



Inspire

Spring 2023

THREE SPIRES TRUST
TERMLY MAGAZINE

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, EMILY VEROW



Last week I attended the Easter service at The King's school, Wolverhampton and was overcome with happiness; not least, the beautiful service led by so many talented young people filled me with joy, but also I was reminded of the joy of Easter, the light Jesus brought into the world through his resurrection and the strength of God's love for us all. I listened to passages of scripture spoken by children in four different languages and heard the power of a child's solo fill St Michael and All Angels Church and felt blessed, for my place in God's world and for my place in Education.

As a child, I didn't really know what I aspired to be, – this didn't come until much later in life. All I knew was that I longed to be part of something meaningful, part of something that could be a force for change and for good, and which could glorify God's name. Three Spires Trust offers all of this. As it develops and grows the opportunities it affords are humbling; the responsibility to shape the landscape for learning and the lived experience for all in the Three Spires schools is valued above all else.

The Trust has at its heart the words (John 10 :10) 'Life in all its fulness'; since we became Three Spires these biblical words have been spoken time and time again. It is essentially the notion that as a family of schools we value – above all else – human flourishing. Thus, the question is clear 'how do we create a narrative for education based on human flourishing?'

How do we create a culture which values the essence of education, academic and vocational, as much as the whole person, the human being – how do we respond to our settings authentically and creatively when there are metrics, and accountability measures, inspections, and curriculum constraints which could so easily straightjacket so much of what we can offer? How do we ensure that we make decisions and act for our young people always with an ambition for holistic experience in mind; never compromising educational excellence but understanding that at the heart of education lies the pursuit of the spiritual, ethical, intellectual, relational flourishing of students, teachers and communities.

It is not always easy to find the solutions we seek, to navigate a way through, particularly as Education post pandemic is experiencing so many challenges. However, as a Trust, we plan for the future, with hope and optimism – we draw on the wonderful skills of our workforce and listen continually and with commitment to the voices of our young people. We underpin our conversations with compassion and consideration but never underestimate the need to be courageous advocates for positive change which will impact on the lives of our young people. And, supported by a high performing, like minded, Trust board the Trust and all the academies know to do 'what is good' above all else.

Three Spires Trust will continually wrestle with policies, and forge new ways of thinking, prioritise empowering leaders affirming the belief that school leadership at its heart is about transforming lives. And collectively we will continue to serve our communities with a real sense of Christian compassion. Hopefully, through this newsletter, the essence of the Trust will shine through – deep and purposeful collaboration with a shared mission, to make a difference to the lives of the children we serve.

All it leaves for me to say, is thanks to all involved in Three Spires for your continued support and commitment. We give thanks to God for blessing this enterprise.

We hope you enjoy the magazine, wishing you a restful, enjoyable Easter holiday.



A MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF TRUSTEES, VEN DR DAVID LEE

This is a time of celebration and thanksgiving. Three Spires Trust was commissioned to take in four schools to create the founding family of academies in the Trust. Three schools came in during 2021 and now the fourth school is coming in this Easter. Chapter one in the life of the Trust draws to completion and we look forward with anticipation to the next chapter.

I wish to thank everyone involved in helping bring The King's, Wolverhampton into the Trust. The principle investment came from the central team at Three Spires Trust, led by the almost indefatigable Emily Verow. Thank you very much to all in the central team.

I have noticed that many friends of the Trust and friends of the school have also played a crucial part, for the journey has been more complicated than usual due to the shared campus within which the school was built. We are very grateful for the advice and financial support from the Department of Education to help with building repairs and with other costs – without which this journey could not have happened. We are grateful to the Local Authority for all the good advice, financial support and practical help they have given. And we are delighted that the hard work of the staff and students at The King's has borne fruit in an Excellent SIAMS and a Good Ofsted - congratulations.

Strategically, the King's coming into the Trust unlocks the next phase of the life of the Trust. We can now attend to those schools who have declared their interest in joining the Trust – there are three schools queuing and two more enquiring. We can foster new, close and mutually supportive working between the Church of England sister schools of St Peter's and The King's. We can attend to a deficit in educational provision in Wolverhampton by introducing a broad and exciting 'curriculum for life' which will bless a wider range of young people. We plan to launch these developments in the next two years, starting in the autumn term, 2023. All these initiatives will bring new opportunities and benefits to Wolverhampton students.

