

ELT News

Issue 1, February 2021



Welcome to the first ELT newsletter. It will inform you of some of the amazing things that are happening in our schools within the Trust. Please enjoy a brief read. In this edition we will summarise a few of

the achievements of last year to set the context for the future.

Our organisation

Vision and values consultation

Our culture is closely associated with our values, vision and behaviours and we undertook a review of these during the autumn of 2020. Across the leadership of both Esher High and St Andrew's Primary schools and the central team what transpired was a high degree of commonality and a wish to clarify and articulate these three aspects of our organisation. The vision is summarised as:

'Every school in the Trust will flourish whilst ensuring a strong ethos of support and collaboration. This is based on the unshakeable belief that children learn through all aspects of their daily lives and that their values and knowledge, experiences and habits are as important as their academic qualifications.'

We are in a strong position to now build on these foundations and enable the schools in the Trust, while retaining their own individual

character, to align themselves around these common beliefs.

What's in a name?

Over the past year we have sought to rename the ELT, retaining the letters, while providing a break from the location of Esher embedded within it. In autumn of 2020 we succeeded in securing the name 'Enlighten Learning Trust' which we believe summarises our wish for the students to be equipped through their learning while our staff help bring a sense of purpose to their lives. We will still be known as the ELT in our communication and we will be launching a new website to reflect this at the end of February.

Technology shift

We have undertaken a significant investment in technology over the course of the year. Through updating our system to Microsoft 365 we sought to both improve how we work, and also transform the way we teach. Little did we know at the time that Covid was around the corner and three periods of lockdown. We are now using Teams successfully in both schools and children are enjoying live lessons, recorded resources and dialogue with their teachers in ways that were unimaginable a few months ago. This shift has brought a few challenges and the timeframe has been enormously condensed, but we are in a very strong position and moving forward rapidly.

Ofsted visit

It seems a world away, yet in the spring of 2020

Ofsted visited St Andrew's Primary school and judged the school to be 'good'. This was a fantastic endorsement of the hard work by the team at the school, led by Bethan Willetts, Headteacher, who have significantly raised the standard of the children's experience there over the past few years. A quote that summarised many of the findings stated:



"Pupils are rising to (the) challenge knowing that all staff want the very best for them. This can be seen in many examples such as their good behaviour, the descriptive writing in their books and the artwork on display".

Our students

Life in a time of Corona

Throughout the summer and autumn we have been responsive and proactive in how we support our children with their learning. We made the shift to remote learning during the first lockdown swiftly and both schools enabled as many students as possible back in at the earliest opportunity when it was safe to do so in June. During the autumn term we adopted carefully planned, realistic and thorough changes to our procedures and this supported high levels of attendance and very low levels of Covid infections in our schools. This term has seen a rapid move to live lessons exclusively at secondary phase, and a blended approach including live, recorded and teacher led learning activities at primary phase. This is proving effective with our students, and popular with parents who appreciate the structure to the days. All this is supported by strong pastoral care and

creative activities to keep our children motivated and engaged at this difficult time.

Care and Support

Throughout the year we have focussed on those who are most vulnerable. Proactive communication, careful planning, creative interventions and listening to their needs have enabled us to really fulfil their potential as much as possible. At both Esher High School and St Andrew's Primary school there has been a strong attendance from our most vulnerable children (alongside critical workers), provision that we as a Trust have been keen to offer.

Our staff

The central team

The central team of the Trust has worked superbly through the recent period and really shown the value of collaboration. We are a small, focussed group and this has enabled an agile response to the challenges all schools faced recently combined with some clear guidance that enabled our staff to focus on excellent provision. Our schools have been provided with Covid policies and risk assessments which have proved invaluable, and been able to work together on shared approaches to the rapidly shifting national context.

Staff in the schools

All our staff have been flexible, imaginative and resourceful over the year which has enabled the children to enjoy high quality learning. Last year we saw the delivery of food parcels by the pastoral team at St Andrew's to their more vulnerable families, and more recently a team of support staff volunteers was recruited to deliver Covid-19 lateral flow testing at Esher High School. During this time, we regularly sought colleagues' views and responded to them as well

as possible, whether it was personal or professional in nature. Both our teaching and support staff teams really have proved to be the schools' most valuable asset, aided by an excellent HR team which really proved its worth when so much in our professional lives was changing. Retention levels are high and we are currently hosting trainees in both schools who we wish to support into the profession.

Looking to the future

We are a successful team which has aspirations to grow and mature. We are excited to be talking productively to other schools at both phases and are confident that we have the expertise and experience to ensure that they will flourish in the ELT as well. Our ambition remains to be a successful Trust in both primary and secondary phases with a local focus and a national awareness that brings about transformational learning for our young people. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch.



Mike Boddington

Executive Headteacher