

Newsletter 2 – 29th January 2021

Welcome to our second Trust newsletter. Thank you to everyone who took the trouble to read the first edition and even more so to those of you who helped to contribute to it. I hope that our regular bulletins will serve to keep you all in touch with and connected to UAT and to share a bit of what we have all been getting up to.

I don't think any of us will be sad to see the back of January and although we are still beset with uncertainty about how and when schools will fully reopen again, at least we can take some comfort that with each day, week, month that passes we edge ever closer to some form of normality. The campaign to prioritise school staff for vaccination is gathering momentum and I feel very optimistic that school staff will be identified as having some precedence as part of the strategy to get schools fully up and running again. It would seem to make sense to me that this is at the forefront of government thinking. We do know, now, that it will not be before March; we also know that we are not expected to open for Key Worker children over half term, so it at least some of the doubt over the next few weeks is assuaged.

Thank you to everyone for all of your efforts with remote learning. As a Trust we have taken a very pragmatic view of our delivery models with a blend of activities to include some live teaching and/or tutorials and the conversations that I am having with many school leaders, both in and outside of the Trust suggests that this is a sensible approach. Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive and whilst it is true that there will always be some who think we should be doing more (or less), I am

very well aware that the vast majority of parents are happy with the provision for their children. Further thanks to colleagues who are coming into school during the week to work with our Key Worker and vulnerable children. You are doing an amazing and important job – both to support our critical workers in maintaining their front-line responsibilities; but also in helping those children for whom home learning would mean that they are falling further and further behind. Your commitment is not unnoticed or unappreciated.

Thank you also to all of our colleagues who are heading up the Testing Centres in schools. You too are doing an amazing job in ensuring that school staff are regularly tested and helping to identify asymptomatic cases. The fact that we have had a few positive results shows that the system is working well in helping to identify and isolate the virus. Whilst we know that the tests are not 100% accurate, they are, even so, a helpful tool in our layers of protective measures.

I feel very lucky to be working alongside so many dedicated and hardworking professionals. I have never been more convinced of the benefits of working in partnership with other schools and we have some ambitious plans for doing so much more together in the future which I look forward to being able to share with you as we develop them.



Lorraine Heath

Focus on the Teaching School

Welcome to the first newsletter update from West Country Teaching School Alliance (WCTSA). We're delighted to have this regular opportunity to disseminate what we are up to, and the CPD that we have on offer to staff across the trust.

Initial Teacher Training:

We've had a busy start to the Spring term. Our School Direct Distance (SDD) trainees have started in their second placements and are working in schools across the alliance to provide support with both remote and keyworker provision. Many of them have taken complete responsibility for some of their classes and are now planning and delivering sequences of lessons. It's been great to receive so much positive feedback about their impact in school already.

Our School Direct @ Exeter trainees commenced their school-based experience at the end of the Autumn term after two months of University based input. It's been a very different start to their teaching careers, but they have taken everything in their stride and immersed themselves fully to get as much out of the experience as possible.

We're so proud of this year's cohort of trainees who have responded so well to the demands of the Coronavirus pandemic.

We have expanded and are now working with more schools across the trust on the School Direct programme, and this term, we placed our first trainee at Axe Valley – a big thank you to Max Irvine and the History department for all of your support. We are already starting to look at placements for the class of 2022 and are delighted to be working with both Axe Valley and Holyrood on the programme next academic year.

The School Direct programme would not be as successful as it is, were it not for all of the work that

goes on in the background. A huge thank you to all of the PSTs, mentors, ITECs and teaching staff who have gone above and beyond in supporting the trainees so far in their teaching practice.

If you or someone you know is thinking about training to teach, please do check out our website and contact us if you'd like to find out more. Next academic year, we are offering School Direct places in Art, Biology, Chemistry, Design and Technology, English, Geography, History, Maths, Music and Physics. UCAS is currently open for the class of 2022 and places are filling up fast! Follow us on twitter @wctsa

ECTSW:

Early Career Teachers South West (ECTSW) is a partnership between WCSTA and two other teaching schools from across the South West. It is a collaboration to focus and specialise in the development and support of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and recently qualified teachers (RQTs). This year we have over one hundred early career teachers on our books who are engaging in our NQT and RQT CPD programmes. We have subscribed to the highly acclaimed WalkThrus personal development programme which is written by some of the country's top educationalists and is grounded in the latest pedagogical research.

Through the teaching school, we offer a high-quality appropriate body (AB) service for our NQTs and our AB team have had a busy few weeks completing the assessments and carrying out virtual school visits to quality assure judgements against the teacher standards. We have a number of NQTs and RQTs across the trust who despite everything going on, have made a great start to their programmes.

