



THE ST. BART'S
ACADEMY
TRUST

RELEASING POTENTIAL



SPRING
2024

Improving Primary Science



Sustainability In Action



Five Principles For Inclusion



SPRING 2024

In this issue of *Releasing Potential* we share ways to improve the quality of primary science using the recommendations from the latest EEF guidance report.

We continue the story of how we are tackling sustainability across our Trust.

There's also an overview of five principles for inclusion.

We hope you enjoy the content.



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Releasing
POTENTIAL

We want to hear from you!
Please get in touch to share good practice
and celebrate your successes
by emailing jcollier@sbmat.org

Improving Primary Science

The latest EEF Guidance Report



Improving Primary Science

The latest EEF Guidance Report

In November 2023 the Education Endowment Foundation released their latest guidance report. The theme for this publication was *Improving Primary Science* and it contained six recommendations for schools and academies to consider.

The report focuses on primary science teaching and is relevant to the teaching of all pupils between the ages of five to 11. Early Years is not included as it can be subject to different priorities, expected approaches and areas for learning.

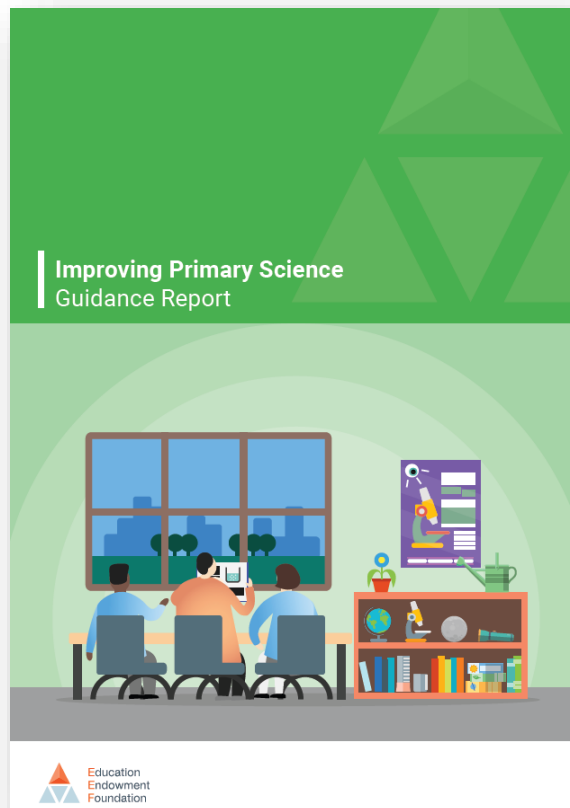
In this article we take a look at the recommendations and provide examples of how these are currently being addressed across different settings in the St. Bart's Academy Trust.

What is primary science?

The National Curriculum for science aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop **scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding** through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics
- develop understanding of the **nature, processes and methods of science** through different types of science enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them
- are equipped with the scientific knowledge required to understand the **uses and implications** of science, today and for the future.

The guidance report states that “teaching science in primary school isn’t solely about achieving strong attainment outcomes: many teachers will understand the joy of sparking pupils’ curiosity and motivating them to explore a subject more deeply.” The report considers both attainment and attitudinal outcomes in science.



Read the full report online by clicking on the image above.

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Recommendation 1

Develop pupils' scientific vocabulary

Supporting primary pupils to develop scientific vocabulary can help them to actively participate in science learning and effectively communicate their understanding.

To implement this recommendation:

1a. Identify science specific vocabulary

Research shows that explicitly teaching scientific vocabulary is a useful strategy to help pupils learn. When deciding on which words to explicitly teach, consider the breadth of vocabulary and background knowledge needed to fully access the science being taught. It can be useful to group the words into different priority areas in the curriculum, focusing on:

- words that have an everyday meaning and a scientific meaning (polysemous words) to help address any confusion;
- words that are important across science topics (Tier 2 vocabulary); and
- words that are specific to the topic (Tier 3 vocabulary)

The types of words and their grouping will depend on the topic being taught and the prior knowledge of your pupils. See the table below for an example of vocabulary used when discussing forces and magnets.

1b. Explicitly teach new vocabulary and its meaning, creating opportunities for repeated engagement and use over time

When teaching new vocabulary, plan when and how you will introduce new words and definitions, ensuring they link directly to the content being taught, and build on prior knowledge.

Support pupils to learn new vocabulary and its meaning by creating opportunities to repeatedly engage with the words and use them in different scenarios. The following four strategies help to integrate new vocabulary into teaching.

Model the use of the word in context

Use the word in a sentence and provide a clear, pupil-friendly definition or explanation of its meaning.

Create context for words that need to be learned

Connect scientific language to related concepts to make it meaningful for pupils.

Expose pupils to new vocabulary across all literacy activities

Provide multiple opportunities to revisit and engage with scientific vocabulary over time.

Use vocabulary approaches that promote rich language connections

Help pupils understand the relationships between words and concepts.

Tier 1 – words that are encountered day to day	<i>push, pull, metal, object</i>
Polysemous – words that have an everyday meaning and a scientific meaning	<i>attract, repel, force, slide, surface, pole</i>
Tier 2 – words that are important across many science topics	<i>predict, compare, observe, describe</i>
Tier 3 – words that are specific to a science topic	<i>magnetic, non-magnetic, bar magnet, horseshoe magnet</i>

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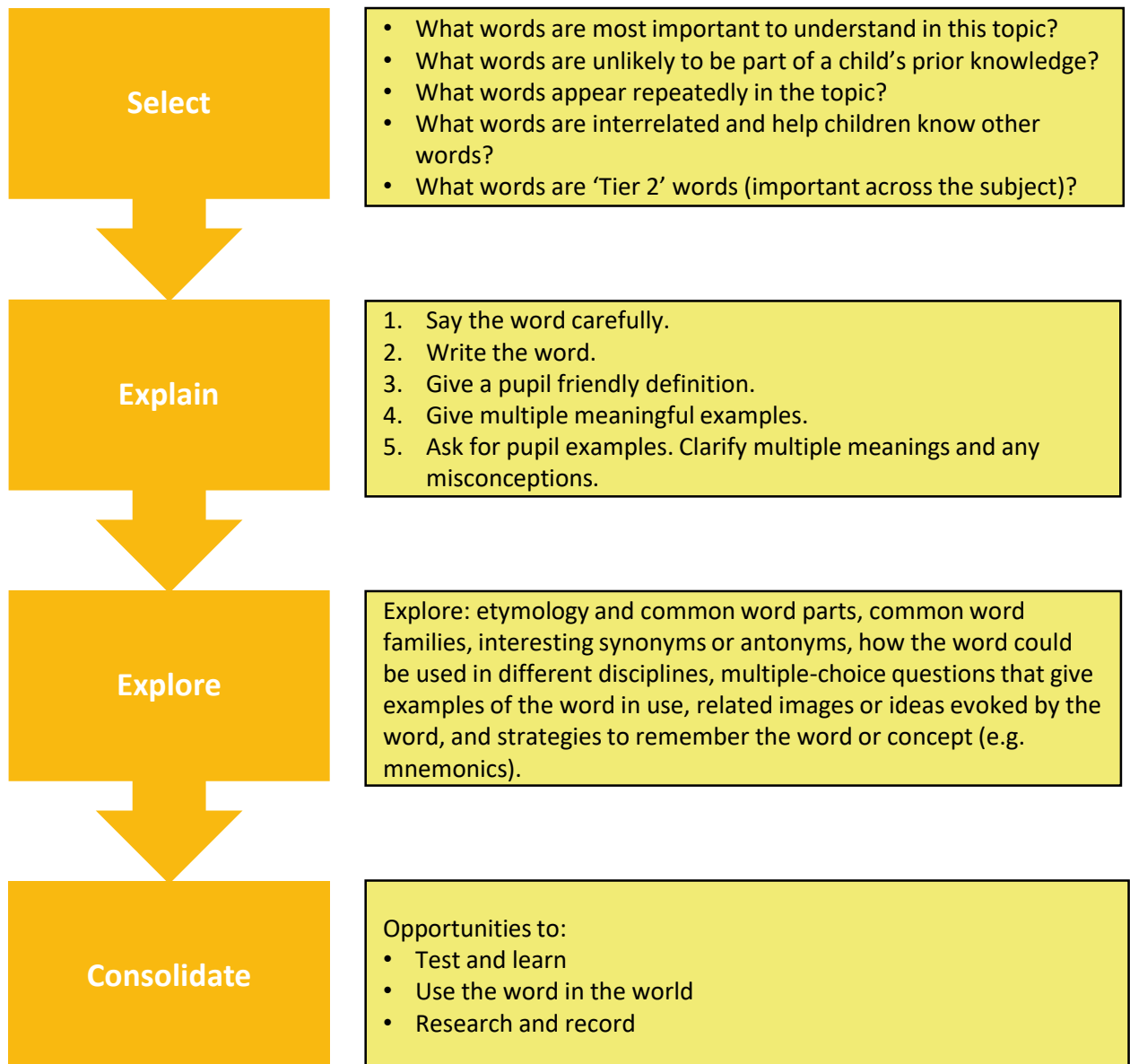
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Recommendation 1 – in the classroom

Strategies such as discussing the origin of new words (etymology) or the structure of words (morphology) can help pupils understand their meaning.

Use the SEEC model in science lessons to explore subject-specific vocabulary. This strategy was developed by Alex Quigley, author of *Closing The Vocabulary Gap*. There are four suggested stages for teachers to follow: **SELECT, EXPLAIN, EXPLORE, CONSOLIDATE**.

