



Welcome to the first edition of FMATConnect this academic year.

The start of a new academic year is always an exciting, refreshing, energising and occasionally nervous time. We welcome new staff and students to our Trust and the new dynamics always presents exciting opportunities.

The overwhelming response I have had from the many students and staff I have spoken to over the last half term has been how wonderful it is

it be back at school with everyone. Whilst there remain some Covid challenges, we must not lose sight of the immense value and positivity of being part of a wider community. Where Covid challenges have meant a temporary switch to blended learning, we have done this in conjunction with advice and support from both the DfE and PHE. In fact, both these organisations contacted the Trust to express their thanks and full support for some of the measures that Richard Cornell and other leaders at Smith's Wood put in place during a recent outbreak.

Reading this edition filled me with pride at the way staff at all academies have grasped the reinstated opportunities for further extracurricular activities. These have included a wide range of sporting events, creative arts and a return to the use of visiting expert speakers to both motivate and inspire students.

Wellbeing remains a priority for every responsible organisation, and I remain committed to improving what we can provide in this area. It has been great to hear about all of the opportunities and activities taking place in our academies to facilitate this goal and I hope that the Trust wellbeing training day delivered last month also proved valuable. Always remember that networks provide good support and advice and as a Trust we have many formal and non-formal groups. If any staff wish to make suggestions for developments in relation to this area, I will welcome the feedback.

I hope that you all manage to enjoy some free time next week and reflect positively on your first half term successes and achievements.

MR SIMON JONES | CEO

FEATUREDINSIDE

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CONNECTING WITH BOURNVILLE

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | A JOYFUL NOISE

Exciting times here at Bournville. Covid stopped play on the wider curriculum including all of those sporting fixtures and community engagement activities that foster collegiality and belonging. These opportunities and experiences are tentatively re-emerging and giving staff and student a tantalising glimpse of normality.

In recent weeks we have held our first secondary netball tournament and I am delighted to announce that we beat several schools, including Selly Park, finishing a very close second in the tournament behind our rival school.

As newly appointed School Games Organisers, it was a joy to welcome five local primary schools along with Bournville Primary School students to take part in a football tournament. The sound of joyful little voices shouting encouragement to their teams always brings a smile. Just as important are the Bournville Sports Leaders, these students are vital in ensuring events run smoothly and everyone has fun and the Bournville Sports Leaders showed every inch of their inspirational leadership to ensure everyone had a great time and the event went off without a hitch.

We held our Open Evening on Wednesday 22nd of September 2021. It was my first as Head of Academy even though I have been here 18 months. Students were smartly dressed and proud to show off their

school to visitors. The students were nervous about their public responsibilities practicing their lines "Welcome to Bournville School, please turn left for the hall". Parents and potential new students commented on how well dressed, polite and knowledgeable our students were when conducting the tours around their school.

It is important to recognise the importance of these wider opportunities for our students as a place to grow, learn new skills and put these skills to the test.

At Bournville, with 64% disadvantaged students, the opportunities we provide are very much the first chance students have to flex their leadership skills.

Our drummers continue to keep a steady beat whilst tackling the complex rhythms of world music and I am excited to report that singing has re-commenced. The Bournville School choir is up and running and the walls truly do resound to the joyful noise of students singing and most importantly, enjoying the experience of working together as a team to create something splendidous.

School is about more than just GCSE qualifications, it is about making lasting memories and inspiring our students to aspire to greatness. I am genuinely excited about getting back the ordinary, with a sprinkle of the extraordinary thrown in!

MISS M GREEN | HEAD OF ACADEMY

CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | ENRICHING LIVES

September is the beginning of a new season: back to school set against the backdrop of the crisp freshness of autumn hanging in the air – summer is a distant memory, as are some of the established habits and routines, for both staff and students! The start to the year has really focusing on self-regulation, with the highest expectations of standards in terms of uniform, punctuality and commitment to learning; striving for excellence at all times.

