

CONNECTING WITH CENTRAL OFFICE



Dear colleagues

It has been my privilege to lead the Trust as interim Chief Executive for the past year. Thanks to your endeavour and hard work, we have made real progress.

Please be advised that the Trust Board, the governing body for the Trust, have now appointed me on a permanent basis. Before my appointment, I had commissioned an independent Health Check of our organisation. The independent Health Check has confirmed the potential we all know exists in Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust (FMAT) and highlighted our strengths, but also indicated areas where we need to improve. I am clear that we must do more to engage you in the journey of the Trust. I am determined to ensure that everyone feels that they can contribute to our future successes.

I have two key priorities that will guide much of my decision making for the foreseeable future:

- To improve outcomes for all pupils, including our most disadvantaged; so that they achieve at least as well as pupils in the top 20% of schools similar to our own nationally.
- To enrich our pupils' lives by providing an engaging curriculum offer, including activity beyond the school day.

Working with the Heads of Academy and Executive Team, I have established a Transformation Programme to ensure that we are investing in our staffing, systems and processes and decision making. I will shortly start the process to appoint a permanent Director of Education. That appointee will be responsible for the performance and educational ethos of every school we have, now and in the future. In the interim, I have asked Mark Rhatigan, in his capacity as Senior School Improvement Partner, to start the work to establish our School Improvement Function. Working with the education and support professionals across the Trust, Mark will begin to build our capacity to ensure that our staff and pupils can fulfil the potential that I know exists in the Trust. At the same time, I want to start to change how Heads take more control over decisions that directly affect their school. The Trust Board have decided to strengthen our governance and establish new Committees to focus on our education performance and on how you, our people, are being engaged and supported. There are many changes, but the Transformation programme will ensure that these changes (and their implementation) will be well managed and communicated.

Finally, as we embark on this period of transformation, I want to meet as many of you as possible over the coming weeks. I will be writing to you again shortly, to inform you of when this will happen. I want to hear your views, to listen and respond to your concerns and to capture your ideas for improvements. My aim is, with your help and support, to make Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust a great place to work and our schools great places to learn.

CHRIS STEVENS | CEO

FEATURED INSIDE

› **FAIRFAX** - HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE, SPORTING SUCCESS

› **ERDINGTON** HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE,

› **BOURNVILLE** - HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE, - THE BENEFITS OF STRUCTURED TALK

› **SMITH'S WOOD** - WHEN ADULTS CHANGE, MY PROUDEST MOMENT.

DEDICATED TO DEVELOPMENT; TRANSPARENT IN OUR APPROACH

CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

This academic year, I have enjoyed the privilege of writing and leading the Fairfax Academy Trust Exceptional Teacher Programme. The programme is aimed at recently qualified teachers, in their second year of teaching, more often known as 'NQTs + 1s'.

The programme is a facilitated one that focuses on reflections and self-development. Teaching is a personal skill, very much dependent on the values and personality of an individual and so 'telling somebody' how to become exceptional is a strategy very unlikely to succeed.

In the sessions, colleagues have reflected on their current practice, and considered strategies that are likely to enhance their practice. The sessions incorporate modelled strategies and behaviours that are typically seen in exceptional teaching. Our most recent module, on questioning, was delivered through the use of a hinge point starter quiz, the outcome of which informed activities for the remainder of the session. It is my belief that by experiencing strong practice, it is easier to visualise how it can be implemented into day-to-day practice.

The sessions based around the Teaching for Excellence Model, so far, have focussed on exceptional learning behaviours, explanation and questioning. It has been a real pleasure to lead the sessions. All of the NQT + 1 cohort have engaged and embraced the opportunity to share experiences and strategies with colleagues from across the Trust, and are committed to reflecting and further improving their practice.

