

Partnerships

Newsletter of Evolution Academy Trust



Looking to the future

Defining our new vision as one Trust



Sharing the wonderful work
of our schools and local
communities

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Welcome



A very warm welcome to our autumn 2023 Trust newsletter!

It remains a privilege to work closely with our schools and communities and there is a lot to celebrate from the autumn term, but I should start by saying a massive thank you to our staff teams. I am always very proud of our hard working and committed staff, who work every day to try

and ensure children get a great school experience.

Our leaders, teachers and support staff all work together and we are seeing more and more collaboration across our Trust of 12 schools. I felt particularly proud to spend time at Costessey earlier this week with Key Stage 2 children from our schools coming together for our fantastic Trust Choir event.

Thank you to parents for all of your valuable contributions over the autumn term. From sharing your views on our new vision, mission and values, to attending a range of community and other

parent events within our schools, your continued support and contributions really matter to us. Your honesty is always appreciated and our partnerships with you really matter. This newsletter captures just a small part of the incredible work happening across our Trust and I hope you enjoy it.

A sincere thank you to everyone for your support this term. I hope all Christmas shows/events go well and you all have a lovely Christmas break.

Best wishes,

C. Avieson

Dr Craig Avieson

Chief Executive Officer

Did you know?

We are a specialist primary Multi-Academy Trust? In addition to 12 schools from age 2 to 11, we also have two Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs), providing specialist support to some of our children.

Visit our [website](#) for more information about the work we do and follow us on Twitter [@EvolutionTrust](#)

If you have any queries for us, please email enquiries@evolutionacademytrust.org.uk

Ofsted visits three EAT schools

Costessey Primary, Coldfair Green Primary and Wensum Junior have all had Ofsted inspections recently.



Inspectors judged Costessey to be 'Good', with 'Outstanding' for personal development. They were impressed by "the culture of mutual respect that flows through the school", along with the school's approach to pupils with additional needs and to teaching reading and phonics.



Pupils and staff at Coldfair Green also celebrated a 'Good' judgement, with children themselves commenting "the school is like a family and they look after each other." Pupil-led initiatives, the "expert" teaching of phonics and the way children with SEND are able to access the full curriculum were all praised in the final report.

Inspectors at Wensum recognised that the school is on a rapid improvement journey and currently 'Requires Improvement.' Ofsted highlighted many positives, including effective safeguarding, improving pupil behaviour and prioritisation of reading and phonics skills. We were pleased that Leadership and Management at Trust/LGB/school levels were rated as 'Good' overall, and there are no doubts that Corrina and her team will continue to improve the education for all.

Trust news



Our changing vision, mission and values

During the summer term of 2023, we commenced work on revising our Trust vision, mission and values. This was based on feedback from our staff well-being survey, which was our largest ever, but also in a desire to improve what we offer all children at school.

We believe passionately in the importance of strong education standards for all children, but we equally value the importance of confidence, self-esteem, happiness, and all of the additional enriching activities which should be available to children. As you can imagine, improving our mission and values enables us all to focus and improve further on these important areas.

After a period of consultation with Trustees and Headteacher, in November we asked for the views of all parents and carers, staff and local governing boards. It was important that we listened and considered all views at the key draft and consultation stage.

We are currently collating the feedback gathered in this process – thank you to everyone who took part. The next stage will be to announce the final vision, mission and values to all staff at a Trust-wide INSET day in January, followed by a wider communication to all parents and carers, pupils and school communities. Further information will feature in our next newsletter in the spring term.

Parent/carer survey

Thank you to the hundreds of parents and carers who completed our annual survey in the summer term.

It was pleasing to see a number of areas highlighted as key strengths of the schools and Trust, including how safe the children feel in their settings and the positivity and hard work of staff.

Opportunities for improvement were identified in areas such as communication, behaviour and resources. The full results have been shared with senior leaders and actions are being taken to make improvements.

The next survey will take place in spring/summer 2024.

Menopause support

A network of support and information groups where Trust staff can discuss and learn more about the menopause has been created.

Three schools are running pilot sessions which will see any staff members interested in knowing more about the menopause come together for informal sessions once a month after school.

The pilot scheme, named Evolve, has been developed in response to staff feedback showing that people would like more support and information about what can often be a difficult and challenging period in their lives.

