

Futura Learning Partnership

NEWSLETTER

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



The Toy in my Bag initiative at Cheddar Grove is a big hit with early years pupils - and is improving their writing skills too



WELCOME

Dear Parents and Carers,

Can you believe we are nearly at the halfway point of the academic year? Those tiny tots who joined our pre-schools, nursery and reception classes are well established in their settings now, while for our older teenagers the exams are looming ever closer! Thirty-nine weeks of learning sounds a lot, but it is amazing how quickly the time passes. Striving to make sure everyone in all of our schools can get the maximum benefit every day takes tremendous efforts from our staff teams and I'm sure you join me in thanking them for all that they do.

There seem to have been lots of negative headlines about schools and young people at the start of 2024 – perhaps it's because this is a general election year. We hear of an attendance crisis, increasing numbers of young people with anxiety and mental health problems, children with dental decay, rising levels of obesity ... the list goes on. These are real issues and my heart goes out to families dealing with any or all of them.

However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the majority of children are thriving at school and at home. Every day I hear examples of wonderful achievements by individuals, classes and schools in our trust. These range from headline successes such as Ofsted ratings – well done to Bedminster Down, which has been judged by inspectors to remain a good school – through to

personal triumphs. Every child who masters something they previously found difficult is worth celebrating.

It is often activities outside the classroom that children and families remember best. Trips and experiences – especially those involving dressing up! – bring learning to life. Many of our primaries carry out imaginative outdoor activities that help instil in pupils a lifelong love of nature. Our secondaries participate in Duke of Edinburgh and Ten Tors expeditions as well as supporting students to take part in many sporting fixtures, often with spectacular results.

The fact that we are a family of schools offers many additional opportunities; primary children have role models to inspire them while the older ones gain valuable skills by helping the younger pupils. They

all have the chance to live out our Futura values: respect, opportunity, collaboration and aspiration.

Each of our schools is at the heart of its community and can respond to local needs. The Winter Warmer three-course meals offered weekly by Clevedon School to its community are a wonderful example.

Our trust of 27 schools is becoming established as a leading education provider in the region. We have strong links with other trusts in Somerset and the West of England, enabling us to share our good ideas and learn from successes elsewhere. I am confident that Gary Schlick, who will succeed me as Chief Executive in September, will continue this partnership approach.

You can read more about Gary's appointment elsewhere in this newsletter. He is known to many of you

already through his previous role as an executive leader in Futura, including a period heading the Clevedon Learning Trust in the run-up to our merger, and he will lead our team in making sure our trust goes from strength to strength.

Meanwhile, I wish you all an enjoyable February break, after which we can all return refreshed and ready for the second half of 2023-24.

With best wishes,

Andrea Arlidge

Andrea Arlidge
Chief Executive

FUTURA BOARD SELECTS NEXT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are delighted to announce that Gary Schlick has been appointed to be the next Chief Executive of Futura Learning Partnership.

Mr Schlick, who is currently our Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Education, will take up the role in September following the retirement of Andrea Arlidge.

“I AM CONTINUALLY INSPIRED BY THE UNSWERVING DEDICATION AND PASSION OF OUR STAFF.”

Mrs Arlidge's career in education spans more than 40 years, including more than two decades as a school and trust leader.

Futura is responsible for more than 10,000 children aged two to 19 and around 1,500 staff in our 27 schools across the region. We are consistently praised by inspectors for the support and challenge we provide.

Mr Schlick, who has been a headteacher and executive leader in the trust for five years, including a spell as CEO of the Clevedon Learning Trust as it prepared to join forces with Futura, is honoured to have been chosen by the trust to lead the organisation.

“I have been privileged to be part of the developments that have helped us become such a strong trust”.

“I strongly believe in the values and aims of Futura: to foster an environment of academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity, where every student has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential”.

“I am continually inspired by the unwavering dedication and passion of our staff. We are a committed team, determined to make a positive impact on the lives of our pupils and the broader community.”

