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It is now four months since I joined FMAT as CEO and it would be fair to say that a lot has happened during this time! Just some of the activities I have been involved in include:

- Finalising the centralisation of the HR and Finance operations;
- Completing the implementation of the Curriculum Led Financial Planning (CLFP) of FMAT;
- Completing a review of Governance across FMAT;
- Working closely with the Directors of the MAT to shape the future direction of FMAT; and...
- Getting to grips with leading the organisation at a socially acceptable distance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

I have been very fortunate to have so many skilled and dedicated staff working with me across each Academy and within the Central Team. These staff have risen to the challenge that we have all recently faced and their experience will support us all as we move into the next phase of additional students returning to their Academies and the future development of our MAT.

This week saw the return of reception students at Bournville. Whilst I wasn't at the Academy, I have been informed that the staff were as keen to see the students as the students were to see their friends and teachers. We will continue to slowly and cautiously welcome back additional students over the coming weeks and I am keen, as always, to listen to the thoughts and suggestions of all staff at this critical time.

Continue to stay safe and well.

SIMON JONES | CEO



FEATURED INSIDE

- **FAIRFAX** - NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK
- **BOURNVILLE** - CPD - DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING
- **ERDINGTON** - CHARACTER EDUCATION
- ASPIRE TO ASPIRE
- **SMITH'S WOOD** - A TIME DO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY
- DUAL CODING
- **CENTRAL OFFICE**
- DoE /COO UPDATE - TRUST DIGITAL STRATEGY
- DIRECTOR OF HR UPDATE



ENRICHING LIVES; TRANSFORMING FUTURES

CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

In these unprecedented times, it seems a little strange to be writing again so soon, when it feels like very little has changed since our last publication. Schools remain closed due to Coronavirus and Fairfax remains open to the children of keyworker and vulnerable students.

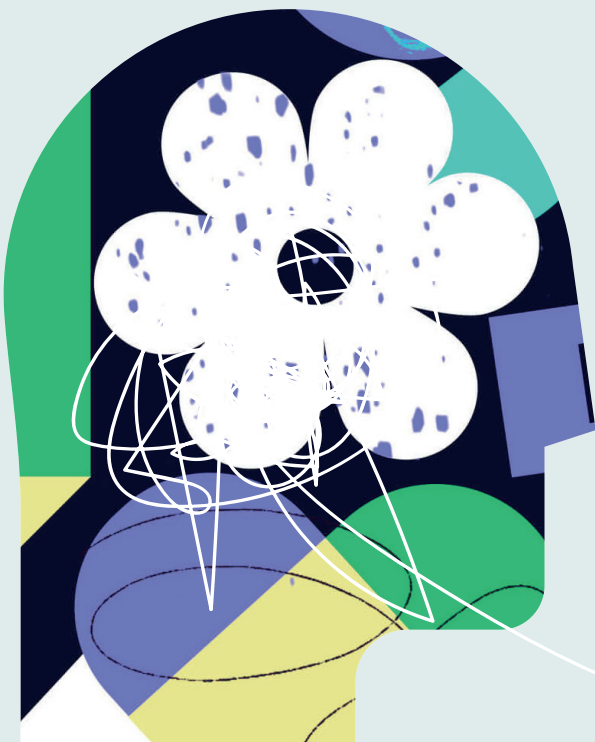
As I write this, it is the beginning of National Mental Health Awareness Week and it seems an appropriate time to raise awareness of mental health issues. Through our weekly keeping in touch survey, students have been flagging any issues they have and staff have been supporting them through what are difficult times. Parents/carers have received signposted support and our educational psychology team are remotely supporting families that need professional reassurance. But these are difficult times for us all, not just the students. Line managers at Fairfax have been keeping in touch with their teams to ensure pastoral support is offered when needed, and this week as part of my electronic staff briefing I was able to share some resources to support staff through this challenging time. We are delighted that the educational psychology team have also offered supervision for some staff as a way of hearing staff concerns and offering some guidance. This week as part of our House communication we are encouraging our students to complete a random act of kindness, such as making a parent/carer a cup of tea.