I look forward to the next sessions in March that will focus on deliberate practice and modelling and the final session in the summer term on challenge. Well done to all participants. #wearefairfax #positiveidentity

MRS DEBORAH BUNN

HEAD OF ACADEMY



DEDICATED TO DEVELOPMENT; TRANSPARENT IN OUR APPROACH

CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

INTERIM PRIMARY LEAD UPDATE

On Friday 1st February 2019, the Fairfax PE Faculty, along with Mrs D Bunn, Head of Academy, Mr N Philpott, Chair of the Academy Association and members of the Senior Leadership Team had the privilege of attending the Sutton Coldfield Sports Awards. Fairfax was one of three finalists for the Sutton Coldfield Secondary School of the Year 2018 Award alongside Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls and Plantsbrook School.

Throughout the evening we were delighted to see one of our students Chloe Barnes win the award for Elite Junior Sports Person of the Year 2018 for her success in Karate.

The evening progressed and Fairfax were announced Secondary School of the Year for 2018. The team received the award with pride not just for the commitment of its teaching staff but also in recognition of the skill and dedication of our students.

The award highlights the fully inclusive programmes here at Fairfax alongside the House structure and the leadership opportunities. Not least, the variety of clubs and activities in over 13 areas with more than 40 sporting successes throughout the 2018 academic year. The varied PE programme for both core PE, Key Stage 4 and 5 examination groups alongside, the Fairfax individual

sports colours programme in which students are awarded for their dedication and efforts.

The evening rounded off a very positive 2018 for the PE Faculty and we look forward to building upon this success, strengthening links within sport and continuing to offer our students the very best opportunities.

MRS K PALMER | DIRECTOR OF PE



CELEBRATING SPORTING SUCCESS



DEDICATED TO DEVELOPMENT; TRANSPARENT IN OUR APPROACH

CONNECTING WITH BOURNVILLE

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

The benefits of Structured Talk

Ambition is a core value that we share across the Trust: we want the very best for our students. This takes on meaning when considering our Trust's mission - giving students the knowledge, skills and attitudes to excel in modern Britain. I have heard this referred to as 'currency and character'. We believe this starts with giving students the aspirations to achieve, to see new horizons, to be inspired by the achievements of others and have experiences that support them towards their ambitions.

Recently, like other schools in the Trust, our Year 8 students began to choose their Key Stage 4 GCSE options. It was wonderful to see so many families at the event, talking to subject leaders about the courses we offer in our broad and balanced curriculum at Bournville. There are many opportunities for students to pursue different career paths. We spoke to children who have ambitions to work in medicine, engineering and other career choices, considering carefully the options that will give them a platform to realise their dreams.

This followed on from the recent Year 8 event called 'Guess My Job?' where students were given opportunities to explore the day-to-day experiences of different careers with different professionals who joined us at the event, organised by our Careers Lead. Taking the shape of a carousel activity and involving groups of students listening to presentations from people working in a range of sectors, Year 8 listened intently to information about our visitors' roles and responsibilities and typical working days - and also had an opportunity to ask questions and guess their occupations. This was an extremely enlightening and engaging session much appreciated by the year group.

We are equally proud of the opportunities we give to staff to develop in their careers in education. Working with the local Oaks Collegiate and national organisations such as Ambition School Leadership, we now have many colleagues at different career stages who are continuing their career journeys with high-level CPD that will lead to them attaining nationally recognised qualifications.

Ambition means different things to different people and we always take time to celebrate the talent and achievements of our students and staff. Our Expressive and Performing Arts faculty have been searching for the 'Singer of the Year' and recently held auditions which attracted huge

interest across all different year groups. Bournville has a proud tradition of excellence in the arts: our recent Christmas concert was a fantastic evening which saw wonderful musical performances by KS4 and KS3 students, including some very talented Year 7 students who have joined the school this year and are continuing our traditions of excellence. The final for our 'Singer of the Year' competition takes place on Friday 15th February and it promises to be superb.

Another example of the way our students show ambition is through their pursuit of academic excellence. This week a team of four Year 10s will be representing Bournville School at Maths Feast, a national maths competition with venues all over the country. The four students going are Arman Ayubi, David Barte, Malachi Jay and John Scott. Good luck to them all!

Competition is a way of life here at Bournville and it is wonderful to see so many of our students participating in a range of activities and events that not only develop their individual characters but also support them to secure their ambitions.