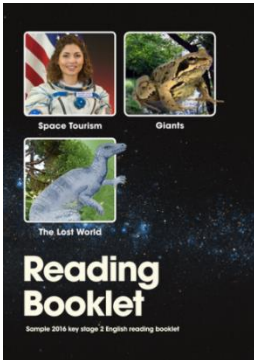


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St. Bart's Academy Trust CASE STUDY



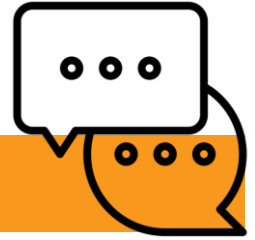
Using practice test materials to identify subject-specific vocabulary

Through our year group learning networks we have considered ways to use practice papers as a teaching and learning resource. Below is a worked example of how to use the SEEC model alongside the sample 2016 key stage 2 English reading booklet article 'Space Tourism'. Useful websites to support teachers in using the SEEC model include the Cambridge online dictionary, etymonline.com and frayermodel.co.uk.

<p>Select</p> <p>By focusing in on one paragraph, teachers identified the 'Tier 2' words contained in the text. It was agreed that several words might be unfamiliar to most pupils. The group selected '<i>atmosphere</i>' as the word to explain, explore, and consolidate.</p>	
<p>Explain</p> <p>After reading the paragraph to the class, the teacher would use 'think-aloud' techniques to share their understanding of how to pronounce the word and its meaning. This was checked using an online dictionary which also offered further information about the word.</p>	
<p>Explore</p> <p>The teacher would use an online etymological dictionary to explore the history of the word and highlight how it is made up of two archaic words – '<i>atmo</i>' and '<i>sphere</i>'. It is interesting to note that '<i>sphere</i>' appears in the maths words list for Reception children.</p>	<p>atmo-</p> <p>word-forming element meaning "vapor," from Greek <i>atmos</i> "vapor, steam,"</p> <p>sphere (n.)</p> <p>a re-Latinized spelling, attested beginning mid-15c., of Middle English <i>spere</i> (c. 1300) "cosmos; space, conceived as a hollow globe about the world," from Anglo-French <i>espiere</i>, Old French</p>
<p>Consolidate</p> <p>The teacher introduces the Frayer Model as an example of how to use a graphic organiser to analyse words and build vocabulary. This metacognitive tool can be used across the curriculum with all ages of pupils.</p>	

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Recommendation 2

Encourage pupils to explain their thinking, whether verbally or in written form

To implement this recommendation:

2a. Create a collaborative learning environment

Well structured collaborative learning approaches, such as paired and small group work, offer a great opportunity for discussion during which pupils can make their thinking explicit. Collaborative learning approaches paired with well-designed tasks that integrate talk demonstrate the greatest impact. However, the impact can vary so it is important to get the detail right, starting with a collaborative environment.

Talk behaviours

Support the development of listening skills where needed, such as how to actively listen and reflect on what has been said, take turns to contribute and respect others' views and ideas.

Expectation setting

Establish clear expectations around participation. This could be done by modelling the kind of behaviours you are expecting, how you ask for clarification, and how you listen.

Another approach from practice is to have pupils establish their own shared rules in class.

Task design

Think about how you can design tasks to encourage collaboration. For instance, you could consider group sizes of no more than five, and how you will scaffold the involvement of lower attaining pupils.

2b. Capitalise on the power of dialogue

Dialogue between the teacher and pupils, and between pupils, can provide opportunities to articulate thinking and make explicit a shared understanding. When planned and structured, dialogue may support pupils to integrate new ideas with their current knowledge, identify gaps in their understanding, and reorganise their thoughts to consolidate their learning.

To support high-quality dialogue:

Plan key questions and discussion points in advance

Open ended questions, which encourage pupils to explain, reason, or argue, can be particularly helpful.

Use strategic follow-up questions to guide dialogue

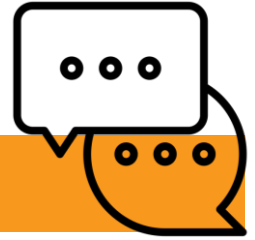
Support pupils to build on their responses and those of their peers to provide the detail you are looking for.

Balance teacher and pupils voice

Ensure that you are giving pupils opportunities to share their thoughts as well as providing yours. If you find yourself wanting to fill the silence, remember pupils need wait time to develop their thinking before responding.

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Recommendation 2

2c. Cultivate reasoning and justification

As pupils progress through primary school they are encouraged to be curious, make observations, ask questions, and increasingly support their ideas and thinking with explanation and evidence. Strategies which may cultivate reasoning and justification include the following:

Explain	Discuss	Re-explain
Pupils explain their thinking through discussions with peers, in pairs or small groups, interactions with teachers, or in written form.	Pupils then engage in group or whole-class discussion facilitated by the teacher. This allows pupils to call on their own understanding, listen to new information and perspectives, and consider how this relates to theirs.	Pupils are given the opportunity to review and update their thinking after the discussion.

Recommendation 2 – in the classroom

Explain



Pupils observe a torch illuminating an object resulting in a shadow cast on a wall. They are prompted to predict and explain the potential changes to the shadow if the object is moved closer to the torch using the sentence stem,

'I predict _____ because _____.'

Discuss



Pupils observe the effect of moving the torch. A whole-class discussion is facilitated by the teacher using questions to encourage the sharing of diverse ideas and explanations from pupils. *'What do we notice about the shadow?'*, *'Why do we think this is the case?'*, *'How could we make the shadow smaller again?'*, *'What would happen if we used a transparent object?'*...

Re-explain



Pupils have the chance to modify and enhance their predictions and explanations. Afterwards, pupils write an explanation in their exercise books. The class could also write a shared prediction and explanation after a discussion, record it orally using an electronic tablet, or end on 'think' pair' share' discussions.

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St. Bart's Academy Trust CASE STUDY

Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy

Sadia Khalil is a Year 5 teacher at Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy in Longton, Stoke-on-Trent where practitioners use a consistent lesson structure to promote opportunities for pupils to reason and justify. Below is an example of how the process was followed when teaching pupils about air resistance.

My Knowledge

Pupils have the opportunity to review their previous knowledge by completing a graphic organiser with facts they already know. This is a chance for the teacher to address any misconceptions.

Scientific Enquiry

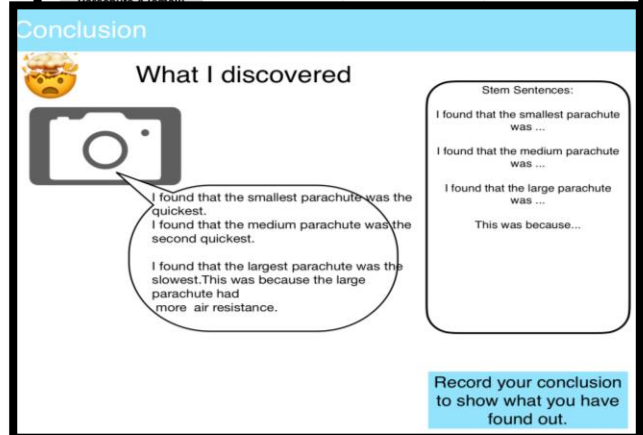
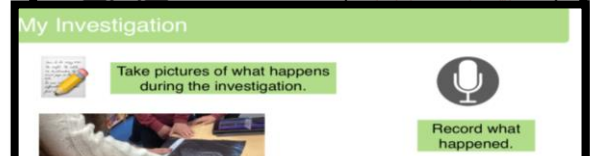
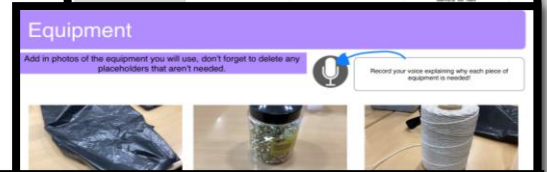
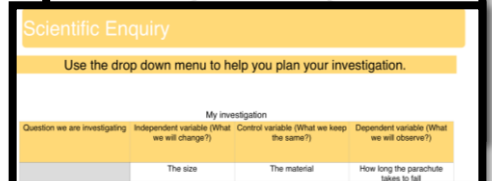
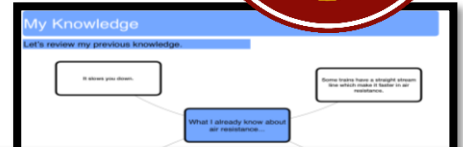
Pupils decide on a question that they wish to investigate within the topic and complete a table clarifying the independent variable that they will change, the control variable that will remain the same, and the dependent variable that they will observe. Pupils identify any equipment they will need and use voice memos on their iPads to record an explanation of why each piece of equipment is required.

Prediction

Pupils complete stem sentences to predict what they think will happen ('My prediction is...' 'I think that....because...'). These are captured on the iPad in text and as a voice recording.

The Investigation

Pupils carry out their planned investigation and use their iPads to take pictures, record what happens, capture their results and use stem sentences to write a conclusion on what they have discovered.



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Recommendation 3

Guide pupils to work scientifically

To implement this recommendation:

Use the EEF seven-stop model (right) to support pupils towards becoming independent scientists who can work scientifically by:

- **explicitly teaching** the knowledge, skills and processes required to work scientifically;
- guiding pupils to **apply this in practice**; and
- incorporating opportunities for **discussion and reflection**.

The seven steps can be implemented across a series of lessons or a topic. Although the stages are in sequence, in practice there will be some integration and iteration.



Recommendation 3 – in the classroom

Year 3 lesson series on the topic of ‘light’ alongside the skill of prediction

1. Activating prior knowledge	Pupils watch a video on shadow puppets and discuss what they see/notice/wonder in threes. Teacher listens for misconceptions.
2. Explicit strategy instruction	Teacher explains that the class will be making predictions, clarifies what this means, and shares a sentence frame for predictions.
3. Modelling of learned strategy	‘For example, if I see a lot of dark clouds in the sky, I might predict that it will rain because the last time I saw dark clouds it rained.’
4. Memorisation of strategy	Each trio has a concept cartoon. Pupils read the character’s predictions and decide if they are good/bad examples. Why?
5. Guided practice	Pupils use a sentence frame to make predictions. Each trio investigate using relevant equipment. They reflect on their findings.
6. Independent practice	Pupils work on their own to explore – ‘How can you change the size of a shadow?’. They predict, investigate, make observations, record their findings, and reflect on their predictions.
7. Structured reflection	Teacher supports pupils on what they have learned over the sequence of learning. Pupils summarise their learning to another trio verbally, using equipment to aid their summaries.

