



NEWSLETTER

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



Sparkling stars: The children of Puriton Primary School staged The Bossy King as their nativity production



WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the end of term approaches, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of your children and our schools this year. Working together in partnership is the key to success and we truly value the role that families play.

I am sure that you, along with pupils and staff, are looking forward to some rest and relaxation over the coming holiday following an extremely busy few months. The short days and the relentless rain make this a tiring time of the year and I'm so grateful to everyone for facing every day with a smile.

Thanks to all those who have sent gifts, cards, and kind messages to teachers and other school staff at this time of year. I am so proud that all our schools are caring and nurturing communities as well as centres of academic excellence and wonderful opportunities for young people to learn and grow.

One of the most rewarding aspects of school life is to watch children flourish in their learning both within and outside the classroom. This term has seen many successes for our schools on the sports field, with teams achieving victories in rugby, cricket, football and netball. There have also been many achievements in art, drama and music, from Wansdyke children performing at St George's in Bristol and Bridge Farm pupils taking to the stage at the refurbished Bristol Beacon to Clevedon staging a flashmob dance at the Christmas lights switch-on.

The latter is just one example of our schools getting involved in community events, which is a priority for us at Futura. Others include the Bridgwater schools that took part in the carnival and the numerous schools that participated in Remembrance activities last month. The annual Santa Dash is a big event in Salford and I was proud that the Wellsway School sports ambassadors were praised on Radio Bristol for the way they helped support the day.

Christmas always provides joyful moments in schools, whether it be a beautiful nativity, some crazy jumpers, a tasty turkey dinner or a dazzling display of seasonal illuminations. Speaking of lights, it was good to see Diwali celebrated in schools earlier in the term. It's so important that people of all faiths and none feel they belong in our family of schools - diversity is strength.

Resilience in the face of adversity is another vital characteristic; special mention here must go to Clevedon School for setting up and successfully operating their tented 'Learning Village' following the closure of a large part of their building because of problem concrete.

School life there is continuing pretty much as normal, with plenty of fun along the way, including an 'I'm a Teacher Get Me Out of Here' house competition!

Our trust is continuing to develop ways to work together to support our schools. Colleagues welcome the chance to come together and learn from one another, while our team of education experts provides ongoing support and challenge to schools. Our school improvement team

knows every setting well, which enables members to ensure staff teams can evaluate their school's strengths and areas for improvement accurately.

External validation of our processes and procedures is crucial, so we are pleased and proud that Futura has been praised in all the Ofsted reports our schools have received in 2023. Most recently, as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, Four Acres Academy in South Bristol and Tickenham CofE Primary in North

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Somerset have been inspected and have emerged with glowing reports. Many congratulations to all involved and thanks to parents, governors and others in those school communities for their support before, during and after the visits.

It is important to remember that Ofsted reports capture a moment in time. Aspects of provision can change quickly, for better and sometimes for worse. Our schools aspire to excellence every day and get closest to achieving this when staff, children and families work in partnership, with support from the trust when it is needed.

So please continue to be closely involved with your child's education. If you notice a problem, talk to the school

so that all can work together to resolve it. And if you are especially pleased with something an individual has done to help your child succeed, tell that person - and tell your friends! Working in schools has become tougher in recent years so all efforts to spread positivity and appreciation are very welcome!

We are constantly looking at the best ways to navigate the challenges of the education landscape. As you know, Futura has already grown this year; this week we have announced that our board and executive leaders are considering joining forces with Olympus Academy Trust, another excellent multi-academy trust in our region. A merger could create a strong trust that would be more financially resilient and have increased capacity to support and improve schools. A working party will begin looking into this early in the new year.

We look forward to the opportunities 2024 may bring. It is a privilege to be entrusted with the care and education of your children and it is lovely to see them work hard and thrive.

Once again, may I wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a happy and hopeful new year.

With best wishes,

Andrea Arlidge

Andrea Arlidge
Chief Executive

SUCCESSFUL START TO MIDDLE LEADERS PROGRAMME

Having skilled and motivated leaders is crucial for providing the best educational experiences to our pupils. Futura offers diverse leadership development opportunities for interested staff, including secondments and training programmes.

November saw a successful start to our Middle Leaders Programme. Teachers and leaders from across Futura took part in the first session called 'Developing Your Vision'. They worked on developing their teaching and learning 'why' and discussed how to effectively communicate it to their teams, pupils, parents, and SLT.

Feedback from participants was very positive.

"Having time to talk about the 'why' in teaching on a cold November afternoon has re-energised me and reminded me of my sense of purpose in this job. I'm feeling excited for the next sessions and digging more into the day-to-day practicalities of middle leadership."