Mr Schlick has worked in schools for 30 years and was Headteacher of Bedminster Down School in Bristol for ten years.

He added: “My career has been focused on making a difference to children and young people”.

“I have seen first hand the power of collaboration; the additional value to be gained being part of a trust, a family of schools. We achieve so much more together than we ever could as a single school.

“I am eager to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure the success and growth of our academy trust.”



Malcolm Broad, Chair of the Trust Board, said: “Gary Schlick has been appointed to this crucial and important role following a rigorous internal recruitment process. We are sure he will prove a worthy successor to our founding Chief Executive Andrea Arlidge, whose dedication to the education system in our region has made a huge impact on countless lives.”

STAFF PROFILE

This section is dedicated to introducing you to some of the people in our team who are committed to providing the best opportunities for the children, families and communities we serve. Here we talk to **Dave Cook, the Commercial Director for Futura Commercial Services.**

Who inspires you?

Anyone who displays resilience and consistent positivity. My mother is a huge inspiration for this reason. I love to surround myself with people who see opportunities and positives in the negatives and can find solutions.

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

My AirPods because I love listening to podcasts.

A barbecue so that I can eat.

A blank journal because recording my reflections on living on a desert island will be really interesting.

Why did you decide to work in education?

It was by accident. My background is in the sports and fitness industry. I was headhunted to be a lecturer at Weston College and completed a PGCE. I worked there before moving back into health club management. Five years ago, an opportunity to run multiple sites across the trust came up, which attracted me. My background in education gave me a real understanding of the education setting and the level of governance and political stances that you have to work with.

What does a typical day look like?

There isn't one; it's varied! I can go from writing a three-year strategy to stacking chairs after an event and everything in between. I look after:

Our two sports centres at Wellsway and SBL

Lettings across eight of our sites

Catering operations across the trust

A school sports partnership that has a membership of 48 schools

Zest Childcare, which is a wraparound provision in a number of our primary schools.

This is combined with bid writing, project management, strategy writing, etc.

My main aims in my role are to generate significant income for the trust and boost community engagement, ultimately impacting teaching and learning.

I directly line-manage six support managers; the whole team is about 140 staff members.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I love the variety. I love supporting and mentoring the team and watching them grow.

What's the most challenging part of your role?

The variety, switching my mind between my various roles, is challenging. Also, raising awareness of what we do with school-based colleagues so they understand that we're here to work collaboratively and support them by generating income that will have an impact in the classroom.

What's your proudest achievement in your role?

Personally, it's the completion of my Masters degree. For Futura, it's turning a significant curve after lots of Covid disruption; this year, we're set to double our projected profit.



What's your most-used productivity hack?

Technology, it's the way forward. We have eradicated paper within our operation, which has brought many benefits. The trust is embracing this, and we are moving into that modern, tech-savvy world.

Who deserves a special shout-out, and why?

The Executive Leadership Group because they have been continuously supportive. Also, all the commercial services team because our success wouldn't be possible without them.

What's the best part of working for Futura?

I received support to complete my MBA; there's a positive culture of work-life balance, and the values shout out to me personally.



SUN SHINES ON SCHEME THAT BENEFITS PUPILS AND PLANET

SBL's new solar array is generating energy equivalent to powering 60 homes.

Futura, in partnership with Bath and West Community Energy, managed the installation on the sports centre as part

of our commitment to sustainability. It is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 55 tonnes each year.

The array also provides cost savings of around £15,000 a year, which will

be used to benefit pupils. The array is expected to last at least 25 years.

There are plans to install solar arrays at other Futura schools over the coming months.

TICKENHAM SATS RESULTS ARE BEST IN NORTH SOMERSET

Congratulations to all members of the Tickenham CofE Primary School team for their recent success in KS2 SATs. The results make the school the highest performing in North Somerset and 279th in the country. This is a considerable achievement resulting from hard work and dedication by teachers and pupils.