I am sure most of us will agree, that school being closed has not meant an easy time, or a reduction in workload! Colleagues have shown remarkable strength, some working, parenting and caring for vulnerable parents and relatives. At times I know a number of staff have found this whole period overwhelming, but I have been incredibly proud of the Fairfax team. Staff are working hard to set daily lessons to keep our students in timetabled routines, calling students each week, delivering work, food and sanitary packages and developing the new KS3 Curriculum. Our students have also been working hard, completing their school work, but also, for some of our students, making a wider contribution to society, from assisting with food bank collections, to knitting mask bands for the NHS.

As Head of Fairfax Academy, I would like to say once again how proud I am of the support given to our Fairfax community by staff and most grateful to those who have and continue to work with the school in these difficult times; this support is invaluable and very much appreciated; a big THANK YOU.

Regards

MRS D BUNN | HEAD OF ACADEMY



ENRICHING LIVES; TRANSFORMING FUTURES

CONNECTING WITH BOURNVILLE

CPD - DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

At Bournville we have tried to use these strange times for some good, we wanted to develop staff's understanding of pedagogy and curriculum and felt it was too good an opportunity to waste. We would never have this amount of time again to use for staff development.

We have asked that some CPD is compulsory, for example, all staff have been able to get up to date with statutory HANDSAM courses, such as Safeguarding, Stress at Work etc. Also all staff have completed a short, certificated course on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences); we felt, with the nature of our students and in this climate, it was essential for all teaching and non teaching staff to be aware of the impact of ACEs and have strategies to help students overcome them. We also felt the need for all staff to complete a short course on Dealing with Bereavement so we can support each other and our students on the return to school.

I produced a professional reading list for staff and weekly, have collated some interesting CPD opportunities or blogs and sent them to all staff. I have noticed that many companies such as OU, Trusts and leaders (ResearchED) have been very generous with their CPD and it has been wonderful to be able to share this for free with staff.

I thought about how we could really consolidate previous learning that staff may no longer fully remember – we started with Rosenshine as this is what our 'Teaching for Excellence' model is based on. Tom Sherrington did a wonderful series of Masterclasses on the key aspects of Direct Instruction which I shared with staff. Many reported that they felt this was 'essential CPD'. I had already supplied staff with key chapters of his book, which I rescanned and sent out so staff could remind themselves of our pedagogy. This was key as staff are also using this time for curriculum planning, the two go hand in hand.

We asked staff to send us their 'takeaways' i.e. what they had learned and what they will do to implement it when they get the opportunity.

Along side this, some subject areas are reading a key text in their area, i.e. Maths are all reading Emma McCrea's 'Making Every Maths Lesson Count' and sharing ideas around this in their weekly meetings. English are using the MASSOLIT lecture series to ensure they are expert in the literature texts we teach. We have also asked all SLT to read all, or parts, of Bruce Robertson's 'The Teaching Delusion' which poses some really interesting questions about teaching and learning and how to make this more effective on student outcomes. A wonderful read! We have made sure that our NQTs are continuing to work with their mentors and have regular 'virtual' mentor meetings where they discuss their CPD. This is so important to make sure that they continue to feel confident and upskilled in readiness for returning to teaching. For support staff, we have shared resources and courses and allowed them to develop areas they feel are necessary for their role or directed from line managers. From improving knowledge of Excel to creating bespoke programmes to support individual students with particular needs – staff have really benefitted from this and have said:

'So lovely having time to do this and reflect on it.'

'Can't wait to put it into practice.'

It has been wonderful to see all staff engaging with many different opportunities to develop their practice or learning and their willingness to share it with others.

**CHARLOTTE CROSS | ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER
TEACHER AND LEARNING BOURNVILLE SCHOOL**



CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

In common with all Trust academies, at Erdington we have a reputation for supporting our students to develop in many diverse aspects of life, not just academia. Through our Character Education we encourage our students to develop the qualities and attributes that will support them to flourish in the wider society. We believe that it is vital that the Personal Development opportunities we offer both within the classroom, and as part of our wider curriculum offer, should continue during this unprecedented time.

