

A huge amount has happened since the last edition of FMATConnect. The summer break has been and gone, Covid-19 restrictions have come, gone and returned once more and we cannot forget the huge amount of last-minute actions in relation to the summer GCSE and A level examinations.

In this edition, it is clear to see that extensive work has taken place to ensure the safe return of students within all areas of our MAT. Our staff have worked tirelessly to welcome students back and to ensure that they adapt to the new expectations, new timetables and new structures to the academy day etc. Also, we must not forget that during this period of time, new staff have been welcomed into the MAT and it is great to read about some of their thoughts and aspirations within this edition.

Despite the huge amount of energy and time dedicated to the work above, facilities have also been refreshed at each of our Academies, ranging from redecorating to large scale rebuilding work!

I would like to end this introduction by saying thank you to all of our staff and the FMAT governance team for your solution focused approach and exceptional hard work over the summer and autumn term.

MR SIMON JONES | CEO



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CONNECTING WITH BOURNVILLE

MR JOHN DOVEY | DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

POSITIVE ASPIRATION PROGRAMME

As soon as it became clear during lockdown that a full return before September was unlikely, our thoughts turned not only to how we would operate under the many restrictions imposed by COVID, but how we could use the opportunity to change our academy culture for the better. Our first decision was that we did not want to wait until September to get our children back. Our primary phase was able to open fully from June, and in the secondary we decided to invite back all of (the then) Year 10 cohort for one day a week each (two days per week for selected students) from the middle of June, with a similar process for Year 9 from July and half a day each for Y7 and Y8.

As well as giving us a chance to welcome students, settle any concerns, and check on their welfare in person (as opposed to via telephone) this also gave us the chance to begin to make clear the culture and expectations that we expected from September.

September, as challenging as it has been, has been a delight. Despite the challenges and restrictions imposed, such as reduced outdoor time and being in the same room all day, the vast majority of our students (and staff!) have risen to the challenge and calm, purposeful classrooms abound.

The excellent learning behaviours of the vast majority has thrown into even greater focus the small number of students whose backgrounds and life experiences mean that they find it harder to value themselves and therefore value their education. For these children, we have put in place a suite of interventions that will take place this term.

Each strand of our plan seeks to raise aspiration and to improve social skills, behaviour and engagement, with the long term aim of improving each child's belief in themselves, their attachment to school and to education, and of course, their attainment. Most of the interventions will be mainly targeted at Year 10 to begin with, with some participants from other year groups in some. An overview of the initial suite of interventions – which we will call strands in order to avoid the negative connotation of “intervention” and to ensure that they are seen as part the over-arching strategy – is given opposite:

Cherished – an externally run programme aimed at young women.

Mindfulness programme – a virtual programme promoting mindfulness for a small number of young people with anxiety or similar concerns.

Aspiration and respect workshop run by poet (and Young Poet Laureate), boxer and former Bournville student, Matt Windle, aimed at some of our more boisterous young men.

Stage make-up sessions – a chance to try out stage make-up while giving the participants the opportunity to discuss their lives, ambitions, hopes and worries.

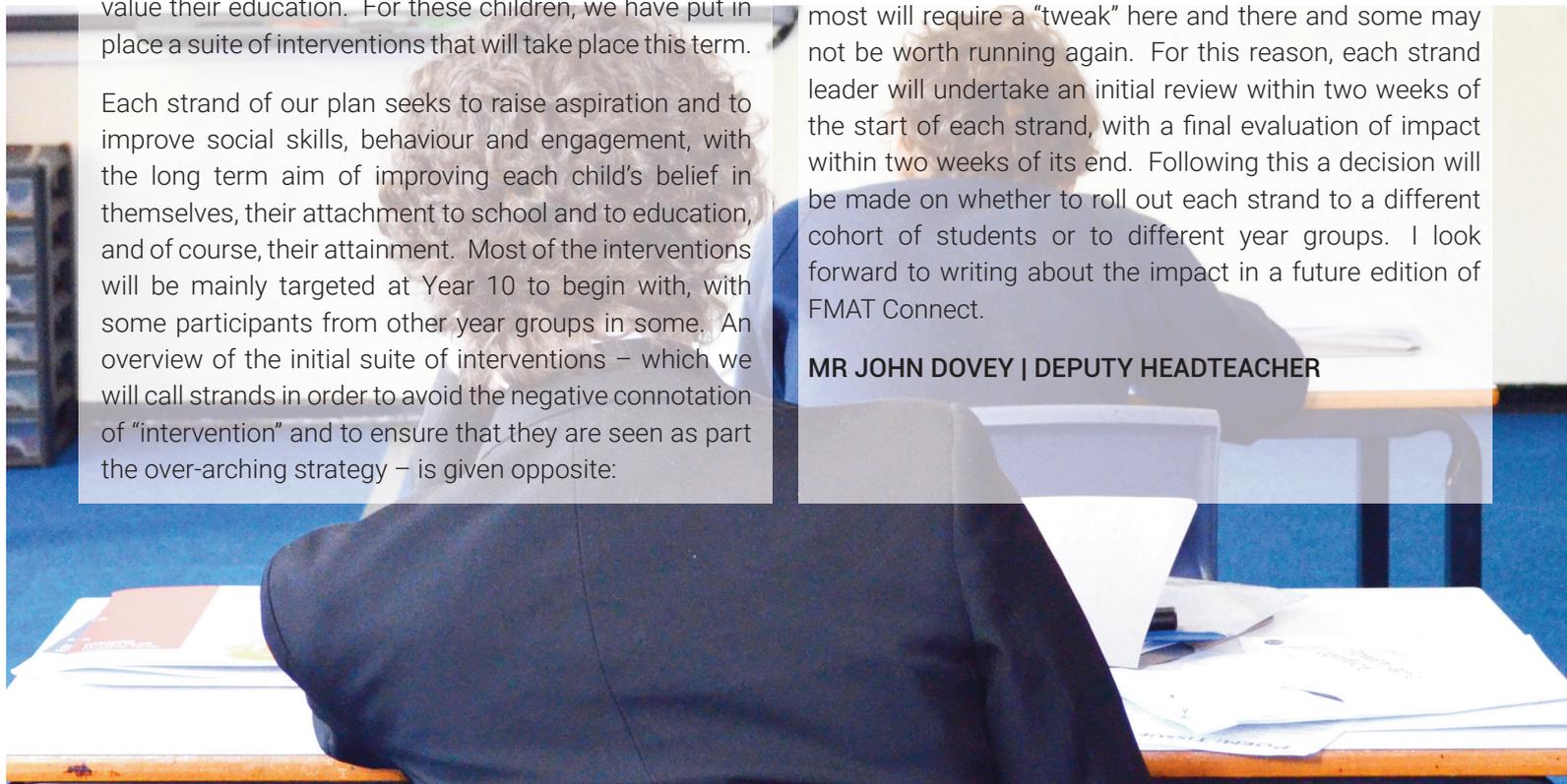
Weekly presentations from inspirational figures, employers and colleges.

