph Primary School @StoneydelphPS · 4h
What a transformation! Our new outdoor classroom is built thanks to @PentagonPlayUK we can't wait to use it - once this rain stops! @SchoolsCat



The Wilnecote School @wilnecoteschool · May 14
As part of a whole school cultural capital programme, we would like to offer an excellent experience for Year 9 students to go to London and visit the amazing Natural History Museum on Monday 10TH of June 2024.



Grange Park PE @Grange_Park_PE · 22h
Our Year 5/6 Girls had an amazing day at the @TWSSP and @CrickShrops Kwik Cricket event at @StGeorgesCrick1 today.

The girls improved so much throughout the event and every match was very close. The girls won 2, lost 2 and drew 1 in their 5 games.

#TeamGP



Polesworth School @PolesworthSchl · May 3
Come and Join us at our Summer Festival next month on Saturday 15th June 2024, 1-4pm!

Free entry to all 🍌🍌🍌

Check out our event's page on Facebook and to let us know if you're thinking about coming 🍌
fb.me/e/5xJakoGUL



Birchwood Primary School @BirchwoodPrim · May 19
Session 6 of 'Consumer Club' compared a range of jelly babies. Most expensive brand, Maynard's (usually priced at £1.65) was least favourite. Most felt that whilst coming in at third place, the closeness of the vote meant that ASDA jelly babies would be the best value for money.



Our Community Matters

