



HELPING PUPILS, COLLEAGUES AND THE COMMUNITY TO THRIVE

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As we reach the end of another academic year, I wanted to write to staff and parents in our school communities to share with you some of the exciting events recently happening across our seven schools. A big thank you to all of my colleagues for their hard work over the course of the year which has helped us to achieve all that you will see in this newsletter. I hope you all enjoy your well-earned Summer break.



I would like to mention a few colleagues in particular. At this time of the year we mark those who have given many years of service. Sharon Saunt has various roles at Borrow Wood and this year marks 28 years of service to the school and yesterday I presented her with some flowers as a small thank you for her commitment to Borrow Wood. We are also saying goodbye to David Evans, our headteacher at Asterdale. David first joined the school 22 years ago and has been at the heart of the community since. We wish him a happy retirement. Also retiring is Pete Parry who has been caretaker at Beaufort since the 1990s. Thank you to them for their dedication to their roles.

As well as marking the longevity of some colleague's careers, I would also like to congratulate the nine Early Career Teachers for whom the end of term marks the end of their two year induction. A lot of hard work goes into passing this crucial stage of their teaching career, well done to all. Thank you also to the colleagues who have supported them.

Wishing everyone a great summer,

Ian Dewes
Odyssey Collaborative Trust CEO

CREATIVE PUPIL IMPRESSES WRITING COMPETITION JUDGES IN JUST 50 WORDS



➤➤➤ OUR CHILDREN THRIVE

Tharun Selvaruban, 11, recently came runner up in the Derby Book Festival 50-word flash fiction competition with his tale of an eagle searching to find the smartest bird who could define what spring was.

And he hasn't stopped there. He has just entered another competition, writing 500 words on the theme of a ship carrying coins.

Tharun does not just use his vibrant imagination to create his stories, he also carries out a lot of research.

For his latest ship-related tale, he found out about the superstitions that sailors used to have, such as girls and bananas being banned from ships and that they weren't allowed to know how to swim (it was more of an incentive to keep the ship afloat). He used that information to shape his writing.

"I enjoy writing stories and really just enter the competitions for the experience," said Tharun, who credits his mum with his creative mind.

"I used to be a really picky eater and sometimes, to encourage me to eat, my mum used to tell me stories to distract me from the food and get me to eat it! She is really good!" he said.

Teachers at Beaufort Primary School, part of the Odyssey Collaborative Trust, said Tharun is always eager to learn. The school recently had a new library installed and Tharun is a regular there, taking on the role of a librarian, as well as devouring the fantasy fiction books.

Head teacher Kate Beecroft said the school is very proud of Tharun's hard work.

"Tharun is a very bright young boy who works extremely hard at everything. He loves writing and reading and, as well as being a librarian, is also our Head Boy. We can't wait to read his first novel!"

And staff may not have to wait long because even when not entering competitions, Tharun is eagerly penning his own story at home, about a fantasy land where there is only one human living, among relatives and friends which include a giant spider aunty who loves to knit.

"When I grow up I would like to keep writing. I'm really interested in becoming an author and I also like acting and would like to be a veterinarian," said Tharun.

"I enjoy writing stories and really just enter the competitions for the experience."

Tharun Selvaruban

SCHOOL PRAISED AS ‘SPECIAL PLACE’ BY INSPECTORS

»»» OUR COLLEAGUES THRIVE

Inspectors have praised Oakwood Junior School for being a ‘special place for pupils to learn and grow’ and where staff ‘enjoy working’. In their report, which rated the school with Outstanding Personal Development and Good overall, the Ofsted inspectors said that pupils were happy and talked with enthusiasm about school life.

The role of Odyssey Collaborative Trust in supporting, challenging and monitoring the school was also praised, with inspectors noting staff talked about the school being “brilliant at making sure staff are looked after well”.

Areas highlighted for particular mention were pupils’ behaviour, which was ‘excellent’ and the curriculum which had been carefully designed to be relevant to the pupils and community that the school serves.

“Oakwood Junior School is warm, welcoming and exciting place to work and learn. I am proud of the hard work the staff do to ensure our pupils thrive.”