Students taking part will also receive a resource pack to include stationary, notepad and a “goals card”. As well as being of practical use in their learning, this will promote feeling of being part of a special group.

Operationally, to co-ordinate and run these strands requires a lot of time and effort, and for this reason each one is being organised by a different member of our extended SLT. Student selection - to ensure the correct intervention is allocated to each student and to ensure that as many students as possible benefit and that interventions are not all directed at the same students – is overseen by their respective Pastoral Lead.

Inevitably, some strands will be more effective than others, most will require a “tweak” here and there and some may not be worth running again. For this reason, each strand leader will undertake an initial review within two weeks of the start of each strand, with a final evaluation of impact within two weeks of its end. Following this a decision will be made on whether to roll out each strand to a different cohort of students or to different year groups. I look forward to writing about the impact in a future edition of FMAT Connect.

MR JOHN DOVEY | DEPUTY HEADTEACHER



CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

Whilst we are certainly in one of the busiest times ever seen in schools, I believe we are also in one of the most exciting times to be an educator. We are facing many challenges, yet we have some of the best opportunities to innovate and find new solutions to traditional challenges. The Covid-19 guidelines have brought with them extra duties and a complex timetable that have taxed both our feet and brains, yet we have seen a really positive start to the new academic year. For example, transitions between lessons and staggered breaktimes have been a lot more purposeful and settled, which gives us much food for thought about how we operate when 'normality' returns.

Erdington's focus this academic year is to offer "Stretch & Challenge" to students and staff alike. How will we achieve this? We intend to shift our CPD culture to one

that is 'research-engaged'. Our new staff have settled quickly into their new surroundings and brought with them many new ideas, which we intend to embrace. "Highly effective and improving schools focus strongly on developing teachers through research-based professional development and let their decisions be informed by published and self-conducted research". As a research engaged school, we will create the conditions in which all school staff can learn through conducting research or by using existing, published research. Our staff found the recent Trust Network Group (TNG) meetings to be very productive and we are all looking forward to collaborating across our MAT and beyond in the coming months – ideas welcome please.

MR SIMON MALLET | HEAD OF ACADEMY



Erdington's focus this academic year is to offer "Stretch & Challenge" to students and staff alike.

CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON ACADEMY

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF



Joining Erdington Academy as Deputy Head after Easter, during the national Covid-19 lockdown was certainly the oddest start to a new job I think I will ever have. It was nearly 5 months before I saw most staff in person! Now that we are as

close to 'normal' as it will get for a while, I am very much looking forward to working closely with everyone from across all our academies in the Trust.

I am new to the Birmingham area, having worked in a range of schools across Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire since 2002. Over my career I have most enjoyed being part of a school's transformation from an Ofsted Grade 3 or 4 through to Good and beyond. As someone who is very interested in evidence-led practice I am keen to learn more about the strategies that have worked well for our students in our Trust and adopt them at Erdington, as well as looking at what other local schools have done successfully.

As a Physics teacher I have often been the only Physicist in a school, so I am particularly interested in how we recruit, train and retain teachers at a time when it is very challenging to find high quality specialist teachers.

MR ANDREW WRIGHT | DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

I will be honest, I am a bit of a geek and love technology. But in my defence, it is because I am a Design & Technology Teacher with a background in Electrical and Electronics Engineering.

Moving from industry into teaching 12 years ago was the best career move I ever made, as working with young people continues to be the most rewarding part of my job.