Middle Leader CPD

Last academic year, we ran very successful middle and senior leader CPD programmes with Women in Leadership funding from the DfE. We are looking into running a very similar programme for middle leaders across the trust later this academic year - Watch this space!

Changes to teaching schools

By the end of the month, we will learn more about the new plans for teaching schools beyond 2021. The number of teaching schools are being significantly reduced to about 100 nationally creating teaching school hubs with greater funding, clearer roles in school improvement and stronger links with MATs. We have been working hard with partners on planning for these future changes and will update you when we have any news.

If there are any aspects of the teaching school that you'd like to find out more about, then please do get in touch. Best wishes to everyone as we navigate this challenging time.



Jen Knowles

News from the Schools



Axe Valley Academy

We would like to offer our huge congratulations to Jack Ward who has finally, against the backdrop of frustrating COVID delays, been awarded his QTS through completing the assessment only route. Those of you who have worked with Jack know just how well deserved this is. We couldn't be happier for him. I know Jack would like to extend his thanks to the Holyrood PE department who supported his second placement. Jack is an ex Axe Valley student and part of a growing gang of staff who attended AVA as students which is really exciting for us.

Other staff who have returned to AVA as Staff include our new Cover Supervisor and TA, Will House, who was once our head boy; our new Art Technician and TA Annabelle Tessier-Dalwood is a talented ex-student who is now bringing her

creativity into the Art and Photography department and ex-student Elliott Turner who has set up and is running the Lateral Flow Testing system pretty much single handed! Those of you from Holyrood Academy will also know Jade Waller who is our amazing sports coach – and also an ex-student - although that was a long time ago now!

Our Staff CPD library has been lovingly put together and opened. If anyone across the Trust has any 'must read' suggestions, please can you let us know as we'd love further recommendations to grow the library. We've got a diverse collection and if anyone would be interested in finding out more please don't hesitate to contact our super librarian Matt Brown mbrown@axevalley.devon.sch.uk



As part of our ongoing reading drive across the school we had a reading competition assembly last week where students had to identify book titles and authors from read extracts. Our competition assembly went down a storm and we were overwhelmed with entries.

The winner was our wonderful student Jasmine in year 7 who was so proud to get her book token delivered. For anyone local, when they are able to, we would recommend checking out the wonderful local bookshop - Archway Bookshop in Axminster - who supported this competition. <https://archwaybookshop.co.uk/about>

This competition sits alongside our current online reading program which takes place during tutor time, which Pav Sanghera (English, Subject Leader) and Phil Wilson (Deputy Head) have put together using a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction titles.



Anita Heale has also produced a beautiful 'staff favourite book' display at AVA.

Can you guess Lorraine's favourite book from the choices below?

- A - Night by Elie Wiesel.
- B - Bleak House by Charles Dickens.
- C - Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller.

Laura Jenkins



Holyrood Academy

It has been an exciting week at Holyrood as we learned that one of our Year 13 students has gained a place at Cambridge University! Caitlin Smith will study English Literature at Peterhouse College from September 2021, provided she meets the conditions of her offer, and will become Holyrood Academy's second Oxbridge student. The first was in 2019. We are really proud of the work our Sixth Form Team have done to prepare students for the academic as well as the procedural demands of gaining a place at one of these top Universities.

Congratulations are in order for Andy Easton and his wife, Hazel, have welcomed their daughter Hallie Wren Easton. She was born weighing 4.36lbs and 7 weeks early. All are doing very well and after a period of support in hospital, Hallie and Hazel returned home on Wednesday of last week. Great news!

We now have three exciting vacancies to share across the Trust: Head of Maths, Head of D&T and Teacher of MFL. You will find these in the vacancies section. I would welcome conversations with any Trust colleagues regarding these posts.

Dave MacCormick



Neroche School

Neroche has been lucky enough to secure refurbished laptops which have now been distributed, this has allowed our classes to participate in very successful social catch opportunities via TEAMS, in which the children enjoyed a range of extracurricular activities and challenges – we have been really proud of the high levels of remote learning engagement across the school.

Following the delivery of the home lateral flow testing kits our staff are now testing themselves twice a week.

Finally our two school administrators have visited the Holyrood Academy finance team who have provided training and support in the new systems and we were also pleased to have welcomed the Holyrood site team to Neroche and look forward to working alongside the both teams in the coming months.