Three Spires Trust was birthed in the conversations and prayers of local educationalists and leaders who wanted to see practical opportunities for young people to experience more of the fullness of life of which Jesus spoke. Thank you to the Trustees and local governors – the sometimes unsung volunteer heroes who offer generous and continuing support. My final thanks are to the Lord who has blessed this project and the effort, energy and prayer invested in it. We are still a young Trust, learning how to serve others in Jesus' name. Welcome to the next chapter in this story.

What it's like to be an associate member of Three Spires Trust



A MESSAGE FROM HEADTEACHER LYNNE WILLIAMSON, HANLEY ST LUKE'S

As a maintained V.A church school, we had been looking for a suitable MAT to join for some time. We had looked widely and were determined that a key criteria would be that we could see clear alignment with our vision and values. Fundamentally, that meant we wanted to ensure that any MAT we joined would be guided in all its work by a strong Christian ethos. Equally important, was that we would be able to see clear benefits to our school community both in the short term but also to provide stability and support success in the long term.

Being able to 'try before you buy' as an Associate Member with Three Spires Trust meant that we could test out what Emily, the CEO, and her team had told us they could offer, but also excitingly, we were able to have a voice in shaping the support we received. This, in turn, meant we had a voice, along with existing members, to offer ideas to be considered in shaping the direction of a new trust. That meant we quickly felt that we belonged and the trust was invested in our success from day one.



In terms of support for our own school, it has been completely tailored to what we felt we needed, so we started off with very little Teaching and Learning Support. We'd had lots of input for that from various sources and we needed to embed what we were doing without adding yet another change. Three Spires respected that and trusted us to know what we needed for our school but the offer was always open and support was always available if we needed it. Instead, we identified some more 'back office' support that was needed. Our safeguarding workload has grown exponentially, so we asked for an audit to help us ensure we were working as effectively and efficiently as we could be in extremely challenging circumstances. The support we received and continue to receive from Sarah Milne was superb. Staff have had bespoke support but have also thoroughly benefitted from the network opportunities provided too.

The next area of support was Business Management. We'd had a number of staff changes, including those new to roles. We really benefitted from an external audit of our processes and procedures but again with the relevant support alongside. Similarly, the networking opportunities have been very valuable and support is always available when a question needs to be answered.

Circumstances changed in school towards the end of our Associate Membership period so we decided the time was now right for some bespoke Teaching and Learning support for a new leader of English. Aimee Williams has been right by our side offering excellent support and expertise which has really benefitted our school. Our maths lead has also joined in with maths networking sessions and been able to share her own considerable expertise in this area and share ideas with colleagues from across the trust.

One thing we do particularly value from the network meetings, is the exciting and unique opportunities to be able to do cross-phase work with our secondary colleagues - together, we each play a fundamental role in shaping our children's learning journeys. What a privilege that is- to see the children's education as a continuum right from nursery through to Y11 and in some cases even beyond. That cross-phase working has also been hugely beneficial to me as an experienced head teacher, having quality opportunities to meet with other leaders, outside of my immediate network and certainly outside my phase of expertise. Above this, it's also realising we all have so much to offer one another; we share so many common challenges and as a result of this, can be a real source of support to each other.

So, is Associate Membership for us? Definitely. It's been fantastic and we know we've made the right choice for our school!



What it's like to be a member of Three Spires Trust



A MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL WILL WILSON, THE KING'S KINGSGROVE

Being a Principal in one of the first schools to belong to the Trust has been an exciting and privileged position to be in. Experiences from my previous employment as a school improvement advisor for both local authorities and established trusts, has shown me that there is always the danger that the uniqueness of a school setting is bulldozed in favour of a corporate Trust approach. Where uniformity is key; where a trust board has an insatiable appetite for all things that can be measured, requiring a constant refresh of numbers on a spreadsheet.

Three Spires Trust is very different. It has a clear vision that places students at the heart of all that it does - with 'life in all its fullness' in total synergy with our school mission to deliver deep and rich learning experiences. It is clear to me that this trust seeks to value and promote not just those things that are easily measured but also those things that cannot be measured - those things that, arguably, are more important to a child's life chances. The trust is invitational in its style, working with me rather than to me. There is an acceptance that I know my academy best.

