



Alliance
for Learning



Bright Futures
EDUCATIONAL TRUST
The best for everyone, the best from everyone

WINTER NEWSLETTER



2020 has been a year like no other. I don't think any of us could ever have imagined the events of this year and we are all, I'm sure, looking forward to a break over Christmas.

In so many ways, circumstances have conspired to drive us apart at a time when the solutions to the challenges we face require even stronger collaboration, mutual understanding and genuine togetherness.

Whatever the season brings this year, we all need to try and find magic and joy in our lives amid the Coronavirus pandemic. I have it on good authority that Father Christmas has special key worker powers and Government 'sign off' to ignore any travel restrictions. I know we have all had a myriad of things keeping us awake at night - not least how to survive, or even thrive, during this pandemic, but I do hope that the Christmas break brings a chance to refresh, recharge and switch off.

At the Teaching School we have tried our best to use this terrible crisis as an opportunity to be creative, try new things, and make changes that will allow all our schools to still 'come together'.



Coming Together

We want to say a huge thanks to you our partner schools, System Leader Team and SLEs, CPD facilitators, mentors, trainees and all the other people who contribute to our teaching school and make it all that it is. The innovation, tenacity, energy and passion of colleagues everywhere have demonstrated the immense power of collaboration and technology.

We are reflecting on what we can learn from our new way of working to ensure we capture the many positives that there are amongst the challenges. We have seen an increased sense of teamwork across our whole network which has really strengthened our commitment to our vision and values.

I hope that you enjoy reading our newsletter capturing so many wonderful successes. I wish you and yours all the very best for Christmas and for a happy, healthy New Year.

Lisa and the teaching school team

Director of Teaching School & Partnerships

Partnerships

During this difficult time, it has been heartening to see Multi Academy Trusts and Teaching Schools collaborate.

We have very strong links with local authorities and other Teaching Schools and we are using these to ensure all schools are connected, launching the national Well Schools provision online with over 800 schools this term.

We are also delighted to announce that we have a number of new schools that have joined us since the Summer: Rudheath School, Flixton Girls School, Co-op Academies Trust, The Crompton House Church of England Academy and St Anne's Roman Catholic High School.

Diverse Educators

We are delighted to announce that we have a new partnership with Diverse Educators. We will be piloting their leadership training course from September 2021 and we are thrilled to be hosting an Early Years conference dedicated to the theme of diversity on 5th March. All Early Years educators will be invited to join us.





Oak National Academy

The Alliance for Learning is very proud to have been chosen to provide the secondary PSHE (RSHE) curriculum and lessons for the Oak National Academy. This work is in addition to our successful designation as an RSHE Train the Trainer Hub.



The virtual PSHE department for the nationwide on-line learning platform is overseen by the Director of Teaching School Lisa Fathers. The Virtual Head of Department is Michelle O'Neil from Wellacre Academy, one of the Alliance's strategic partners. Together, and with the input and support of other Alliance member schools, they will develop the overall PSHE curriculum, schemes of work, resources and lesson delivery around this vital area of education.



Oak National Academy is an online classroom and resource hub created by teachers, for teachers. It provides nearly 10,000 high-quality video lessons and resources, with content for the full academic year across primary, secondary and specialist schools. It was created in April 2020 as a national response to the pandemic, with teachers and education experts creating online lessons. We are really excited and proud to be one of the sector wide organisations contributing to this national initiative that allows students to keep on learning in the face of the ongoing Covid 19 crisis. Self-isolating students need to access the full range of curriculum content including PSHE, and this content is even more important in challenging times for health and wellbeing.

Teaching School scores with Girls' Football Super Hub win!

After a robust application and recruitment process, we were successful in gaining the prestigious status of "Girls' Football Super Hub".

The Teaching School is starting its work with the FA and the Youth Sport Trust to pave the way for the next Lionesses to take to the pitch. We will be leading the innovation to create a 21st century modern curriculum for girls, enabling them to access and engage in football through the curriculum and will really improve the take up of girls' football. This will involve working with PE leads across the North West to further develop the school workforce with CPD on football.

The Alliance for Learning Teaching School is like no other, we champion wellbeing, physical activity and sport, we constantly innovate and respond to need and we are ambitious for our schools and the students in them. We cannot wait to inspire a new generation of female footballers across the region. Kay Statham from Flixton Girls' School has been seconded onto the teaching school team to lead this work.





CPD

We have had to make significant changes to our business model and change our approach in order to provide an offering that will help and support all those in the profession managing the changes the pandemic and school closures have created.

Word of the year has been 'adapt' and that's certainly what we've done - all CPD has been online, with the exception of Mental Health First Aid Adult which is being delivered in a school with a Covid secure CPD suite.

We've provided support to Coop MAT, helping them create their own internal SLE team and we have about 40% of our SLE team 'out' giving virtual support.

We've been finding completely new ways to celebrate, support and connect teachers across our network, whether it's been through our virtual networking events, our **new online training offer** or through our brand new Covid-19 area of our website which bridges the gap between practice and research and equips teachers and leaders with the best resources.

The aim – as ever - is to support our teachers and bring teaching professionals together.

It's been quite the journey! We've been really busy, with all sorts of CPD delivery from our core offer to more bespoke sessions, even delivering in the Middle East. We're continuing to re-frame, re-set and innovate to ensure our vast and successful CPD offer continues to give our schools all they need.

We've been really encouraged by the number of schools still ensuring that their staff are invested in and continue to grow. If you have had too much on to really look at our CPD offer for this year, **information is here** when you are ready to explore.