MRS JO COTTLE | HEAD OF ACADEMY



CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

2019 has started really strongly; students have started back eager to learn. Part of our school mission is to expose students to wider experiences. So far this year students have participated in two events:

Year 7 Visit to Birmingham Symphony Hall, January 2019

As part of our students' cultural learning at Erdington Academy, year 7 went on a visit to Birmingham Symphony Hall to experience a live orchestra in a world class venue in January. Students were privileged to watch the CBSO (City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra) perform a wide range of music pieces from throughout history and different composers which expressed moods and feelings. Linking the musical performances was commentary about the different instruments that form the orchestra and their sounds. The highlight was John Barry's Star Wars soundtrack which we all recognised as an iconic film soundtrack.

Students found this an informative and enriching experience, learning that there is more meaning to Classical music than they first thought.

Student feedback:

"I learnt the different parts of an orchestra and how you need all of them to make certain masterpieces."

"The music has different stories and emotions."

"I enjoyed the different music that was associated with emotion. Sad music and happy music and the difference between them."

"I enjoyed the Star Wars music."

"I learnt that every bit of classical music means something."

"I learnt how music is more than instruments. It has a story."



Holocaust Memorial Day

On Monday 28th January, students at Erdington Academy joined the local community to show respect for the Holocaust Memorial Day. They went to the local YMCA and joined members of different faiths and representatives of the community, who were all brought together by the Reverend Gerard Goshawk. The service was entitled 'Torn from Home' and students were encouraged to empathise with what it would be like to leave their home with nothing and were introduced to different genocides that have occurred. There were extracts read out from survivors from various genocides, and there was a particularly emotive reading of the poem 'Refugee Blues' by W H Auden by a member of the public. Students were very moved by the service and remarked it made them more aware of some of the atrocities that have happened across the world.



Speaking to students, who attended, about these two events, it is clear how these opportunities really enhance the student's thinking and understanding along with providing life long memories.

MR SIMON MALLETT | HEAD OF ACADEMY

CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON

HAJJ LESSON

Having performed Hajj this year, I was asked by the RE department to share my experiences with the Year 11 cohort. I began with verses from the Quran in which God talks about the Hajj and its relevance in Islam. Hajj is what is known as the greater pilgrimage to Mecca and takes place annually. Before beginning the spiritual journey, one must be in a state of 'Ihram'. This is where two white sheets are worn, covering the body signifying equality. There was a live demonstration for the pupils to see what it looks like in person – However for obvious reasons, I kept my work attire on underneath.

Talking the students through my journey allowed me to relive some incredible experiences I had in the Holy lands. One of those has been well described below.

"I remember one night at Muzdalifa with nothing but the sky overhead I lay awake amid sleeping Muslim brothers and I learned that pilgrims from every land--every colour, and class, and rank; high officials and the beggar alike--all snored in the same language." – Malcolm X

As I was lucky enough to perform the journey, I believe sharing my experiences has allowed the pupils to attain a deeper understanding of what they learn in their lessons.

MR T MAHMOOD | TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

Year 11 GCSE Religious Studies pupils recently completed the unit on 'Living the Muslim Life' which included the 5 pillars of Islam. Having taught the unit, pupils were confident with the knowledge and content they need to answer exam questions. However, exceptional religious education practice and pedagogy is a combination of both 'learning about' religion and 'learning from' religion. Therefore, when Mr Mahmood agreed to share his experiences of holy pilgrimage, Hajj, within the context of the GCSE specification I was hoping for a new learning experience that I personally cannot share with the pupils.

Mr Mahmood's lesson combined the facts and content the pupils had learnt in class and brought their learning to life with real life video experiences, photographs and shared memories from a practicing Muslim on how his experiences of holy pilgrimage impacted his life and how it has enabled him to fulfil his duties as a religious believer. Pupils left their room fascinated and able to take their understanding of the five pillars to a new deeper level linking their learning to the real world experiences, with clear mutual respect and tolerance for other faiths and beliefs.