The CEO, Emily, has been a 'hands on' colleague with not an ivory tower in sight! As a new head in post, the ability to draw on the experience of a senior colleague has been invaluable; further, it has been advice that I have not been afraid to seek for fear of a judgement being made. Cliché as it sounds, it genuinely feels like being part of a team; a team with a clear focus that has teaching and learning as the core business. I love the fact that there will be no compromise in securing the very best education for every child who is a member of the trust - I only have to look to the £150,000 investment the trust secured The King's in order to provide brand new sixth form facilities. This would never have been possible in the rapid timescale it occurred had we been a stand-alone school.



The central team has real expertise that I can readily draw upon and crucially, for me, that support is based on need not quotas. There is nothing that the Strategic DSL doesn't know about safeguarding which is so reassuring in the days of KCSIE; the Strategic lead for Teaching and learning is steeped in the knowledge of the latest educational research and time and time again, she has supported the academy in moving our core business agenda forwards. Not to mention devising and supporting the implementation of a creative NPQ programme (such as Leading on Behaviour and Culture) that has ensured there is a minimal time commitment during the school day but maximises staff uptake because of the quality of the offer. The Director of Operations has helped to ensure facilities at The King's are in tip top condition and that we are on top of our game when it comes to health and safety matters. The Director of ICT is too fast for words - in a short space of time, from having taken up post, he has secured off-site back-up for data and supported us in installing a much-improved phone system.

All members of the central team (and I do not mention them all here) have common traits -they have drive; energy, enthusiasm (in bucket loads) and, most importantly, a willingness to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in.

Am I happy to be a Principal working in the Three Spires Trust? Absolutely.



A message from our Governance Professional



CELEBRATING OUR LINK CHAMPIONS

The Trust is very grateful for volunteers who give their time as governors so that our academies may be safe and effective for our children and students. As a Trust, we have identified 5 link champion roles across all Local Governing Boards. These are;

1. Christian Distinctiveness
2. Safeguarding and SEND
3. Quality of Education
4. Finance, Audit and Risk
5. Health and Safety

In addition to their identified link roles, governors also have a wide range of other matters which they need to seek assurance of such as Pupil Premium and sports funding, careers, wellbeing and workload. By asking questions at the LGB meetings and in link visits, governors are better equipped to know the academy, ask focused questions that help make a difference to student outcomes, and articulate the Trust's value of 'Life in all its fullness.'

We currently run two network meetings that take place termly;

- Safeguarding and SEND governance network, which is an open invitation for link champions to meet termly with Director of Safeguarding & SEND to review key actions and compliance that is required across the Trust to better inform link visits and both local and Trust assurance process of this key area
- Chair's network – termly meetings between Chair of Trust Board and Chairs of LGB to review current areas of focus and information sharing. The CEO will also be in attendance together with Trust leads from the central team as appropriate.

The Trust are keen to develop and strengthen the role of the link champion and during the summer term, we will be developing a suite of resources to help and support with this important role. This will build on the first of what we hope will be, a number of webinars on link governance.

What is the strategic role of a link champion?

This can be summarised as follows;

- Being the 'eyes and ears' of the school community – remembering that governors are not community representatives but representative of the community whether they are church nominated, staff, community or parent governors
- Being an advocate for the academy– sharing and celebrating, supporting and championing
- Provide a diverse range of views and opinions based on skills and knowledge to broaden and enrich discussions,
- Be an agent of engagement between the LGB and the Trust Board
- Provide good governance in light of the Trust's scheme of delegation
- Provide support and challenge to the academy
- And finally be visible in the academy – be invitational in your approach to link visits, complete and share reports and live the Trust's values.

Thank you to all our link champions and if you are interested in being a link champion, do get involved!

A message from our ICT Business Partner



THE IMPORTANCE OF CYBER SECURITY

In today's world where technology is interconnected, cyber security is an increasingly important concern. Cyber-attacks and data breaches can have devastating consequences for individuals and organisations. As a result, cyber security measures and education has become a critical component to minimise the risk posed to institutions.

