



Wessex
Learning Trust
We Learn Together!

Trust Newsletter

Issue 7
Spring 2021

New Year, New Partnership!

The Wessex Learning Trust was proud to start 2021 with an exciting new partnership as Nailsea Secondary School officially joined the Trust on January 1st. The school is the 14th to join the Multi-Academy Trust, and the second secondary school in our portfolio, bringing over 800 new students and more than 140 staff into the Wessex family. This partnership will ensure that an exceptional education can continue to be guaranteed for every child in the Trust's care, as well as enabling teaching and learning expertise to be shared across sites and the financial benefits of economies of scale to be felt.

Gavin Ball, Chief Executive of the Wessex Learning Trust said: "We welcome Nailsea School to our Wessex family, we encourage our schools to be at the centre of their community and raise aspirations and achievement. Nailsea School's ethos of 'Aspire Believe Succeed' and its focus on the wellbeing and happiness of each child, sits brilliantly well with our own values."

Dionne Elliott, Head of Nailsea School said: "It is an exciting time for Nailsea School, with this partnership allowing us to enjoy our own identity, whilst being a part of a bigger organisation. The Wessex Learning Trust will bring lots of advantages to the school, with staff benefitting from professional development opportunities, sharing positive experiences and joining in new initiatives. We are looking forward to working with our new colleagues in what will be an interesting year."



The Wessex Learning Trust believes that this partnership will offer incredible opportunities for all involved, and help us to continue to provide an outstanding, 21st century education to all young people, from 2-19.

We very much look forward to seeing what 2021, and this exciting new partnership will bring.

Above: Wessex Learning Trust Chief Executive, Gavin Ball, with Nailsea Head Dee Elliott



Green Fingered Gowers at Wedmore!

Reception children from Wedmore First School Academy have been getting their hands dirty (quite literally!) in the garden recently as they took place in Outdoor Classroom Day, sowing wildflower seeds in the school garden.

Over the past 6 months the garden has had a complete transformation thanks to volunteers who have tended to it on a weekly basis. The wildflower seeds were provided by the company Seedballs who are working with Backyard Nature, to inspire 'children to spend more time enjoying and protecting nature where they live'.

We look forward to the children being able to watch the wildflower garden establish and observe the benefit of wild spaces for insects and wildlife!

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We Learn Together!



Chief Executive's Message

2021 has not started quite as we were hoping for. With the country in lockdown, schools closed, and cases still high, we are once again forced to transition to virtual learning for all but vulnerable and critical worker children. This is obviously not what we had hoped for, but it is unfortunately necessary if we are to contemplate a return towards normality any time soon.

Despite the adversity, I am filled with pride in how our staff and students have responded to the lockdown, and how they have adapted once more to this strange new world of online learning. As you will see in this newsletter, the work being produced is of an incredibly high standard, and testament to the skills and versatility of our incredible learners. You should be incredibly proud.

Further to this I would once again like to thank all our dedicated staff who are working tirelessly to keep exceptional lessons (both online, and in person) happening, and going above and beyond the call of duty for the sake of the young people in our care. You are all amazing. Without your dedication the wheels of education would grind to a halt, and for this you are owed much gratitude.

Finally, a word of thanks must also go out to all the parents and carers who are supporting their children at these times. We know that teaching, while also balancing jobs and parenting is hard and I am truly grateful for your continuing support at these difficult times. We will continue to do our best to help make home schooling as easy as possible so that you can focus on everything else.

We know that there is still a great deal of uncertainty, but rest assured we are still here for you and working round the clock to support you the best we can. We can't wait to have children back in school again and will of course provide details on re-opening as soon as the government make their plans known to us.

Stay safe and well, and we look forward to seeing you all again in the very near future.

Brand New Pre-School Opens at Brent Knoll



This term saw the exciting opening of a brand-new pre-school facility at Brent Knoll Primary School in a new state of the art building. The new facility means the school can now cater for children aged 2 – 11, and the Trust now provide Pre-School care in all its First and Primary Schools.



