

## Newsletter 3 – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Who would have thought that we are just about to tick off another half term, and one that once again has been spent in lockdown? I am acutely aware what a heroic effort it has been on everyone's part to maintain the sense of purpose and motivation that is so desperately needed to keep our pupils and their families going. I hope that for this half term break at least, everyone gets the chance to breathe and relax a little. It seems such a long time since we were able to take stock and just *be*. There is of course every chance that as we send this newsletter on Friday morning, the guidance for wider reopening will be published on Friday evening and Heads and senior leaders will spend the week planning – again! I do hope not.

There have been some exciting developments in the central team, and I am delighted to announce that Matt Pearce has been appointed as Trust IT Manager. His role is to level up the IT provision across all of the schools and begin planning for ways that we can use our IT capabilities to better collaborate and work together and maximise the benefits of partnership working. Matt has already been talking with Heads and School Business leaders to set some priorities.

The majority of our newest members of staff who started with us in September will have had their probationary periods signed off by now. Congratulations therefore to all of our new colleagues who have survived an induction period like no other. Your significant contributions to the success of our family of schools are highly valued and welcomed.

We have also held the majority of our Local Governors' Meetings in the last week or so and I would therefore like to thank this fantastic group of volunteers who give so much so willingly to the school communities that they serve.

Please do all have a restful and enjoyable half term break. You deserve it.



Lorraine Heath

### Message from Matt Pearce

I'm really excited to have this opportunity and we are already working with Senior Leadership Teams across the Trust to realise the UAT ambitions for a truly inclusive and collaborative IT system for the whole of the Uffculme Academy Trust.

I'm looking forward to getting to know, and working with, staff all across the Trust, and pulling the best of UAT together!

Matt Pearce, Trust IT Manager

## News from the Schools



### Axe Valley Academy

We have a very special member of staff leaving us this week. We would all like to wish Vincent Parkes a fond farewell as he heads off to Wales to embark on his retirement. Vincent has been with us since 2003 and we will miss all that he has brought to not only the Science department, but also the wider community, through his dedication to Science (but mainly Chemistry and mainly not Biology!), Duke of Edinburgh and much, much more.

Vincent has always been such an innovator and we will miss his creativity, inventions and explosions!

Collective noun for 5 baby guinea pigs, minutes old??

To: All Staff



Apparently I'm not as good at sexing a guinea pig as I thought! I may be looking for homes, as this brings our total to 13.

His sense of humour will also be missed by all of his colleagues and students alike – and this very recent “all staff” email from Vincent, is an example of how Vincent has tickled us all pink on a regular basis.

We will at Axe Valley, of course be wishing him all of our best, but we wanted to share with everyone across the Trust just how missed he will be.

We would also like to extend our congratulations to Emily Ward who has successfully completed her NPQSL (passing with flying colours!). We don't underestimate the exceptional hard work that it takes to complete the NPQ courses and Emily really worked tirelessly throughout her project and her secondment to SLT.

Laura Jenkins



### Holyrood Academy

What a half term! We are delighted to have made some very high-quality appointments to some crucial roles within our school. I am really grateful to Alan Blackburn and Lorraine who lent their expertise to our Head of Maths interviews. We appointed Mr Ansar Ahmed to the role who will join us from St Ives School, having previously worked for Greenshaw Learning Trust. I am very excited about what he will bring to the role in September, when Katherine Laws (our existing Head of Maths) will move onto our SLT full-time. Congratulations to Katherine, too! We also appointed Laura Hutchings to our Head of D&T role. Laura delivered an excellent presentation and interview which fills me with hope and excitement about the department's future. Well done, Laura!

We have some exciting vacancies for a Teacher of Science and a Teacher of MFL, both for September starts. If either of these opportunities interests you, please speak with your Headteacher first and then feel free to contact me at [dmaccormick@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:dmaccormick@educ.somerset.gov.uk)

Over 1000 Covid tests done, time for a rest! Happy half term, everyone!