To ensure the security of digital assets, educational organisations need to take a comprehensive approach to cyber security. This includes implementing strong security policies and procedures, educating students and staff about the various threats, and how to stay safe in an ever-changing online environment.

At Three Spires Trust we have taken significant steps to minimise our risks this year and will continue to prioritise our student, staff and institutions safety.

This academic year we have designed a cyber awareness training programme for our staff through the national college in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). The training aims to improve our cyber resilience and to highlight potential threats. We have also introduced simulation testing using an automated solution, this testing aims to expose users to threats in a controlled safe environment. The simulation testing aims to reduce human error and cyber human risk. As an organisation we can then review the data from the testing, and potentially close any gaps in knowledge using additional training materials.

During this spring term we have introduced multi-factor authentication as a standard across the trust, this together with strong password and passphrase complexity rules help to strengthen security and further protect our users from harmful threats. For more information on multi-factor authentication see this article from [Microsoft](#).

In the coming months as Three Spires Trust grows the digital strategy and in particular our security strategy will play a vital role in creating a secure, safe and modern way of working for our staff and most importantly the young people in our care.

**The
National
College[®]**



**National Cyber
Security Centre**

Three Spires visit XP academy Doncaster



In many ways, the XP academy, situated in Doncaster, is similar to thousands of secondary schools up and down the country; student focused, vision led and intent on raising aspirations.

However, there is one aspect of their practice which is different, one which makes it stand out, bold and proud compared to its peers. It's the 'way' they do things. It's their 'way'; it's the 'XP way'.

Opened as a free school in 2014, XP was created after visits to High Tech High and Expeditionary Learning schools in the USA. Engagement with both establishments left the founders with a moral imperative to create similar provision for the children of Doncaster – a curriculum centred on developing the whole child.

This year, in 2023, XP is ten times over-subscribed, with over 100 applications for each of the 50 places available. Teacher attendance is +99% and the academy has never had to use supply.

What's their secret?

ENGAGING, PURPOSEFUL, VISCERAL.

Inspired by the vision for education, leaders from the trust, the CEO, DSI and principal from St Peter's visited the academy to experience what it felt like to be a student at XP.

Throughout the day, it became apparent that there is a relentless focus on quality of work and character growth. As a result, the school culture is value driven. Moving away from the conventional, the curriculum is delivered through 'learning expeditions' which are academically-rigorous, experience rich projects that allows each student to fully understand and appreciate the purpose of their learning. Children are taught *how* to use their learning from the classroom and apply this knowledge to experience-rich projects, utilising the community that surrounds them to provide experts, stimulation and above all, enriching opportunities. The outcomes are not grades, numbers or figures, but 'products'. Products are as diverse as books, posters, events – such as poetry slams, exhibitions and art installations. They are always designed to be part of the community, making a positive impact on local people and places, and vitally, part of the real world.

The rationale which sits behind the learning expeditions is simple. It's to develop like-long learners; learners who are enthused and inspired by their learning; learners who develop a knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them; learners who truly respect and 'own' the community in which they live in. Ordained with examples of expeditions, the corridors around the school tell a story of how the school expects students to be courageous, respectful, committed to craftsmanship and quality, compassionate and to always show integrity.

VALUES – THE CREW

Students stand publicly and openly appreciate others for helping and supporting them in school. Students will appreciate staff for organising fieldwork, friends for helping them through difficult times, classmates for helping them academically and pastorally. Apologies are endorsed with pledges; an active and concrete way of demonstrating how students are going to change their behaviour in the future. What is key here is how a 'pledge' is seen as a positive action to develop positive behaviour and to understand social agency. During their assemblies, children were confident in their delivery, fierce in their conviction and respected for their transparency and honesty. It was a powerful scene to witness.

Ambitious in their vision, yet humble in their approach, leaders in the school remained dogged in their determination to place character development at the forefront of everything they do. As we walked away, hopeful for the future generations emerging in Doncaster, we were left with a determination to embrace XP's energy, innovation and 'unapologetic' drive to ensure the provision we provide at Three Spires encourages every child to 'EMBRACE' each year of their education.

The way we will do this, is through 'creating learning experience which will last a lifetime'.