Early Career Teacher Framework (ECTF)

Last year, the Department for Education (DFE) released the Early Careers Framework (ECF), to provide more support to new teachers in their initial teaching years. We were delighted to be located in an early rollout area and can now announce that we have recruited over 100 participants! This really reflects the appetite for the programme as well as the level of support. We're offering in depth training for new teachers and their mentors, along with the development of a coaching model. We're also hosting talks with TeachFirst and the Educational Development Trust.

PSHE Hub

PSHE is an important area of work for the North West with increasing challenges around the new legislation for Sex and Relationships Education. We were designated as an RSHE Training Hub for the Department for Education and initially had over 300 secondary schools signed up for the training – that has now been upscaled to 400 schools. Thanks to our planning and progress, the DFE has asked us to host their Regional Meeting and showcase our RSHE Hub!



Mental health first aid

We are delighted to have won the contract to deliver Mental Health First Aid across the whole of the Star Academy MAT.

This is a real opportunity to make a difference to a MAT's internal capacity in mental health and wellbeing and is a great example of our MAT2MAT work.

We host a plethora of Mental Health First Aid courses for Youths and Adults alike. These courses will teach you the skills and confidence to spot the signs of mental health issues in a young person/adult, offer first aid and guide them towards the support they need. In doing so, you can speed up a young person/adult's recovery and stop a mental health issue from getting worse.



MHFA England





Support & Wellbeing

High levels of stress in teaching

New research shows that more UK teachers and education staff than ever are experiencing symptoms that can lead to depression and anxiety, a significant rise on previous levels. They also experience symptoms of depression at far higher levels than the general population, according to the 2020 Teacher Wellbeing Index.

The report conducted annually by the charity Education Support in conjunction with YouGov, reveals a sharp increase since last year in those who have experienced symptoms widely associated with poor mental health.

Download the [report here](#).

Head2Head

HEAD2HEAD



In response to the rising levels of stress, we have launched a new initiative called HEAD2HEAD. The aim is to connect Headteachers through a simple request service. It's good to talk: peer to peer support is invaluable - and by having access to other like-minded professionals, hopefully we can all support each other through what has been a very difficult school year.

The programme has been endorsed by a range of partners including Teacher Toolkit, Youth Sport Trust, Well Schools, BUPA Foundation and by the Chartered College of Teaching.

Further information can be found [here](#).

School to School support extension

The Department for Education is extending delivery of its School-to-School Support Recovery Offer until at least the end of Spring 2021, in order to support schools that are the most vulnerable in facing the challenges brought on by COVID-19. Regardless of Ofsted rating, schools will be able to benefit from additional leadership support, including a high-quality remote learning offer.

You can apply for support free of charge if you:

- Have educational (or safeguarding) issues that have either been caused or exacerbated by coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Are facing operational challenges because of coronavirus (COVID-19) and would benefit from additional leadership capacity including help with your remote learning offer.

[More info here](#).

NQT Conference

The first 2020-21 NQT conference took place at the end of November - and what a great success it was! We were delighted with the attendance to the event, especially given the staffing pressures schools are facing at this time.

Behaviour expert Jason Bangbala facilitated the most interesting behaviour clinic supporting NQTs with practical advice on how to tackle a range of behaviours presented in the classroom, from low level disruption to children refusing to wear face masks! In the afternoon, Jodie Lomax, Research Lead and School Direct Lead at Culcheth Community High School, delivered an informative and insightful session on the Principles of Learning, which was really well received.

This year, as a thank you to our NQT mentors for their continued support in such challenging times, we extended the invite to all current NQT mentors. We really do appreciate all that you are doing in such unusual times to support our novice teachers.

[More info here](#).



[Read the NAHT report on improving schools here](#)





Free courses for non-specialist teachers

If your school has non-specialists teaching secondary maths, physics or MFL, you might be interested in Teacher Subject Specialism Training (TSST), which offers free courses for non-specialist teachers teaching secondary mathematics, core maths, physics and MFL.

The benefits to your school include:

- Lowers the need to recruit externally for teachers in high demand areas – saving time and cost
- TSST involves no fee for the school or teacher
- TSST demonstrates the value the school places on its teachers
- It benefits schools with timetable planning and workforce flexibility
- The courses are flexible – they start throughout the term

For more info, or to register, please email HLangmead-Jones@aggs.bfet.uk

2020 Poetry competition

We were very excited to launch this year's poetry competition - the theme is 'Coming Together'.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, we have seen people from all walks of life 'coming together' to provide not only support when needed, but charitable donations, birthday wishes, helping hands for struggling businesses and of course the weekly coming together to support our keyworkers and NHS.

Families, friends and communities alike have now, more than ever, become an important part of our lives.

We have had to 'stay apart to come together' and so we invited children in primary schools and Year 7 students in secondary schools to write a poem about anything linked to 'coming together', collaboration, relationships teamwork- anything linked to the idea of togetherness.

The winners were announced on 14th December - huge congratulations to Jake Smith from Wellacre Academy who scooped first prize and Abigail Bennett, of Birchwood Community High School and Eva Rothwell of Longendale High School, who came second and third.



Ofsted's Covid reflections

You might have missed the Ofsted reflections from Covid visits to schools across the UK and find the report interesting to read. Key points to note are the curriculum adaptations, the ambition of leaders to return to normal and the overall happiness of pupils in schools. Well done everyone.

[The full report is here.](#)

Coming soon...

The launch of our Primary PSHE/RSHE Hub

A Diversity themed Early Career Teacher Conference 5th March - SAVE THE DATE!

A Diverse Educators Leadership Course. The programme runs between 24 Sept 2021 and 24 June 2022

And much, more, more...