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BTSA CASE STUDY

BTSA School Direct Beginning Teachers



Our ITT Beginning Teachers have recently had a focus on using the EEF seven step model as part of their knowledge and understanding of the core areas of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment.

The Beginning Teachers (BTs) were introduced to the seven stage model in their University of Derby lectures in preparation for completing an ITaP (Intensive Training and Practice) on 'How pupils learn and cognitive architecture'. ITaPs are a major change to Initial Teacher Education with their purpose being an opportunity to strengthen the link between evidence and classroom practice. They are often designed around the National Institute of Teaching model of:

- Introduce
- Analyse
- Prepare
- Enact
- Reflect

Back in their main placement, the BTs were tasked to identify where the seven stop model could be seen in focused school observations using the template on the right.

This was followed up during a BTSA Hub session where the BTs reflected on what they had seen and shared their experiences with each other. One final task was for the BTs to make an action plan that would capture how they intended to continue to apply the seven step model in their own practice. This was shared with their mentor during a professional development meeting.

How does the expert practitioner:

1. Activate prior knowledge?

e.g. questioning

2. Give explicit strategy instruction?

e.g. discussion and step-by-step instruction of possible strategies they will take to complete the task

3. Model the learned strategy?

e.g. verbalise their choice of strategy and thought process to pupils

4. Ensure memorisation of strategy?

e.g. check pupil understanding and recall of key taught aspects.

5. Guided practice?

e.g. provide multiple opportunities for pupils to practice whilst gradually removing support.

6. Facilitate independent practice?

e.g. give pupils the opportunity to complete tasks independently.

7. Structure reflection?

e.g. encourage pupils to consider whether the strategies they chose were effective and if they would make changes next time.

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Recommendation 4

Relate new learning to relevant, real-world contexts

Real-world scenarios can be introduced through in-class teaching, outside of the classroom, and by using virtual models. Ensure that your real-world context appropriately supports explanations of the science you want to teach, that it links closely to in-class learning, and fits into long term curriculum planning.

To implement this recommendation:

4a. Consider real-world contexts

Use applications of science and real-world contexts that support pupils to develop an understanding of science, demonstrate its purpose, and show its relevance to them by connecting it to pupils' experiences, the local context, or wider contexts. Plan your teaching so that the context adds substantively to learning and is accessible to all pupils. Weigh up the balance of time, cost, and engagement value alongside the key learning objectives the context supports.

Questions to consider:

1. What is it I want pupils to know/understand/do?
2. Does the context support this? How?
3. Are there potential challenges with this context, such as a risk of unfamiliarity, segregation, or misunderstanding for some pupils?
4. When and how should I introduce the key concepts, processes, or skills I'm trying to teach in relation to the context (pre-teach, during, after)?
5. What connections does this context have with the wider curriculum (science and beyond)? How can I make these connections explicit?
6. How can I consolidate learning from the context?

4b. Engage with science concepts, supported by virtual models

Scientific phenomena can sometimes be complex and hard to visualise. A model is a way of representing these concepts in a simplified and accessible way to make it easier to comprehend, such as a model of the digestive system or water cycle.

Virtual models relate to the real world by making an abstract idea, concept, or process visible.

A virtual model can take many forms ranging from simulations of the real thing, analogies, illustrations, examples, and educational gameplay (hands-on science).

When identifying whether a virtual model might support your teaching, it can be helpful to think about the following prompts –

Does the virtual model accurately represent the scientific concept being taught?

What are the limitations of the virtual model?

Does the virtual model offer clear, visually appealing, and relatable representations of the concept making it accessible to pupils?

Does the virtual model provide interactivity and engagement for pupils?

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Park Hall Academy CASE STUDY

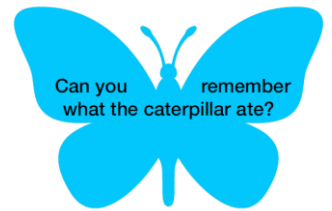
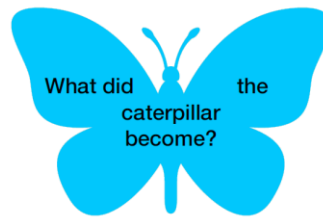
Linking fiction to reality

In the Reception class at Park Hall Academy in Stoke-on-Trent assistant principal and ITT mentor Judith James worked alongside her beginning teacher Salinda Johnson to devise a sequence of learning opportunities that would use the Early Years curriculum to develop subject-specific knowledge in science.

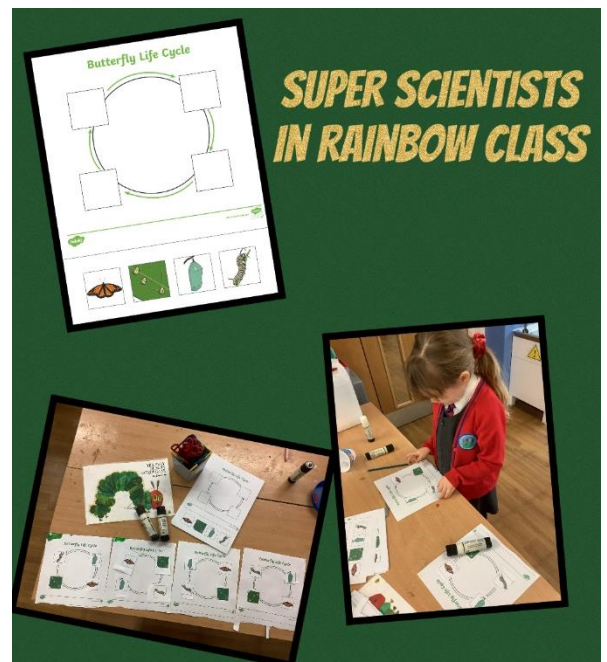
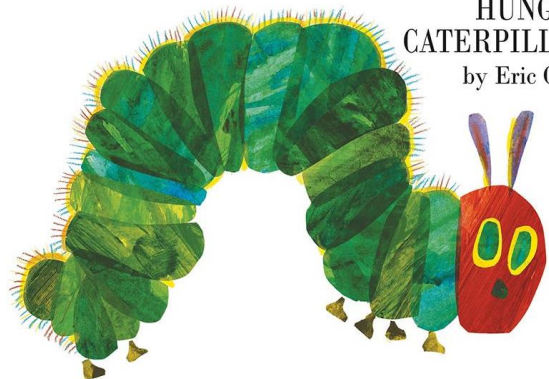
Through their 'Understanding The World' topic the children encountered the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. This text introduces readers to the life cycle of a butterfly, starting from egg to the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. It provides opportunities for children to explore and discuss the concepts of growth, change, and metamorphosis in the natural world.

The story involves the caterpillar eating different types of food, presenting an opportunity to discuss various fruits, healthy eating, days of the week, and counting.

'Development Matters' (DfE, 2023) highlights the importance of allowing children to explore and understand the natural world, including plants and animals. Emphasising that children should be provided with opportunities to make sense of their physical world and their community through exploration, observation, and discussion. As well as stating that children should be supported in understanding the concept of time, including the order of daily events and the days of the week. The story provided children with exposure to words and foods that they may not have previously encountered. They then had an opportunity to access a range of activities independently, each one covering a specific learning objective through hands-on exploration.



THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR
by Eric Carle



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Recommendation 5

Use assessment to support learning and responsive teaching

Assessment in science is useful for both pupils and teachers. For pupils, it can support them to take ownership of their learning, respond to feedback, and aim towards learning goals. For teachers, assessment can help identify pupils' knowledge and experience at the start of a topic, inform responsive teaching, and the planning of next steps.

To implement this recommendation:

5a. Plan teaching that builds on existing knowledge and experiences

Assessment undertaken both before and during a topic has been shown to support science attainment and self-efficacy (your confidence in your ability to do well in science).

When undertaken before a topic, 'diagnostic assessment' can be a valuable tool to uncover pupils' pre-existing ideas and understanding, so that planning can be adjusted to support learning more effectively. This could include spending more time securing foundational knowledge before moving on to new learning or covering complex content that is new to pupils in smaller stages so that it is more manageable.

There are several techniques to elicit current knowledge and understanding at the start of a topic, which can be completed as a whole class, in small-groups, or individually in relation to the topic to be learned. The 'recognise, reveal and respond' process below has useful suggestions.

Recommendation 5a – in the classroom

Recognise what you want to assess	Reading around or discussing with colleagues the common preconceptions and misconceptions for any upcoming science topic can help you plan your diagnostic assessment. Anticipating preconceptions and misconceptions can help you to spot them, take account of them, and respond to them.
Reveal their understanding	Mind map of knowledge related to the topic of focus. Big question answers – pupils answer conceptually challenging questions. Odd one out – pupils discuss 3 or 4 pictures/objects to find the odd one out. Pupils discuss 'positive/minus/interesting' aspects of a scenario statement. Concept cartoons – characters discuss their viewpoints around a science concept. Card sorts – including images, words, and definitions. Label/construct a diagram. Explain a prediction. Give the answer – what is the question? Talk for just a minute on _____. True/false statements.
Respond in your planning	Is key vocabulary creating a barrier for understanding? Would memorisation strategies be helpful? Are there links with previous learning you want to make explicit? Is there prior knowledge you want to activate? Could the same diagnostic assessment be repeated later to show progress?

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Recommendation 5

5b. Monitor pupils' learning to inform responsive teaching, feedback, and next steps

Assessment can also be planned into lessons to inform how pupils are learning to adjust instruction to ensure that learning moves forward. This type of assessment is often called 'formative assessment', which aims to help teachers and pupils recognise learning gaps and decide how best to close them during a topic. It is important to have a clear idea of what learning you want your pupils to achieve so that you can effectively assess their progress against this and respond appropriately.

Clarify, share, and understand learning intentions and success criteria

Be clear about what success in the task would look like and share the learning intentions of the lesson so that everyone has a clear idea of what they are aiming for. Engaging with clear guidelines for success means teachers, pupils, and peers can make better informed judgements on learning progress.