Learning experiences which will be 'our' way, 'the' way, 'Three Spire's way'.





Showcasing our academies

'Life in all its fullness'

EMBRACING LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS

The following stories illustrate how our academies embody our vision and values, and “**EMBRACE life in all its fullness**”

What does Three Spires aim to achieve through our vision and values?

Growth & Transformation

Growth and Transformation focuses on creating opportunities for widening horizons, adding value to the academy experience, and inspiring all individuals to flourish within our Diocesan Trust with Christian distinctiveness at its core. We seek to create a positive and inspiring environment for all individuals within the Trust, where they can achieve their full potential and become lifelong learners with an alertness to the spiritual dimension of life.



Making a difference

Three Spires is focused on creating financially viable and sustainable academies within the West Midlands, providing outstanding governance and executive leadership, developing efficient central support services, providing excellent education and preserving and expanding the Christian ethos of the Trust.



Community of Learning

Our Community of Learning is focused on ensuring that academies within the Trust provide the very best teaching and inclusive learning environments for children and young people. We seek to create a collaborative, responsive, and dynamic learning community that provides high-quality education and support to all individuals within the Trust and beyond.



‘STOKE GOTTA SING’

A fabulous evening, showcasing the work of Hanley St Luke’s choir, was had at the Mitchell Arts Centre on Monday 13th March- 'Stoke Gotta Sing'. This is an annual event which pulls together eight local schools, both primary and secondary as well as young adults from nearby performing arts centres.

Hanley St Luke’s children had rehearsed a wonderful medley and were super excited to take part. Children of all backgrounds, gifts and challenges, all working together and growing in confidence from the experience.

Pulling together a multi choir event successfully meant a 15 minute technical rehearsal late afternoon on the day of the show. This involved a trek across Hanley on foot, there and back, which for some children, was an adventure all by itself, never mind the awe-inspiring atmosphere of being in a real life theatre for the very first time. And all that before the curtains had even opened!

A lovely part of the show was being able to also be part of the audience. As the choir were in the second half, they were able to sit in the auditorium and watch the performers in the first half. This included some fabulous singing from a 13-19 year old performing arts group which really inspired the children for their own medley. The excitement in the wings as they waited to stand in front of the footlights was fabulous and they sang their hearts out to a hugely appreciative audience.

It’s clear to see that some of the best learning, flourishing and growing happens outside of the classroom too!

We were super proud of them all!





PRAYER WEEK AT THE KING'S WOLVERHAMPTON

In February, we organised our first Prayer Week at The King's. Students had the opportunity to learn about different ways of praying and different reasons why people might pray. During form time, they discussed the importance of prayer as a tool for meditation and reflection which can support good mental health. Students shared that they felt prayer was like a conversation with God. It wasn't just about asking for things but about listening too.

A prayer space was set up with a range of interactive prayer stations. Students had the opportunity to consider situations around the world in need of prayer. Many felt compelled to write prayers for those affected by the earth quake in Turkey and Syria. Others chose to write prayers for people around the world who cannot access clean drinking water as we are raising funds for Water Aid during Lent.

Students also had the opportunity to reflect on how they are seen by God. Our school vision states, 'We believe everyone is unique and made in the image of God.' Students looked at their reflection and wrote down words to describe how God sees them. They studied the uniqueness of their fingerprint and thanked God for how he made them and allowed them to flourish.

Another station asked students to write down Big Questions which they would like to ask God. There was a wide range of thoughtful and curious responses. Many students commented that the prayer activities had enabled them to think beyond themselves and more deeply about the world around them.

ST THOMAS' DANCE PERFORMANCE

St Thomas' continue to excel when representing the academy in the local area. Our dance club performed at the Victory Hall with an incredibly moving piece representing the contribution Reginald Mitchell made to WW2. The children brought a tear to many eyes showing the devastating impact of war.



DISNEYLAND DAZZLES SIXTH FORM BUSINESS STUDENTS

St Peter's Sixth form business students visited Disneyland Paris at the start of March to take part in a Business LIVE conference. The aim of the conference was to bring business studies to life for our students, firing their future career ambitions by showing them the many opportunities a career in business can offer – all whilst enjoying the magic of Disneyland® Paris!

