

Newsletter 1 – 15th January 2021

Happy New Year and Welcome Back

I hope very much that despite the challenges, you and your families were able to enjoy and celebrate a peaceful and relaxing Christmas Break. We enter a new year and a new term facing another difficult and uncertain set of circumstances; but perhaps with a vaccine on the horizon, we can be optimistic that there is some light at the end of this particular tunnel.

It is no surprise really that we have gone into another full lockdown with all of the associated disruption of remote learning and limited attendance at school. I am sure that you, like me, were frustrated by the timing of the announcement but have nevertheless accepted that, given the circumstances, it was the right thing to do. I have no doubt that we will make the best of this and continue to offer high quality provision for all of our children and young people.

Please look out for Wellbeing information from Amanda Woodward and make use of the services that she offers. Amanda is a very skilled trainer, listener and coach and can help with a multitude of issues, personal or professional.

I am writing this from our new Trust Offices which were installed at Uffculme School just before Christmas. I was expecting a portacabin in the car park – which is essentially what we got, but I wasn't

expecting such a nice portacabin in a car pack. In fact, we are very lucky to have a lovely new set of offices which are housing the Trust Central Team, and which will facilitate our efficient working collectively. The good news for Uffculme School is that they get the offices which we were squatting in back; and hopefully have not endured too much disruption from us.



Welcome

Welcome to all of the staff and children at Neroche Primary school who joined the Trust in January. We are delighted that you have joined our family of schools and look forward to developing the partnership over the coming months and years.



Welcome also to Fraser Wallace, the new Headteacher of Uffculme Primary School. Obviously, it is not the best time to start a new job, but we are determined to provide as much support for Fraser (and all of our new starters as possible). It is great to have him on board and I am confident that he will provide excellent leadership at Uffculme Primary and build on the very good work of Jo Dentith.

Remote Learning

A huge well done to everyone for moving swiftly from in person to remote learning – again! We don't underestimate the challenges that this brings, not least because parental expectations are no doubt considerably higher than they were during the first lockdown. We appreciate everyone's efforts in getting this up and running.

Laptops for disadvantaged Students

We have now given out more than 200 laptops to children and young people across the Trust and are working with data providers to ensure that every child in UAT can access their learning from home. The good news is that our Primaries will shortly be getting their allocations also.

Unsung Heroes

Thank you to all the site teams who have worked so hard across all of our schools to ensure that the premises are clean and safe for everyone. Like everyone else, they have had to move quickly and flexibly to ensure everything is sorted and organised to meet the new risk assessments.

Thank you as well to the teams of IT technicians who have also worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that learning platforms are fully functional and laptops

etc are up and running for students to access their work.

Testing Testing Testing



Well done to everyone who was involved with setting up the mass testing centres at Axe Valley, Holyrood and Uffculme School. I don't think any of us anticipated setting up and running a large scale medical facility but, as always, schools are great problem solvers and within 48 hours all the centres were up and running and testing staff and Key Worker and vulnerable learners.

Hopefully this facility will add another layer of confidence to you all as we navigate our way through this next stage of the pandemic.



Lorraine Heath

News from the Schools



Axe Valley Academy

We have had a very busy and productive return to the new term and I'd like to thank staff for their incredible support and dedication to their students and the school.

Student engagement in remote learning has been really very pleasing and all of the staff are working tirelessly to engage more students all the time. We have a wide variety of work being set from independent tasks to live lessons and the variety is helping to keep our students engaged and working hard at home. A particular thank you to the lateral flow testing team who have worked in an incredibly organised and professional way to ensure routine LFT for staff and the students at AVA. and to the Learning Support Team who are ensuring there is significant enhanced support for all students on the SEND register and the most wonderful provision for our most vulnerable students on site.

Our site security CCTV project is nearing completion and we are really pleased with the quality and the coverage this new aspect to our security brings.

We'd also like to congratulate Dawn Coghlan on her recent engagement. We are delighted for her!

Laura Jenkins



Holyrood Academy

We are really pleased with what has been a productive and successful start to the academic year at Holyrood. The amazing hard work and dedication of our staff has been quite astounding despite some challenges (to say the least!). We have been particularly proud of how so many of our staff teams worked together to set up a fantastic testing centre which has delivered over 400 COVID-19 tests for our staff and students. We have also successfully provided FSM vouchers, and food for those in school, for 220 students. A big 'thank you' to #teamholyrood is always necessary but this is especially so at present.

The Crisis Bike Ride and all the associated events raised just shy of **£9000** which was an excellent total and a great example of the collective power we have as a group of schools, to affect change. Thank you so much to the colleagues who led and got involved in events in all of the Trust Schools.

We are delighted to be able to advertise a really critical and exciting post for a Head of Maths for a September start, at Holyrood. We are looking for a talented and bright Mathematician who has the ability to enthuse and inspire staff and students to engage with an ambitious curriculum which is delivered through excellent teaching and learning. This role could suit an existing second in Maths or Head of Maths who wishes to join a large school with a Sixth Form. I am happy to discuss the role with internal Trust candidates.