During this time of isolation, amid concerns of mental health and well-being, we wanted to create some fantastic and engaging activities that the whole household could be involved in. The Pastoral and PSHE team have ensured that the remote learning offer sustains this focus, whereby each week non-academic activities are also set for students to do, many with an important focus of family participation.

Below is a sample of just some of the great activities that have been set:

- 60 second challenge: How many 60 second challenges can you complete in one week? Points per entry, extra points if other family members joined in.

- Kindness calendar: linking to the British Red Cross project - supporting young people learn about the importance of being kind to themselves, and encourage them to share their kindness with others.
- Up-cycling competition: Turn your household recycling into a piece of artwork or something useful. There were some impressive entries – the House and DT team found it difficult to judge and award points!

It has been interesting to see that in a time when society has been forced to become fragmented and isolated, there have been many ingenious ways reported on the news each week exemplifying how communities and cultures have found a way to support one another and come together. Erdington Academy has been no different in echoing this, showing a true reflection of individuals and teams' commitment to the support of others at a challenging time.

It is always a real honour to be part of Erdington Academy.

MR SIMON MALLETT | HEAD OF ACADEMY



CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON ACADEMY

ASPIRE TO ASPIRE

I'd like to tell you about a charity fundraising group called *Gift for Humanity*, a group who donate a small amount every month, to help the poor and the needy irrespective of religion, race or gender.

They are a non-profit fundraising group who contribute 100% of all funds. Their aim is to help the most needy, desperate and vulnerable people around the world. They support national and international projects. They achieve this by providing relief to such people by financially assisting existing registered charities.

For the past few months with Covid-19 the organisation has been supporting bigger charities like As-Suffa who have been providing food and support to homeless people in Birmingham City Centre, along with giving food packs to other needy and vulnerable people in the community.

I myself have joined this organisation by donating a small amount each month to help them support the needy on a bigger scale.

For the past few months it's not just been about giving charity but also raising awareness of what these charities actually do and how they support the community as a whole.

I have been using social media platforms to help promote the work this and other organisations do, also by word of mouth to friends and family to help raise much needed funds to help the less fortunate who have been affected by this tragic epidemic.

It really is a shame to see first hand how many people and families are affected so close to home. The money raised and food given is a life saver for so many people, we really don't know how lucky we are.

There have been a number of charities doing great work during Covid-19 not just here in Birmingham but also internationally.

I have been involved in raising awareness and donating to other causes, such as: Buying PPE for doctors and nurses in Birmingham and abroad, giving food packs and sponsoring an Orphan abroad.

Below is a picture of the latest food drop given to As-Suffa at the end of April to be distributed to the community.

During the last week or so of Ramadhan, the Organisation made an appeal to buy 1000 gifts for Children in poor countries as an Eid Gift, the aim was to raise £10,000. It was to buy a £10 gift per child, within a week or just under we raised more than that amount through the kind donations of people and the hard work of the team promoting and getting people on board.

This time has really been an eye opener making me realise what is important in life and not to take everyday things for granted anymore.

I hope and pray when all this is over, I continue to support charities in the great work they do behind the scenes.

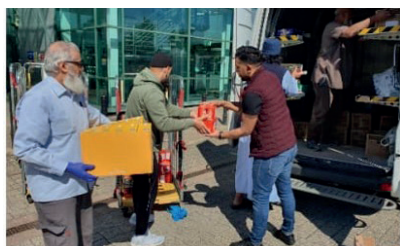
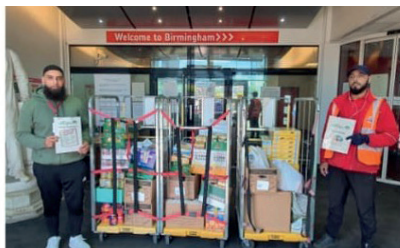
MR Z KHAN | INCLUSION MANAGER



www.giftforhumanity.org.uk
info.giftforhumanity.org.uk

**MAY 2020
CORONA APPEAL UPDATE**

**"Serving humanity to
please The Almighty"**



CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

A time for doing things differently.....