Dave MacCormick



### Neroche School

We have had another couple of busy weeks at Neroche.



We took delivery of our two new active walls to support our active engagement. Sport Premium money was used to purchase these

resources. The boards can be used inside or out and are on wheels.

An external electrical socket was installed on the KS2 playground and our Year 6 children have enjoyed trialling the boards and trying to beat their scores. These boards have drawn a lot of interest among the children we have on site and others are keen to explore how to use them.

We received a kind donation of £1927 from the Ilminster Education Foundation with an accompanying letter informing us that we will receive the same again in the next couple of weeks. The Ilminster Education Foundation was set up after the closure of the Ilminster Grammar school years ago with the funds now used to support local children. As a school, we benefit every year from this Trust and the double allocation this year is as a result of an underspend due to the COVID situation. Normally the Trust supports children from Neroche and neighbouring Ilminster schools to participate in school trips and to support the individual purchase of educational equipment and university book costs. Applications have been reduced this year which has resulted in the double allocation.

Our Eco Council have continued to work hard despite the COVID pandemic and were thrilled to receive notification this week that Neroche has received the Bronze Eco School status. They have been working hard on recycling initiatives at school and we continue to work towards Green Flag status. We received a kind donation from a parent's employer to enable us to purchase a water butt for the school grounds.

We continue to have high levels of engagement among our school community and families have enjoying the range of extra-curricular opportunities we have provided them with. The Neroche rainbow bake off to support food technology drew a great deal of



interest and children have enjoyed sharing their colourful baked creations this week. The Headteacher challenge of share your new hobby also resulted in a number of children at home sharing new skills with staff even if they didn't want the public exposure of the school Facebook page and it is very evident that we have had a number of children developing their musical talents while being at home which is wonderful.

New paper-based materials have been ordered and are being distributed for our infant children ready for use after half term to try and maintain engagement and motivation after the break.

As a school we recognised Safer Internet Day on Tuesday with a range of activities to develop the children's ongoing understanding and awareness. Plans for World Book Day, Science Week and World Water Day are underway ready for our return after half term.

Friday class social times continue to be an event that our Neroche children look forward to. Children both at home and at school have the opportunity to meet together virtually to catch up. As these opportunities have developed over the week children are approaching class teachers with ideas for their class sessions and these have now developed into opportunities for show and tell, sharing hobbies and showcasing new skills.

Ali Collins



### Uffculme Primary School

As we come to the end of a challenging half term, I would like to thank every single member of staff for making me feel incredibly welcome during my first six weeks at the school. We have such a dedicated staff who really do have the best interests of the children at heart, and I am extremely proud to be leading such a dynamic and motivated staff team.

Huge congratulations are in order for Anna Lee and her husband, Kieran, for having welcomed their beautiful daughter Elsie Olive Lee. She was born weighing 7lbs 6oz. The family are doing very well and enjoying their life as a family of three.

The roof repair project has now been completed, so we are finally able to say goodbye to rain-filled buckets and leaking ceilings! The project was a much bigger undertaking than we initially thought, but thanks to the site team and our friends at Qube, the project has been completed with success.

The school had an overwhelmingly positive response to the parent survey regarding remote learning. Comments were supportive and constructive, but it has been reassuring that our remote learning offer is making a difference and having the desired effect. However, we have reviewed our processes and as a result, we have planned some themed days, beginning with a Science day on the 26<sup>th</sup> February and of course, World Book Day on the 4<sup>th</sup> March.

We have received a further five laptops from the DfE which has been instrumental in providing our families access to remote learning. It is also a welcome boost for our ICT provision within school moving forward, when these laptops are returned.

Fraser Wallace



Uffculme School

The Covid testing programme is going well at Uffculme and we have now completed over 1500 tests with staff and those students who are coming into school. The really exciting news is that last week we were invited to join the pilot project being set up by the DfE and Public Health England to trial the systems for the serial testing strand of the programme.