Dave MacCormick



Neroche School

Neroche School have been lucky to secure the services of a local computer company in Crewkerne to refurbish donated laptops for free to support students with limited technology and their engagement with Remote Education. The local community have shared a willingness to donate excess laptops that are surplus to their requirements for us to donate to our learners.

Our new kitchen area has been finished to provide a designated serving area for school lunches away from the Staff room and to support the external catering providers when on site. DFCG money has been used to finance this.

Our preschool has reopened three days a week for all children and 2 days a week for Key Worker – this continues to be well utilised.

Lastly thank you to Holyrood Academy for allowing our staff to join their lateral flow testing arrangements.

Ali Collins



Uffculme Primary School

A heartfelt thank you to all of the staff at Uffculme Primary School for their hard work and dedication during a challenging

fortnight. They worked extremely hard to ensure that the partial closure of the school went as smoothly as possible, and their upbeat nature has helped me in my new role as headteacher. We would also like to extend a big thank you to Uffculme Academy for supplying lateral flow tests for all our staff at the primary school. We are very grateful and feel reassured.

Online engagement from children at home has been really pleasing and this number is rising all the time. We have also launched a 'Lockdown Card' competition where winners will have their designs turned into cards. These will be sent round to local residents to make them feel cared for and to make them aware that they are not alone during this pandemic.

Finally, a huge congratulations to Aaron Carpanini and his wife Becky, who welcomed their beautiful son Finan to the world on Boxing Day. We wish them all well and hope they are enjoying every minute of being a family of three.

Fraser Wallace



Uffculme School

We were delighted to hear that Emily Packham, a student in Year 9, has received an Angel of Hope award for her contribution to a wonderful project in Wellington this Christmas.

Emily undertook this project as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering section and her trail map which led people to beautifully lit Angels of Hope all over

Wellington featured on the TV when Points West covered the Angel of Hope project on the news. Emily offered to help with a project to create 700 lavender bag angels for residents in Care Homes and Sheltered Accommodation. It was a lovely way of showing that she cares, and the gifts have been so well received.

As always there is a great variety of house competitions going on, with something to appeal to all the students. They include: Winter Photography, Shakespeare monologues, home baking, speed typing and PE Challenges and Yr7 Geography.

Our project to enhance security on site is also well underway. Fencing is being installed to make the perimeter of the school site secure and new doors, which will have an electronic access system for staff, are currently being installed at the main entrance to the school buildings and around the Reception area.

Finally, we also want to congratulate Rosemary Alford has completed 42 years at the school – not a normal point when you mark long service, but quite remarkable!

Alan Blackburn

Governance

We are grateful to our Directors and Local Governors across the Trust for their continued support for our Heads and schools. They continue to meet remotely and are all due to participate in online Permanent Exclusions training later this month.

Health & Wellness

There are so very many things we cannot do right now and I for one am finding this hard.

What we can all do now is walk (I know, I wasn't convinced either...) Here a few benefits to embracing the opportunity to partake in an authorised activity!



Walking makes the brain more resilient
Inactivity means less muscle volume and less muscle strength in our bodies. On top of that, perhaps surprisingly, our brain also starts to wither. When we walk, molecules produced in our muscle leak into our grey matter and facilitate resilience in the brain. One particular molecule helps the vasculature (blood network) in our brain to grow to support our brain cells.

Walking keeps our heart healthy
Walking is incredibly beneficial for heart health. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors typically walked between 15 and 17 miles a day, five or six days a week. What you see in those populations is heart health equivalents that are remarkable. There's a tribe in the South American jungle, the Tsimane, where the average 80-year-old has the heart health of a 50-year-old American - largely because they engage in low level activity all day long.

Walking helps us to problem-solve
Walking has been scientifically proven to increase our creativity and help us to tackle problems. When you're thinking something through, getting up and walking around is a much better way to problem solve than sitting down feeling very frustrated.

Walking can help to prevent depression
 Research shows that there may well be a sedentary component to the onset of depression. A recent study shows that rates of depression fall and the likelihood of succumbing to depression fall, for every group above the most inactive.

Walking can improve our posture
 For many of us, the working day involves going from sitting in our car, to sitting at our desk, to sitting on the sofa. This can result in bad posture and back problems. Walking regularly can help prevent a bad back and improve our posture.

Remember to complete our wellbeing survey which is anonymous and confidential. Please submit your answers by Monday 18th January.
<https://forms.gle/ui7w8jmDHk7hxZvw9>

Lastly remember our free Zoom fitness classes which you can take part in from the comfort of your own home – so far 240 people have participated but there is room for all of you!

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](#)
- Holyrood Academy – Head of Maths
[Teaching and non-teaching jobs at Holyrood Academy, Chard, Somerset | Eteach](#)
- Neroche Primary - Clerk to the Local Governance Committee
<http://dasjobs.co.uk/job/clerk-to-support-the-local-governing-committee/>
- Uffculme School – Senior Science Technician
[Uffculme School Careers Site Eteach \(21341\)](#)

Future Newsletters

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