Erdington's key foci for our improvement plan are: literacy, further development of our knowledge rich curriculum and punctuality. We have been driving punctuality through our self-regulation drive and rewards system. We are looking forward to continuing to develop our current curriculum provision and sharing good practice across the Trust and locally through the DLP network. In terms of literacy we have been working with the new Trust improvement partner Mrs Debbie Tremble and launched our whole school literacy CPD on Monday 20th September – already we have seen some exciting ideas coming through so watch this space! Staff have been competing a literacy skills audit this has been a challenging activity, but well received by staff, all knowing that if we are going to improve the quality of students' written work we need to skill up the team to be highly effective practitioners first.

Although only a few weeks in, we have had a number of exciting opportunities for our students to learn from and enjoy.

On Friday 10th September, as part of the end of year rewards programme, the top 30 students in each year group took part in a fun sports-based workshop with the Medical Mavericks, which was not only educational and inspirational but thoroughly enjoyable.

On Monday 13th September, selected Year 11s attended the Achieve Conference at Birmingham University; the RAISE programme is a range of fun, interactive lectures, workshops and competitive quizzes for students. They are designed to motivate and inspire students around particular subjects, and in the long term raise achievement at GCSE. The students really enjoyed the day and took a lot away from it, especially useful advice from high achieving students who spoke at the conference.

On Tuesday 28th September Erdington relished in the opportunity to finally be able to return to an 'in house' Open Evening for prospective students. The event was well attended, with parents/guardians and their children enjoying interacting with the staff and learning about all the Academy has to offer.

Looking forward, we have many other whole school activities planned for both staff and students.

As part of our dedication to driving higher standards of literacy in school, on Friday 8th October, the whole school will partake in the Take10 challenge with the National Literacy Trust. Students will watch Award-winning author, Louisa Reid sharing top tips for reading, benefits of reading and will be reading with students nationwide.

Staff at Erdington are looking forward to welcoming Tom Bennet to join us for our training day later this month, he will be delivering practical and evidence-informed training to in order to maximise the impact of education. We share his vision of the Great Project of Education: to transform the lives of all children for the better, helping us to raise informed, wise students who are scholars, citizens and flourishing human beings, in a flourishing society.

Here at Erdington Academy we are a multi-cultured society, where everyone is valued and appreciated.

On the Thursday 21st of October we will be holding a Cultured BBQ and fun evening from 4:30pm to 7:30pm. The evening will include: mixture of Ska music, Samba drumming, African Drumming, Reggae music, and Art exhibition and much more! In terms of food, there will be a variety of Black and Asian dishes, including: jerk Chicken, curries, samosas, rice and peas, fried dumplings, festivals and lots more. There will also be a black history quiz for families, with a prize up for grabs! I am really looking forward to this event and Mrs Folkes's fried dumplings.

MR S MALLETT | HEAD OF ACADEMY



CONNECTING WITH ERDINGTON

LEAD PARENTS PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Over the next year, Erdington Academy will be working towards achieving a 'Leading Parents Partnership' Award. We are using the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) to help strengthen our academy's partnership with parents. LPPA is a national award that will provide us with a valuable school improvement tool and also gives us recognition for our commitment to working with parents.

Parental engagement at Erdington has always been an area we have been committed to strengthening and working with this external partner to share great practice from other schools is something we are looking forward to being involved with.

Research has identified that, at age 7, a parent's influence on a child's learning is six times that of their school and even at 11 years old, it is 29% greater. Increased involvement can raise achievement by at least 18%. No involvement means low or no qualifications at 16.

The LPPA will help us achieve these long-term benefits:

- contribute to improved student attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress;
- increase parent participation and involvement;
- enhance parents' support in their children's learning;
- improve communication between home and the Academy.

The Covid pandemic highlighted the importance of close links between school, parents and students. Staff in our Academy made regular 'safe and well' calls during lockdown, our students whose parents are key workers were given the opportunity to stay in school to enable them to do their vital work. Vulnerable children were carefully monitored and looked after on site. One area that our parents told us they missed was 'face to face' parents' evenings, though for some online appointments were very effective.