MISS A TURNBULL | ASSISTANT HEAD TEACHER - TEACHING AND LEARNING



CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

WHEN THE ADULTS CHANGE, EVERYTHING CHANGES

This January staff at Smith's Wood introduced themselves to the work of Paul Dix, founder and director of Pivotal Education. Our training focused on providing an introduction to Dix's much celebrated publication 'When the adults change, everything changes'. The book is described, on its jacket, as 'A must-read for anyone who works with children or young people' – it certainly is!

When the adults change, everything changes, bucks the trend of most behaviour related writings in that it is clear that it is far more effective to change the behaviour of adults in a school than it is to try to change the behaviour of the children. As Dix tells us "you can buy in the best behaviour tracking software, introduce 24/7 detention or scream 'NO EXCUSES' as often as you like; the solution lies with the behaviour of the adults. It is the only behaviour over which we have absolute control". Very true.

Seven shifts in adult behaviour that have the greatest impact. Very simply Dix highlights to us the key aspects of our practice that we can shift, with a little thought and consideration, soon resulting in significant gains.

1. Deliberately noticing something new about each child.
2. Focusing positive attention on effort, not achievement.
3. Stopping yourself from telling the children how their negative behaviour makes you feel.
4. Refusing to shout.
5. Introducing more non-verbal cues.
6. Focusing positive recognition on those going over and above.
7. Ending the lesson with positive reflections every time.

Punishment doesn't teach better behaviour, restorative conversations do. This is one of the five pillars of Pivotal Practice. This is certainly something that we are working hard at Smith's Wood to weave into our everyday practice.

Dix reminds us that the positive relationships that you form with students depends on a restorative approach being your default mode. A student sat in detention with

a member of staff that did not issue the sanction does not allow for a connection to be made with the child by the teacher. It does not allow for a calm examination of what went wrong and what both parties can do next time to prevent a repeat. Detentions do not create good behaviour; restorative approaches do.

A restorative conversation is more than a process or a set of questions. The behaviour of the adult lies at the heart of it all. Dix provides some invaluable, practical suggestions to support us in getting it right.

THE MEETING

Small things matter; your body language, the setup of the room, your tone, inflection and attitude will all be read carefully by the child. Office spaces are not ideal for open and honest reflections. Sitting alongside the child or walking and talking can help to remove the fear. It helps things to feel less forced.

Dix's top tips to make a restorative meeting work;

1. If you are not walking and talking, don't sit behind a desk! Leave the door open.
2. Try to focus on the outcome you want.
3. Reserve enough time for the meeting.
4. Resist the urge to take copious amounts of notes. It makes the student feel that their every word is being recorded and is not conducive to thinking and speaking freely.
5. Avoid using judgemental language; it will encourage a defensive reaction in the child.
6. As tempting as it may be avoid picking up at that point on other issues (uniform, make-up etc).
7. End the meeting well – end it positively.

THE RESTORATIVE FIVE

Dix suggest that five questions is enough; have them to hand for whenever you need them. Dix encourages us to remember that in between your truth and their truth is the truth. He suggests the questions below;

What happened? – allow the child to give their account and then offer yours in a non-judgemental fashion.

What were you thinking at the time? – this helps the child to reconsider their actions and replay their thought process.

What have you thought since? – this may allow the child to show a change in attitude or explanation.

How did this make people feel? – it is important that the child has the opportunity to consider others and to think about the impact of their behaviour on other children and adults.

Who has been affected? – with gentle encouragement help the child to see the bigger picture.

How have they been affected? – through this question we deliberately encourage students to have empathy with others.

What should we do to put things right? – it is important that an apology is not demanded. There may be other ways to put things right.

How can we do things differently in the future? – it is likely that the child will meet similar situations in coming days – some prior planning will help them to recognise when their behaviour patten begins. It may help them to be more aware of their poor choices.

Dix suggests that in time this reflective routine might start to be thought about by the child in enough time to prevent them making the wrong choices. You are teaching them to use their conscience.

