

Welcome...

Welcome to our very first newsletter to keep you updated with news across our Trust.

You are receiving this newsletter because your child attends a Wimborne Academy Trust (WAT) school – and we are very proud that your child and their school is part of our Trust.

But do you know what it means to be part of WAT and how your child's school benefits from being a member academy?

We're a proud family of seven first and middle schools – Allenbourn Middle, St Michael's Middle, St John's First, Colehill First, Merley First, Hayeswood First and Witchampton First – providing education for children aged 4 to 13 in the Wimborne area.

All of our schools are rated as either Good or Outstanding and enjoy a close collaborative relationship so we can all share best practice with each other. We also host the Wimborne Teaching School, training teachers from across the area.

This newsletter will not only provide you with news and updates from the Trust but will also share in the good news of the individual school and how they promote creative and innovative learning opportunities.

By bringing our news altogether in one newsletter we hope to enhance that sense of working together and being part of one Trust family.

Everyone in the Trust community plays an important role in our success and we are always keen to hear any feedback or ideas parents



may have. At the bottom of this newsletter is a contact point where you can contact us.

I hope you enjoy this first issue of Academy News.

Liz West, Chief Executive Officer

We are family

Two years ago, seven first and middle schools in the Wimborne area joined forces to become a multi-academy trust.

In those two years our schools have formed a very close bond and we benefit greatly from working with each other.

We exist as a Trust to provide outstanding education for all our children and we work hard to ensure we improve their life chances.

As an outstanding education provider across first and middle phases, we give children a broad and balanced education, which prepares them well for success in their future lives.

We provide strong challenges and support to all our schools so they deliver success for all.

Professional development, challenge and support are also at the heart of what we do to ensure our staff are some of the finest teachers in the area. This is complemented with the teacher training we provide at the Wimborne Teaching School.

WAT was one of the first multi-academy trusts to include both Church of England and community schools and we celebrate the unique histories and characteristics of each of our schools.

Our schools also share



three core values which inform all aspects of educational provision and school life in Wimborne Academy Trust:

- Excellence
- Collaboration
- Respect

WAT is governed by a Board of Trustees that

meet termly. They act as a critical friend, oversee leadership, set targets for school improvement, monitor progress and improved outcomes for pupils and set budgets.

You can read more about WAT, how we are governed, our visions and aims at www.wimborneacademytrust.org

Our children at Witchampton First were transported back in time to the 1940s and the Second World War.

In a special World War II Day the pupils were taught what it was like to live in a war-torn Britain.

Children and staff wore 1940s style clothes and were tasked with organising a tea party using rationing – just like their great grandparents would have done seven decades ago.

The youngsters made their own ration books and created a shopping list of what limited ingredients they could buy under rationing.

They also used their maths skills to tackle their small budget, working out ratios and what proportions they could buy. Groups of children then went to the village shop with their ration books to buy the items needed for the tea party.

Joining in with the spirit of the day, shop staff stamped the ration books and used authentic vintage scales to weigh the required loose ingredients.

Pupils then helped cook and prepare



Bringing the past to life

the food for the tea party that was attended by their parents. This special day culminated in a WWII-themed performance from the children.

Head of school, Cathie Bolton, said: "We feel it is very important that this generation learns about this momentous time in our country's recent history.

"Our day showed that although times were tough for our grandparents and great grandparents there was also a show of immense resilience and spirit."

Teacher Emma Richardson added: "It was really quite eerie walking around the school that day as it really looked like time had stood still. It was a moving occasion for all."

Fun day is all mapped out

Some very lucky children at Hayeswood First School were invited to test-run a brand new orienteering course.

The Year 2 children were among the first people to enjoy a brand new course at BytheWay. Armed with maps and navigation tools, the youngsters were tasked to find their way around and locate markers.

The Bytheway orienteering course was built by Christchurch and East Dorset Council's Community and Open spaces team and Wimborne Orienteers. It is a permanent course open to anyone.

And it's a course designed for the 21st century, with each orienteering post containing a QR code for smartphones.

Using a free smartphone app from www.iorienteering.com, people can walk or run around the course, using their phones to prove they have visited each control post.

Headteacher Pippa Gerrett said: "Not only was it a fun exercise but the children learned lots of new skills and the importance of team work."



Read all about it

Colehill First School turned over a new leaf with its refurbished library, following a successful fundraising campaign.

The £1,600 improvements have seen the library transformed into a wooded wonderland.

It now boasts new woodland-themed furniture, complete with log-shaped cushions, walls painted like a forest, plus new shelving and storage units.

Movingly, the new library also includes a new reading chair in memory of long-serving chair of governors Gordon Richards, who served the school from 1978 until he sadly died in 2014.

Headteacher, Andrew Turrall, said: "The children absolutely love the new library and they really look forward to going in it and reading.

"We are also very pleased that we have a lasting memorial to Gordon Richards, who is sadly missed and fondly remembered."