Looking forward, from parent voice activities last year, Erdington Academy will be re-introducing 'face to face' parents' evenings this half-term. I am working alongside my marvellous faculty of Design and Performance and other staff in the Academy to celebrate 'Black History Month' this October through an event which parents, staff and students can engage in music, food, art and sports activities. To forge strong links and to make continuous improvement, we will be sending out frequent invites to parents to have their say. We will be looking closely at how we communicate with parents and what works best for them. A half termly newsletter will be sent out with details on how parents can be involved in the education of their child.

If you would like to become more involved or want more information, please contact:

Jo Thom, Associate Assistant Head, Design and Performance at j.thom@erdington.fmat.co.uk



CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | NEW YEAR, FRESH START

It has been a very positive start to the year here at Fairfax. It was really exciting to be together in the hall for staff training for the first time since March 2020. It was lovely to hear the buzz of colleagues catching up after the six-week break.

We began our year establishing our expectations in terms of student behaviour and reviewed our ARKS strategy.

Leadership were pleased to introduce our new tailored CPD programme for teachers, and look forward to working alongside our teachers to invest in all of our teaching colleagues' practice.

The opportunity to share our Academy Improvement Priorities face-to-face with colleagues was a welcome one. Two areas of our Improvement Plan that I am particularly excited about are the introduction of our guided reading programme and the embedding of our Staff Solution Circles.

Post-pandemic research has highlighted a drop in reading levels for students, and Fairfax chose to use some of the Covid Catch-Up Fund to invest in a guided reading programme for all our year groups. Our Literacy Co-ordinator, Judith Hickling,

carefully selected books that represent the diverse community we have at Fairfax, and our staff and students are looking forward to starting their reading next week.

We introduced Staff Solution Circles in Summer Term II last year with a focus on well-being. It was encouraging to hear how positive staff were about the well-being measures we have in place already, and Leadership enjoyed hearing staff suggestions about how we can further enhance our well-being offer.

The theme of well-being ran through our Trust Training Day, and the positive evaluation forms highlighted how valuable staff found the wealth of resources on the day, and what a benefit the training will be for our students.

I am very much looking forward to improving our well-being offer here at Fairfax for both staff and students. Wishing all FMAT colleagues a positive start to the year.

MRS D BUNN | HEAD OF ACADEMY



CONNECTING WITH FAIRFAX

SUPPORTING STUDENTS AT FAIRFAX ACADEMY

In line with all academies within the Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust, here at Fairfax we are highly focused on supporting our students to develop academically, socially and emotionally to enable them to leave us equipped for both their future careers and life. It would be unfair to say that this support comes from just the Pastoral Team, or SEND or even classroom teachers. There are many layers to this support, starting with the universal offer available for all our students, then level 2 and level 3 support as required.

Universal support is aimed at building resilience and ambition; it is the offer that is available to all students regardless of need. It includes the House System, our new RSE Curriculum, our Pastoral Support Team, our termly focuses – e.g. Be Kind, our Equalities Group, House Council, LGBTQ+ group to name but a few.

If a student is identified as needing more support either academically or socially, we look to use strategies such as the '3 houses' to identify their barriers to learning, or SEND review the student's progress; we will plan targeted interventions or make referrals to appropriate agencies. We work closely with a range of agencies such as Headspace, Spurgeons, LACES, PSS, PDSS, CAT, EP and this year we have increased our in-house intervention offer. We have started using CHERISHED for students within this group too this year.

The next level of support – Level 3 is for our highest need students. This involves level 1 and 2 support but also involves more intensive support from external agencies alongside support from our Family Support Worker or Our Place Counselling.

Fairfax Academy is conscious that one size does not fit all, and the pastoral support system offers

flexibility to review and adapt support, dependent on need.