Thursday 7th May saw Smith's Wood Academy's first remote training day and what a success it was! Staff, as they are in all of our MAT schools, are working hard to plan and distribute high quality learning materials for the children they teach and to monitor the welfare and well-being of all students. This is being achieved alongside managing family commitments and working hard to establish a sense of normality for those for whom we love and care for. This is not an easy ask for anyone.

Despite this juggling of demands on our time we felt it important that we still took some work-time to think about ourselves and our own development. The agenda for the training day included; an introduction to the work of Oliver Caviglioni and the theory of dual coding; we then focused on developing our relational approaches to working with young people, particularly linking this to supporting our children through and beyond the national crisis we currently find ourselves in. This session included;

- a Presentation from Dr Holly Ackland (our school Educational Psychologist), discussing key principles of brain development, building relationships, and emotion coaching.
- Recommended wider reading about trauma, fight-flight-freeze responses, brain development, and the importance of building relationships.
- Links to TED talks and webinars about trauma and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on young people and adults in schools.
- Online drop-in sessions with Holly for staff to talk, and ask questions. These discussions were centred around; trauma and the impact of COVID-19 for young people and adults in school; is all behaviour a form of communication?; emotion coaching - what is it and how can we use this to support our return to school?

Materials were planned so that colleagues could dip in and out of them at a time convenient to them; online blogs, pre-recorded training materials by Smith's Wood staff and online discussion forums.

There was so much to learn and engage with throughout the day but a key take-away for me, relevant to us all in FMAT settings, included thinking about our return to school, beyond the taught curriculum.

Relational approaches are vital at all times, but even more so in the current climate. During this pandemic children and the adults with whom they work have suffered significant loss; routine and structure, social connection, opportunities, freedom and control. Some may have suffered the loss of family or friends. They have also felt the challenges presented by increased uncertainty, having more time at home and more time to think.

Through our relationships, approach and interactions, we can help to counteract some of these pre-conditions of trauma by facilitating:

- Predictability and structure
- Mobilisation
- Connection
- Grounding
- A Sense of safety and a sense of purpose

Through our training, I was introduced to the work of Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University and Matthew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College, Worcestershire, who are working to support schools to think carefully about the transition for children back to school.

In their work, they rightly suggest that it would be naïve to think that children will pick up the curriculum at exactly the same point at which they left on the day that school closed. They encourage leaders and teachers to listen to what they children are saying and to consider their experiences over recent weeks and months. Mathew and Barry Carpenter suggest that when students return to school they will benefit from a 'recovery curriculum' being in place. They suggest that the recovery curriculum should be built on 5 'levers', as a systematic, relationships-based approach to re-engaging children with their learning.

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

Lever 2: Community – we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

Lever 4: Metacognition – in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

Why is the recovery curriculum so crucial to our young people? The losses of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom, can trigger the emergence emotionally of anxiety, trauma and bereavement in any child. The impact of these due to COVID-19 should not be underestimated and should be carefully planned for.

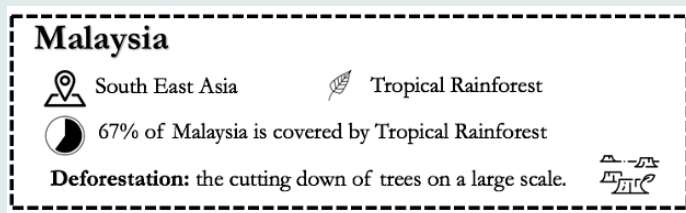
CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

DUAL CODING

Dual Coding is an idea that Oliver Caviglioli has brought back to the forefront of teaching debates. The basic idea behind it is that students show a better retention of key knowledge if they are shown the information using words and images together. By providing students with both words and images together, their retrieval of this knowledge later on is improved because they have made better connections in their working memory.