Chair of Trustees



Hi everyone,

As I sit to reflect on this new academic year it hardly seems possible that the Autumn term is almost over! With only just over three weeks until we break up for Christmas, I know the excitement is growing in all the schools and what a great time all of our pupils will be having in the build-up to the holidays.

Collaboration continues to bring great value

As Trustees we continue to see the excellent collaboration across the Trust at all levels. In particular I would like to recognise the work done within the 'network groups' where we have experts from each school meeting to share ideas and best practice in areas such as Maths, English, Early Years and SEND. Having the

mechanisms and desire to do this is great news for us all and really does show one of the benefits of being part of a Multi-Academy Trust.

One Trust . . . a single vision and shared values

As part of our 'One Trust' journey, we have decided to refresh our EAT Vision (where we want to be), our Mission (who we serve, what we do, and why we are different) and our Values (the principles by which we do our work), and to adopt these across the Trust in all areas.

We kicked this off at an excellent working session with Headteachers, Trust central team and Trustees back in September and I would like to thank governors, staff and parents for subsequently sharing your views to help us shape this over recent weeks.

The launch will be in January at our 'One Trust' Strategy Day and we will provide a further update in the Spring newsletter.

Changes at Trust Board

We have had some changes at the Trust Board, with two of our Trustees stepping down at half-term. Many thanks to Sandi Bately (who is off on extended travels overseas) and Rhys Jarvis (who has taken on a role as town councillor in Suffolk) for their time in supporting the Trust. Their experience and support have been invaluable.

We are currently recruiting and will soon be welcoming a new Trustee, an experienced educationalist with SEND expertise, to the Board of Trustees in the Spring term.

In the meantime, may I wish you all, whether EAT volunteers or staff, parents or carers a wonderful Christmas break. I hope you enjoy the festive period with your friends and family.

We look forward to welcoming you all back in the Spring term.

Regards,

Drew

Drew Whitehead
Chair of Trustees



Angel Road Schools

Wilder Schools Project launches



Angel Road Schools has been chosen to take part in The Norfolk Wildlife Trust - Wilder Schools Project. We are one of only five schools in Norfolk selected to participate in this exciting three-year project, which is aimed at increasing the levels of biodiversity and wildlife, especially within our

Forest School Area. It is also hoped that the work will increase the children's understanding and love for nature and wildlife in their local area.

The children in Year 4 are leading the work on this project and are having monthly visits from a Wilder Learning Officer from the Wildlife Trust. Each session is aimed at developing the children's knowledge and understanding of wildlife in general, while also focusing on what the children would like to see developed. The children have engaged in a range of activities including bug hunting, habitat identification and nature art so far.

The children will have the opportunity to visit a Wildlife Nature Reserve in the early Summer term 2024 and we aim to widen school and community links as part of the ongoing project. The children are really excited about being part of this project and look forward to each session whilst making a positive difference to our local area.

School staff have been able to get involved too. As part of the project, teaching staff have already had a Professional Development session with Wildlife Trust experts and have looked at what nature means to them and how the project can support developing outdoor learning within the wider curriculum.



The long term aim of the project is that the school will independently be able to manage and promote increases in biodiversity across its site and enable staff to feel confident in using the outdoor space more effectively in their curriculum learning, benefitting all children.



Bignold Primary School & Nursery



Exciting experiences for whole school

Our children have truly embodied the qualities of organisation, determination and pride in learning this half term.

Whether exploring the school-site as part of autumn walks (in EYFS) or using new learning in geography to forecast the weather (in KS1), we've been embracing seasonal change and using this to enhance our lessons. Some of our older children got into the mindset of Neolithic Man as part of a hands-on school trip (in LKS2) whilst others (in UKS2) even had the opportunity to contribute to the stunning Jenny Lind Community Murals, which now stand as a monument to our community's amazing spirit.

We are fully committed to giving our pupils a voice in their school experience, so have also reinstated our School Council – with representatives elected from all year groups.



Mosque visit

Year 6 enjoyed their visits to the Ihsan Mosque as part of their unit on Islam, supporting their enquiry of how beliefs shape identity for Muslims.

