



THE  
VIEW  
FROM  
HERE



# THE VIEW FROM HERE

Thank you as always for all of your hard work over the last two terms. It is difficult to believe that in a few weeks we will start the summer term - especially as signs of Spring seem sadly thin on the ground.

You will know that the proposals to merge with The Castle Partnership Trust were submitted to the Regional Director last week and I am pleased to report that they gained unanimous approval. There is still a great deal of work to do if the merger is to go ahead and it is not yet a done deal but it is good to know that our plans were accepted and the members of the Regional Board were very complimentary about the strength of the papers we submitted.

I would like to thank our own Trust Board members for all of the work that is going on behind the scenes to connect with our opposite numbers at TCPT - not least attending weekly steering group meetings. It is a big commitment for what are essentially volunteers and testimony to their commitment to our schools and pupils.

As I write this we are no nearer to a pay settlement for Teachers and I want to thank everyone who has lobbied for a decent pay award and, just as importantly for it to be fully funded. It is simply not acceptable to agree a settlement and then expect schools to find the money to pay for it. The outcome of this would only be to deplete resources, which are already scandalously scarce, elsewhere.

Finally we continue our push on attendance. Heads collectively agreed an attendance strategy last week and we all agreed that ensuring high attendance is our number one priority. I have always believed that the best attendance strategy is a school that pupils want to come to. I know how hard everyone works to create the environments, opportunities and culture that supports this so thank you.

Have a wonderful Easter break. You deserve it.

Lorraine

**Chief Executive Officer, Uffculme Academy Trust**



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LORRAINE HEATH

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This term, at Axe Valley Academy has whizzed by. As I reflect on this jam-packed issue, I cannot believe how much as a school we achieve in just 7 weeks.

We hope you have enjoyed our alumni campaign as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. To hear about our students and their successes in life is one of the true delights for us as a school. If you studied here or know someone who did, we'd love to hear about the journey you have been on since leaving AVA. Please contact Mr Scott, our Assistant Head, email: [jscott@axevalley.uat.ac](mailto:jscott@axevalley.uat.ac)

One of the highlights for me as a Headteacher was to meet with three of our ex-students, Hayley, Hannah and Jade from Police, Paramedic and Fire and Rescue Services. On #IWD2023 we celebrate women such as Hayley, Hannah and Jade as outstanding members of our community. History is filled with women who took a stand in an attempt to redress the balance in gender inequality. All week to honour International Women's Day, we talked to all of our students here at Axe Valley Academy about equity. We have been working in focus groups with students to launch an equity campaign here. We are delighted that our students are forthright and committed to studying in a community which values equity as a concept and look forward to launching our poster and social media campaign to reinforce this. We look forward to sharing the resulting campaign with you next term.



# THE VIEW FROM HERE



Our production of Bugsy has been an absolute joy to have undertaken. It is a fabulous production which engages so many of our students. I will miss it as a backdrop to after school life at AVA. Thank you to all those who have worked so hard to make it happen. It has been a real labour of love but completely worth it for the experience it has given our students from the lighting technicians to the lead players.

I hope our staff and students are able to recharge over the Easter break as we prepare for our typically busy Summer Term. Have a wonderful break.

**Laura Jenkins, Headteacher**



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LAURA JENKINS

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Here we are at the end of another busy term, with so much having been achieved since Christmas. We have not yet received our Ofsted report, despite the fact that the inspection took place in early February, but when we do I will be proud and pleased to share it with you all. Thank you once again for your support and well wishes – hearing these from our colleagues across the Trust has been great!

The past few weeks have really reminded me of what fantastic opportunities our students have to 'Join In' with the wider life of the school, develop their confidence and try new things. In just the past fortnight, our students have had the chance to go to Iceland, visit the Globe Theatre, play Rugby at Rosslyn Park 7s (a national rugby competition), go bowling, watch the staff do karaoke (!! ) and play football against a staff team, just to name but a few. I am so proud of our students for throwing themselves into these opportunities that exist above and beyond the normal array of clubs available at lunch-time and after school. It is testament to the hard work and commitment to our students that they have access to such a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities, so thank you to all on #TeamHolyrood for their dedication this term.