EXPERIENCES HELP BRING LEARNING TO LIFE



Visits and visitors help bring learning to life for pupils of all ages. Here are a couple of examples from our primary schools.

At **St John's** in Keynsham, an online meeting with Roy, who shared his memories of World War II, was the highlight of a Hook Day. Children also enjoyed dressing up as evacuees and building model Anderson shelters.

Meanwhile, pupils in Reception had the chance to explore the inside of an ambulance when they were visited by paramedics.

These immersive experiences were inspiring for the children.

Stephen Webber, Headteacher of **All Saints** in Clevedon, says it's well worth overcoming the challenges of expensive transport and altering planned activities to take children out on trips.

He was speaking after Years 5 and 6 pupils visited Aerospace Bristol, where children were amazed by a Boeing 747 plane wheel, launched paper rockets, saw photos from the Hubble telescope and made paper periscopes. Oh yes, they also got to see the cockpit of Concorde!

Earlier in the term, Years 3 and 4 visited Caerleon to bring their learning about

the Romans to life. The children dressed in armour and toured the amphitheatre, inspiring the pupils to develop dances to explore their Roman theme.

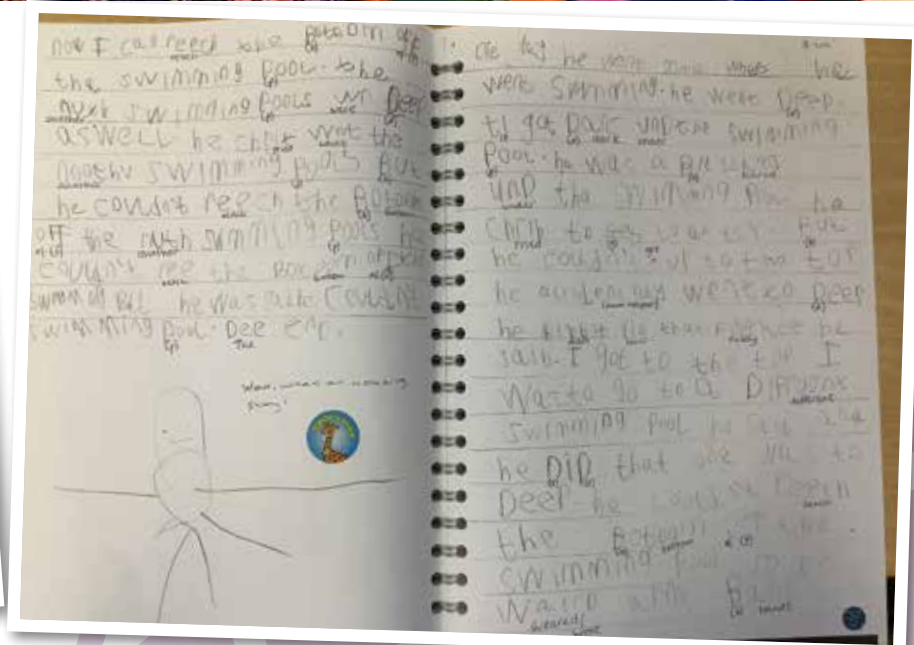
"As a small school, we acknowledge the importance of linking the pupils' learning to real-life experiences, which deepens their learning and often sparks a passion for learning more," Stephen said.



COULD YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

If you are planning your next career move and share our passion for making a positive difference in the lives of children and young people, please look at our [vacancies](#) or check your local school websites.

TOYS HELP CHANGE THE STORY ON LEARNING TO WRITE



A 'Toy in my Bag' initiative at Cheddar Grove has reduced the early years gender gap in writing.

Each child is given a bag containing a soft toy and a blank story book to take home. The homework is for the child to write a story every week. The toys are

then swapped on return for another adventure to begin.

Teresa Fuller devised the scheme after discussions with parents and carers revealed that, while there was a strong link between reading at home and school, writing was not a common

activity at home and expectations were inconsistent.

Toy in my Bag is now in its fifth year and has cut the gap between EYFS girls and boys in writing and mark-making.