The children had the opportunity to:

- listen to the Muslim call to prayer
- to hear – and join in with – the Salah
- to learn the history of the Prophets and how the Qur'an came to be
- to find out about the significance of clocks inside Mosques and how these connect Muslims' faith with their daily lives
- to explore the mosque and the objects of religious significance it contained (such as prayer mats, headscarves and prayer caps)

The children all prepared some excellent questions which they were able to ask our very knowledgeable guides, and – once they had returned to school – were able to reflect on what they had seen, heard and how they had felt inside the Mosque.



Coldfair Green Primary School

The role of technology at Coldfair Green



From the very start in Reception, pupils independently use Seesaw on iPads to record their learning and their tasks. Each day they are set jobs and are expected to complete and record them. This means that by the time the children are ready to move into Year 1, they are autonomous, independent, digitally proficient learners who will continue to thrive. All of the children in Reception and Year 1 are Seesaw experts and regularly train other children (and adults) who are less confident.



To further boost parental engagement and to support children with SEN, every morning, the Reception class teacher posts the jobs for the day so that parents can have a meaningful conversation about what is expected of them throughout the day; almost a pre-teach in partnership with parents.

In the digital age, the integration of technology in schools has become increasingly fundamental. At Coldfair Green, we don't just introduce gadgets; for us, it's about revolutionising learning experiences and ensuring that technology remains a tool for empowerment. Technology at Coldfair Green has become an essential tool for enhancing teaching and pupil engagement.

We also use Seesaw as an efficient and effective way to communicate with parents. In Reception, the work that children post, can be shared immediately with parents. A child in Reception said that "I want to show my mummy my picture and she can see it on her phone at work". Parents can then comment on their child's work, which can be read out to the class. We also review our work as a class on the big screen at various points throughout the day, in order to compliment each other and talk about what we need to improve.

Vital digital skills are valued throughout Coldfair Green. As a school, we enter the international Bebras competition every year, we do this to promote problem solving skills and computational thinking. Coldfair Green is equipping our children with the skills and resources they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital world.



Costessey Primary School



Visitors in school

At Costessey Primary school we know how important it is to expose children to experiences outside of classroom, ones they may not normally get. Furthermore, making children aware of the different careers that people do is equally important. This term at Costessey, we have been working hard to bring visitors and volunteers into our school to address this and to enhance our already broad curriculum offer.

Fire Service



Year 1 had some special visitors this term, some real-life heroes – the Fire Brigade. They taught the children about what they wear, what they do and how they stay safe. Children also learnt some fire safety rules and practiced the STOP, DROP and ROLL technique. Children then found out all about the fire engine and watched one of the fire fighters flying their special drone. Finally, everyone had a go at using the fire hose where the water shot out super quickly!

RSPCA



A few weeks ago we were fortunate enough to have a visit from the RSPCA. Our visitor spent time with our Year 6 children looking at the fantastic work of the RSPCA as well as loads of cool information about their history. She even told us about her strangest rescue – 250 gold fish from an abandoned public swimming pool! Children then learnt about the vital role that animals played in World War 2, to supplement the learning that they are currently doing in their curriculum lessons.

The lady also visited our Reception classes. She taught us all about the RSPCA, what the letters stand

for and what the RSPCA do to help animals. The children were all given a cuddly animal to look after and had to identify whether their animal was a pet, a farm animal or a wildlife animal. They then learnt how to handle their animal with care and pretended they were a member of the RSPCA, before having to decide which part of the animal was poorly and treat it with care so it could be released back to its home. They ended their session by playing a game involving animal facts and they all learnt something new about animals, even our grown ups.



Calm Cats Yoga



To celebrate World Mental Health Day, children in Year 3 got the opportunity to take part in a yoga session with Calm Cats. They worked on their stretching, breathing and relaxation skills.

RAF Pilot



Our Year 6 children were fortunate enough to have a visit from an RAF Pilot who taught them all about some of the planes used in World War 2. He created a game which allowed our children to take on the role of pilots, radar station workers and those who delivered the coordinates.



Nurse

As part of our curriculum topic 'Does every hero wear a cape?' Year 1 have been investigating real-life heroes.

We had a special visitor, a nurse called Leighanna who works at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. Before the visit, children discussed who they consider to be real-life heroes and what they do to help people. The children planned some fantastic questions, which Leighanna answered, so the children could learn about what she does and what equipment she uses.