Uffculme Primary School

The past few weeks have continued to be very busy and productive, and I would like to praise the hard work and dedication of our staff in providing the very best provision for our children who are learning from home, and those that are accessing the in-school provision.

The primary staff are now testing themselves twice a week with the recently delivered home testing kits. We would like to thank the secondary school for providing the staff with tests during the first three weeks of term.

Student engagement in remote learning has really improved over the last two weeks. We have a wide variety of learning tasks that reflect our broad and balanced curriculum, with live, interactive Teams 'Circle Times' being incredibly popular with our children. It has been so lovely to see the children coming together to share their learning experiences, with the odd pet and cuddly toy thrown in for good measure!

The roof repair project is nearing completion, and we currently have decorators painting some of the affected areas, which has given some parts of the school a much-needed lift.

We would also like to thank former Chair of Governors, Jenny Willand, for donating £1000 to the school on behalf of her mother, Joyce Kerslake. Joyce was a former pupil of the school in the 1930s and the staff are busy thinking of ways we could use the money so that the legacy of Joyce and her family lives on at the school.

Fraser Wallace



Uffculme School

Congratulations to Year 10 student Lydia Leavy Jones, who has won a writing competition run by Exeter College, Oxford University (Uffculme School's link college at the university). Students in Years 10 and 11 across all affiliated schools were invited to write an essay, identifying a key issue in a subject of

their choice: they had to explain that issue and offer a potential solution. Students were also assessed on their grammar and the clarity of their communication. Lydia wrote her essay on Environmental Activism and was awarded first place (and presented with a £100 Amazon voucher).

"It was business as usual for some of student councilors this week. 13 students in years 7-11 took part in an online 'introduction to antibullying' workshop with the Diana Award. The Diana Award is a charity supported by HRH Duke of Cambridge, set up in his mother's legacy. The programme aims to help young people, parents and teachers to change the attitudes, behaviour and culture of bullying by building skills and confidence to address different situations, both online and offline. The students enjoyed an interactive session with trainer, Paul, and they are keen to implement their new learning and ideas when they return to school later this term."

Alan Blackburn

Governance

42 Staff, from all schools plus a number of guests from Kingsmead Academy, joined Governors and Directors across the Trust in online Permanent Exclusion Training this week which was facilitated by the Trust's legal partner. Despite some very challenging technical issues, this was an excellent CPD session which covered all aspects of this difficult process.

Uffculme Primary School appointed their new Clerk to the Local Governance Committee (LGC) this week – Rachel Chugg joins the other Clerks, Jo Govier at AVA, Linda Driscoll at HA, Liz Mitchell at US and Paula Gibson at the Trust, in supporting and advising this key group of people.

Health & Wellness



If you can, please join us in our free Zoom fitness classes which you can take part in from the comfort of your own home.

Monday – 6.00pm	Pump
Tuesday – 6.00pm	Core & More
Wednesday – 6.00pm	Pump
Thursday – 6.00pm	Core & More
Saturday – 9.30am	Dance Fitness*
Sunday – 9.30am	HiiT

Zoom Code: 476 607 8001

Passcode: fitness

* see Facebook /uffculmesportsand fitness for weekly dance code

Amanda Woodward.

Trust Wide Vacancies

We currently have the following vacancies within the Trust. Further details can be found on each school's website or via the links below

- Axe Valley Academy – Teacher of English
[Careers at Axe Valley Academy - Axminster, United Kingdom, EX13 5EA | eteach](#)
Closing date – 31st January 2021
- Holyrood Academy – Head of Maths
[Teaching and non-teaching jobs at Holyrood Academy, Chard, Somerset | Eteach](#)
Closing date – 5th February 2021
- Holyrood Academy – Head of Design and Technology.
This post is currently only advertised within the Trust and was circulated to our Secondary School staff on the 18th January. Applicants are encouraged to contact Dave MacCormick, for further information dmaccormick@educ.somerset.gov.uk,
Closing date – 5th February 2021
- Holyrood Academy – Teacher of MFL
[Teaching and non-teaching jobs at Holyrood Academy, Chard, Somerset | Eteach](#)
Closing Date – 11th February 2021
- Neroche Primary - Clerk to the Local Governance Committee
<http://dasjobs.co.uk/job/clerk-to-support-the-local-governing-committee/>
Closing date – 4th February 2021
- Uffculme School – Senior Science Technician
[Uffculme School Careers Site Eteach \(21341\)](#)
Closing date – 1st February 2021

Future Newsletters

If you have any feedback or suggestions of items that you would like covered in future newsletters, please email gibsonp@uffculmetrust.org