A particular highlight was an incredible production of The Addams Family, which involved students from years 7-13. The quality of acting, music, singing and production was fantastic! It was also impressive that the entire production, including the lighting and sound, was completely led and run by students. I would like to say a huge 'thank you' and 'well done' to our amazing Creative Arts team who make things like this possible. They are considering next year's production already and I am reliably told that my annual request for The Lion King is being considered... thanks Mrs Lowe!



# THE VIEW FROM HERE



We now enter the 'business end' of the academic year as Year 11 and Year 13 approach their examinations. Our examination groups have tackled their mock exams with maturity and hard work and I know you will join me in wishing all Year 6, 11 and 13 students across the Trust the very best of luck in their upcoming exams. Here's hoping for a successful summer for all our schools.

Leaders from Holyrood Academy had the pleasure of being represented at the Somerset Education Strategy Meeting and the South West 100 Summit, both last week. These crucial events brought school leaders together to talk about and plan to address the disadvantage gap in the South West, which is the largest in the UK. It was very important for our school and Trust to be represented in forums such as these so that we are at the forefront of addressing such a crucial issue, in line with our Trust vision of 'Excellence for All'. There is much important work to be done to address educational and wider disadvantage in the South West and I am proud to be part of a Trust which is at the forefront of that work.

Finally, next term also contains some of our favourite events of the year including Sports Days, Celebration Day, Activities Week and Proms – here's hoping for some excellent weather with which to enjoy them.

**Dave MacCormick, Headteacher**



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**DAVE MACCORMICK**

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This term always seems to fly by at Neroche. The staff team have worked hard and have impressed me with their determination, despite unfortunate staff absences and adverse weather, to continue to ensure that they offer a rich and varied curriculum to the children. Wherever possible, we have been able to engage with a number of external providers to bring enrichment opportunities into school which have added to our wider curriculum offer.

We were able to access some workshops from the RSPCA linked to the dangers of litter on wildlife and animals. This has led to some work with our Eco Council on litter picking around the school site. We have a number of willing volunteers who have offered to help the Eco Council with this initiative, and it is good to see the children recognising this as an important aspect for the future. We have also been lucky enough to benefit from Road Safety talks to the children, something that helps to reinforce our PSHE curriculum offer.

Year 2 children enjoyed a Great Fire of London workshop where they reinforced their learning about the fire and firefighting equipment of the time. Year 3 enjoyed an interactive Roman workshop using an online provider. Year 1 thoroughly enjoyed a visit from the drumming bus to consolidate their musical learning on rhythm and beat and Year 4 are busy planning their trip to Charmouth beach to learn about fossils and rocks. Year 5 and 6 were invited to watch the dress rehearsal of Holyrood's Grease performance and they came back full of their visit and aspirations to appear in productions when they join. Our Year 4 children are taking part in a Jackdaw music project in connection with Holyood Academy and have had the opportunity to develop their growing ukulele skills. All of these enrichment opportunities take a great deal of staff time and commitment to explore and arrange and we are lucky to have a staff team who value such activities providing the children with first hand experiences to support their classroom learning. World Book Day was marked at Neroche this year with a series of story workshops. Children engaged with drama activities linked to key texts that they have read and our youngest EYFS children took part in a range of Forest School activities linked to The Gruffalo and We're Going On A Bear Hunt.

Brodie, our school dog is now a familiar face at Neroche and the children are enjoying working towards our specially designed Neroche PAWS awards. Our first children have now received their green PAW badge and have been proudly wearing these helping to encourage others. One of our children who had a fear of dogs at the start of last term was the first to achieve their green PAW badge and it was so lovely to share in this personal growth as she started to overcome her fear towards dogs. Brodie is having a positive impact on the whole school and is in high demand. Children, parents and staff have all very quickly fallen in love with him and he has played a key part in some bespoke curriculum provision for some of our most vulnerable children.



# THE VIEW FROM HERE

Mrs Dellow our designated SEMH Teaching Assistant has been busy studying to complete her ELSA training and has successfully gained the ELSA teacher accreditation. This is a fantastic addition to our staff team and adds to the SEMH offer we have at Neroche. We have also secured a grant to install solar panels to our Hedgehog Hut which is our external classroom space used by Mrs Dellow, to provide a simple power source to the area for lighting and possibly heat for next winter. The Eco Council ran a 'design a garden on a school lunch plate' as additional fundraising to support this solar panel project and we now have enough to move forward with the installation. This competition also resulted in a fantastic opportunity to find an alternative use for our school lunch plates that we no longer use rather than them finding themselves in the landfill. Any left over plates have now been donated to a nearby school.