Elicit evidence of learning

Elicit evidence of learning to help assess whether the learning aims are being achieved. You can use this information to decide what needs to be done next to move learning forwards. This could include a few key questions from the teacher, multiple-choice questions that include common misconceptions and distractor answers, and listening in to pupils as they work.

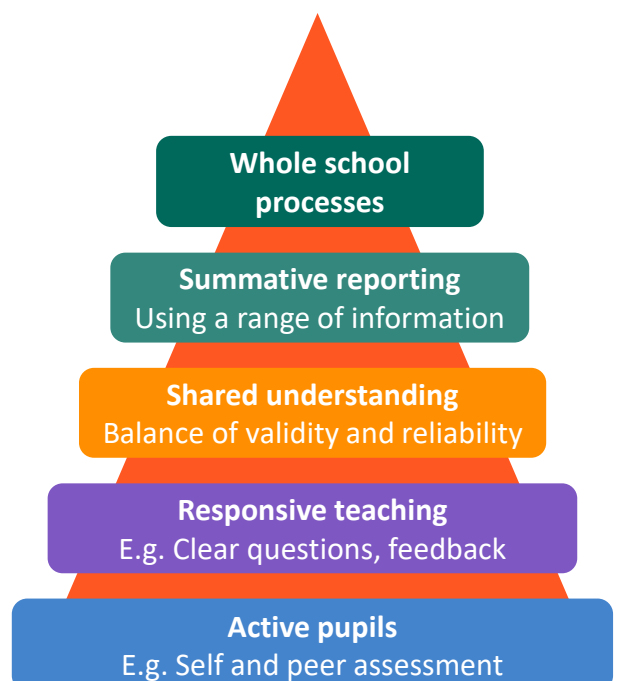
Reflect on any teaching adjustments

Reflect on any teaching adjustments that may be needed to help pupils better meet the success criteria or learn from the feedback you need to provide.

5c. Summarise what pupils have learned against planned criteria

Although there is limited research on effective approaches to assessment in primary science, the Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS) project is a rigorously evaluated approach that has demonstrated a positive impact on pupils' learning of two months' additional progress.

TAPS uses information from formative assessment, collected over time, to inform summative reporting which evaluates pupils' overall understanding at the end of a unit, term, or year. The approach can be summarised using its pyramid tool, which provides a framework to help schools evaluate and develop their primary science assessment processes using a 'formative to summative' model of assessment across the school.



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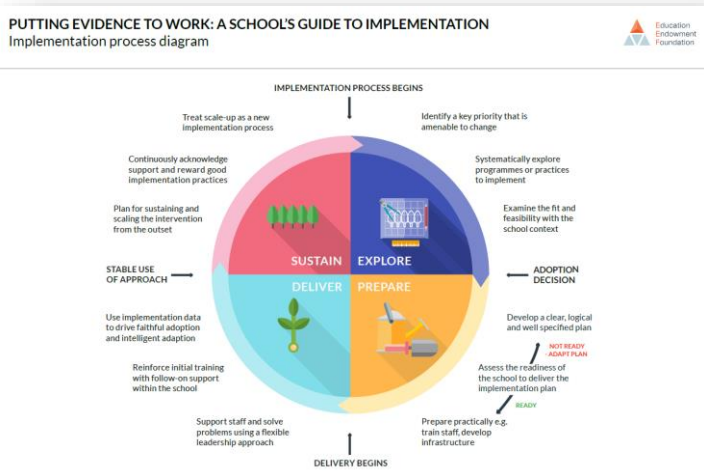
BTSA CASE STUDY

Supporting subject leaders in reviewing and developing their use of assessment

The BTSA *Primary Subject Leaders* programme provides leaders across the St. Bart’s Academy Trust with the opportunity to reflect on the opportunities and experiences they offer to their pupils.

The six half-termly sessions cover curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, culture, systems, and policy. The recent assessment session was a chance for subject leads to consider the recommendations from the EEF guidance report *Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning* and explore examples of what effective practice might look like in their setting.

There was also an opportunity to identify commonalities from the Ofsted series of subject reports, including the science subject report *Finding the optimum* (2023). Subject leads were then encouraged to use the EEF implementation process to follow the steps that effective schools take to manage change well.



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Recommendation 6

Strengthen science teaching through effective professional development, as part of an implementation process

Teaching is a continuous process of development: everyone has the potential to become a better teacher. Providing opportunities for science-specific professional development can harness this potential, which – with the right conditions – can translate into positive science outcomes for pupils.

To implement this recommendation:

6a. Use a range of information to identify development priorities and professional learning needs

Science leads can play an important role in supporting professional development of science teaching. This may include identifying and accessing high quality and relevant training as well as providing a range of internal support such as staff training, co-planning and teaching, moderation of assessment, and the sharing of resources and sources of information.

To identify areas in science teaching most in need of improvement, and the type of information you need to inform your decisions, it may help to answer the following questions:

1. Which areas of pupils' science learning need strengthening? What evidence is there for these?
2. Which aspects of science teaching are teachers finding most challenging? Is this reflected in pupils' learning?
3. Are teachers using assessment effectively in science lessons? How is this impacting teaching?
4. Do teaching plans and content support delivery of a well-sequenced curriculum?
5. Which areas of improvement will be most impactful to pupils' learning?
6. Does the support required for this align with senior leadership strategic goals or the school development plan?

6b. Consider key features of high quality professional development to plan or evaluate provision

High quality professional development should:

- **build knowledge** – consider the amount of information that can be reasonably handled in one go and revisit to support recall;
- **motivate staff** – empower teachers to set their own goals to achieve as an outcome of the training and demonstrate a robust supporting evidence-base so they can trust it; once implemented, positive reinforcement can encourage continuation;
- **develop teaching techniques** – show teachers how to integrate the approach into their practice using modelling, rehearsal, peer support, and delivery, with feedback, to hone technique; and
- **embed practice** – support purposeful plans and accountability, to use techniques, monitor progress, and reinforce implementation.

6c. Reflect on senior leadership support from the strategic to the classroom level

Ways in which a science lead can be supported are:

- Science is included in the school development plan;
- Science features on the school's professional development plan;
- Science leads have appropriate time to fulfil their leader role;
- Science leads are able to access science-specific professional development to support their role; and
- Systems and processes empower science leaders to support teachers and monitor need.

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The latest EEF Guidance Report



BTSA CASE STUDY

Core Five Science Network Meetings

The BTSA Core Five (originally Core Four) network meetings first began in November 2013 when we were asked by Stoke Local Authority to provide training that would prepare primary schools to deliver the revised National Curriculum.

The result of this was the creation of our four networks facilitated by Specialist Leaders of Education and aimed at supporting subject leaders of English, Maths, Science and Computing.

These termly sessions continue today and in Autumn 2021 we added Religious Education to the Core 'Five' offer. This method of networking has been featured in several education publications as a best practice case study and the collaborative approach has given hundreds of attendees evidence-based ideas to take back to their own settings to share with colleagues.

With over ten years of experience we used the Core Five model to create our St. Bart's learning networks for year group practitioners and our foundation subject networks for staff that have curriculum responsibility for the wider subjects. All of our subject networks ensure improvement by:

- Defining a core entitlement to knowledge
- Developing high quality resources
- Building professional expertise
- Creating a community of improvers

CORE FIVE

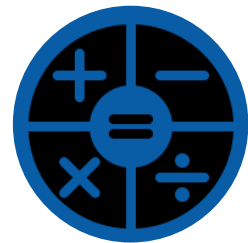


“The power of collective capacity is that it enables **ordinary** people to accomplish **extraordinary** things.”

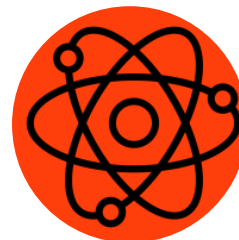
Michael Fullan



ENGLISH



MATHS



SCIENCE



COMPUTING



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Great Science Toolkit

Giving direct support when pupils are working scientifically

The University of Manchester has been working with a range of sponsors and supporters in a collaborative known as the **Great Science Share for Schools (GSSfS)**.

They have recently released a new toolkit that brings together resources to support pupils when engaged in working scientifically. At all points in the process, GSSfS can build pupil's confidence when asking questions, making predictions, analysing data, drawing conclusions and sharing outcomes.

The toolkit is a set of templates and talking prompts that can be displayed and be made available for pupils to use regularly when working independently and in groups.

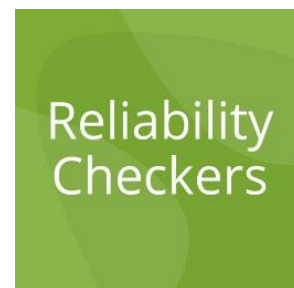
They are designed for different age groups of 5-7, 7-11 and 11-14 years. All are designed to enhance inclusion and quality.

The resources include –

- 6 creative ways to inspire great scientific question-asking
- 3 age-specific prediction prompts
- A reliability checker to support pupils in discussing the trustworthiness of information they gather
- 3 age-specific conclusion creators
- 2 share prompts (a spinner and a dice)
- 6 talking prompts

You can download all the resources for free by visiting -

<https://www.greatscienceshare.org/great-science-toolkit>





Learning to grow

Thyme
Chillies
Peas
Flat leaf parsley
Lemon balm
Dill
Mint
Basil
Cilantro
Garlic
Onion
Carrot
Cucumber
Tomato
Zucchini
Pumpkin
Squash
Beans
Peas
Lentils
Chickpeas
Broad beans
Peas
Lentils
Chickpeas
Broad beans

Sustainability

Our Ongoing Journey

Sustainability

Case Study: *Community Engagement at Whitchurch Federation*

Continuing our series looking at ways our Trust schools are tackling the issue of sustainability, we hear from Emma Coxon from Whitchurch CE Infant and Nursery Academy in Shropshire.