Students took part in sessions with leading industry experts from high profile companies which gave them an insight into real-life experiences and provided them with case studies they can use in their exams.

Talking about the event, Year 13 student, Chellam Nahar, said:

"I'm so grateful to have been given the opportunity to attend the Business LIVE! Conference at Disneyland Paris. This conference brought business studies to life for many students by speaking about future career ambitions and showcasing the many different paths a career in business could take! We also enjoyed our afternoon in the park seeing Mickey Mouse!!"

THE KING'S KIDSGROVE VISIT LACHES WOOD 2023

This term, 76 Year 8 students attended the annual residential to Laches Wood. Throughout the week, students participated in a plethora of physical activities, including activities which would serve to enhance their wellbeing. From axe throwing to caving and a wintery expedition to Cannock Chase – no challenge was off limit. What made the experience even more exciting this year, was the unexpected snow fall which really pushed some of the students out of their comfort zone.

Students were given the opportunity to develop their ability to work as part of a team, problem-solve and demonstrate practical skills, such as orienteering and bushcraft. Ultimately, it is these incremental wins in their professional development which sees a group of students return to the academy every year with a newfound confidence and altered insight into what it means to be a part of our school community.

Every year, staff members return with new stories and experiences that they've had with the group of children; these experiences allow students to flourish within a different working environment, but also allow us, as a staff body, to build the very best working relationships with these children. Most importantly, the students return with experiences that will undoubtedly last them a lifetime.

Despite the wintery conditions, students were the epitome of what the academy seeks to develop in our young people - resilient.



‘FULFIL THEIR GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL’

A new term at The King’s Kidsgrove has provided students with a range of enriching learning experiences with the formation of a group of 11 anti-bullying ambassadors all dedicated to ensuring that all students are part of academy life and are able to fulfil their God-given potential. Students will work alongside our RSHE Lead, Jo Wilkinson, Heads of Year and the Senior Leadership Team to enable all students at The King’s to flourish.

This journey for our 11 ambassadors began with their attendance on the prestigious Diana Award’s Anti-Bullying Programme, enabling students to build confidence and acquire the skills to address peer-on-peer bullying within school. Students have already begun to ignite change by establishing a ‘wellbeing’ club which is held on Fridays; the club provides opportunities to those who feel isolated, lonely, vulnerable or feel unsafe, to socialise in a safe space and with the expertise of the ambassadors to navigate their emotional wellbeing and address any instances of peer-on-peer bullying.

Students are encouraged to initiate new, positive relationships with other members of the academy community - with an added element of competition – over a board game or two.

The anti-Bullying ambassadors join our student leaders and restorative champions as role models of what it means to flourish at The King’s – using our God-Given potential to support the wellbeing of our community and help it thrive.



THE
DIANA
AWARD

SIXTH FORM R.E. MORNING

The King’s Wolverhampton’s annual Sixth Form RE Morning took place on Tuesday 21st March. We were pleased to welcome 7 visitors into school as part of the morning. Our visitors represented Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam and different Christian denominations. Following on from last year’s theme of ‘Religious responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic’; our theme this year was ‘Religious Responses to the Cost-of-Living Crisis.’

Students enjoyed the opportunity to discuss Big Questions around the use of money, stewardship, moral responsibility, duty and where God is in times of suffering and hardship. Several students presented questions to the panel and answered some of their questions such as, ‘Can money buy happiness?’ ‘Does God cause everything to happen for a reason?’ Students were able to reflect on their personal response after hearing the panel’s ideas. Our students displayed curiosity and the ability to analyse differing viewpoints. We are very grateful to the visitors for sharing their thoughts and insights with us – it certainly enabled students to pause and reflect on their personal response to the current Crisis.



P.E AT THE KING'S WOLVERHAMPTON

At The King's C of E School, we are delighted to offer students an exciting opportunity to be part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. You need to be determined, dedicated and passionate which are exactly the characteristics our Year 9 students have shown this half term. Attending our well-structured programme, our students have also increased their knowledge on first aid, fitness and expedition requirements.