We love to celebrate the achievements of our children and at St Michael's Middle they've found an eye-catching way of doing this.

St Michael's large wall in its main corridor is emblazoned with all the achievements its children are securing – achievements not made in the classroom but away from school.

The wall has also been used to highlight children who have done well in the world of sport, art, fundraising and voluntary work.

Headteacher, Ron Jenkinson, explained why: "We feel it is very important to not only celebrate what our children achieve while they are in school, but also what they do when

they are not here. We are very proud that St Michael's is a place where champions learn.

"By celebrating achievements we are fostering a sense of pride in our school and showing that everyone can aim for the top and to do their best both inside the classroom and outside."

Children drive school's environmental changes

Youngsters at our Merley First School are helping to ensure a greener future for fellow pupils.

The children have devised their very own 'Eco Code' following a week of intensive learning about the environment.

During the week in which World Environment Day fell, the pupils learned all about the harmful effects of plastic pollution on the planet's seas and oceans.

They created collages to demonstrate the impact of pollution on the planet and debated how the seas could be kept plastic-free.

Each class wrote an Eco Code for the school and the children were asked to vote on which code they would like adopted.

Headteacher Jane Phillips



said: "The children have really taken on all the lessons they have learned and are very passionate about doing their bit to help the environment.

"Each child has also produced personal promises on how they can cut down on their use of plastic at home and school. It's been wonderful to see how caring and dedicated the children are and now their Eco Code will make our school greener for future generations of children."

Shakespeare laid Bard

All the world was a stage when children at St John's First made a sonnet and dance about the world's most famous playwright.

For one week teachers dedicated their teaching to the wonderful works of William Shakespeare. St John's turned back the clock to the 17th century and went all Shakespearian.

The week kicked off with a surprise performance from our talented staff singing 'Shakespeare Rocks'.

Pupils were then tasked to act out one of the most famous scenes in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. And the rest of the week was the stuff dreams are made of.

The children wrote Shakespeare-inspired speeches, re-enacted scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* and made their own puppet shows.

Head of School, Katharine Anstey, said: "To be or not to be in love with Shakespeare was the question we posed our children – and the answer was definitely 'to be'.

"What our special week has shown is that you are never too young to start learning about Shakespeare and all our children, from Reception to Year 4, embraced the Bard."



Children join forces to prevent bullying

Our caring children from across the Trust have joined forces to help ensure bullying does not happen in our schools.

Pupils from across our seven schools have formed a special anti-bullying council. Their first workshop helped influence a range of activities during National Anti-Bullying Week.

The children on the trust-wide council – whose ages range from 7 to 13 – now meet each term to help influence how the Trust as a whole prevents and tackles bullying.

CEO, Liz West, said: “Thankfully occurrences of bullying at our schools are rare. To ensure this continues there is no one better to have involved than the children themselves.

“We are delighted that our children, who care deeply for their school and others, have come together this way.

“Their ideas and input will be invaluable in helping us forge an even stronger community, in which we all look out for each other.”

Already the council has sent out a questionnaire to find out how safe at school their peers felt.

Although the general consensus of the council members was that their schools do not have much of a problem with bullying, they all agreed that standing together against it would be a positive thing.

The members recommended introducing an anonymous ‘bully box’ into the schools – where children can disclose concerns privately.

They are also hoping to arrange for an inspirational guest speaker to talk to children about their experiences.

Hair today, gone tomorrow



Talented dancer Emily Eaton of Allenbourn Middle with friends Ellana Dulson and Jasmine Trudgett.

Every day our children amaze us with their talent, kindness and generosity.

There were two prime examples of what wonderful youngsters we have, when two of our pupils – independently of each other – donated their hair to a charity that makes wigs for young cancer sufferers.

Emma Denton from Merley First and Emily Eaton from Allenbourn Middle both had good and very different reasons for donating their long hair to the Little Princess Trust.

For 13 year-old Emily it was the shock news that she would have to put her dream of being a dancer on hold after being diagnosed with a bone disorder called avascular necrosis. But rather than feel down about this shattering news the youngster turned her thoughts to helping others.

She explained: “I decided that as I was not able to dance for such a



Emma Denton of Merley First with her second lock of hair for the Little Princess Trust – after spending two years growing it back.

long time and wouldn't need my hair to be so long, I would donate it to the Little Princess Trust. I just really want to make another child smile.”

Meanwhile, for Merley's Emma Denton it was the second time she went for the chop.

When she was just five years-old Emma took the selfless decision to cut off her long auburn hair so another little girl in need could have a real wig.

It's taken nearly two years for her hair to grow back to its original length, but rather than enjoy her long locks, the generous pupil has decided to do it all over again.

Emma said: “Last time I did it with my mum and this time I wanted to do it on my own and I'm a Brownie and Brownies stick to the Brownie promise. I also really wanted to help children who don't have hair.”

You can find out more about the excellent work of the Little Princess Trust at www.littleprincesstrust.org