Dell Primary School

Artsmark Gold Award



We are proud to have been awarded the Artsmark Gold Award by the Arts Council England which recognises our commitment to cultural education through creativity and the opportunities we provide for our children across the curriculum. It also recognises our enrichment offer with clubs including Dance, Art and Musical opportunities. A big thank you to Mrs Withall for all her hard work towards this.

Black History Month competition

For the second year running we have been awarded the schools shield for Creative Writing in the Lowestoft Town Council Black History Month competition! We also had 4 individual pupils whose work was awarded individual prizes – Isabella (Y5) and Dallas (Y2) won visual arts awards and Isabella (Y6) and Brody (Y2) won writing awards.



Lowestoft Matball tournament



Earlier this month a team of Year 3 pupils represented us at a local Matball Tournament and they achieved first place! They won all but one of their matches but we are especially proud of the additional points that they were awarded for kindness, sportsmanship and respect. They shook hands with the opposing teams and thanked each match's refs – so proud!



Remembrance Day Service

Mr Joyce and the Dell Junior Leaders attended the Lowestoft town annual Remembrance Day service to lay a wreath of poppies on Sunday 12th November.

We sold poppies and poppy accessories in school in the run up to the event and our junior leaders did an amazing job in representing our school in the local community.

School Council elections



This year we have been looking at ways which we can increase pupil voice and agency across the school. We have chosen to take a new approach to the School Council, signing up to be a part of the 'Smart School Council'. The approach from the Smart School Council is to give a voice to all the children in the school as part of class discussions. Specific groups are also set up with specialised roles, including Communications and Actions groups.

We wanted to ensure that every class was represented on the Communications Team, so we launched an election process. We began by taking a wide look in assembly, at governments across the world and the different in the ways they govern: from the UK's democracy, to the USA's republic and to the absolute monarchy in countries such as Oman.

In classes, we learnt about what democracy is; thinking about the process of how we elect our leaders as a nation and why this is important as a British Value. Children explored the jobs, roles and responsibilities of leaders of the school and also the government. We debated what

makes a good leader, such as empathy, good communication, honesty, problem-solving skills and a willingness to listen to others. Children thought about how these qualities and attributes would also be beneficial in our school council class representatives.

Using the UK democratic process as a model, we invited the children to consider whether they would like



to represent their class on the main School Council. Children were then asked to consider their manifesto, create a speech to give to their phase, and invited to make campaign posters to be displayed. The children were encouraged to use their learning about good leadership attributes and link these to their own personal qualities to write persuasive speeches. The children were incredibly brave and gave their speeches in front of around 60 children, speaking passionately and enthusiastically about issues which they wanted to raise or tackle, and charities which they wanted to support. It was inspiring to see how engaged the children were with many hot-topics and their determination to be part of change.

To make the election process even more authentic, some members of the previous School Council wrote to the electoral team at Norfolk County Council to request the use of the ballot boxes and cardboard booths for the election day. Their letter was very persuasive, and we were delighted when the electoral team wrote back to say we would be able to use them for our school council election day. This allowed the children to replicate a polling station and gain an authentic experience of the voting process. Ballot papers were created with the names of the candidates and classes took it in turns to visit the ballot booths and cast their votes. There was a real buzz of excitement in the classes about the democratic process.

The School Council elections were about more than selecting the council - they were about instilling democratic values, nurturing future leaders, supporting each other and creating a culture and sense of community where each pupil's vote is valued.



Elm Tree Primary School

British Sign Language



is engaging in our new MFL learning.

Elm Tree is home to a Resource Base for the Deaf and signing has become an important part of our efforts to communicate with children who are supported by the base. Earlier this year, we were thrilled to learn that one of our former pupils, Daniel Jillings, had been successful in his tireless campaigning to the government for BSL to become a GCSE subject.

Our children were already amazing at signing to sing in assemblies and for special festivals, so the decision to move towards learning to communicate with the deaf community through a BSL curriculum in weekly lessons was a natural progression. We were thrilled when Ann Jillings, Daniel's mum, agreed to become our BSL teacher.