It is always important to reflect on what we offer, and this year we are introducing some new interventions to support our students and their families based on our quality assurance last year. These include:

- A Well-being Suite – Beverley Shinton our new HLTA is working closely with the SEND and pastoral team to deliver a range of SEMH interventions around anxiety, managing your own behaviour and examination stress to begin with.
- A Family Support Worker – Cynthia will work closely with our students and families around identified areas.
- Open Door Mentoring – a 20-week program for students who are identified.
- An Intervention Room – New targeted English and Maths interventions will take place weekly.
- CHERISHED – Kindness Counts Course
- SALT interventions for particular students
- TIAAS training for all staff
- New systems for First Aid

Here at Fairfax Academy we make a difference because we care. It is the hard work and dedication of all our staff, working together to identify and support in a timely manner, that makes a difference to our students.

At Fairfax we pride ourselves on the layers of support available to each and every student dependent on their individual needs.

MRS H WILLIAMS | ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



CONNECTING WITH FMAT

DEBORAH BUNN | TRUST LEAD FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACROSS FMAT

Usually I write in FMAT connect in my capacity as Head of Fairfax Academy, but this edition, I wanted to add an article in my role of Trust Lead for Professional Learning, to give you a flavour of what the Professional Learning Strategic Development Group (SDG) will be working on, and what our vision is, moving forward.

Firstly, the decision to call our staff development 'professional learning' rather than CPD is a deliberate one, and one we hope you will embrace as we move our staff development offer to one that is an ongoing journey, rather than occasional days, that have often been concentrated at the start of a career. To support our vision for ongoing career learning, FMAT have invested in The National College online learning platform. All staff are able to access hundreds of learning modules and whilst we aim to develop our Trust use of this valuable resource throughout the year, all colleagues are encouraged to access any learning they are interested in as soon as possible!

As a Trust we have made tentative steps towards collaborative CPD, through the Exceptional Teacher Programme, curriculum development and most recently with our 'wellbeing for all' training day. However, the vision is for something far more cohesive, where all FMAT employees are able to access high quality learning that will develop them professionally and enable progression, whatever their career stage.

I held my first meeting with the professional learning SDG last week and we agreed some strategic

targets for this year. Alongside other strategic aims, there are two objectives that I am particularly excited by.

The first is the development of a common framework for excellence across Trust academies that enables leaders to collaborate effectively when identifying training needs and then facilitates a strategic response to those needs across the Trust. The second is the development of a career stage professional learning offer across the MAT, that provides a route for professional learning and qualifications at any level of the staffing structure.

Such an offer will enable colleagues to build networks, gain accredited courses, continue to develop expertise specific to their career stage and give them the skills to progress onto the next stages of their career. Whilst these objectives initially focus on teachers, support staff development is high priority for FMAT and will also be developed at pace.

I am very much looking forward to working alongside the professional learning leads in each academy to develop the offer for our staff and look forward to updating you on professional learning developments in the months to come. In the meantime, please take the opportunity to speak to your academy's Professional Learning Leader about what you will value professionally and don't forget to log on to National College and start building your training portfolio!

DEBORAH BUNN

TRUST LEAD FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | SMITH'S WOOD ACADEMY COLOURS

Academy colours at Smith's Wood is one of the highlights of the year. Although slightly different this year because of the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic, it was a genuine pleasure to award Academy colours to students in year 10 and 11 at the start of the Academic year.

What makes 'Academy Colours' different to other awards at Smith's Wood is the commitment over time that the recipient needs to have demonstrated. Typically, students will have shown real dedication to the work within a particular faculty for staff to consider nominating them for the faculty award. This makes Colours extremely prestigious to win. In addition to a certificate, students receive a specially designed badge to be worn on the blazer lapel, recognising which faculty (or faculties) have made the award. Over time, some students who have made exemplary progress in a variety of areas of the academy will receive a 'rainbow' of colours on their lapels.