The children's first day was incredibly exciting as they came to explore the new building, as well as meet the staff. As well as settling in, the children had a bracing walk up Brent Knoll hill to help get to know each other and the area. The new pre-school has a team of five, all with several years of early years' experience, who will work closely with the school to ensure that children are prepared for a smooth transition into the main school. Headteacher Chris Burman said: "We were delighted this term to meet our newest, and youngest members of the school and really look forward to embracing them as part of our wonderful school community". If you are interested in your child attending the pre-school, please contact the school directly.

Trust Welcomes New Head at Cheddar



The Wessex Learning Trust is very proud to welcome Mrs. Tamara Dexter to our family. Mrs. Dexter joins us as the new Headteacher at Cheddar First School and brings with her a wealth of expertise and experience which will help Cheddar to remain an exceptional learning environment for your child. A full interview with Mrs. Dexter will be published on the Trust website soon.

Eco Warrior at Hugh Sexey



Most of us have been getting out for exercise during the lockdown, but James (Year 7, Hugh Sexey) has been going one step further. While on his daily walks he was upset by the

amount of rubbish around his village, so decided to take matters into his own hands. After buying his own grabber James has been out everyday picking up litter and making the village a tidier place. What an amazingly selfless act – we're very proud of you!



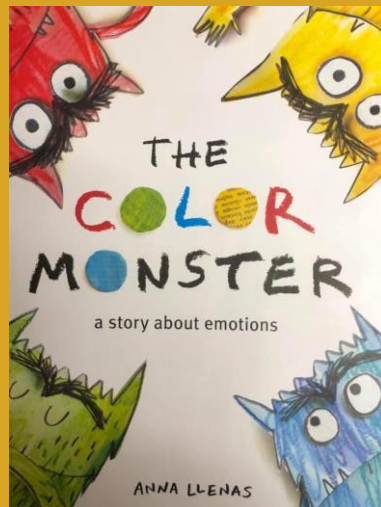
Marking Children's Mental Health Week

More than ever, we are all facing strains on our mental health – an often-invisible issue which is being compounded by the stresses of lockdown. To promote good mental health and help children deal with the stresses that face them, schools across the Trust have been marking Children's Mental health week with a range of activities designed to promote mindfulness and wellbeing.

At Lympham, staff organised events for the children in and out of school including virtual PE sessions to get children active, screen free Friday to help children re-engage with live beyond screens, and story readings such as 'My Monster and Me' and 'The Colour Monster' which in age appropriate ways helped children to recognise when they might feel different emotions, why, and how to deal with them. All of the above prompted lots of great discussions with teachers and peers, helping to get the children engaged with their mental health and how to support themselves through challenging times.

Further to this, in order to continue to promote positive mental health the school have begun running 'Wellbeing-Wednesdays' on their social media accounts where the school is promoting resources and techniques to help children's wellbeing. More than ever we hope that this will protect and support our young people, and help them cope with the stresses of lockdown life.

You can follow Lympham on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Wassailing Tradition Kept Alive, Despite Pandemic



Brent Knoll School has helped to keep Somerset's annual wassailing tradition alive this term by holding its own small ceremony for the children of keyworkers.

Despite the rain, the children who are attending Brent Knoll Primary during lockdown still managed to get out and celebrate a mini wassail around the school's apple tree. Headteacher Chris Burman says: "The children, helped by music teacher Siobhan Johnson, started the ceremony by playing drums and tambourines to get rid of the 'bad spirits'. This was

followed by the telling of the Wassail story, a toasting of the tree with real toast and some West Croft Farm cider and then the final rendition of a traditional Wassail song." He adds: "The children really enjoyed learning about this ancient tradition and hopefully next year we can all return to West Croft Farm in Brent Knoll to celebrate in a real cider orchard."

We are very proud of our schools finding new ways of keeping traditions like this alive and can't wait until all the children can be back to celebrate together.



Lockdown Lowdown

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None of us hoped to be hear again, but for as long as we can't be together we will keep sharing all the amazing work that is being made while we are apart. Check out what Trust children have been up to this term below:



Top L-R: Colour mixing at Mark; model and pancake making at Weare

Middle L-R: Counting at Weare; An amazing penguin model at Cheddar; Key worker children at Lymsham

Bottom L-R: Chinese New Year dragon and model Great Wall at Axbridge; a rainbow cake at Hugh Sexseys; geography, art, and English work at Cheddar

On behalf of everyone at the Wessex Learning Trust we wish you a safe and restful half term!