I am keen to discover best practice wherever I can. Erdington Academy is the largest school I have worked in, and I am looking forward to finding solutions to the new and interesting challenges that we face. It goes without saying that the first few weeks have been unusual (given the pandemic) and particularly busy; I feel fortunate that the Leadership Team are supportive and welcoming. This is in part what attracted me to Erdington Academy, but I also took the role of Assistant Headteacher to develop my leadership skills in a larger and diverse school setting.

I am really looking forward to meeting my FMAT colleagues and to benefitting from the insight and expertise of my colleagues across our MAT during the school improvement journey in my role as Assistant Headteacher. I'm also looking forward to meeting colleagues in person, but, of course, the geek side of me really enjoyed having my first Trust Network Group meeting using Microsoft Teams!

MR PAUL FOWLER | ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | INTRODUCING FAIRFAX ARKS

Staff at Fairfax were delighted to welcome all of our students back on 3 September! Students returned via staggered entry times through different gates and we were so pleased with how maturely they managed their return after six months away from the Academy. Staff are really proud of the maturity that students have demonstrated with the new Covid-19 restrictions and procedures and how well they have settled back into their learning.

On their return to the Academy, students completed a set of common sessions based on the Fairfax ARKS. The ARKS are the values that we believe students need in order to be successful. They are Ambition, Respect, Kindness and Safety. Students enjoyed sessions on kindness and gratitude; bullying vs banter; ambition and participation; owning your social media feed; and praise and rewards. Students also had the opportunity to review what behaviours are expected of them in a formal setting and were reminded that their teachers were committed to catching up the lost learning time caused by lockdown 2020.

Students had an opportunity to recap the Fairfax rewards milestone ladder and were introduced to the new praise elements of the student card and the new style ARKS merits. We are really looking forward to awarding our first Y7 ARKS Badges and have already had the pleasure of distributing merits to those students who truly demonstrate Fairfax ARKS!

MRS D BUNN | HEAD OF ACADEMY



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

CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

INTRODUCING 'ARKS' - A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE



These values are all rooted and firmly embedded in Fairfax traditions and beliefs. The difference this year being that at Fairfax, we have made them as clear as we can, as often as we can and as visible as we can.

The roll out of this 'culture shift' has been smooth and clear for all students, with a consistent and relentless approach taken by all staff. Each year group has had multiple 'ARKS' sessions delivered to them based around the four values, delivered by a range a staff across Fairfax Academy. These sessions included topics such as 'Bullying V Banter', 'Study Skills' and 'The Science of Happiness'. The sessions which I personally delivered were very well received by our students who have 'come onboard' with these values quickly and with the right attitude.

The step-by-step introduction and approach from our Leadership Team has been most positive regarding 'ARKS', with support offered at every stage regarding the implementation of our 'new culture'. Staff are encouraged daily to use ARKS within situations around Fairfax Academy, actively using the vocabulary of the values to really create our culture of 'ARKS'. There have been some real highlights regarding the embracing of this culture, especially within Year 7 as students strive for their new 'ARKS' badge for their blazer. This is also evident within other year groups, as students are also striving for new 'ARKS' merits within their subjects.

Students at Fairfax are resilient, calm and have embraced 'ARKS' in a really positive way. Within the current global pandemic, the subsequent lockdown, changes to the school day, phased returns, new routines and government guidance that we, as a school, have to react to daily, never has there been a more important time to uphold the values 'ARKS' stands for. These are to be Ambitious within school work; be Respectful of others around you and their space; be Kind to one another through tough times and ultimately, be Safe within an ever-changing environment.

ADAM SHEPPARD

HEAD OF DRAMA – FAIRFAX ACADEMY

Students at Fairfax are resilient, calm and have embraced 'ARKS' in a really positive way.

CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | BIG HEARTS

At Smith's Wood we are *better together*.

We have seen a really positive start to 2020–21 at Smith's Wood Academy. Given the new and additional demands placed upon leaders and teachers in education currently, to be able to say this, makes me very proud.

We began the year with two excellent INSET days, delivered by colleagues in the Academy as well as Solihull Educational Psychology Team – the focus being very much on supporting us to realise our strategic aims and ambitions for this year. Some of which I would like to share with you in this article.

We have a number of strategic aims across key aspects of our provision, but collectively they are all focused on re-setting and re-calibrating; specifically, in relation to culture, ethos and curriculum. The aim is for these things to bring about sustainable changes in relation to outcomes; we are striving to ensure that no-one is left behind. As I said to staff on our INSET day "Our core business is to provide a high-quality education to the young people that we care for whilst keeping them safe and free from harm, and, making certain that they are happy. This is what we are employed to do and this is what we have to do to be great at our jobs."

Connect – Respect - Excel

At Smith's Wood we are working hard to achieve a culture within the Academy of incredibly high expectations and 'no excuses'; we are clear that this is for the children and for ourselves. We aim to achieve this through outstanding classroom provision and outstanding care and support. High quality relationships will help us to deliver this.

One of the ways that we intend to facilitate organisational cultural change is through the PATH (planning alternative tomorrows with hope) – linking to staff well-being and fostering a greater sense of positivity and celebration. We have started a journey that prioritises well-being and relationships for everyone.