We are only one of a handful of schools to be selected from across the country for this and I think

it is a real credit to Laurence Eve and Katie Francombe for the incredible work that they have done, that we can be trusted to take a lead on this. It will hopefully mean that in the event of the school having any confirmed cases of coronavirus in the future, the students and staff may be able to continue to come into school each day – safe in the knowledge that they are not putting themselves or anyone else at risk.

We are also helping CHAT (Churches Housing Action Team) and Catch77 (a community interest company based in Exeter with the mission to help everyone eat well, whatever their circumstances) contact families who might benefit from a new programme they are offering. This initiative lasts for 10 weeks and provides families in need with a combination of meal boxes from Catch77 (with all the food and recipes needed for five tasty family meals) along with Support and Advice and food booster packs from CHAT.

Alan Blackburn



West Country Teaching School Alliance

Job season is upon us and our School Direct and PGCE trainees are busy working on their applications. Congratulations go to one of our PGCE trainees Laura Perry who yesterday secured an English position at The Blandford School. Laura finishes her PGCE course at the end of term, and we wish her the best of luck in her new job.

All of the NQTs registered with us at WCTSA recently submitted their first assessments and our moderation team have been busy carrying out QA visits. Occasionally, we get teachers who already have significant teaching experience applying for a reduction in their NQT induction period. Rhys Baker one of the Science teachers at Uffculme School was visited by a team of moderators from Ventrus Teaching School Alliance last week. The moderators were really impressed with his lesson

and supporting NQT evidence, and he has successfully secured a term's reduction to his induction period. Congratulations to Rhys for all of his hard work, and many thanks to Sam Wilson, his induction tutor for his superb support of Rhys this year.

#### Teaching Hub update:

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that there were huge changes afoot in the way that teaching schools will be organised from September 2021. These changes were publicly announced on February 10th. 77 schools from across England have been selected to run 81 new teaching school hubs across England with £65 million in funding made available from the government. These teaching school hubs will provide "high-quality professional development" to teachers and leaders, and play a "key role in helping to build up trainee teachers as they enter the workforce". They will help to deliver the government's new early career framework of support for new teachers and will provide national professional qualifications and initial teacher training. We are delighted that Colyton Grammar School was successful in their pitch and will lead the hub in this area. We look forward to working with them on their programmes.

Jen Knowles

#### Health & Wellness

Please have a look at this free webinar looking at "How can we support our mental health, deal with our insecurities and find joy, even in tough times?"

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/joy-connection-with-chude-jideonwo-tickets-138297755309?utm\\_medium=discovery&utm\\_campaign=social&utm\\_content=attendeeshare&aff=escb&utm\\_source=cp&utm\\_term=listing](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/joy-connection-with-chude-jideonwo-tickets-138297755309?utm_medium=discovery&utm_campaign=social&utm_content=attendeeshare&aff=escb&utm_source=cp&utm_term=listing)



We are taking a break from our Zoom fitness

classes for half term but look forward to welcoming you back on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

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

- **Holyrood Academy** – Assistant Headteacher and Uffculme Academy Trust Subject Lead for MFL

<https://www.eteach.com/job/assistant-headteacher---mfl-subject-lead-1130913?lang=en-GB&fmsrh=Y>

Closing Date: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

- **Holyrood Academy** – Teacher of Science

[Teacher of Science - Eteach](#)

Closing Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

- **Neroche Primary School** – Key Stage 2 Teacher Part Time 0.6 FTE (Maternity Cover)



2021.02 Maternity Cover Applicant information pack.pdf (Command Line)

Closing Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

- **Uffculme Primary School** – Part Time, SENDCo

<https://www.eteach.com/job/part-time-senco-teacher-1131793>

Closing Date: 5<sup>th</sup> March 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](mailto:gibsonp@uffculmetrust.org)