Since September, meeting one of the Elm Tree family in school can be a very quiet encounter. This is not because we expect silence in our corridors and classrooms, but because we are all practising our British Sign Language (BSL) greetings. Whether it is wishing someone good morning or good afternoon, or to say thank you as they hold the door open or sorry for disturbing a lesson, everyone

From Year 1 to Year 6, our classes enjoy learning new signs and recalling and using learnt signs once a week with Mrs Jillings. Teachers and SLT are learning alongside the children and we are all keen to show how communication using BSL is about body language and finger spelling too. We have all learnt the alphabet and can interpret



Mrs Jillings when she spells out words for us to sign in our lessons. Like any new language, the focus has been on using it and building in new words and phrases. In EYFS, the children are learning signs which link with their classroom and singing activities.

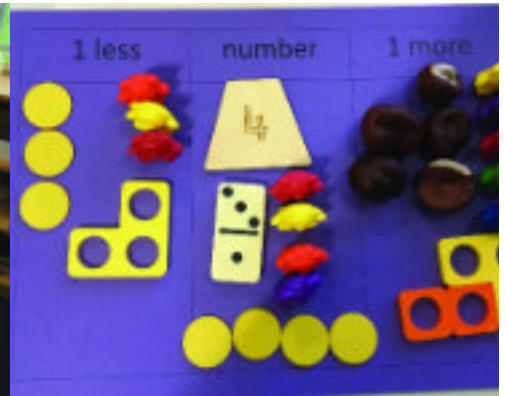
BSL is an expressive language and enables children to learn how we communicate non-verbally. If we can teach our children to interact with members of the deaf community inside and outside of school to enrich the lives of others, then we have provided them with an important skill for life.



Filby Primary School



Getting it right from the start!



Here at Filby we know we have got to make children's early school experience as positive and powerful as possible: without strong foundations, you cannot build a sequence of learning. In the Early Years, we ensure that children have the knowledge and can apply skills to make them successful as they move through the school.

Since Little Blossoms nursery joined us, we have been able to extend our impact to two, three and four year olds. In nursery the children are supported with their communication and interaction skills and their personal, social and emotional development through story-telling, song singing and carefully designed adult-led play sessions.

meet their learning needs, especially in early reading and number."

The development of early reading through phonics is something we are particularly proud of. In fact last year 100% of our Year 1 children passed their phonics screening check and we hope for similar results this year too! Children quickly pick up the individual speed sounds and then learn to blend reading whole words that will support their knowledge of other areas of the curriculum.

By getting it right early on, we are seeing the benefits to children as they move through the school.



Once children move into Reception, this is extended further through adults carefully choosing the learning, where applicable matching this to the children's interests and using our lovely school site as a stimulus. We are proud to say that we have been oversubscribed in Reception for the last three years, against a local trend of falling numbers on roll in other schools.

Our Ofsted report last year reported that: "Staff know how to instil in children the behaviours that set them up for learning. Children learn how to share, take turns and can listen and concentrate for sustained periods of time. Adults in the early years know each child well and adapt activities to



Busy autumn for children at Nelson

Autumn term here at Nelson has started with many warm welcomes and building new connections with our school's local and wider community.

It was a real pleasure to host our Open Day on 14th October; staff, current parents and pupils welcomed potential new families into our school, sharing our exciting curriculum and their own personal experiences at Nelson. Visitors commented on our school's positive and inclusive approach to learning, the high expectations we hold for all children and in particular the school's holistic education based on Thrive. The children visiting enjoyed exploring the Reception classrooms and outside spaces including our allotment and forest school.



Our Reception children had some very special visitors, as we have made links with Friend in Deed who create intergenerational connections within our community. During the visit, the children and residents from Heathcoat care home crafted houses that created lovely conversations about where the residents lived when they were young. George, one of our visitors, re-laid his tales of once living in a railway carriage and the adventures he had playing out from dawn until dusk. The visit ended with everyone listening to a story together.

This term we have also welcomed Milo the therapy dog to Nelson Infant. Milo is part of the Paws & Read Programme; he gives children a private opportunity to practice and enjoy reading away from peers



or an audience to help increase confidence and enhance the love of reading.