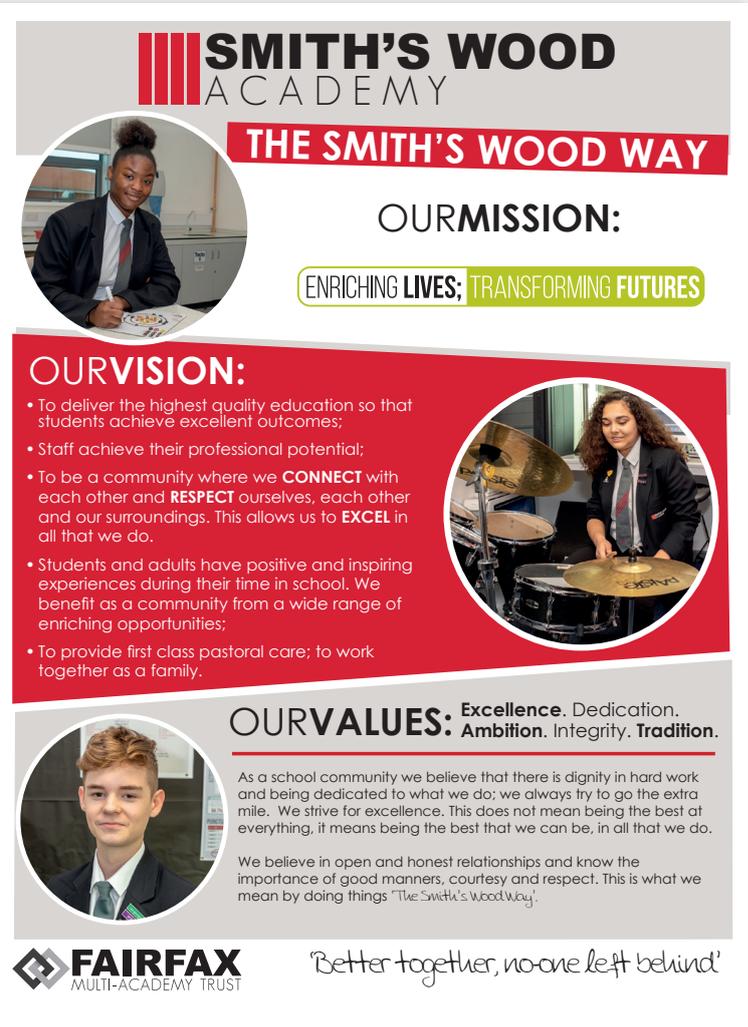
It is imperative that teachers create an environment in which all students feel that they belong and where they feel safe and valued; an environment that allows all students to thrive as individuals and as learners. This requires establishing appropriate learning-focused relationships where expectations are set high and where everyone knows the routines and the boundaries.

We know that many of our children have suffered / are suffering trauma in their lives. In turn this impacts brain development, particularly in the early years. We also

know that this can cause difficulty in self-regulating, anxiety, fight/flight/freeze responses and so on. We also know that the more extreme sanctions and behaviour systems do not result in better behaviour – instead it divides the adults and the children in to 'them' and 'us'. The changes to the culture that we are creating is not about lowering standards or not challenging students. We do not lower our expectations for those children that have suffered from trauma. They are capable of excelling and we should expect them to do so. However, the prerequisite for this to happen is an approach that recognises their very real challenges and is rooted in relationships. We know that good trauma informed practice is just good behaviour management practice. The key is well established routines followed by all, a calm approach, the building, maintaining and where necessary the repairing of relationships.

All of this is framed within

Connect – Respect – Excel



SMITH'S WOOD
ACADEMY

THE SMITH'S WOOD WAY

OUR MISSION:
ENRICHING LIVES; TRANSFORMING FUTURES

OUR VISION:

- To deliver the highest quality education so that students achieve excellent outcomes;
- Staff achieve their professional potential;
- To be a community where we **CONNECT** with each other and **RESPECT** ourselves, each other and our surroundings. This allows us to **EXCEL** in all that we do.
- Students and adults have positive and inspiring experiences during their time in school. We benefit as a community from a wide range of enriching opportunities;
- To provide first class pastoral care; to work together as a family.

OUR VALUES: Excellence. Dedication. Ambition. Integrity. Tradition.

As a school community we believe that there is dignity in hard work and being dedicated to what we do; we always try to go the extra mile. We strive for excellence. This does not mean being the best at everything, it means being the best that we can be, in all that we do.

We believe in open and honest relationships and know the importance of good manners, courtesy and respect. This is what we mean by doing things "The Smith's Wood Way".

FAIRFAX
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Better together, no-one left behind!

CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

ASSISTANT HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE

Smith's Wood Academy embracing all things digital!

Remote learning and blended learning have been thrust into the limelight this year both by the government and the Department for Education. As teachers this has changed the way we now think and plan, as the virtual classroom is as important as the physical.

At Smith's Wood Academy, staff have embraced this change and risen to the challenge of working alongside new technology and software. Throughout the start of a new academic year, we, like all schools up and down the country, have faced the challenges of teaching remotely and adapting to new ways of communicating lesson content to teach and engage our students using technology.