The new Broadway Playpark development is almost complete and we have been keeping an eye on the progress from across the junior playground. The local Parish Council have worked hard on this project and the Neroche children have been lucky enough to add their voice to the design and choice of equipment that has been installed. The Neroche children have supported the fundraising efforts. We have been invited to the official opening of the new park and are families are looking forward to using it.

We enjoyed a visit from Jacob Blackburn earlier in the term. Jacob spent the day at Neroche creating what will be a new school video. Big thanks to Anita Heale as well for helping with this project. The children were very excited and we are looking forward to seeing the finished video clip that we can use on the website. Jacob was a huge hit with all the children at Neroche and he wasn't short of willing volunteers to appear in the filming.

Our PFA have been working hard and through the determination of our new committee we have established a group of very willing and committed volunteers. They have organised an Easter Egg design competition this term and have engaged the school community in a coronation project where the children and families can create their own coronation artwork for mementos to mark the Kings Coronation in May. We are very grateful to the hard work of the new committee, many of whom also have full time work commitments as well.

A really busy term at Neroche and lots more to look forward to next term. At the end of this term we sadly say goodbye to Mr Smith as he is off to pastures new in a school nearer to home. We all wish him the best of luck in his new role.

The whole of the staff team would like to wish everyone across the trust a happy Spring holiday and a very Happy Easter to those who celebrate.

**Ali Collins, Headteacher**



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**ALI COLLINS**

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## UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL

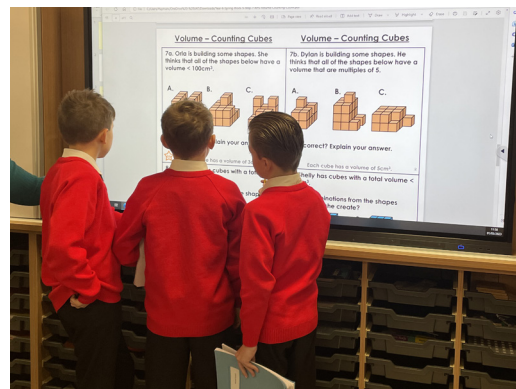
It has continued to be an incredibly busy but rewarding 2023 so far and the children at our school continue to go from strength to strength.

We are delighted to have finally moved into our new Year 5 and 6 classroom building. Although there are still some very minor tweaks to be completed internally and externally, we have been able to move in properly. The Year 5 and 6 children have thoroughly enjoyed acclimatising to their new surroundings and they feel that extra sense of privilege being in Upper Key Stage 2. It has also been lovely to see Year 3 and 4 adjusting well to their new environments. It is amazing how quickly the children have adapted to such a big change after so many years.

There will be a launch event on May 5th to mark this momentous occasion. This will be a chance to celebrate all the hard work that has led to the completion of this project and an opportunity to thank all those individuals who made this possible. This project really has made a huge difference to our school and allows us to make use of the vacant classrooms which will be used as a SEND Hub and a meeting space.

We had a wonderful day celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 2nd March. It was lovely to see the children dressed as their favourite characters – there were even some very strangely dressed adults in school too! Every class focussed on different stories and teachers planned a range of fun, book-filled activities. One of these activities involved the Year 6 children sharing and reading books to the Reception children. Seeing the oldest children inspiring and being role models to the youngest children filled me with such pride – we are lucky to have such wonderful children here at Uffculme Primary School.

Last week, we conducted teacher interviews, and I am delighted to share that we have appointed Niamh Fowler and Jacob Kuliszewski. It was an incredibly strong field but we are confident we have found two special teachers that will build upon our school vision and ethos and create truly amazing learning experiences for our children.



# THE VIEW FROM HERE



The school community has also worked hard fundraising for various causes. We raised well over £200 for Red Nose Day on Friday 17th March. The PTFA also hosted a World Book Day themed school disco on Thursday 2nd of March. All children who attended enjoyed themselves and we saw lots of funky dance moves. The PTFA managed to raise a fantastic £290.