Congratulations to all students who received their Academy Colours – wear them with pride!



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.

 **BOURNVILLE**
SCHOOL

www.bournvilleschool.org

 **BOURNVILLE**
SCHOOL Primary

www.bournvilleprimaryprovision.org

 **ERDINGTON**
ACADEMY

www.erdingtonacademy.bham.sch.uk

 **FAIRFAX**
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

www.fmat.co.uk

 **FAIRFAX**
SINCERITAS LABORIS

www.fairfax.bham.sch.uk

 **SMITH'S WOOD**
ACADEMY

www.smithswood.co.uk

CONNECTING WITH SMITH'S WOOD

HEAD OF ACADEMY UPDATE | COMMONWEALTH CONNECTIONS

Smith's Wood Academy has been selected from over 200 applications to represent Solihull in the prestigious Commonwealth Connections project. The project has been created by a partnership between the Birmingham Education Partnership, the Commonwealth Games organisation, the British Council and the Youth Sports Trust.

The Commonwealth Connections Project is twinning schools in the West Midlands with those in official development assistance (ODA) eligible Commonwealth countries. The project will create bespoke educational opportunities for young people and their teachers across the Commonwealth to learn together and develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Commonwealth and its values, thus allowing young people to feel more ownership and ability to shape their communities.

As an Academy we have selected (from a very large number of applicants!) 16 year 9 students to represent the Academy in the project. The students have been selected as official Sports Ambassadors for the project and along with taking part in a number of sports and arts projects, will feature in the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games!

We have been paired with India as part of the project and we have already made contact with our partner school, The Red Roses Public School in Palam Vihar, New Delhi. The partnership will involve collaborating in a number of ways to raise awareness of the characteristics and needs of our respective communities.

Congratulations must go to our Sports Ambassadors:

Jahmelia Arnold-Moors

Molly Clarke

Levi Davis

Carly Donnelly

Daina Donnelly

Cole Horton

Morgan Hyett

Connor Jordan

Meredith Maddock

Connor Passco

Charlee-Jay Simons

Alfie Stanford

Kaycee Stanley-Davis

Teagan Thomas

Prada-Jay Tracey-Dequezney

Liam Woodford

A special thanks must also go to Richard McIlwraith for coordinating the project and we are all very excited to see what lies ahead.

MR R CORNELL | ACTING HEAD OF ACADEMY



CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

MARTYN JOBLING | DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

I would like to take this opportunity in the first FMAT Connect of the academic year to thank all of those colleagues who supported with the TAG process this year. Whether your role was teaching or supporting in classrooms, setting, marking or supervising assessments, conducting the reviews of the evidence, producing the supporting documentation and evidence or in many cases a significant combination of all of the above, you should be pleased and proud with your efforts as ultimately, they contributed to children being awarded with qualifications which enabled them to move on to the next stage of their education or employment.

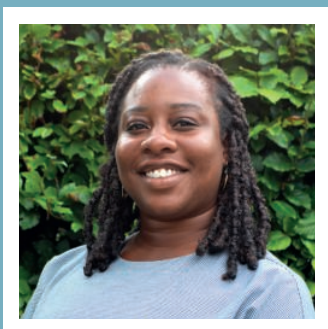
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

I am really looking forward to working with everyone this year as we continue our journey of School Improvement. The addition of the Trust SEND, English/Literacy and Maths/Numeracy Leads to the School Improvement Team means that collectively we will continue to move forward at pace in a way which benefits the children in all our communities.

The Trust Leaders have a slightly different focus to the TIPs from previous years, they will still work very closely with the relevant Middle and Senior Leaders in our academies, but they also have significant MAT wide responsibility for the strategic development of their area. They will be sharing their work with you all in future editions of FMAT Connect so please keep an eye out for significant developments in these areas.