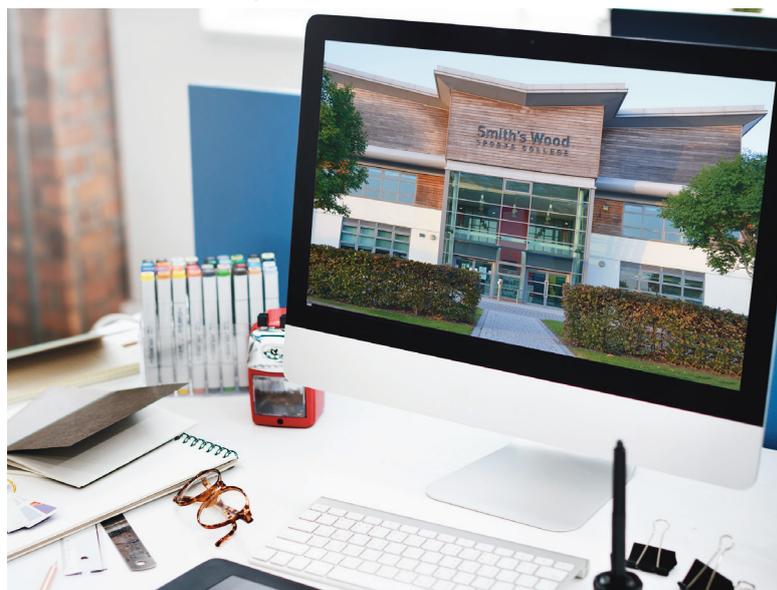
Staff have learnt how to dial in remotely from home to give their classes the continuity of subject specialist teaching they want and deserve in the current climate. This has not come without a few moments of nervousness, as we learn to adapt to this new way of teaching and talking to a camera to communicate to our classes. Students have really embraced this momentous step forward within the Academy and begun to show a thirst for blended learning. They have also developed a growing confidence to dial into lessons happening on the Academy site to continue their education, if, for reasons beyond their control, they cannot attend.

Embarking on this new journey in the classroom over the last couple of months has been exciting and ever-changing. Our ambitions and ideas of where we can go next by using Microsoft Office 365 as a blended learning tool are just beginning. We have pushed these new boundaries and begun to showcase what technology can

offer in current times. We have held remote parental support sessions to help our parents understand the basics of Office 365 and our vision and direction over the coming months. Just recently, we had over 50 families, external partners and our subject leaders all attend and present key information to our Year 11 students at their annual study skills evening.

To further enhance our offering to Year 11, staff have also provided opportunities outside of the classroom using a mixture of face to face learning opportunities and remote learning using Teams. We have students dialling into intervention from home! It is clear that we are now at a time where technology is no longer an add on to a lesson; it is a tool to help us teach and communicate with our students 24/7 from anywhere. The pace at which this movement regarding blended learning is moving is phenomenal, the opportunities are endless the only question it leaves me with is where will it take us next?

KAYE DOWNING | ASSISTANT HEAD OF ACADEMY



TEAMS TEACHING FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE.....

It's a very strange and disconcerting experience to teach remotely via TEAMS. Sitting at home, speaking to your class of students via the screen and speakers, relying on a colleague to manage the classroom on your behalf.

However, it is infinitely better, at least in my view, than setting remote cover work!

Having looked through the books of my classes that I taught remotely in the 3rd week of term, it is clear that the ability to continue their current Learning Journey, and being led by a teacher that they have a relationship with, is something that students appreciate and respond

well too. It enables a form of normality to continue, and allows for a much smoother transition back into face to face learning once a teacher returns to school.

So yes, it is strange and disconcerting to teach via teams, but it's a far better outcome for our students, and for ourselves as well. It won't always be perfect, and it's no substitute for the real thing, but it is a new alternative for us to use in the situation we find ourselves in.

MR DAN GILES ASSOCIATE ASSISTANT HEAD OF ACADEMY (HUMANITIES)

CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

MARK RHATIGAN | DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

FMAT School Improvement: new groups established

I have been using a lot of acronyms in my recent communication to staff -but these ones are exciting! TNGs, SDG and ELG have all come to life this half term!

School improvement is at the heart of the process of raising standards and ensuring all our students have an engaging, fulfilling experience. It allows us to deliver education for all students from age 4 through to 19 that is of the highest quality.

Our School Improvement Strategy embraces the following principles:

The most effective leaders, teachers and support staff influence more of the direct classroom experience than can happen in a single school;

- The best ideas that originated in one academy can quickly become the Trust approach;
- Partnership is at the core of all that we do as a MAT and we insist on inclusive collaboration to identify, based upon evidence, best practice in all areas
- The capacity of a larger organisation means that time, talent and resources can be used for the benefit of all our children
- System leaders care about the community beyond the single school and take decisions that impact on students they might never meet;
- Every Academy should be a provider and receiver of support and challenge, recognising that academies who may be in need will receive more intensive help to ensure rapid improvement;
- The most effective form of intervention is the sustainability of high-quality teaching.

TNGs, SDGs and ELG all reflect these principles, firmly rooted in the MAT ethos and commitment to open collaboration. The MAT operates a 'done with' process rather than a 'done to' process with regards to all support.

TNG: Trust Network Groups

These subject groups provide a forum for leaders (and teachers) to share best practice and research in curriculum, teaching and assessment. Core subjects have met for many years but it is good to see a range of other subjects now established. There are half termly meetings calendared but it is often the informal networking with colleagues that brings great results. Thank you to Chairs, past and present, and all who are building collaboration in this way.

