

Welcome from our Chief Financial Officer

CFO's don't usually get asked to write prose, the considered school of thought being that we should focus on the figures rather than the narrative. Therefore, I am grateful to be given this opportunity to address the Three Spires community. I think this opportunity reflects our beliefs and values, in the purest sense, in that we understand that each of us have more to offer to the Trust over and above those areas that others may consider to be our calling. **Our. Thoughts. Matter.**

As I write this we're not sure what Christmas will look like and what restrictions may be in place. The communities at our academies will be well aware of how quickly rules changed at this time last year and the consequent "hokey cokey", approach to school opening last January. Our staff are adaptable and resilient and will deal with the consequences of decisions made by those in power to ensure our pupils will continue to benefit from teaching and learning.

This year has been an exciting time for the Trust and the pupils and academies that reside within it. I hope that this newsletter gives you a flavor of the life and times of the pupils within our settings. When we look at the pupils within our academies we should be considering the following questions as stakeholders of the Trust:

Are our pupils happy?

Are our pupils achieving?

Are our pupil's life chances being enhanced?

It is the answers to these questions that should define the success of our academies and the Trust.

At Christmas time we at the Three Spires Trust are thankful to all of those who have contributed to enhancing the education and consequent life chances of the pupils within the Trust, either directly or indirectly this year. We thank you for your time, energy, thoughtfulness and prayer.

We believe that pupils should be the first, and last item, on the agenda at every Department meeting, at every SLT meeting, at every Local Governing Body Meeting and at every meeting of the Trust Board and its subcommittees. To misquote Barry White pupils should be "Our First, Our Last, Our Everything".

Yesterday the CEO and Chair of the Trust signed the Trusts Annual Financial Statements. For those of you who suffer from insomnia I suggest you look no further for inspiration than these statements once they are published on Companies House in the new year. Writing the narrative for these reports can be a soulless, albeit important job. Soulless (but essential) because it focuses on very important issues financial, regulatory, compliance, internal scrutiny and audit for example, however makes only fleeting reference to the most important thing of all, the pupils.

This month we successfully completed our Financial Management and Governance Review by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. We are hopeful that this will provide a route for more academies to join the Three Spires Trust and provide a wider audience for Life in all its fullness. We are hopeful that the Kings, Wolverhampton will finally join the Trust in 2022 and we are developing a strong reciprocal relationship with Hanley, St Luke's our first associate member of the Trust.

Christmas time is a time for reflection and looking forward to the future. Our annual report states the following as plans for future periods:

"The Trust is devising a growth strategy that will enable the Trust to grow in a considered and sustainable manner. The Trustees are cognisant that we must not grow too quickly and that the capacity of the central team will need to grow to ensure the high quality of services that our members expect are provided. Schools will not solely join the Trust on a first come, first served basis. Schools that wish to join the Trust will need to have values that align with the Trusts and successfully complete our due diligence process."

Growth in a considered and sustained manner is important for the Trust to be as impactful as possible on pupils lives. It is the potential impact that we can have on pupil's lives through our pedagogy, our Christian Distinctiveness and our approach to educating each pupil for life (not just for school) that should anchor our growth strategy. **And. It. Does.** Consequently, a number of small acorns have been planted, watered and fed over the last few months. We will see how these flourish in the Spring with care, nurture and support.

My present to you, this Christmas, after this exciting and challenging year is my favorite poem. Maybe consider finding a quiet space, with a Christmas drink and a mince pie, read this marvelous piece of literature and let yourself reflect on the following question: *What is your Ithaka?*

Reflect. Be proud. Be joyful.
Season's Greetings.
Rich.