Debbie Tremble
**English Language
and Literacy Lead**



Shara Kay-Davis
**Maths and
Numeracy Lead**



Simon Lynch
SEND Lead

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

The Strategic Development Groups (SDGs) are all now up and running for this year and the teams are working on some exciting projects which will support the children and colleagues. These groups, as well as providing support for key leaders in these areas, are also the powerhouses of School Improvement. The projects they are developing are in addition to their business as usual activities and will make a real and vital difference to the educational, cultural and social experiences the students receive.

This year we have seven groups and they will provide some more detailed information on what they are working on in later editions of FMAT connect.

If you are interested in finding out more or joining a group as a co-opted member then please contact myself by email: m.jobling@fmat.co.uk.

CONNECTING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

MARTYN JOBLING | DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The groups for this academic year are: The Strategic Development Groups (SDGs) are all now up and running for this year and the teams are working on some exciting projects which will support the children and colleagues. These groups, as well as providing support for key leaders in these areas, are also the powerhouses of School Improvement. The projects they are developing are in addition to their business as usual activities and will make a real and vital difference to the educational, cultural and social experiences the students receive.

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The groups for this academic year are:

| SDG | CHAIR | MAIN FOCI |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Pastoral | Karen Cornell Central Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FMAT Alumni, • Best practice for behaviour and attendance, • Open evenings/ marketing your academy. |
| Student Engagement and Leadership | Greg Bartlett Erdington Academy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FMAT Games • FMAT Performing Arts Showcase • Student leadership courses. |
| Assessment | Tim Johnson Fairfax Academy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we report to parents • How we assess progress at KS3, • Consistent assessment for mock exams at GCSE |
| Curriculum | Andrew Wright Erdington Academy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers education and ensuring all academies work towards a top quality mark • RSE development • KS3 curriculum development across the MAT |
| Professional Learning | Debbie Bunn Fairfax Academy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers stage professional learning road map • Talent mapping across the MAT • Launch and roll out the National College |
| Teaching and Learning | Matthew Else Bournville School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework of excellent for determining the quality of T+L Heat mapping, T+L strengths and AfD across the MAT continued use of blended learning. |
| SEND | Simon Lynch Central Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision mapping across the MAT • QFT and interventions access arrangements and provision for them. |
| Wellbeing | Alex Pugh Central Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality wellbeing offer for staff and students. |

CONNECTING WITH THE COO

JOHN FITZGERALD | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Firstly, I would like to thank the teams I work with for their leadership and commitment in successfully delivering the business aims we set ourselves in the 2020/21 academic year.

Working collaboratively with academies, central teams have delivered a number of capital and infrastructure improvement projects that have continued to improve the environment for our students and staff.

DATA

INTERNAL SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

Over the past few months, some of you may have introduced new supplier/companies/services and been greeted with a 'Data Protection Officer approval reference'.

We all have a duty ensure that information about other people is safe and only shared when necessary.

If you plan on sharing student/parent/staff data with a new company, agency or government department, you must first discuss with the Trust's Data Protection Officer (DPO), Robert Fitzgerald.

The simplest is by submitting a request to the Trust's DPO by completing the below form.

Third Party Data Sharing Request

Remember, you must submit a request if it meets the three conditions

- a) if you plant to share personal data with a new supplier/company/agency
- b) you plan to share new categories of personal data with a preferred supplier (such as sensitive, medical etc.)
- c) you have concerns about sharing data

The Trust's DPO will review and either approve, or conduct a full review, called a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), if there are high risks surrounding the data sharing.

If you unsure, just complete the form.

ROB FITZGERALD | ISM

FINANCE

ESFA ACADEMIES FINANCIAL HANDBOOK

The ESFA Academies Financial Handbook September 2020 states that "all academy trusts must have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its financial and non-financial controls and risk management procedures are operating effectively".

To ensure compliance with the ESFA Academies Financial Handbook and the FMAT Financial Handbook the FMAT Board had appointed Beever and Struthers to carry out the programme of internal scrutiny.