It is important to use the same icon to represent the same word throughout their learning e.g. location to reduce student confusion and it is also important to think carefully about whether using an icon / image actually improves the student learning or will simply confuse them. By using icons instead of words, this also helps to reduce the number of words on the page, allowing for a better layout and actually reducing the confusion of students. When there is too much information given to students this can overload them and is often detrimental to their learning, however dual coding reduces the likelihood of this happening and improves the ability of the working memory to cope and understand the information provided. (Image to the right – an example of how to reduce the wording on a revision sheet)

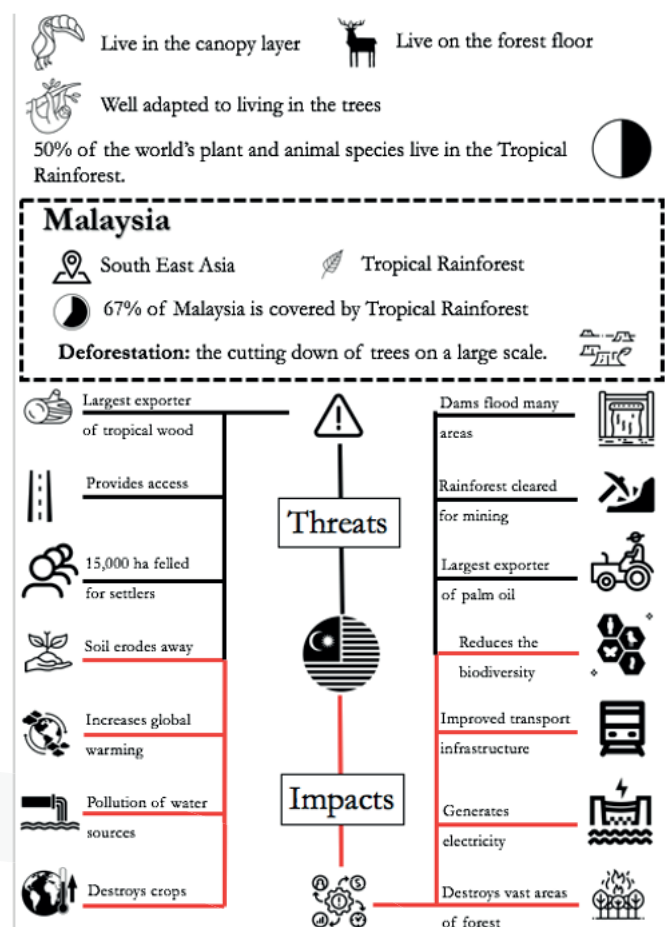
The example below shows how the use of icons can be used to enhance the information given to students, providing them with icons to refer back to.



Dual coding can be particularly powerful when used in conjunction across several parts of the student learning i.e. connecting lessons, revision sheets, tasks sheets and homework sheets together using the same icons to consolidate their learning and the connections that they have already made.

JOTI ODEDRA

ACADEMY TEACHING AND LEARNING LEAD



CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

MARK RHATIGAN | DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Trust's digital strategy has been months in the planning (pre lockdown) but there is no doubt that working remotely has placed technology in sharp focus. It is the right time to ensure that the ICT for students and staff is of the best quality, meets our needs and provides values for money. John Fitzgerald (Chief Operating Officer in the Trust) provides some context and details on the next page but, whatever choices we make, we are committed to ensuring all staff have the opportunity to help shape the strategy.

ICT in schools should be there with the sole aim of improving Teaching and Learning, improving the outcomes of students. Whether this is in the classroom, in the back office or at home, ICT has the ability to enhance teaching and streamline management. It has the ability to enhance engagement of students thus broadening their experience. It also has the ability to save time for teachers and support staff, making their time more productive.

ICT should be embedded in all aspects of the curriculum, therefore being able to have an impact in all subject areas. It should also be informed by and geared towards the Trust's teaching and learning strategy; we want to enrich students' lives and enable students to know more, remember more and be able to do more.

There are three keys to ICT delivering these benefits.

- Investing the right amount of money on the right equipment,
- Ensuring all end users are properly trained in its use.
- Ensure the right software systems are put in place.