Ithaka

BY C. P. CAVAFY

TRANSLATED BY EDMUND KEELEY

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

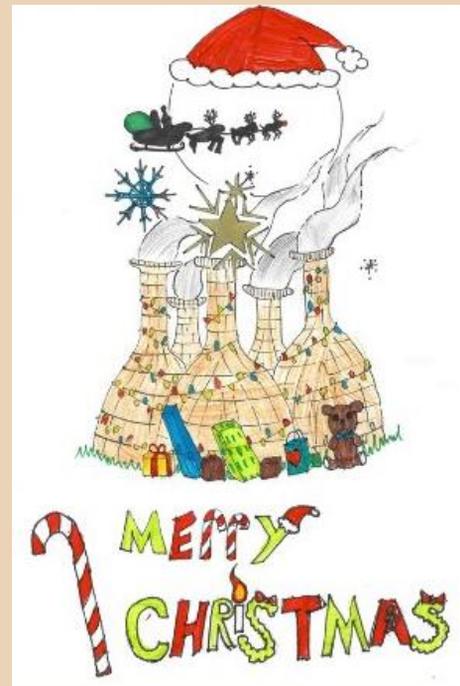
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas
mean.

Hanley St Luke's Christmas Winner!

We were delighted that last week Emilie (year 5) at Hanley St Luke's was announced as the winner of a Christmas card competition for local MP, Jo Gideon!

Out of hundreds of entries Emilie's festive design with a hint of the local area was the clear favourite for Jo and she was excited to present Emilie with her prize and certificate, as well as showing off the design to the Prime Minister!

Well done, Emilie!



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

from the Three Spires team!



Joshua's weightlifting reign continues

St Peter's student, Joshua Badhan has done it again, winning the World Powerlifting Championships in Ireland last month. In July, he won the National Powerlifting championships, and in November he also reigned over the World Bench press championships in Sardinia.

At the beginning of the year when the lockdown was lifted, Joshua (known as the 'Iron Kid Powerlifter', was nervous about lifting in the regional championships let alone in national and world championships. His belief and faith took him to the World championships within one year.

Joshua said he wouldn't have achieved this success if it wasn't for his coach, best friend, and his dad Mak Singh. Joshua has also said: "It has also put my home city of Wolverhampton on the World Map."

Joshua has also ended the year on a high by smashing the European Squat record as well as already being recognised as being the strongest 15-year-old in the world for his weight and age.

Joshua has been displaying his strength since the age of 5 years old and began training 2 years ago at the age of 13 years old. His plan is to continue competing in all powerlifting competitions.



St Peter's Collegiate Academy

'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you' Matthew 7:12



Damilola reaches European Tennis Quarter Finals

Damilola started playing tennis and showing an interest in sport when she was around 3. She began going to a local kids tennis session every Saturday and loved it. From then it grew and grew, until she started playing local mini competitions.

Dami is very competitive and she loved the feeling of accomplishment tennis gave her, as well as the fun and enjoyment in practice sessions. As Dami grew older her skill for the sport grew and so did the training and commitment to practice. Currently Dami trains 3-4 hours a day before and after school to fit in around her studies. The sport involves a huge amount of dedication but the rewards are massive when she gets to travel around and compete in different cities.

Recently Dami played in a Tennis Europe competition in Liverpool which meant time off school, and she was very pleased with her matches getting to the quarter finals. Tennis is a sport that is continuously evolving and improving and so after every match Dami reflects on her strengths and what she needs to work on. It's a game of highs and lows but one that Dami loves!



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Health Week in Kidsgrove

Following the exceptional efforts of the St Thomas' Year 5 and 6 pupils during [#HEALTHWEEK2021](#) children were rewarded by a special visit to The King's. Over the week, pupils were presented with a number of different healthy lifestyle challenges and initiatives to complete, both during and after school including the "Change4Life Family Challenge" and the Great Mile.

As overall winners in the school, all children in upper KS2 were rewarded with some well-deserved sessions at the [The King's CE Academy](#), delivered by their wonderful staff:

- [#Dodgeball](#) and Capture the Flag, focusing on agility, speed and teamwork
- [#Cooking](#), with a classic Spaghetti Carbonara on the menu
- [#Woodwork](#), creating mini-speedboats using measuring, sawing and filing skills.