The programme of internal scrutiny provides the FMAT Trust Board, through the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), with an independent and objective opinion on the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control. At the same time, through its objective and independent approach, the work of internal scrutiny helps us at FMAT to improve the design and operation of internal controls and thereby promoting more effective governance and risk management

The first programme of three audits was undertaken in May 2021 which had 6 recommendations in total, 5 low and 1 medium. There were no significant/major improvements required, they were either no minor improvement required or improvement required.

SAFINA MAHMOOD | ACCOUNTANT



CONNECTING WITH THE COO

JOHN FITZGERALD | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

FINANCE

It might have been mentioned a few times, how much more efficient an online authorisation system for procurement/approvals would be....

Well.... I am pleased to officially confirm that 'you said it and we delivered it for you'!

I am really proud and excited to announce that 'Zahara' which is an online approval system for your purchase orders and invoicing has been procured and has now been launched across our Trust. We have worked really hard in collaboration with the project team at Zahara over the summer to bring us all into the digital world. I hear your sighs of relief!

This new way of ordering and obtaining approval, will improve our procurement processes, remove unnecessary paperwork/scanning etc and streamline the approval process for delivery of your goods/services and approval of your invoices within your academies.

Not to mention.... keeping each and everyone one of us and our Trust financially compliant!

We've set up your approval platforms, with workflows that automatically notify the relevant budget holder that there is something waiting to be approved; this is just one of the improvements that will support you and your teams and give you more time back to focus on what we're all here for – "enriching the lives of all of our students".

Budget holders have the ability to view their budget allocations immediately and make quick, informed decisions on whether to approve orders or not.

Zahara records all notes made on the order, reasons for non-approved orders etc and one of my favourite functions is the ability to view where your purchase order is at any point in the process, whether it is sat with your budget holder or ready to be sent to the supplier.

We have delivered 15 hours of training sessions for you all across our Trust and have also been out and about visiting you at your academies over the last fortnight to support you raising orders, with queries and to listen to any feedback you may have on the new system.

You will all be familiar with the setup of new system and so like any new system, we are pre-empting that there may be some feedback on this. For me 'feedback is the breakfast of champions' and without constructive and objective feedback we can't improve and maximise the benefits of new initiatives.

So, as always, we really appreciate any constructive feedback you may have, coming straight into finance@fmat.co.uk so that we can act on those quickly and efficiently whilst we work towards a fully paperless solution for all.

That said, I have to say we have been overwhelmed with the positive feedback on this project and it has made the hard work and endless Teams sessions well worthwhile; a massive thank you to all of you that have engaged with the training and supported us in implementing this system.

Shortly an update will be released through your Head of Academy and Trust leaders about new features and functions that Zahara can deliver to further support us, along with a helpful 'Hints and Tips' guide and FAQ's.

Therefore, in the spirit of sharing our best practices across our Trust, if anyone has anything they would like to share, that they would like included in this then please forward it to finance@fmat.co.uk.

Thank you again,

FINANCE



CONNECTING WITH THE COO

JOHN FITZGERALD | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

FINANCE

SUMMER SCHOOL TRANSITION WEEKS

Over the summer, 420 year 6 pupils attended our summer school transition weeks. Each of our academies provided a week of activities for Year 6 children starting in September, giving them a chance to settle in, make new friends, and have fun.

SMITH'S WOOD ACADEMY – MS BUTCHER

Over 100 new intake students signed up for a place and took part in Smith's Wood Academy's first Summer school. The students spent the week with key staff from Smith's Wood Academy both teaching and support staff.

Over the week the students worked in mentor groups, taking part in taster curriculum lessons to support their transition. The students benefited from getting to know peers who will be in the same classes as them in September, working on communication, teamwork, resilience and building friendships.

Many of the students reported that they felt less nervous and anxious about moving to secondary school and the start of their journey at Smith's Wood Academy.

Curriculum lessons included; English, Maths, Science, Art, History and Physical Education.