When the adults change, everything changes really is an excellent read that will change your practice for the better no matter how experienced a teacher you are. It is bursting with strategies and tips that can be simply applied and perfected through practice in any classroom.

Personally, I love this nugget “What would the best teacher in the world do now?” A question that can be continually asked of yourself when faced with uncertainty. Ask this question and you won’t go far wrong.

**WHEN THE
ADULTS
CHANGE
EVERYTHING
CHANGES** PAUL DIX
SEISMIC SHIFTS IN SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR

KATY CRAIG | HEAD OF ACADEMY

FMAT GAMES TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT

GIRLS:

1st: Smith’s Wood **2nd:** Bournville

3rd: Erdington (*however special praise to Jorja who represented Erdington and played against all other 8 opponents individually*).

Chloe, Paige, Tia (Smithswood) and Ella (Bournville) were all unbeaten during the girls event.

YEAR 7-9 BOYS

1st: Bournville A (year 7 team) **2nd:** Bournville B

3rd: Smith’s Wood **4th:** Erdington

YEAR 10-11 BOYS

1st: Bournville B (Year 11 team) **2nd:** Bournville A (Year 10 team)

3rd: Erdington **4th:** Bournville C



CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

'THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE'

Year 11 student Oliver Appleyard speaks to Dean Heeley about how his ambition to be a footballer is coming true thanks to Smith's Wood Academy.

Year 11 student Oliver Appleyard began playing football when he joined us at Smith's Wood Academy in Year 7. Oliver was encouraged in sport at primary school but was not given the chance to develop his skills in football and was never chosen to be a part of any team. It was when a member of our PE staff noticed Oliver's natural athleticism in year 7, that he suggested Oliver should join the school football team as a full-back. Oliver says: "I remember feeling proud that a team wanted me to play for them and from that moment I just knew this was something I wanted to do."

This then encouraged Oliver to pursue his growing football ambitions outside of school and he joined Kingshurst Sporting Boys, a Sunday league team, who he played with for four years.

Last year, Oliver had an open trial with Kidderminster Harriers and then later with Birmingham City Junior Blues team – an opportunity he relished. He was successful with this trial and says: "I couldn't turn down an offer from my boyhood club."



Since then, Oliver has cemented his place in the starting 11 most games with the club this season. Oliver's first match was a pre-season friendly against the Solihull Moors. Speaking about his first match nerves, he says:

"I remember waking up that morning like it was just yesterday. I woke up early because I was so nervous about making a good impression with my team mates." The Junior Boys won the match 3-2 and Oliver was "elated" with the result. "I have never felt a feeling like I did when I saw that winning goal go in."

Oliver now trains twice a week with former footballer Dennis Bailey, best known for his spell at QPR and plays in the Junior Premier League (JPL) every Saturday. He also gets opportunities such as being able to be a ball boy at the first team games, being mentored by former footballers and being able to face teams from the likes of the BCFC ladies academy.







Now in his final months of year 11, Oliver is balancing the demands of fulfilling his football ambition with the expectation of achieving top grades in school. "I understand how important it is to get good grades in school. Smith's Wood has always supported me with my football and is helping me in my preparations for the summer exams. I want to say a special thank you to all the teachers who have supported me with my dream and I hope one day to return to the Academy as a Premier League footballer."



In June 2018, Oliver was officially signed as a Junior Blues player at St Andrews Stadium. He says, "For me, it was the proudest moment of my life, not only signing the contract but sharing the experience with my family, especially my little brother who's never been allowed to go to the stadium before."

SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to improve our communication links and promote our Academies and the Trust as a whole, we would like to encourage all of our employees, Directors, Associates and parents to follow our social media sites. Links to social media can be found on our new websites.

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|  Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust www.fmat.co.uk/ |  Erdington Academy www.erdingtonacademy.bham.sch.uk/ |
|  Fairfax www.fairfax.bham.sch.uk/ |  Smith's Wood Academy www.smithswood.co.uk/ |
|  Bournville School www.bournvilleschool.org/ | |
|  Bournville Primary Provision
www.bournvilleprimaryprovision.org/ | |

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INTEGRITY.

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