Our students have come together as a team to work on different competences; within first aid they have taken part in numerous activities such as CPR, recovery positioning and defibrillator training which has been a great opportunity for them to take on an essential role and develop their confidence in delivering lifesaving treatment. We have also given students the opportunity to use our gym facilities to undertake the physical aspect of the course. Each student has led a workout to the group which strengthens their leadership skills and support others to combat their own challenges. It has been great to allow students to use first class facilities in order to improve their brain, health and cognitive functions. Finally, the volunteering unit of the course helps us see the students in a different light. Participants on the D of E course meet with Year 7 students once a week to support with their reading. They select a book from our library and read together for 20 minutes during form time. This opportunity allows our students to thrive, while experiencing a sense of pride that is gained when helping other students to achieve their potential. We can't wait for the expedition to take place, which will be another great opportunity for our students to show their ongoing perseverance and complete their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Our varied, extra curriculum programme aims to offer opportunities for students to grow in confidence, interact socially with others and develop new skills. This term, we have had over 60 students taking part in our basketball extra curriculum sessions. Our junior NBA fixtures have allowed students to compete against schools within the Wolverhampton and Telford and Wrekin borough. This has provided the opportunity for students to learn the fundamentals of the sport whilst instilling core values such as teamwork, respect and sportsmanship. This January at The King's School, we have been the proud hosts of The Wolverhampton Volleyball Competition which brought together 14 schools from across the local area. Our students prepared for this by committing to regular extra-curricular training which allowed them to act on feedback and become more effective team members. Within past tournaments, there has been a lot of memorable moments for the students, these experiences have led some students to play in external regional teams which in some cases, has developed into selection for the England national squad.

Our Monday evening football club is well attended with over 40 students from across the year groups coming together to take part in sport. This term, we have given our students the opportunity to take part in the league fixtures and friendly tournaments held across Wolverhampton; it has been fantastic to witness students flourish in an environment where they feel comfortable to try new skills.

We continue to build our extra curriculum programme into the summer term with rounders and athletics starting soon!





ST THOMAS' LAUNCH FOREST SCHOOLS

St Thomas' have launched their new forest school area this term where their reception class have enjoyed spending time in the woods developing new skills along with their confidence and resilience. We are incredibly lucky to have a Forest School lead in the academy full time who can now provide this provision on a regular basis.



YEAR 11 GEOGRAPHERS EMBRACE OUTDOOR LEARNING

This term, the St Peter's Year 11 geographers visited Ashes Hollow for their GCSE fieldwork, focusing on 'transects'. There was mixed weather across the two days, but that didn't deter the students from getting their hands dirty (and their feet wet!). Throughout the day, they collected data on river width, depth and velocity as well as bed-load size and angularity. It was the first time many of them had been able to conduct a river study, so it was great to see them out of the classroom. This trip will help them significantly with their Paper 3 in June.



STUDENT LEADERSHIP AT THE KING'S WOLVERHAMPTON

At The King's Wolverhampton, we believe in empowering our students and nurturing a culture of leadership within our school community. Our Student Leadership Program has been instrumental in achieving this objective and has seen tremendous success since its inception.

The program is designed to provide students with a platform to present their thoughts and ideas on school progress. It includes regular school council meetings every two weeks, split into Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and 5, and weekly duties for our prefects. These duties involve helping at school events, such as the successful Year 6 welcome evening, during which our prefects took prospective students on a treasure hunt around the school. The program also offers opportunities for prefects to run their own passion projects, such as Culture Day or a football game in memory of a lost student.

One of the key factors that has contributed to the success of the program is the opportunity for school council representatives to meet with the senior leadership team. During our recent meeting, representatives from each key stage were able to express their views on what is working well in the leadership program and what aspects within the school need improvement. This constructive feedback approach helps the senior leadership team identify areas for development.

Our Student Leadership Program has had a profound impact on our students. It has fostered a culture of leadership and empowerment, giving students a voice and the opportunity to contribute to the school community. Through their regular responsibilities, students have developed organisational and leadership skills, and through their passion projects, they have been able to pursue their interests.

The program has also helped students build essential life skills such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and decision-making. By working collaboratively with their peers and teachers, and managing projects and initiatives, students have gained valuable experience that will serve them well in their future endeavour.