Enrichment at The King's

Enterprising students at The King's Sixth Form have raised hundreds of pounds for good causes in Stoke after taking part in the National Citizen Service (NCS).

One of the many volunteering opportunities on offer through our Enrichment Programme, the NCS is an initiative to help young people build skills for work and life, while taking on new challenges and developing new skills. Run regionally by Port Vale Foundation FC, NCS brings together young people and helps them develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility. It encourages personal and social development by working on skills like leadership, teamwork and communication.

As well as engaging in a number of outdoor, team building activities including archery, raft building and canoeing, students also worked together to develop a social action project which aimed to deal with a local issue close to their hearts. This year, students were keen to support two charities, Number 11 and Swan Food Bank.

Representing the NCS in their visit to the school, Jorgie Wallace, said:

"The young people have all been a pleasure to work with and are a real asset to the school. They have really come together over the week and supported one another in more ways than one!"

Head of the Sixth Form, Aimee Williams, said that the school has been actively encouraging all of their students to take part in the scheme, due to the nature of the NCS's work: "The Sixth Form in The King's places great focus on enrichment and leadership alongside academic achievements. The National Citizen Service programme combines all of these attributes and we are delighted that our students are keen to participate in it."





Empowering Women at The King's

Over at The King's Kidsgrove a selection of our Year 10 students completed the second session of the Empowering Women's Project 2021. This event was provided by Willmott Dixon who delivered a team building activity where students were required to build a tetrahedron structure. The aim of the session was to promote a wide range of construction based careers and the different aspects of the construction processes including health and safety, team work, engineering problem solving and working to timescales. This required the students to use key skills in team work, communication, co-operation, problem solving and planning.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the activity and were surprised to find that there is a large number of females working within construction based roles, successfully challenging stereotypical thinking and raising their aspirations.



Year 9 & 10 Take a Stand

In November 2021, as part of our RSHE program, our students in Year 9 and 10 took part in a National Challenge "Take a stand". Throughout the day, students reflected on the personal stories of several former professional players, describing racism, prejudice and discrimination within the game before they created their own manifesto for Change. This required the students to highlight the key changes they would like to see within the sport and wider society and then, develop their own campaign to address one of these key issues. Two of our groups, one from Year 10 and one from Year 9 went on to become 2 of the 7 teams selected for the national finals. Our students were absolutely fantastic; not only did they develop their knowledge and understanding of racism and discrimination, but they also demonstrate a high acumen to form a united front; working maturely and collaboratively.

The Take a Stand Challenge Liam Brookes from TILG said "You should all be extremely proud of your achievements - what didn't come across in the video was how tough the decision was to choose our top 3, 'ANA' Active supporters, Not Active Abusers in particular were very much in the mix. ANA manifesto was all about education for change, supporting their ideas with a quote from Nelson Mandela "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Anti-Bullying Week @ The King's Wolverhampton

Earlier this term, the school signified national anti-bullying week with a number of events and workshops:

- Our KS3 ambassadors received the first part of their training to help them support all students;
- Year 10 drama students performed a production of A Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty. The students worked incredibly hard to show the effects of bullying alongside the message it has no place in our school;
- Our ambassadors attended a special event at Wolves FC to receive the Anti-Bullying Charter status award, which recognises the work the school does to keep our students safe.



Christ the King Day

Earlier this term, the school celebrated Christ the King day, the school's founder day. It is now 23 years since the school became a Church of England school.

The day started with a whole school worship before each year group participated in a range of workshops and activities linked to the school's vision statement such as:

What does it mean to belong to a Church of England school?

What is social justice?

How can we make a difference in the world?

How can I serve the community?

What is true?

God and the Big Bang theory - what can challenge my faith?

We had a range of speakers from Durham University, Enterprise Company and Tearfund leading the workshops.