We are thrilled to share with you all that Genna Cole has given birth to a beautiful baby boy, Fredrik Sidney Cole (Freddie). He was 8lbs and born on the 8th of March at 9:30pm. Genna is doing really well, and her daughter Lily is enjoying being a big sister! I am sure you will join me in sending our warmest wishes and congratulations to Genna and her family.

Staff have worked extremely hard on our School improvement priorities this year and we are seeing real progress in those areas, such as rising attendance rates. But curriculum improvements have been one area I feel most proud of. Our Little Wandle phonics and Early Reading scheme has revolutionised the way these areas are taught in Key Stage 1. We have also changed our approach to mathematics in Key Stage 2, and a lot of work has gone into History, Geography, MFL and the other curriculum areas. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those staff members leading on these areas.

Finally, we would like to wish all our colleagues across the Uffculme Academy Trust a very happy Easter.

**Fraser Wallace, Headteacher**



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FRASER WALLACE

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Throughout their time at Uffculme School we repeatedly emphasise to students the importance of working hard at all we do, joining in and making the most of all the opportunities that are available to them and being respectful, accepting and kind to others.

So much has happened this term that shows our students in all year groups are fully invested in these aims and are growing in maturity, becoming the young people we all know they can be. And this really matters to us as a school – we want so much more for each student, beyond leaving us with a great set of qualifications: we want them to be equipped and prepared to meet life challenges, to be able to make the most of the opportunities that present themselves and to be happy and thrive in life. This is why we place so much emphasis on our ethos as a school and work so hard to try and instil strong positive values within each young person.

The Spring reports and Year 11 mock exams reflect just how hard the students have been working in their subjects, both in school and at home.

In terms of making the most of the opportunities available the students have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into a remarkable variety of activities, both curricular and extracurricular. These range from:

- house competitions such as castle building and further rounds of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,
- challenges such as the Year 7 Maths Challenge at Blundell's (particular congratulations to Adri van Hensbergen who came in first place overall in the individual challenge and to the Uffculme A Team who were crowned overall winners of the competition) and the Year 10 & 11 Physics Challenge at Exeter Maths School,
- Music events including the Rotary Young Musician competition (good luck to drummer John Merrick who has made it through to the regional final in April), the Soul Band Gig and auditions for the Devon Youth Choir (all 52 of our students who took part were invited to join the choir!),
- Sports competitions of every kind, from show jumping to badminton (along with pretty much every sport that uses a ball of any shape or size!),
- Moorland walking activities such as the Exmoor Challenge and practices for the Ten Tors event,
- Curriculum trips from catering & hospitality students visiting the Quantock Restaurant at Bridgewater College and Year 9 students going to the Computer Science and ICT cyber security event.

However, the main focus with students this term has been the latter principle – the importance of being respectful, accepting, supportive and kind to others. Whilst many people recognise the importance of working hard and trying their best in every situation, and of joining in and making the most of the



# THE VIEW FROM HERE



opportunities that are offered to them, for some the idea of being respectful, tolerant and kind to one another seems like an 'add-on' – something that is nice to do if there is time, but not essential. And yet nothing could be farther from the truth. This principle of being respectful and kind to one another, which we advocate so strongly with our students, is not only essential for their own wellbeing, but also for those around them, and indeed the whole school community.

Over the course of the term we have undertaken a major piece of work around Harmful Sexual Behaviours, not because of major concerns in this area, but because we want to do all we can to challenge and stamp out any unwanted sexist comments, or misogynistic language that might creep in at times and help challenge some of the unpleasant aspects that exist in our society.

We have also reviewed all of our work around Anti-Bullying to not only ensure that we are able to provide a quick and robust response to any reports of it occurring, and to provide strong support for those who might experience such behaviour, but also to once again reinforce the message that we are community that collectively stands against such behaviour.

As part of this work recently, all of Year 10 were off timetable taking part in workshops led by an external organisation 'Humanutopia' which included a really powerful session all about how they treat other people and the impact their words and actions can have on others. Students came away talking about the impact this had had on them and how it had helped them think about their relationships with others and the importance of working to build one another up, rather than causing upset for others.

Being respectful, accepting and kind to one another, far from being a nice 'extra', is in fact crucial to who we are as a school and what we want for our students – a place where they can be happy and thrive as young people and as learners.