We are excited to announce the upcoming Head Boy and Head Girl Elections, which will be taking place over the coming weeks. This is an important process for our school as we select the student leaders who will represent and lead our student body. We encourage all students to participate in the selection process by attending candidate speeches and casting their vote. This is an excellent opportunity for our students to exercise their leadership skills and have a say in the direction of our school.

At Kings Church of England, we are committed to providing the best education and opportunities for our students. We are proud of the success of our Student Leadership Program and the positive impact it has had on our school community. Moving forward, we will continue to foster open communication between students and the senior leadership team to ensure that the program continues to evolve and meet the needs of our school community.



'BUILD YOUR CAREER' EVENT AT DERBY UNIVERSITY (NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK)

St Peter's Year 12 students recently had a fabulous day at the University of Derby Build Your Career event. They had the opportunity to speak to a number of employers including Rolls Royce, Alstrom and the NHS.

Students were also able to attend masterclasses and talks in a number of career areas including psychology, education and sport, and even had chance to have selfies with Baasit Siddiqui from Gogglebox who gave one of the guest talks as a University of Derby Alumni. There were opportunities for campus tours, chats with current students and competitions enabling the students to have a really good taster of university life.



Professional Growth at Three Spires Trust

We take professional development extremely seriously at Three Spires Trust; we vehemently believe that our staff deserve the best possible opportunities to develop so they can be the best version of themselves. It is for this reason that we are proud to announce our partnership with the Church of England to deliver the newly reformed NPQ for 'leading behaviour and culture (NPQLBC)', 'teaching and learning (NPQTL)' and headship (NPQH).



THE TWIST

Unlike the vast majority of trusts across the country, Three Spires will be launching the NPQLBC in a different way this March. A way which will seize the opportunity to supplement the existing academies' CPD programmes whilst ensuring it is both cost-effective and time-efficient at the same time. Over the next 12 months, 28 participants from across two of the trust's academies will embark on the NPQ Flex programme to develop the skills and knowledge that underpins expert school leadership and apply it to their own areas of professional development.



Professional Growth at Three Spires Trust

CALLED

Earlier in the academic year, Andy Wolfe (Deputy Chief Education Officer for the Church of England) and the trust's Director of School Improvement, Aimee Williams, joined forces to consider how the existing NPQ programme could be refined so more practitioners within a school, could come together and take advantage of this rich opportunity. An opportunity which would allow participants to learn alongside fellow colleagues in their own academy whilst helping to shape, drive and own the culture of behaviour or teaching and learning in their setting. There needed to be an additional 'flexible' element to the course which meant there would be no impact on students' learning; staff would not need lessons covered nor would they need to travel to alternative venues.



To truly personalise the experience and empower leaders in the school, the Flex also needed to be delivered in-house by those members of staff who held the vision for school improvement in their area of responsibility. It was for this reason, that the NPQ Flex was born.

What started off as a vision, quickly became a reality. Within 3 months, over 50 schools and MATs across the country have signed up to take part in this exciting pilot scheme with some, completely overhauling their whole-school CPD programme in favour of this model.

In the upcoming months, Three Spires will play an instrumental role in the development of the Church of England's NPQ Flex programme, shaping the delivery and direction of how CPD can be delivered in schools. This is an excellent opportunity for schools to 'grow' their own; to identify and nurture talent in their work force whilst empowering a range of practitioners from middle leaders to teaching assistants.

CONNECTED

Recently, the behaviour leads in St Peter's and The King's completed their facilitator and coach training, meaning they are now qualified to deliver the NPQLBC in their own school setting. Whilst the vast majority of sessions will be delivered face-to-face, there will be opportunities for participants from both schools to come together to network and share best practice.

A huge thank you to Dan Sherriff and Mike Worthington who delivered two outstanding sessions.

COMMITTED

"The NPQ Flex programme has meant that support staff also have the opportunity to develop their understanding and knowledge of the area in which I work in" Kirsty, Inclusion Support Manager.

"when working on trust-level CPD, having a group of individuals from each academy who have been engaging with the high-quality research that runs through the NPQs, has enabled us to create a shared language and understanding of evidence-led practice." Mike Worthington, Assistant Principal and behaviour lead at The King's Kidsgrove.





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