Here at Whitchurch, we aim to support the children in recognising what the environment needs to be a sustainable place for our community and beyond. The children, view their roles as global citizens and the important part they play in creating a sustainable future. Children have been selected to become 'Eco Warriors' – these children act as advocates for their classes to ensure our school pledges are demonstrated.

Our aims in school are to:

- **Reduce food poverty in the local community**
- **Help children to connect to open space and natural materials**
- **Develop a culture of reduce, recycle and reuse**
- **Support families in making healthy life choices**
- **Create more green spaces in and around school including wildlife areas**

Reducing food poverty in the local community

We are working with local businesses as part of the Neighbourly scheme to reduce food waste. We collect twice a week from local shops, and families are invited to come and take what they need. We have also created a pantry. This serves as a mini food bank. Families in need receive a fortnightly food parcel; this is again provided by local supermarkets. Following a successful grant application to the scheme we received £1500



which will be used to develop a community garden, offering surplus produce to the community.

Last year we saw a very successful garden project in our Nursery. We shared produce and offered a plant exchange and seed swap. We will continue this in the spring.

Sustainability

Case Study: *Community Engagement at Whitchurch Federation*



Helping children to connect to open space and natural materials.

We recognise the importance of nature, and the connections children make whilst exploring. We ensure classrooms and play spaces have flowers, herbs and plants available. We also encourage children to use the green spaces within our school. We have a well-established Forest School area which the children use regularly, developing an intrinsic motivation to be at one with nature. It is hoped these opportunities will lead to a lifelong love of the outdoor world and green spaces.



“We have invited local preschool families to share the forest space with us through weekly sessions allowing the wider community to connect with green space.”



Sustainability

Case Study: Community Engagement at Whitchurch Federation

Develop a culture of reduce, recycle and reuse.

We actively encourage children to recycle materials, we have fruit waste containers for break time and use a compost bin. We harvest rainwater to water the plants and have a uniform swap shop allowing families to reuse uniforms instead of buying new – helping the environment but equally helping families. We have a clothes bank on site as well as paper recycling bins in classes. A previous project we participated in was collecting crisp packets. These were turned into blankets for the homeless. Another project focused on single use plastic.



Support families in making healthy life choices.

As part of the Neighbourly scheme grant, we aim to run healthy eating cooking workshops in the summer months.

We are also supporting families by working alongside the parenting team to deliver sessions. We actively encourage walking to school.



Create more green spaces in and around school including wildlife areas.

The grant will be supporting us in doing this by creating diverse habitats to attract wildlife. We are looking to plant wildflowers as part of a reading garden.

We are also participating in the big bird watch again this year.



Sustainability

Case Study: Refillable glue sticks at Cranberry Academy

Why choose refillable glue sticks?

Reduction of Waste: Refillable glue sticks typically come with reusable cartridges which can be returned to the manufacturer for refill or re-use or recycling dependent on condition. This reduces the amount of plastic waste generated compared to single-use glue sticks, which are difficult to recycle due to glue residue and different types of plastics used in construction. Whilst some glue sticks are branded as recyclable, there are currently no councils in the UK who can do so.

Consideration of the use of glue sticks will also identify areas for reduction in usage. Do worksheets need to be stuck into books? How are iPads being used to ensure minimum sticking into books?

Energy and Resource Conservation:

Manufacturing single-use glue sticks requires resources such as plastic and energy. Refillable glue sticks generally have a more durable design and only require replacement cartridges, which typically use less material and energy to produce than entirely new glue sticks. This conservation of resources helps reduce the overall environmental impact of the product. Used refills can be returned to the supplier for re-use, ensuring that maximum resources are kept in use.

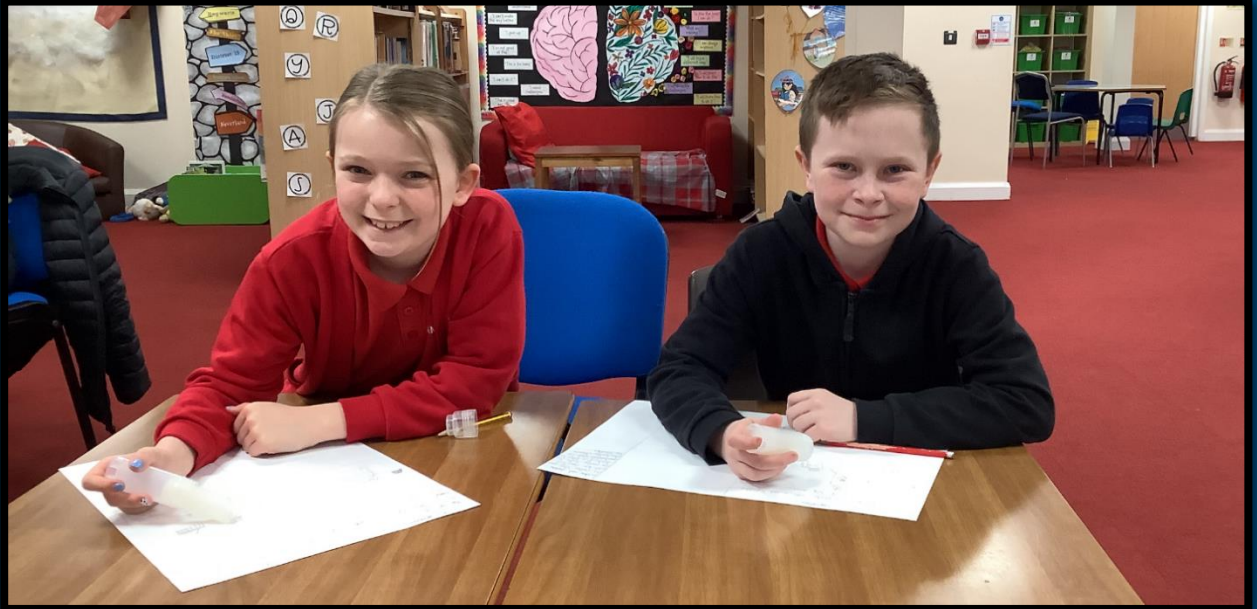
Transportation Impact: Refillable glue sticks often come in larger quantities or as kits with multiple refills, which can reduce the frequency of transportation needed to supply consumers. Fewer transportation trips mean lower emissions from vehicles, contributing to lower lifetime carbon footprints associated with the product.



Long-Term Cost Savings: While the initial cost of purchasing a refillable glue stick may be higher than that of a single-use glue stick, over time, the cost of purchasing refill cartridges is usually lower. This can result in long-term cost savings.

Sustainability

Case Study: Refillable glue sticks at Cranberry Academy



Encourages Sustainable Practices:

Using refillable products offers pupils a real-life context for sustainability and an opportunity to understand the positive impact of a circular economy. Where pupils feel ownership of the product, they are more likely to take care of it, leading to less waste due to lids being left off.

The adoption of refillable glue sticks contributes to a reduction in plastic waste, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions, making them a more environmentally friendly and economically beneficial choice compared to single-use alternatives.

Cranberry Finance Officer Jayne O'Brien explains: *"In May 2023 (ready for September 2023) we placed an order for the U-Fill clear glue sticks, and the refills, from Nexus TEC Limited. We ordered 300 U-Fill glue sticks at 40g each which cost nothing, because at the same time we placed the order for the refills. The refills come in packs of 50 at a cost of £74.50 each, we ordered 12 packs at a cost of £894.00.*

We have not had to order anymore yet this academic year, and looking at stock levels we will not need any more for the rest of this academic year, this will more than last. In the past we have ordered Pritt Sticks from ESPO. The costs of these are £183.10 for 43g x 200 glue sticks. So, for 600 which would be the equivalent of above amounts ordered from Nexus the cost would be £549.30. However, these are not sustainable, and we would have had to order more of these throughout the year to keep us going for the whole academic year, 600 Pritt Sticks would not last a whole year for 439 children."

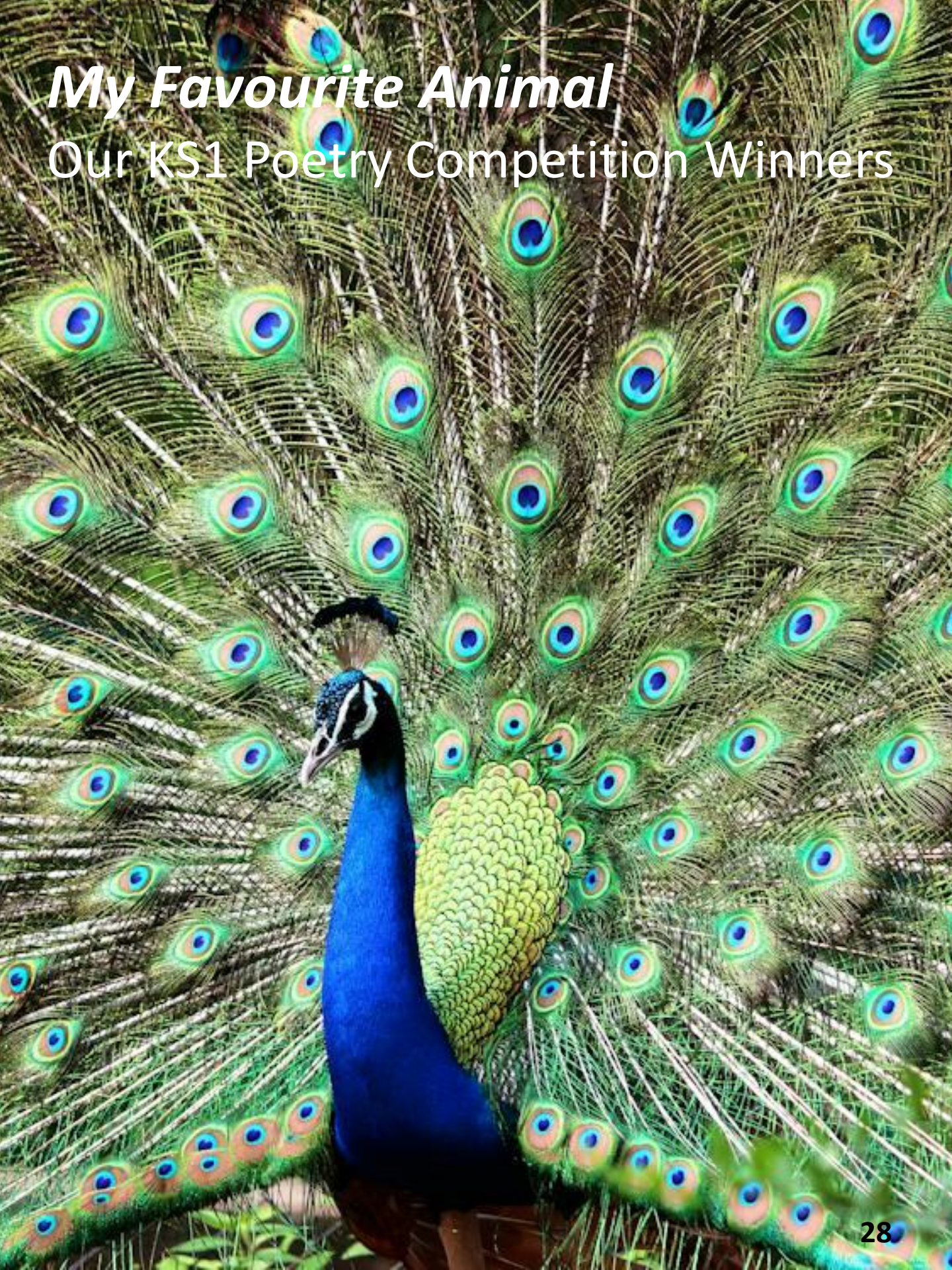
Actual glue stick expenditure at Cranberry in previous years:

2021 – £1289 (approximately 1400 glue sticks)
2022 – £1550 (approximately 1600 glue sticks)

In addition to reducing their impact on the environment, the use of consolidated ordering in the Cranberry case study shows how additional spending can be avoided and ensures that the correct amount of products are purchased, by avoiding incremental purchasing.

My Favourite Animal

Our KS1 Poetry Competition Winners



My Favourite Animal

Our KS1 Poetry Winners

Our recent poetry competition was judged by Booker prize 2023 long listed author and Seamus Heaney prize winning poet **Sian Hughes**. Commended entries were Abubaker from St. Saviour's C of E Academy, Olive from Woodcroft Academy, Dulcie-Mae from Priory CE Academy, Amelie from Weston Infant Academy, and Holly from Whitchurch Infants and Nursery C of E Academy.



Dear Young Poets,
I have had a wonderful time reading all your amazing acrostics. Like all forms in poetry the acrostic is really tricky. You have to try and fit what you really want to say into a pattern that might not help you!
I was so very, very impressed with the range of words you used, with the love and enthusiasm you showed for the animals you described, with the funny moments and the serious ones too.
WOW!
Sian Hughes

The Winners

**Aroosh
Ali**
for 'TURTLE'



**Isabella
Wrench**
for 'POLAR BEAR'



**Lydia
Davies**
for 'PENGUIN'



**Ivy
Lawton**
for 'ORANGUTAN'



Turtle

By Aroosh Ali

Timid

Unhurried

Reptile

Tough shell

Lays eggs in the sand

Endangered



One of my overall winners is a really short poem about a TURTLE. I have a pet tortoise called Sarah who lives in my bookshop, and I thought that the first three words really captured what she is like.

Polar Bear

By Isabella Wrench

Every line is good, and it stays interesting and full of rich words and images all the way to the very end of the last line. That is very hard to do!

Powerful and strong to catch it's prey

One of a kind Arctic mammal

Long sharp claws

Adventurous in the snow

Rapid steps over the ice

Brave predator of seals

Eagerly swims through the icy cold water


Awesome white coat to camouflage in the snow

Roars loudly to show its strength

Penguin

By Lydia Davies

Perfect penguins playing peacefully
Even in cold places penguins' hearts are warm
Neatly lining up for their next game to enjoy
Go! Go! Go! Glide! Glide! Glide!
Under the gorgeous glistening moonlight they snuggle
Interesting species that have lots of diving techniques
Not all penguins have teeth! How fascinating!

A photograph of a penguin, likely a King penguin, standing on a snowy surface. The penguin has a black head and neck with a white patch on its forehead, a black back, and white underparts. It is facing left.

What I love about this poem is the use of repeating sounds inside the lines, the different kinds of sentences in there, and the great use of repeated words in the middle to change the speed of the reading.

Orangutan

By Ivy Lawton

Originate in rainforests

Round faced

Agile

Nimble

Great Ape

Upside down dancing

Tarzan of the rainforest

A clever mammal

Naughty sometimes

The line that goes 'upside down dancing' is really well written, fun, interesting, and memorable. The rest of the poem is good, too, but I loved that image.

Five Principles For Inclusion

A Call To Action



Five Principles For Inclusion

In September 2023, Ben Newmark and Tom Rees produced a discussion paper in partnership with the Ambition Institute entitled *Five Principles for Inclusion*. It built on their previous paper, *A good life: greater dignity for people with learning disability*, by ‘developing a chain of reasoning, articulating a system of belief, and is a call to action’.

The paper gathers examples of places and projects that are responding to the challenges of inclusion as a priority. Tom and Ben say: “If we are to take this opportunity as a society to think again about the place for those with special educational needs and disabilities, we have to be able to make a fuller and more inclusive articulation of what a good life is, and what it could be.”

They argue that this is about dignity, belonging, and the value we place on work and learning. It is about living well in our communities and societies, and creating communities defined by an ethic of belonging.

Principles for Inclusion

The *SEND Code of Practice* defines inclusion as the ‘progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation’. School staff need to be continually identifying and removing anything that gets in the way of all children accessing high quality education.

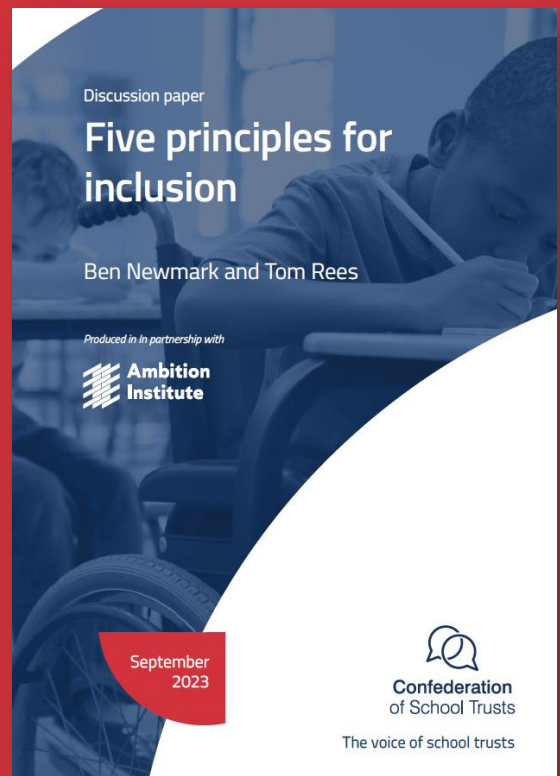
The Five Principles for Inclusion are:

- **Dignity, not deficit**
- **Greater complexity merits greater expertise**
- **Different, but not apart**
- **Success in all its forms**
- **Actions at all levels**

On the next page we expand on what each principle means.

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community.

Article 23, United Convention on the Rights of the Child



To read the full discussion paper online click on the image above.

Five Principles For Inclusion

Dignity, not deficit

Difference and disability are normal aspects of humanity – the education of children with SEND should be characterised by dignity and high expectation, not deficit and medicalisation.

The challenge for schools

Labels can become self-fulfilling prophecy, with low expectations resulting in poor outcomes (Jussim & Harper, 2005). Whereas labels and categorisation can lead us to reach too quickly for provision that is “additional and different”, this principle emphasises the need to demand higher expectations of teaching for those who need it most. This requires us to strengthen the main teaching offer and to ensure that high quality teaching is itself the intervention.

Greater complexity merits greater expertise

All children deserve a high-quality education – where extra support is needed, it should be expert in nature.

The challenge for schools

Children with SEND typically makes less progress than their peers, yet they are often taught by less qualified staff. This is back-to-front. In many professions, the hardest tasks are reserved for those with the greatest expertise.

Professionals in the most inclusive schools and systems are recognised and rewarded as truly expert practitioners. They are given the time and resources they need to meet the needs of the children they are responsible for and to. Their leaders see their work as central to the institutional goals and are as deeply invested in the educational and social progress of children with SEND as they are in the progress of children without.

Different, but not apart

Encountering difference builds an inclusive society – children with different learning needs should be able to grow up together.

The challenge for schools

Schools can create proximity, by prioritising integration both within mainstream schools and between specialist and mainstream provision. Achieving the right balance is hard. Specialist provision is necessary for some children. This can (but does not necessarily) reduce the chance of relationships being formed between children with SEND and those without. Building regular interaction between mainstream and specialist settings can be challenging, and requires determination and commitment from school leaders.

Success in all its forms

Success takes many forms – we should value and celebrate a wide range of achievements, including different ways of participating in society.

The challenge for schools

To do this meaningfully, schools need to pay close attention to the voices of all those who attend them, and to hear the ambitions of young people and their families. In doing so, schools can broaden their conception of good lives and open them up to more people. They can enrich communities by showing the importance of noticing and celebrating the achievements of all members, and not just a constructed elite. They motivate everyone to participate.

Actions at all levels

Change happens from the bottom-up as well as top-down – everyone has the agency and a responsibility to act.

The challenge for schools

Schools contain high levels of expertise and with sufficient resolve and direction have the ability to better include more children. Yet many teachers don't feel confident supporting learners with SEND. School leaders can make sure that the training they provide is based on the best available evidence.

Championing The Change

Wildlife and Birdcare, Stoke-on-Trent



Championing The Change

Wildlife and Birdcare in Longton, Stoke-on-Trent is an industry, life and social skills training centre for people with autism, diverse or additional needs. CEO Sammy Holman explains how the business came about and how it is supporting young adults in the local area to secure employment opportunities.