SDG: Strategic Development Groups are responsible for the co-development and implementation of Trust educational strategies 2020 -2021. Building on latest research and best practice wherever it may be, the recommendations from these expert groups help shape the educational direction of the MAT; these groups are new to the MAT from September 2020 and meet half termly

Membership comprises leaders, teachers and support staff and has been by application. All academies are represented; see the table below for details.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS 2020-21

GROUP	CHAIR
SDG 1: Safeguarding	Jason Halstead (EA) 
SDG 2/3: Curriculum & Assessment	Andrew Wright (EA) 
SDG 4 Teaching and Learning	Rachel Clarke (FF) 
SDG 5: Digital Strategy	Kaye Downing (SW)  Mark Rhatigan (Director of Education) 
SDG 6: FMAT Student Offer Arts and Enrichment	Adam Sheppard (FF) 
SDG 7: Transition for Students	Amelia Heath (EA) 
SDG 8: SEND	Helen Williams (FF) 

CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

CONT'D

The **ELG** is the **strategic educational leadership group** of the MAT, a new entity from September 2020.

This group scrutinises the very latest educational research and considers its suitability for the MAT, as appropriate. The ELG also considers the outcomes of other MAT school improvement groups such as SMG (the Head's Group), SDG's and TNG's and recommend further developments. The ELG also review all MAT educational audits, external reviews, inspections and Trust wide QA outcomes and therefore can recommend deployment of school improvement resources using evidence to inform decisions.

All ELG decisions are based on benefits for all children in the MAT, not a single academy.

Membership for 2020-21 has been by application and is as follows:

Mark Rhatigan	Director of Education (Chair) 
4 Heads of Academy	
Tim Johnson	DHT Fairfax Academy 
Andrew Wright	DHT, Erdington Academy 
Simon Lynch	AAHT, SENDCO, Smith's Wood Academy 
Helen Williams	AHT Fairfax Academy 

So, in summary, FYI, the next time you see another FMAT acronym, you'll be in the know. ADIET!

CONNECTING WITH THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

JOHN FITZGERALD | COO

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Board of Directors has approved the Trust's Risk Management Framework to ensure there is a consistent approach to risk management across the Trust. The Directors approved the use of the sector leading risk management software GRC ONE.

The system delivers a Governance, Risk Management & Compliance solution that provides a simple integrated approach to risk management. It allows the Trust and academies to keep all risk related materials in one place, linked together and effectively managed. The software makes it simple for users to record risk, access and manage control documents, report incidents and track remedial actions.

The system was implemented in July 2020, in time for a fresh start at the beginning of this academic year. Online training was delivered to academy and central staff who will be using the software moving forward.



CONNECTING WITH THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

JOHN FITZGERALD | COO



ESTATES DEPARTMENT

Over the summer the operational responsibilities for the Trust's estates management have been reviewed and a new structure in place for Estates Management and Health & Safety. Andy Green is now the Trust Estates Manager and will manage all aspects of the Trust's properties including upkeep, care, maintenance, security, and facilities management in line with statutory and regulatory requirements. Brian Fox is responsible for the Trust's Health and Safety compliance in his new role as Trust Health & Safety Manager. Brian is now responsible for coordinating, supporting, and advising on all aspects regarding Health and Safety and will manage and monitor standards, processes, and systems in line with statutory and regulatory requirements. He will also be responsible for the PFI contract delivery.

The Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) is an annual fund for eligible academies or MAT's to apply for capital funding via the DfE. The priority for the fund is to address significant condition needs, keeping academy buildings safe and in good working order.

Working with Brian Fox and Andy Green we have successfully bid and received **£1.6m** of DfE Condition Improvement Funding for the 2019 and 2020 programmes. The following projects will all be completed by 2021:

- Bournville School - Window replacement
- Fairfax - Fire Strategy and Water Safety (Legionella) works
- Erdington Academy - Asbestos Removal and Boiler Replacement

BOURNVILLE

The site improvement works completed over the summer holidays has transformed the learning environment for students and staff at Bournville. The Estates Team has worked with Moira Green, Head of Academy, to develop and plan the relocation of the secondary provision to the Elgar building. The hard work and diligence by all involved has made a positive impact to students returning in September.

ERDINGTON

In collaboration with Birmingham City Council, Erdington Academy has increased their Year 7 intake by 60 pupils this year. To support meet the new demand for new places, Birmingham City Council is investing in the building infrastructure to support the increase student numbers. Phase 1 of this project has been completed over the summer holidays and included creating and refurbishing music and IT teaching rooms and constructing new toilets and changing facilities.