Every month we share our work in the commitment to creating a culture of

welcome and inclusion for refugees and people seeking asylum. This month, in celebration of the 30 plus languages spoken across our school, we held an EAL coffee morning hosted by our school's cultural capital lead, Becky Edwards. The coffee morning offered a great opportunity for families to meet other families, share their experiences and learn more about supporting their children's learning at home and in school. We are proud to be a School of Sanctuary and are delighted to be formally recognised as a 'Supporting Organisation' in the City of Sanctuary status.



We work closely with Ormiston Families Mental Health Support Team (MHST), and as part of their work with the school they held an open meet and greet information and advice morning for all our parents and carers to attend. The MHST staff work with a large range of families and are trained in helping young people take care of their mental health by recognising the impact of their difficult thoughts and feelings. The MHST works directly with parents to implement interventions under their guidance.

We were proud and delighted to be awarded the International Eco-School 'Green Flag' status due to our whole school commitment to helping the environment. Our newly formed Eco Club pupils and staff have started some amazing work



already this term, including participating and promoting Cycle to School week. They have also written to the Prime Minister to challenge him on making plans to make cycling possible for more families, and have been creating sustainable furniture by recycling plastic bottles into eco-bricks.

As part of our broad and balanced curriculum, over the course of the year the children at Nelson focus on six key world views, one per half term. In the first half term, our KS1 classes studied Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism). We then set a challenge to enhance and embed the children's learning by asking their families to discuss with them about what they have been doing or have learnt. Questions such as: What family celebrations do we have? Why is it important to celebrate together? Is there a symbol which is important to our family? If not, should we create one? The children in Year 2 particularly enjoyed sharing their own Mehndi patterns as part of their learning of Hinduism and celebrations of Diwali.



Poplars Primary School



Collaboration is a core value at Poplars Community Primary School because we believe that it is essential in promoting the success and well-being of our students. Together, we are achieving remarkable things, both inside and outside the classroom.

Bake sale for a cause



We believe that by modeling the support of our community we are cultivating social responsibility, empathy, unity, and civic engagement, nurturing responsible citizens who contribute to society's well-being. This term we hosted a collaborative bake sale at school to support YMCA. We invited parents, students, and teachers to join forces in baking delicious treats and raising funds for a great cause.

A family of lifelong learners

A shared support in lifelong learning is good for your brain, mental well-being and self-esteem. In September, we invited parents and carers into school to join us in supporting their children in a math challenge, through putting heads together our families were successful in cracking the code! Again in October, we invited



families to join us on our whole school writing day about our values, the Poplars Way.

"Poplars Community Primary School seems to be going from strength to strength with general learning and other activities which include family fun days. It's got a real community feels about it" – EAT Parent Survey

Supporting our local community

In October, we were learning about the Harvest Festival with our local Reverent, Rev Simon. Following this, families collaborated with staff to provide donations for our school food bank.



Giving and receiving

Our library spaces have a wonderful array of books for children to take home to share with their families and this term we were lucky enough to win even more! Suffolk Libraries donated Mrs Hurren's height in books - around £3,000 worth - for children to take home and share with their families.

"I love our library, we get to visit it together as a class and use it at lunch time." – Jake Y6

"It is fun to see all the different books, I can never decide which I want to take home and share with mum and dad" – Dylan Y2





Wensum Junior School

Football competition



On Monday 13th November, the 'Wensum Warriors' took part in their first ever Championship football league at The Nest - and came third! They did us proud by working as a strong team and supported each other throughout.

The league continues through to next year with our next league game in February. The Wensum Warriors will be ready - watch this space!



European Day of Language

The European Day of Languages is celebrated annually on the 26th September. For the first time at Wensum Junior School, we decided to acknowledge this special day. Pupils learn French as part of our curriculum and through this day we were also able to explore other languages, countries and cultures.

The afternoon started with an



assembly led by Miss Hart who is a German speaker. We learnt about various flags, and our EAL children from other countries talked about their home countries. We have children at Wensum from Romania, Poland and Sri Lanka, to name but a few.

Miss Hart also did part of the assembly in German! Many of the children had the confidence to come to the front to take part. After the assembly children spent the rest of the afternoon in their classrooms partaking in activities about countries and languages. They were also able to enjoy some French Baguette with cream cheese! We plan to celebrate this day again next year.