**Alan Blackburn, Headteacher**



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## ALAN BLACKBURN

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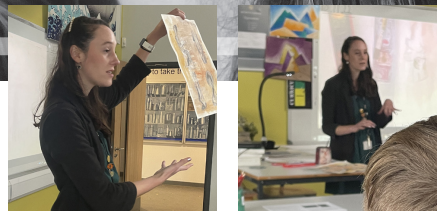
West Country  
Training School Alliance



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[wctsa.org](http://wctsa.org)

West Country  
Training School Alliance



# THE VIEW FROM HERE

The West Country Teaching School Alliance offers two distinct School Direct routes into teaching, both of which are accredited by the University of Exeter. Trainees who successfully complete the course receive their PGCE qualification from the University.

## **What is School Direct?**

School Direct is a one-year full-time course leading to a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and credits towards a Masters degree. Schools in the Alliance are experienced in delivering Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and are committed to developing new entrants into the profession. By selecting this route into teaching, trainees can state a preference for which school they would like to train in. Trainees will spend the majority of the year in this lead school as well as benefiting from a contrasting second school placement of approximately 10 weeks. All placements are organised by the WCTSA and trainees are consulted on which schools they would like to train in. All trainees also undertake cross-phase placements in primary and post-16 settings during the course of their School Direct training; these placements are also arranged by us.

## **We offer two different options for School Direct:**

### **School Direct Distance Secondary (fee paying)**

Trainees are based in schools for the entire academic year and are treated as a member of staff from Day 1. This route is more suited to those who have some experience of working with young people and have good subject knowledge.

### **School Direct @Exeter Secondary (fee paying)**

Unlike University based PGCE programmes, School Direct@Exeter trainees have the benefit of being in school from Day 1. They join their lead school at the start of the academic year and remain at this school undertaking school based learning tasks until the University course begins.

## **For more information:**

# wctsa.org



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JEN KNOWLES

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# THE VIEW FROM HERE



## EXERCISE

WELLBEING AT UFFCULME ACADEMY TRUST



### What is exercise?

Exercise is anything that takes physical effort and tires the body out.

There are different levels of exercise ranging from light to moderate to intense.

Light exercise includes things like walking, carrying out chores around the house or garden. Moderate exercise includes activities that should wear you out slightly, but not to the point where you are out of breath, for example power walking. Intense exercise includes activities such as swimming, cycling, jogging and should make your breathing fast and be at a level that is sensibly pushing your body's limits.

### What are the benefits of exercising?

Regular exercise can provide for a longer life expectancy as well as an improved standard of life, it does not just make you fitter and help control weight, but it can also reduce the likelihood of developing a large number of life shortening conditions.

Exercising is known to release chemicals which affect the brain, making you happier and reducing the effects of stress proving that exercising is not only good for physical aspects, but it promotes emotional and mental wellbeing too. For example, carrying out exercise such as Yoga and Pilates does not only improve muscle strength, flexibility

(which may in turn help improve any injuries or health problems as part of a treatment program) it is also known to help aid mental health.

### How can I find the time to exercise?

Finding time to exercise whilst you have a busy work schedule is hard, however making some minor adjustments to your daily routine can maximise your chances of incorporating exercising you're your daily life.

Here are some top tips to consider if you want to up your heartbeat:

- Turn your commute into an exercise – can you ditch your car and make your way to work on foot or bike?
- Workout at lunchtimes – can you go for a brisk walk at lunch time, a 20-minute power walk can not only increase your exercise intake but leave you feeling invigorated and work hard all afternoon.
- Schedule mini workouts – working out doesn't need to take hours, the most important thing is to ensure that you feel comfortable juggling exercising and daily life!

### Uffculme Academy Trust Sports and Fitness Centre

Did you know that you, as an employee of Uffculme Academy Trust, can take advantage of a subsidised **gym membership for just £9.99 per month.**

With well-equipped gym facilities at both Uffculme School and Holyrood Academy, and diverse upbeat exercise classes, why not take advantage of this fantastic employee-specific luxury.

**If you would like any advice on fitness and exercising, please contact the UAT Wellbeing Service where tailored or personalised support plans can be discussed.**

**<http://www.uffculmetrust.org/wellbeing>**



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**AMANDA WOODWARD**

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[www.uffculmetrust.org](http://www.uffculmetrust.org)