"I am Sammy, autistic CEO of Wildlife and Birdcare Nature Recovery Project CIC. I founded WBC in 2022 with my wife, Alex. In 2021, the Government launched the Environmental Act and Biodiversity Net Gain to help nature recover and leave it in a better condition than when we first found it.

Since our launch we have created a business around my hobby, which is carpentry. I am what you might call a 'DIY dabbler'. We both have a huge love of nature and feel very strongly about saving it. We wanted to make a difference, not only to nature, but also to other people like me who are autistic, or have a learning disability.

Both our parents were Special Needs teachers, and my dad was a master carpenter. We did not want to be just another manufacturer, we wanted to make sure we were creating habitat homes that were compliant, safe and FREE from chemicals.

We consulted with the experts and charities who look after the welfare and survival of nature, and together we formed a plan. In just over a year, we have added 10 people to our team and opened a therapeutic on the job sub-contracting work training centre in Stoke-on-Trent.

Every day we teach young adults with additional needs the industry and life skills to help them become work ready with the main aim of obtaining full or part-time salaried employment."



WBC is a community interest company that supports individuals with additional needs by providing therapeutic on the job placements where they can experience real demanding work tasks in a controlled, supported workplace environment.

The WBC workshop is a place where daily demands are a reality and learners experience 'the world of work' in the woodwork and print/packing workshops.

WBC are a training sub-contractor for SEND educators. Their ultimate mission and ethos is to teach industry skills and progress their learners into supported employment leading to salaried positions.

All WBC learners experience a 'real work day' as they are taught life, work and social skills.

Championing The Change



“We all have a responsibility to make inclusion real.

To offer more children more chances to feel successful and to realise dreams and aspirations that are as vital and important as everyone else's.”

How can individuals support WBC?

- WBC make British handmade habitat homes made from FSC certified larch from sustainable UK forests.
- They also design, develop and build planters, veg boxes, trugs and industrial furniture.
- They have a range of herb and wildflower gift boxes, seed balls, seed cards and a plethora of wildlife and floral giftware.
- Join the WBC Gardening and Nature Club. Membership is just £10 a year which helps to support the expansion of the World of Work programme, ensuring more young people can access the on-the-job training and ultimately achieve a fully paid job.



How can schools get involved?

As well as selling a huge range of wildlife themed items, WBC also provide schools with uniform, bags, sport kits, aprons and leavers' hoodies. There is also the opportunity for pupils to visit the workshop and take part in art and craft sessions.

Find out more by visiting

<https://www.wildlifeandbirdcare.co.uk/>

or contact WBC on 01782 229129



World Book Day 2024

Promoting Reading For Pleasure



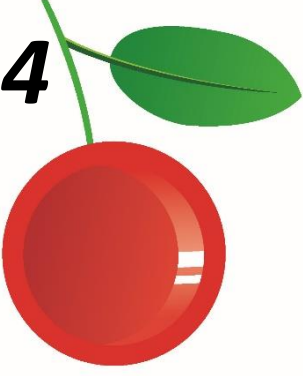
World Book Day 2024



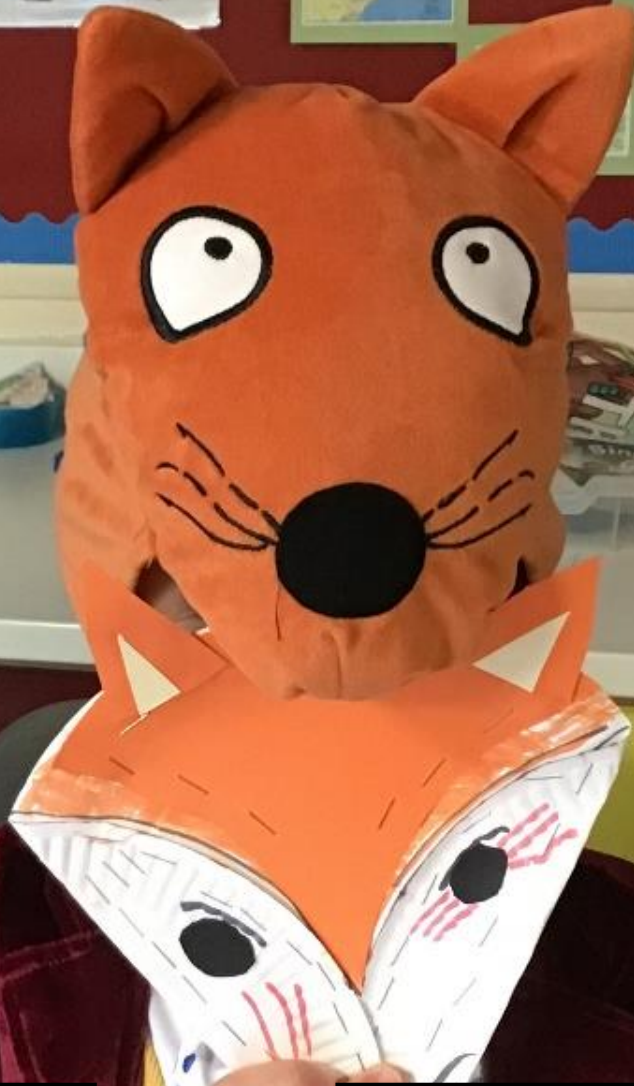
World Book Day 2024

CRANBERRY

ACADEMY



World Book Day 2024



World Book Day 2024



World Book Day 2024



St. Michael's Community Academy



St Michael's Community Academy has been on a positive journey of improvement since the previous inspection. Despite turbulence in staffing, the school, with the support of the trust, has focused on ensuring that there is an ambitious curriculum on offer. The curriculum provides a clear structure for pupils to gain the knowledge that they need to be successful in their learning.

In those curriculum areas that are well established, staff use their secure subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. They make regular checks to make sure that pupils remember what they have learned. In turn, staff use the information gathered from these checks to guide future teaching. Pupils remember their learning securely over time in these subjects.

The school is ambitious for pupils' academic achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children in the early years achieve exceptionally well. They are very well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive in lessons and work well together. Pupils feel able to be themselves because they are accepted by others. Pupils have strong relationships with staff and with each other. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and said that they feel welcome and valued, for example through attending book-share events and family outdoor learning.

“Pupils enjoy coming to this school where support for their well-being is a high priority. They like to be with their friends and to take part in the many activities on offer. Several pupils join the school at different times in the year. For many of these pupils, English is their second language. They quickly feel part of this caring school community.

Pupils enjoy taking part in the many clubs on offer, such as football, yoga and singing. Older pupils are proud to be nominated for leadership roles...they take these roles seriously.”

Overall effectiveness: Requires improvement

The quality of education: Good
Behaviour and attitudes: Good
Personal development: Good
Early years provision:
Outstanding

Inspection date: November 2023



Pupil Parliament



Welcome to St Bart's
Pupil Parliament.

Your voice counts!

The second of our pupil parliament meetings was held at Keele University on Friday 15th March 2024. It was attended by pupil representatives, staff, the central leadership team, and trustees.

The focus for the meeting was Development Goal 15 (Life on Land) and how we can improve the biodiversity in our school grounds, helping to halt biodiversity loss in our localities.

In her opening remarks and welcome St. Bart's CEO Lisa Sarikaya shared the work that is happening centrally to reduce our impact on the environment and how important it is that we become a more sustainable trust, working together to be the best and inspiring others.

In session one, Deputy CEO Sean Thomson asked pupil parliament representatives to share the incredible work they are doing in their own schools towards their pupil pledges.

Woodcroft Academy in Leek have been working hard to save electricity by switching off lights when they leave the room.

Saint Nathaniels Academy in Tunstall are in the process of planting 200 trees, they are turning off lights, picking up litter and EYFS are growing their own potatoes.

Weston Federation in Weston Coyney has a uniform swap shop; they have been litter picking and have a 'make a difference' after-school club.

Nantwich Primary Academy are going to install a water butt to harvest rainwater, they are making sure they don't waste food, are turning off lights, switching off devices, they have put up sustainability posters, have taken part in the RSPB schools bird watch and the big spring clean and have a gardening club to improve the biodiversity on their school site.

Offley Primary Academy in Sandbach have replaced their plastic ketchup packets with a refillable dispenser, avoiding plastic waste. They have been raising awareness about saving electricity and have devices on timers to make sure they are switched off. They have a clothes bank on site, enabling families to donate their

Pupil Parliament

outgrown clothes. They have put up posters to remind parents to avoid car idling to reduce air pollution in the area and have been recycling their paper.

Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy in Longton have organised pupil-led workshops about the UN sustainable development goals and food waste. EYFS have planted potatoes, garlic, leeks and herbs, plus wildflowers to increase biodiversity. They have been turning off vampire devices, working hard to reduce food waste, making bug hotels and are planning to celebrate Earth Day on the 22nd April.

Hungerford Primary Academy in Crewe have been litter picking, shared the five pledges with their school council and took part in the RSPB bird watch.

Cranberry Academy in Alsager have been monitoring food waste and working hard to reduce it, they have been turning off vampire devices and have reduced their electricity consumption. They have taken part in the RSPB bird watch, have harvested rainwater and prepared the allotment beds for spring. They have had recycling bins donated and are putting them to good use. They have been litter picking and are taking part in the big plastic count.

Priory CE Academy in Trentham also have a clothes bank on site. They have a gardening, litter picking monitors and are recycling in school. They have a sustainability section in their library funded by the PTA.

St Michael's Community Academy in Crewe are working hard to reduce food and electric waste.

Meir Heath Academy in Stoke-on-Trent are also managing food waste, have a gardening club and are picking up litter.

Knutton St Mary's C of E Academy in Newcastle-Under-Lyme are saving paper and electricity and picking up litter.



Stoke Minster C of E Primary Academy in Stoke-on-Trent took part in the RSPB bird watch and are feeding the birds every day. They are litter picking and planting wildflowers to help pollinators. They are harvesting rainwater, have a gardening club and are reducing electricity consumption.