"The session went straight to the essentials. Articulating my vision was a challenge, and I enjoyed having this reflection time. I'm looking forward to exploring various aspects of

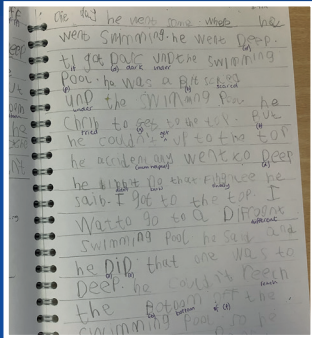


leadership in the next sessions."

The next session will focus on developing management and leadership skills.



IT'S A CRACKER! FUTURA GOES FESTIVE



VALUES REALLY MATTER AT FOUR ACRES - OFSTED



Four Acres Primary School is celebrating a glowing report from the education watchdog Ofsted.

Three inspectors who visited the academy in Withywood for two days in October judged it to be Good overall and said its provision for pupils' personal development through "an impressive range of experiences" was Outstanding.

In their report the Ofsted team had high praise for the staff at Four Acres, who they said were very caring, patient and kind, and built positive, respectful relationships with children.

"The school's values of 'respect, confidence, resilience, independence and articulate' are used to support pupils exceptionally well. Pupils feel safe and happy. They flourish at the school.

"Staff have high expectations for every pupil. As a result, pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.

"The school has established strong relationships with parents. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many say how staff inspire and go the extra mile for their children."

The inspectors said learning to read was at the heart of the curriculum, from the very start in nursery, where speaking and listening skills were developed, through reception and beyond with well-taught phonics.

"Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. Teachers set out the

important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. Subject leaders receive extensive training. They help staff to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Ofsted added: "The school weaves highly memorable experiences through the curriculum to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils praise the wide variety of clubs on offer, including sports, art and music. Pupils say these experiences make their school special.

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"The school celebrates pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and beliefs. Pupils say that they know to value everyone and be kind. They learn to challenge unfairness, should it occur. Older pupils are extremely strong role models of how to act for the good of others. This makes a tangible difference to the school."

The inspectors noted that the school was taking appropriate action to improve pupils' attendance but had rightly identified that it wants to make further improvements.

Futura Learning Partnership was praised: "Trustees fulfil their statutory duties well. The trust and governors are well informed about the school's strengths

and next steps for development. They have the right skills to check the effectiveness of the school's actions. Senior leaders set high expectations for everyone."

Headteacher Matt Cave said he was delighted with the report following the first full inspection of Four Acres in more than a decade.

"I am so grateful for our staff, parents and carers, governors, trustees and trust colleagues, who work together to create

a nurturing and aspirational learning environment for the children in the community we serve.

"I am also hugely proud of our children, who demonstrated to the inspectors that they are flourishing not only academically but as future citizens," he said.

Futura Chief Executive Andrea Arlidge said: "Congratulations to Four Acres for showing Ofsted the importance of school and trust values. The school is a valued and valuable part of our trust, contributing to and benefiting from our collaborative approach. I am pleased that once again inspectors have recognised the additional strength that Futura provides."

PRAISE FOR LEARNING THE 'TICKENHAM WAY'



Tickenham CofE Primary School is continuing to provide good education for the 88 children in its care, according to Ofsted.

Two inspectors who visited the Futura village school in October reported that pupils found the school a welcoming place and parents praised its 'family feel'.

"Pupils understand how the 'Tickenham way' helps them to be kind, respectful and to work hard," Ofsted said.

"The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and courteous... They value the positive relationships they have with staff."

The report particularly noted the successful start children make in the early years, "where children are eager to learn, listen to instructions carefully and show high levels of respect to one another".

The inspectors said: "The school has high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. An ambitious curriculum has been designed that considers what pupils need to know and when they need to know it."

Some of the strengths highlighted were:

- Reading is a priority
- The mathematics curriculum is designed well
- Pupils learn well in most of the wider curriculum subjects
- Clear systems are in place to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- The environment in classrooms and around the school is calm and purposeful
- There are high expectations and effective procedures for pupil attendance.

The support Futura Learning Partnership provides for the school was

praised. Ofsted commented: "Trustees and local governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They provide appropriate support and challenge to school leaders. Staff value the training and collaboration with colleagues from other trust schools."

Liz Lester, headteacher, said: "I am extremely proud of our pupils, staff and the whole school community for showing Ofsted what an incredibly special place our school is."

Futura Chief Executive Andrea Arlidge said: "Congratulations to everyone at Tickenham CofE Primary on this excellent Ofsted report."

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WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



On Friday 10th November at 11 am, Futura staff and pupils joined the rest of the nation and paused to mark Remembrance Day. Schools including Clevedon, Saltford and SBL honoured those who lost their lives in conflicts.