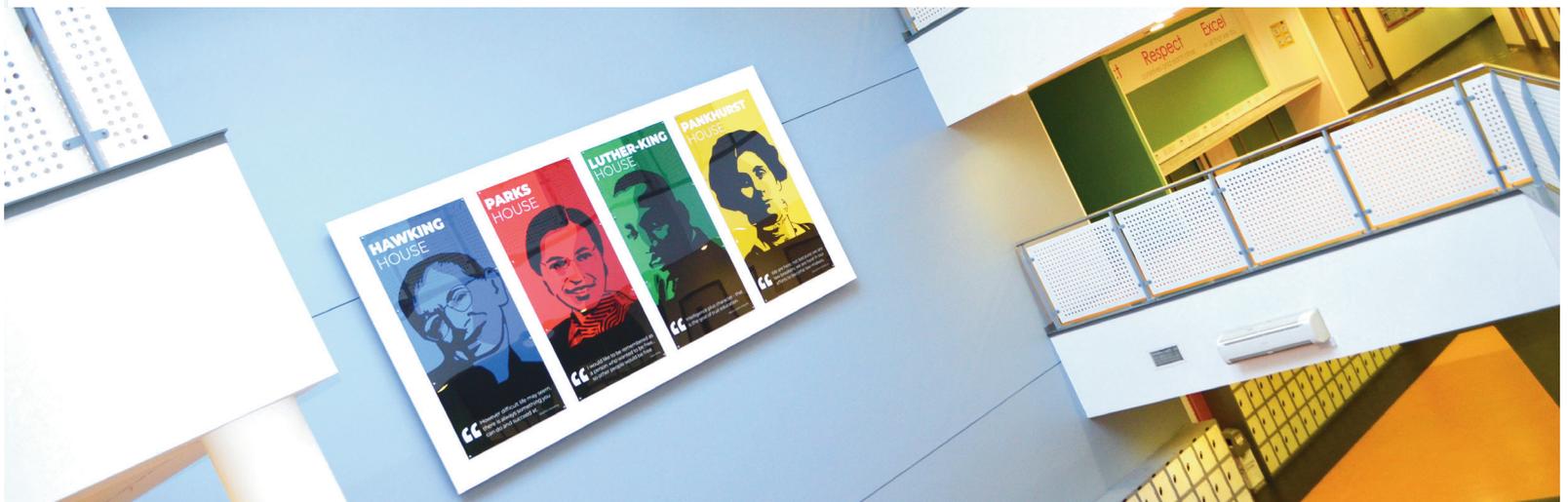
FAIRFAX

Works are underway to redevelop the decommissioned swimming pool area to an open multi – functional facility. Working with Debbie Bunn we have been successful in securing **£60k** from Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust and **£25k** from Birmingham City Council to support the project.

The project will be completed in November 2020.

SMITH'S WOOD

The PFI contract has delivered the planned lifecycle refurbishments over the summer, with much of the site being redecorated with new colour schemes being introduced.



CONNECTING WITH THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

JOHN FITZGERALD | COO



FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Finance Department centralisation was completed in the Summer term and has now settled into life at Smith's Wood Academy.

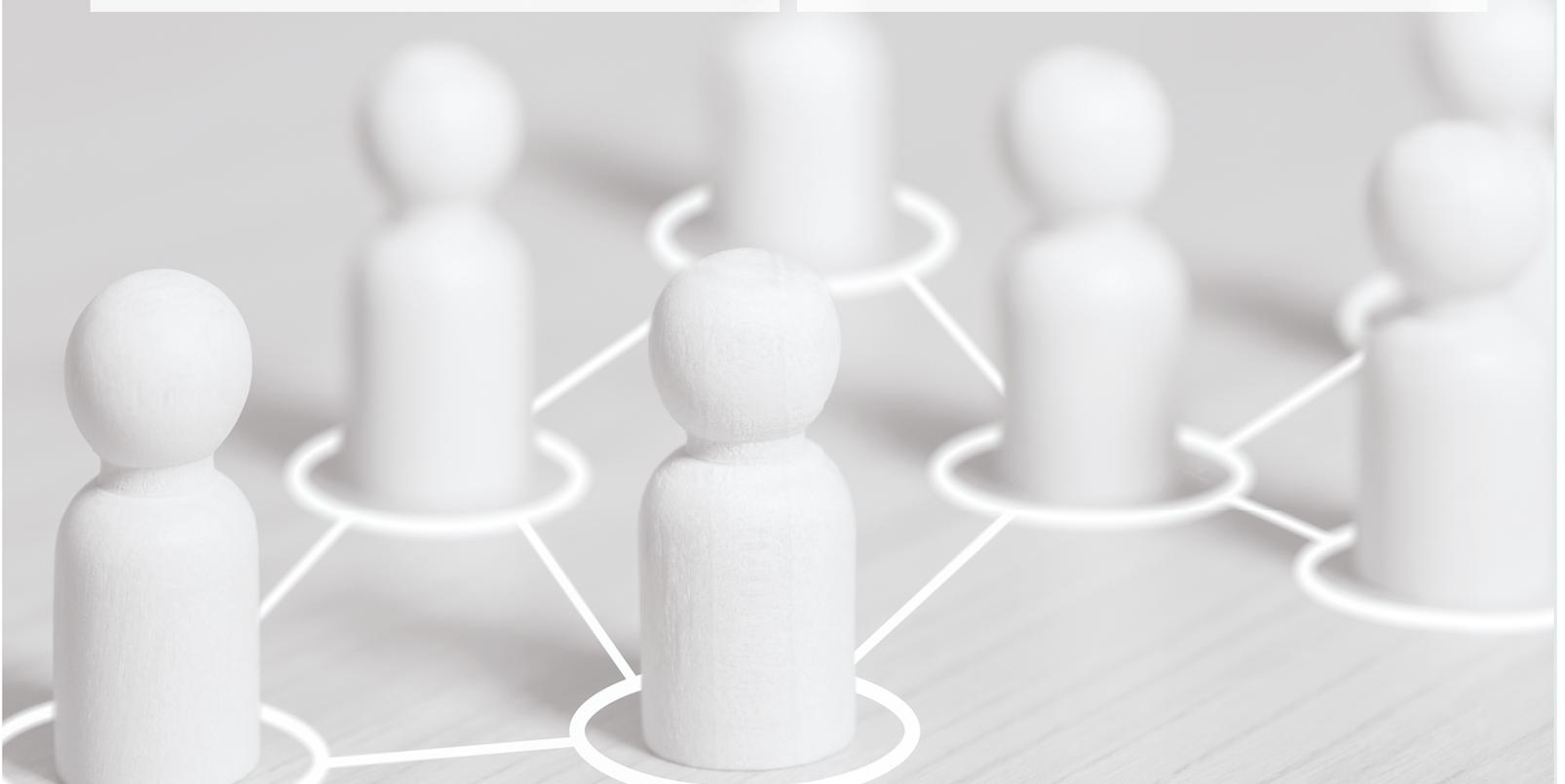
Gemma Wyle, our Trusts Finance Business Partner, has worked for our Trust for over 4 years mainly across Erdington and Fairfax Academies and is responsible for supporting the financial management of each academy. By working closely with the Academies and Trust Leadership Gemma's role will be to support and enable effective decision making which will positively impact our students and in return achievement of Academy aims.