If any of these elements are over looked or under delivered it will have a disproportionately adverse effect on the outcome.

The IT world is fast moving with constant innovation. While a lot of this new technology is exciting and has the potential for school improvement it is important to have a structured and aligned approach in all academies. While it is good to use new technologies, it is important to make sure you only invest in technology that can be of benefit to the largest number of users and can be maintained and updated easily.

The Digital Strategy, therefore, is education led and the Heads of Academy have contributed to the strategy and will be fully involved at all stages. Also, all staff will be able to contribute their ideas with representatives from each academy joining a Trust ICT working party shortly; this group will investigate the options available, try out different software and hardware and make recommendations to the Trust Executive and Heads of Academy.

Training is the key to the success of any digital strategy. We are currently in discussions with Tablet Academy, one of the UK's leading ICT teacher training providers, about a package of training that can form part of the Trust training offer for all staff in 2020-21.

MR M RHATIGAN | DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



CONNECTING WITH THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

JOHN FITZGERALD | COO

As Mark has said, it is an exciting time to implement a digital strategy that can benefit all staff and students across the Trust.

Whilst there has already been much investment in IT over the past few years, moving forward further funding will be allocated to updating hardware and equipment in order to standardise all IT across the Trust, whilst maintaining some scope for diversity where needed.

The Trust is already moving down this path with the introduction of IT Managed Services, the planned move to a single Office 365 Tenancy and the move to a single Trust email. These all bring the advantage of a standardised approach meaning consistency of support and resources. The next step is to ensure these resources are fully utilised in the right way and that end users have the appropriate tools to do this.

Whereever possible we are moving towards cloud working. By fully embracing Office 365 all teachers, students and support staff will be able to work collaboratively from any location. New software is currently being installed on the network to automatically create Teams for all classes.

This leaves three main areas to focus on next; Wireless, user devices and classroom Audio Visual provisioning. The user devices can be broken down into two areas, student and staff devices. Within these areas, the type of device needs to be decided on. The ICT working party will investigate and make recommendations about the best functionality for staff laptops and what AV provision could deliver the best outcomes for staff and students.

The aim is for Wi-Fi at all sites to be updated and in place for September 2020 for all sites. This will offer economy of scale during purchasing, a simplified management for IT support and seamless working between sites for all users. With all hardware, whether it is Wi-Fi, end user devices, AV or servers and infrastructure a rolling replacement program will be implemented to ensure the equipment stays at a suitable standard to support the delivery of teaching and learning.

JOHN FITZGERALD | COO



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CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF HR

DANIELLE BILLINGTON | DIRECTOR OF HR



I hope you are all well and had an enjoyable and relaxing half term. For nearly two months, the newly created, centralised HR Department is now operational, and I want to thank the team in situ for all their support and hard work providing HR support to the entire organisation whilst continuing with setting up the HR Department remotely.

On our daily HR inbox call we currently review as a team the e-mails received and agree responses/action going forward. This call is also a forum for the team to keep in touch during these challenging times providing support to each other, learn from each other developing our knowledge and skills and raise any questions/concerns in the round. On 1 June 2020, Alison Jones, HR Advisor, will be joining the team.

Our new office at Smith's Wood is taking shape. Desks have arrived, cables and connection points being installed and computers assigned to each desk (and maybe installed by now). Whilst there is still a lot of work to do to make the office space fully functional, it is exciting to see the transformation of a space.

Like most of you, the team continues to work remotely from home due to the on-going Covid-19 crisis, and any queries will be responded to in due course in order of priority. We would appreciate your continued support during this challenging time. Please remember to contact the HR Department using the following e-mail: hr@fmat.co.uk.

If you have any queries or concerns with the service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stay safe and well.

DANIELLE BILLINGTON | DIRECTOR OF HR

 hr@fmat.co.uk

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 websites.



www.fmat.co.uk/

www.fairfax.bham.sch.uk

www.bournvilleschool.org/

www.bournvilleprimaryprovision.org/

www.erdingtonacademy.bham.sch.uk

www.smithswood.co.uk

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