CEO Ian Dewes

The school, which joined the Odyssey Collaborative Trust three years ago, has worked hard to allow pupils to develop leadership skills by taking on different roles such as school councillors, reading ambassadors and anti-bullying ambassadors.

It has also created a variety of school clubs available for activities such as science, gymnastics, chess, yoga, dance, choir, netball, art and football.

Inspectors praised this work and mentioned how the pupils spoke about the ‘many opportunities’ they are given at the school.

The report noted pupils used words such as ‘spectacular’, ‘remarkable’, ‘magical’, and ‘inspiring’, to describe the school, and said it was ‘open to everyone’.

Ian Dewes, Chief Executive of Odyssey Collaborative Trust, said it was pleasing the inspectors had noted so many of the areas of work he is also particularly proud of.

“Oakwood Junior School is warm, welcoming and exciting place to work and learn. I am proud of the hard work the staff do to ensure our pupils thrive, and of the excellent behaviour and attitude to learning the children show. It is pleasing that the Ofsted inspectors remarked on the pride the children also have in their school.”



OUR SCHOOLS RECEIVE NEARLY £1 MILLION TO IMPROVE BUILDINGS

»»» OUR COMMUNITY THRIVES

Four of our schools have been successful in gaining nearly £1million of funding to carry out work to improve their buildings. Cherry Tree Hill Primary in Chaddesden, Springfield Primary in Spondon, Beaufort Primary in Chaddesden and Portway Junior School in Allestree all received funding following the bid submitted on behalf of the Trust by property consultant Eddisons.

The money will come from the Government's Condition Improvement Fund, taking the total amount the Trust has been successful in winning from this pot in recent years to £7.4 million.

Ian Dewes, Chief Executive Officer of Odyssey Collaborative Trust, said: "Working with Eddisons we have had huge success this year with our bids.

"The results announced over the Easter break showed only five schools in Derby were successful in receiving funding – four of them being Odyssey Collaborative Trust schools, so that is a great result for our schools."

The biggest funding award went to Springfield Primary School which will receive £309,000 towards the £412,000 cost of installing new windows. The Trust will put money towards each of the projects as well.

David Blackwell, head teacher at Springfield Primary School, said: "We were delighted our bid was successful as it is the second part of a project which began, also using CIF funding, three years ago.

"The aim of the project is to modernise the windows in school, whilst at the same time, retaining the original character and



'The aim of the project is to modernise, whilst at the same time, retaining the original character.'

David Blackwell, Springfield Primary School

appearance that was established when the school was built back in 1932. Hopefully this bid will help ensure the lifespan of the school premises for the next 92 years!"

Portway Junior School and Cherry Tree Hill will both receive nearly £225,000. At the Allestree school, the money will go towards new heaters, while at Cherry Tree Hill it will pay for fire doors. Fire doors will also be installed with the £175,000 awarded to Beaufort Primary School.

The success for Odyssey Collaborative Trust was set against a backdrop of disappointment for many schools across the country with this year seeing the lowest number of school building work requests approved since the CIF system began in 2015.

In the East Midlands, 182 (64%) of the 268 bids that were submitted for improvements and repairs to school buildings were turned down by the Government for funding.

RAISING CASH FOR NEONATAL UNIT

▶▶▶ OAKWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Oakwood Junior School pupil Freya Cushley, 11, has presented a cheque for £500 to Friends of the Baby Unit, a charity that supports Royal Derby Hospital's neonatal unit, which looked after her brother when he was born.

Freya was supported by her friend Amelie to organise two cake sales and to raffle off a Christmas chocolate hamper to raise the money throughout the year.

"I've been fundraising for Friends of the Baby Unit for almost five years now because my brother, now seven, was looked after by them when he was born so it means a lot to me," she said.

Head teacher Mrs Atwal said Freya's commitment to organising the events had been brilliant.

"Freya has been very entrepreneurial in raising the funds and has shown great leadership skills during this venture. She led an assembly with me and presented the rationale for the fund-raising to the whole school. I'm very proud of Freya."