We also have welcomed Safina Mahmood our Trust Accountant to our Trust and team, Safina has a wealth of experience within the education sector and a background in auditing Multi Academy Trusts. Safina is responsible for the finance compliance aspects for our Trust and will be working closely with the Finance Business Partner and Trust leadership to produce the management information that will enable all leaders across our Trust to make informed decisions.

We have successfully completed the centralisation of our Trusts purchase ledger to reduce duplication and therefore expediting the service finance can deliver to our Academies. As part of this a preferred supplier listing has been introduced and communicated to you. This enables our Procurement Officer, David Miller to keep a close eye on our procurement and drive economies of scale to ensure we are getting the best value for money and thus allowing more available funds to be utilised to our students advantage.

There is a mix of new and existing staff that make up our Finance Department, we are fortunate to have recruited some fine candidates that bring with them knowledge and experience from across both the education and corporate sectors.

For us we are fast embedding new processes, policies and procedures and we have made a smooth transition from onsite finance teams to a centralised Finance Department. Working in collaboration with all our academies and as part of our central team including HR to make Fairfax Multi Academy Trust a thriving Trust for our young people and staff.



CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF HR

DANIELLE BILLINGTON | DIRECTOR OF HR



I hope you all had a good start to the autumn term.

The HR team has now moved into their new office at Smith's Wood Academy, and it is wonderful that, after such a long time of remote working, colleagues can actually work together in person. The vast majority of the team are new to our organisation and some of them also new to Education, which means the main focus of this academic year is embedding the team and the new ways of working.

The implementation of the HR self-service portal and the new Civica payroll bureau service are two key milestones we achieved in the summer term thanks to the dedication and hard work of Menaz Akhtar and Dorota Figiel.

We also welcome three new members to the HR team: Gemma Mitchell, HR Advisor; Vaneeta Tandy, Recruitment, Apprenticeship & Training Advisor; Aiysha Tai, HR Assistant.

Please note that from September 2020, we also have three bespoke inboxes:

- ▶ **HR inbox (hr@fmat.co.uk):** Please use this inbox for all general queries and employee relation matters.
- ▶ **Recruitment inbox (recruitment@fmat.co.uk):** Please use this inbox to start the recruitment process for any roles.
- ▶ **Payroll inbox (payroll@fmat.co.uk):** Please use this inbox for all payroll information and queries including pensions.

Each member of the HR Department will introduce themselves to you in the FMAT Connect publications for this academic year. Dorota Figiel, Payroll & Systems Officer, will make the start.

I wish you all an enjoyable and relaxing half term. Stay safe & well

DANIELLE BILLINGTON | DIRECTOR OF HR

MEET THE TEAM

DOROTA FIGIEL | PAYROLL & SYSTEM OFFICER



My name is Dorota Figiel. I joined the FMAT HR department as a Payroll & Systems Officer in June 2020.

My job is to support the Payroll & Systems Manager with processing monthly payroll and ensuring that

the correct and appropriate information is communicated to our payroll bureau.

I am also responsible for managing the HR systems, ensuring that the information is accurate and up to date, as well as assisting members of staff who require assistance accessing and understanding our new self-service portal.

Before joining the FMAT Central Team, I worked at The Box Factory as Finance and Payroll Administrator. I was running weekly payroll and supporting the Financial Controller with looking after Purchase and Sales Ledgers.

As a result of many years of experience in payroll and using computerised payroll systems, I have a strong grasp of what my new role and responsibilities will bring and I look forward to working as part of the FMAT Team.

EXCELLENCE.

DEDICATION.

AMBITION.

INTEGRITY.

TRADITION.