Saltford remembers

On Remembrance Day the whole of Saltford School paused to remember those who have served and sacrificed in the hope of a peaceful future.

Everyone went outside to observe a two-minute silence at 11am on Friday 10th November. We are lucky to have Mrs May, who plays the bugle, on our staff. She played the Last Post before we fell silent and then ended the silence

by playing the Reveille. This added to the significance of the occasion.

In their classes, children learned about Remembrance Day, why people wear poppies in November and why we observe the silence. We focused on how hope can come out of some tragic events. Everyone also attended a Remembrance assembly.

Many Saltford children also represented us beautifully at the annual Remembrance parade in the village for the Rainbows, Brownies, Cubs, Guides and Scouts.

SBL remembers

Our moving and impeccably observed remembrance event on Friday 10th November was also an excellent opportunity for our Year 11 student

leadership team and school council to represent the school on the Sports Hall balcony, which they did superbly. Natasha, Lucy, Josh and Liam all gave impressive readings to the whole school during the event, which they should all be very proud of.

The rest of the school was also united in remembrance, and many of our students showed their creativity in and out of lessons. Lucy in Year 11 expertly made some poppies and designed potential war memorials with students as part of their PSHE work.

Photos: top - SBL Academy, bottom left - Clevedon School, bottom right - Saltford CoE Primary

STAFF PROFILE

Our staff profile section is dedicated to introducing you to some amazing colleagues who are committed to providing the best learning opportunities for our pupils. In this newsletter, we had the opportunity to have a conversation with Alex Maggs, who works as the social, emotional, and mental health assistant at Wellsway School.



Who inspires you?

I have an amazing friend who told me a while ago to be the change I want to see. It really inspires me to be proactive and empathetic. That phrase is my constant aim, to bring around the positive changes I want to see.

What three items would you take with you to a deserted island?

A tent, my foraging book and my pile of unfinished craft projects.

Why did you decide to work in education?

I have always been really passionate about systemic wellbeing and wanted a role where I could reach people who needed help most. Working in education means getting to interact with people who need help but are also keen to learn new wellbeing skills.

What does a typical day look like?

I'm not sure I have a typical day! I do some one-to-one work with students, usually fitted around what would be most useful to them at the time. I also work in our response office, helping any students who drop in with concerns. It's always very flexible to respond to what the students need.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I love that it's never boring. I get to do a huge mixture of things and really connect with students who need support. I always feel so excited when I see students doing well and achieving their personal goals, all the little things other people might not notice, like going to assembly for the first time.

What's the most challenging part of your role?

The most challenging part is holding space for students to sit with the big things we have no control over. It can be both challenging and heart-breaking to sit alongside them as they process big issues like inequality, money worries and global news.

What's your proudest professional achievement in your role?

This is my first job since I completed my degree, which feels like an achievement in itself. The biggest achievements are when I make suggestions for students that they find really helpful. I like bridging the gap between them and other staff by finding ways to communicate their needs and

compromise. It's a delicate balance, and it always feels good when you're trusted to get that done.

What's your most-used productivity hack?

I would not get anything done without my bullet journal. I make lists and timetables that are pleasing to look at and tick each thing off when it's done. It feels like a nice reward to have a colourful, completed list by the end of the week.

Who deserves a special shout-out, and why?

The whole Inclusion Team at Wellsway School. They do amazing, life-changing work to keep students happy and help them to access lessons. They always have my back and work really well as a team, and I know they do hundreds of tiny things every day to help things run as smoothly as possible.

DOING MORE WITH LESS - ENHANCING I.T. INFRASTRUCTURE WHILE REDUCING COSTS

Cost savings and expert procurement are some of the many benefits that Futura provides to schools, colleagues and pupils. Since the summer holidays, IT Services has been improving our infrastructure while finding some significant savings.

These developments include:

- Securing over £260,000 of DfE Connect the Classroom funding to upgrade the wireless and wired networks at four schools - Mary Elton, St Nicholas' Chantry, Willowdown and Woolavington. This upgrade will provide these schools with a

future-proof system for the next ten years. The Meadows school underwent a similar upgrade last year.

- Earning over £20,000 of cashback from the purchase of Lenovo computers during summer 2023. This income will be invested in further IT equipment.
- Expanding the Splicecom telephone system to include our schools in Somerset. Once the expansion is complete, all phones can make direct calls to any other Futura phone, access an online address book, and make or receive calls on smartphones as if

from your extension. Many other features will be available as well.

- Negotiating free trust-wide Promethean touchscreen software.
- Rolling out FFT Aspire to our Somerset schools, allowing all schools to benefit from a 30% discount, equating to savings of over £5,000 per year.
- Finding a 10% discount on CPOMS and SISRA.