Park Hall Academy in Stoke-on-Trent are planting trees, picking up litter and working hard to save electricity.

Kingsland C.E. Academy in Werrington are rewilding some of their school grounds, they have planted potatoes, are taking part in Earth Day and have installed bird feeders as well as working hard to reduce electricity consumption.

St Saviour's C of E Academy in Talke have been working hard to reduce their electricity consumption, picking up litter and pledged to reduce and take home their packed lunch waste.

The amount of progress made towards the pledges was inspirational, with pupils demonstrating a deep understanding of why they are reducing their impact on the environment and the importance of enhancing biodiversity.

Pupil Parliament

In session two, pupils were introduced to United Nations Sustainable Goal 15 (Life on Land) and the types of actions they can take in their schools and how to reduce their impact on the environment. This might be picking up litter, reducing paper consumption and avoiding printing, composting food, and avoiding food waste. We then considered what they can do to enhance the biodiversity in their school grounds, inspired by the biodiversity work at Keele.

To further inspire the pupils, Sammy and Daniel from Wildlife and Bird Care joined us to explain why providing food and habitat for pollinating insects is vital. Sammy explained how without this, food plants will not be pollinated, and crops will fail, leading to food shortage. So, in looking after these little insects, we are protecting our own future too.

With help from Sammy and Daniel, and investment by the trust, pupils created their own pollinator houses (for solitary bees) to take back to school, to improve the biodiversity of their school grounds. They will site them above ground in an area with wildflowers, to ensure the solitary bees can find the habitat created for them.

Our chair of trustees Johnny Anderson and fellow trustee Michelle Johnstone, closed pupil parliament, expressing how impressed they were with the passion and determination of both pupils and staff to make a difference. Johnny said the event was a fantastic showcase. "I was impressed by the amount of work already undertaken. The pupils were knowledgeable, articulate, and enthusiastic. My energy levels rose enormously just by being there! As a passive observer, I was left with hope for the future of our planet."

Michelle said it was wonderful to observe the great work pupils are doing to ensure schools are sustainable and understand the importance of biodiversity. "They all take their responsibilities to care for the planet seriously."



Sammy Holman from Wildlife and Bird Care delivering a presentation on pollinating insects.



Daniel (a former pupil from Belgrave) now works for Wildlife and Bird Care and is photographed here with some of his former teachers.



St. Bart's pupils create their own pollinator houses for solitary bees.

HEADlines

Welcome to our regular feature profiling a different Principal/Headteacher from one of the St. Bart's Academy Trust schools.

Name:

Katie Challinor

Job Title/School:

Principal, Hazel Slade Primary Academy

Why did you choose education as a career?

My parents said I was destined to be a teacher as I played schools constantly when I was little – even making my younger sister sit through my lessons! I have always wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember, and I still see it as privilege to teach.

Where did you first start teaching and in which year group?

I first started teaching in 2001, at a one form entry primary school in Armitage, Staffordshire called The Croft. My first class as an NQT was Year 6 – there was only 17 of them and I still remember all of their names. It is scary to think that they are now in their thirties!

Describe your journey into leadership.

I remained at The Croft for the next 21 years, during which I worked in all of the year groups from Year 2 upwards. The majority of the time I taught Year 6 and Year 2. After a couple of years as Key Stage 1 Team Leader, I became the Deputy Head and SENCo. I loved this role as I got to work closely with more of the families and pupils. In 2022 I was acting head for two terms when we got 'the call'. No one wants an Ofsted inspection as acting head, but we did it! Once I had seen the school through this, my confidence was boosted and for the first time ever I felt that I could be a 'real' Headteacher. I am forever grateful for all of the people who have supported, empowered and believed in me to get me where I am. This is why I feel so passionate about developing others in my team.



What has been the stand out moment of your career so far?

I have two stand out moments – one was being really pushed out of my comfort zone with the Ofsted inspection, and at the end of it having such great feedback, not just about the school but also about me as a professional in a very challenging position.

The second one was the Coronation family picnic at Hazel Slade. One of my aims when starting at Hazel Slade was to link with the community more and engage our families. We all worked together to plan a family picnic to celebrate the Coronation. We had the most fantastic turn out, and all of the families picnicked together on the field, listening to the DJ and playing in the sunshine. We all agreed that it had been a really lovely event, helping our families to make memories together that will last forever.

HEADlines

How do you think colleagues would describe your leadership style?

I definitely work best with a team, and I am very fortunate in that the Team at Hazel Slade are amazing!

The staff have said that they feel valued under my leadership and that they like being involved in discussions, planning and ideas.

The staff know that they can come to me with any problem, but if they also come with ideas for solutions that's even better! I try to really see the strength in people and use this to the team's advantage.

We have some very talented staff and I want them to have the chance to shine!

Describe your school using the title of a song.

When I was introduced to the staff at Hazel Slade, they were introduced as one big family, so it has to be 'We Are Family' by Sister Sledge.



Share a dream that you are yet to realise.

My husband and I would love a motor home (our retirement plan!) and travel the coast of England.

What interests do you pursue when you are not at work?

We own a static caravan in Wales, not far from Aberdyfi. We spend many weekends there and make the most of the school holidays. We love being outdoors – especially at the beach. My favourite time on the beach is about 6 o'clock when the beach is quiet and we can get the BBQ out.

What is your favourite staff room drink/biscuit combination.

Our school always has LOTS of lovely food and any visitor that we have always gets offered some yummy treats.

I get through the day with coffee, and I love a malted milk biscuit...very boring!



Vinyl Corner

Ian Hunt

Well, who knew that I had so much in common with Caroline Sullivan from *The Guardian*? 'Eat to the Beat' is one of her favourite albums too. Ah, Debbie Blondie – formative years. The first single I bought with my own paper round money was 'Heart of Glass' by Blondie, 1979. I played it until I wore it out.

*Once I had a love and it was a gas
Soon turned out had a heart of glass
Seemed like the real thing, only to find
Mucho mistrust, love's gone behind.*

Lyrics we can all relate to at some point in our lives – Elizabeth Woodcroft, you have a lot to answer for.

However, I digress. 'Parallel Lines' was the more critically acclaimed Blondie album, almost definitive many would say and it's hard to argue with the quality of 'Heart of Glass', 'Hanging on the Telephone' and 'Sunday Girl', again all of which I have as singles, But, that notwithstanding, my grandparents did not buy me the vinyl of 'Parallel Lines', they got the album 'Eat to the Beat' for me for Christmas. Which was a big step up from the Abba 'Gold' cassette from the Christmas before!



I was very fortunate to have my Grandparents in my life for a very long time and they were instrumental in moulding me into the person I am today. My grandad was to me a hero who survived being taken as prisoner by the Germans at the battle of El Alamein. When I was younger, I was fascinated about the scars on his legs when he wore shorts in the summer - the remnants of the bullet wounds which led to his capture. I think the stories he told began my fascination with the Second World War and history in general. He was one of the kindest and gentlest people I have known. It led to my aversion to armed conflict and my degree in Peace Studies from the University of Ulster in London/Derry. Jaw, jaw must be better than war, war. My concern is that the way things are heading we will look back on this period since 1946 as a golden age of peace and the current situation in Europe with Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Palestine, America and China are worrying to say the least. Maybe I am longing for a simpler time with less worries and concerns where it seemed devastating at 12 years old that Elizabeth Woodcroft dumped me.

The standout track for me on 'Eat to the Beat' was 'Atomic'.

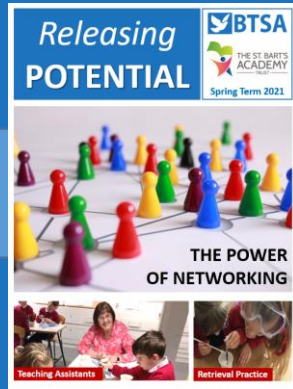
Atomic

Oh, atomic

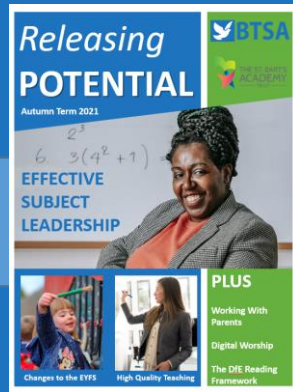
Oh

Give it a listen – you won't regret it..

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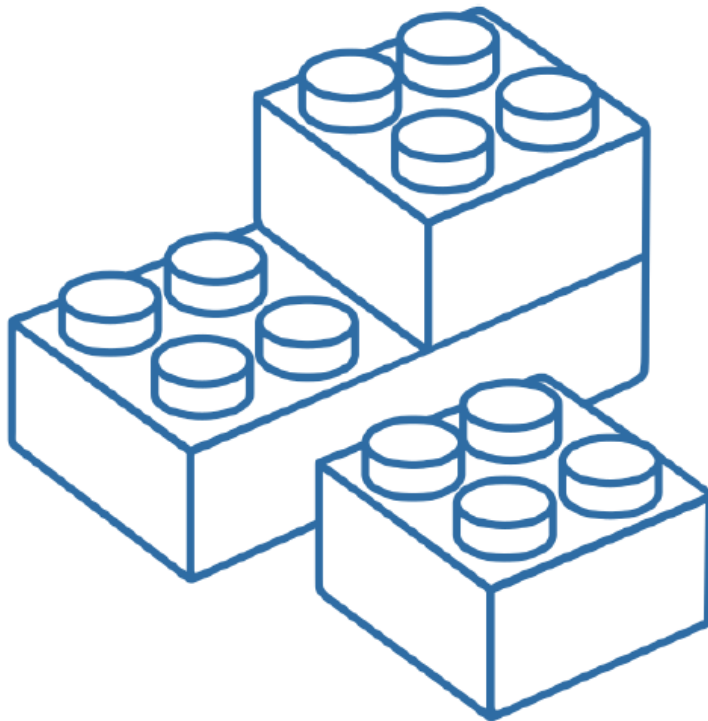
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