CHANGING PLACES

▶▶▶ BEAUFORT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupils and a politician traded places last week when Beaufort Primary School council went to the Houses of Parliament in London before Derby North MP Amanda Solloway took a seat in their classroom in Chaddesden.

While in London on May 9, the 14 pupils, aged seven to 11, experienced a live debate in the House of Commons and even tried their hand at their own debate. They also got to visit some of the sights of London.

The following day, the children were able to quiz Amanda Solloway MP, when she visited the school to answer their questions.

With their parliamentary experience fresh in their minds, the pupils asked about the MP's most and least favourite debates and where she sits in the House of Commons, as well as about what inspired her to become a politician.

COMMUNITY TURNS OUT FOR OUR FAIR



▶▶▶ PORTWAY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Staff, children, parents and carers baked, donated and gave up their time to raise more than £1,000 at the summer fair.

Organised by the PTFA, the annual event was a brilliant success - not least because the sun shone.





CHINESE CHILDREN GET A TASTE OF UK

>>> CHERRY TREE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chinese children enjoyed roast dinners, football and school trips last week as they were welcomed to Derby by children from Cherry Tree Hill Primary School as part of a visit arranged through the Global School Alliance.

The Chaddesden school welcomed pupils from Hongxing Road Primary School in the Chinese city of Hefei.

Paul Appleton, head teacher at Cherry Tree Hill Primary School, said the visit had been enlightening.

“The children have shown such warmth towards the visitors. I know they were nervous about how they would communicate but once the visitors came into the classroom, they made friends with their buddies from China and have enjoyed doing artwork and sport with them. They’ve overcome any language barriers and have communicated brilliantly.”

During their days at the school, children visited Derby Museum and Art Gallery, The Museum of Making and Derby County Football Club. They also got treated to a traditional English roast dinner at school.

Yixuan Li, 12, said he had really enjoyed his time in England. “I really liked the school, it is very friendly and very different. The classes are very interesting.”

Weichen Da, 11, also noted the difference in the schooling. “I really like the classes they are very different and very practical. I also like the beauty of England and the views. The sky here is more blue too.”

Phoebe, 11, from Cherry Tree Hill Primary School, said she had enjoyed the visit.

“It has been good because we have been able to make new friends in another part of the world. We have done a lot of sports together which has been great too.”

Chungling Tao, a teacher at Number 50 Middle School Hefei, said he had been impressed with the education system in England.

“The ways of education are very different, and it has been a wonderful experience. Our students are very good at working out problems on paper but I have noticed how British students can work by themselves and do some very practical work which I think our students liked very much.”

GREEN FINGERS HELP RAISE THE FLAG ⁷

➤➤➤ ASTERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupils at Asterdale Primary School have worked to achieve international accreditation for their exceptional work in promoting sustainability and raising environmental awareness among their peers.

They have achieved the Eco-Schools' Green Flag award, a symbol of their work to improve the environment and commitment to appreciating the outdoors.

The Spondon school's Eco Council, which has a representative from each year group from Reception to Year 6, completed the application for the Green Flag status with support from Forest School leader Louise Sumner. It highlighted their focus on three key issues which formed their action plan for the year: transport, school grounds and litter. Throughout the year, the Eco Council at Asterdale Primary School, part of the Odyssey Collaborative Trust, has worked with other pupils to improve each area. It has encouraged sustainable ways of getting to and from school through the Living Streets project, carried out litter picks and planted trees and shrubs to improve the school grounds, with support from local charity Trees For Spondon and the Woodland Trust.

Council member Ava-Maria said: "I really like doing the litter picks and I like it when it looks nice and tidy afterwards."

Fellow member Emily, in Year 3, brought her green fingers to the council's work.

"I wanted to get involved because I like helping my dad in the garden, so I really enjoyed planting trees at the school."

A DECADE OF OUR ERF



SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

This term it has been 10 years since Jane Asher (right) opened our Enhanced Resource Facility. The unit has grown from seven to 39 children and continues to provide calm spaces with dedicated staff and a tailored curriculum for pupils to learn as part of the main school.