The students also had a key member of support staff to facilitate their transition. The week culminated in a day of competition, working in mentor groups on a range of activities including, speed stack, team building activities and an all-round quiz.

"I've enjoyed this week because I have made lots of new friends and have tried new activities I thought I would never try".

Jack

ERDINGTON ACADEMY & FAIRFAX ACADEMY

A big thank you to Kingsbury School Sports Partnership who took the lead on both schemes. Erdington attracted 91 students and Fairfax 172 students. A varied programme gave students the opportunity to take part in graffiti art, team building activities, circus skills, bhangra dance sessions, glow sports, science experiments, active maths and literacy, music making with steel pans, and to take on the challenge of the climbing wall and inflatable assault course.

BOURNVILLE SCHOOL

65 students signed up for the last week of the summer holidays, with 6 school staff supporting the week along with Premier Education. Activities included music – steel pans, street dance, circus skills, self-defence sessions, sports sessions and active maths and literacy sessions.

A fun filled week. Here are a few comments from the students.

Thank you to all the staff that supported the summer transition weeks ensuring the year 6 students were 'School Ready' for September 21.

TRACEY STEVENS | INCOME & GRANTS GENERATION OFFICER



STUDENT COMMENTS

"I tried new things that I thought I would never do or be good at. I also learnt new skills whilst having fun".
Alfie

"I've enjoyed this week because I have made new friends, got to know my way around the school. I've had time to get to know new people and got to do new activities I would have never done". *Florence*



"I like the climbing and the graffiti art. It has made a difference as I'm less worried to go to Fairfax". *Elisha*

"I really enjoyed the rock climbing, glow sports and the dance. I loved this camp, everyone is so nice. Can't wait till September". *Chloe*



"I enjoyed making new friends and PE, I got to try new things like kickboxing and steel drums". *Theo*

CONNECTING WITH THE COO

JOHN FITZGERALD | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

ESTATES

The Estates teams at all Academies have worked tirelessly to improve the sites and buildings for all Students and Staff. Teams have also worked to support the Academies with their covid plans, ensuring covid supplies are available where appropriate in addition to the additional cleaning that has been carried out to reduce the potential for cross contamination.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP) UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2021

FMAT have in place an Asset Management Plan for the Trust's sites. The plan is for Bournville, Erdington and Fairfax. Smith's Wood PFI contractor BAM are responsible for the management of the estates and there is an agreed lifecycle plan in place for all assets.

All identified Health and Safety issues have been addressed within budget.

Our students have benefited from the investment and improvements to several areas including:

- Significant refurbishment works at all sites, including fixtures and fittings, furniture, carpeting and equipment
- Refurbished science rooms at Bournville, Erdington and Fairfax, in addition to refurbished Food Technology rooms at Erdington and Fairfax. This is in addition to a number of other refurbishment projects on all sites.
- Redevelopment of the redundant swimming pool into a large multi – functional facility

The financial performance of our academies has enabled future projects in the AMP to be accelerated and be delivered ahead of planned completion; this is a fantastic outcome. Heads of Academy's have been extremely supportive in the delivery of the AMP and this is testament to how working collaboratively and as a MAT does have a positive impact on the lives of our students.

CONDITION IMPROVEMENT FUNDING (CIF) APPLICATIONS

The MAT have been successful in the 2021/22 Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) application for each eligible academy.

This is a fantastic outcome and will provide £1m of investment to improve the infrastructure of the Bournville, Erdington and Fairfax estates. The successful applications:

£375,312.71

Bournville – Roofing works

£276,100.32

Erdington – Roofing works

£364,500.00

Fairfax – Curtain walling replacement

ANDY GREEN | TRUST ESTATES MANAGER



CONNECTING WITH THE COO

JOHN FITZGERALD | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

GRAPHIC DESIGN

September is always a very busy month with four open evenings across our Trust. We advertise these events externally using platforms such as billboards, bus stops and train stations. This year with an increased budget allocation I was able to expand the advertising campaign using the press and digital media.

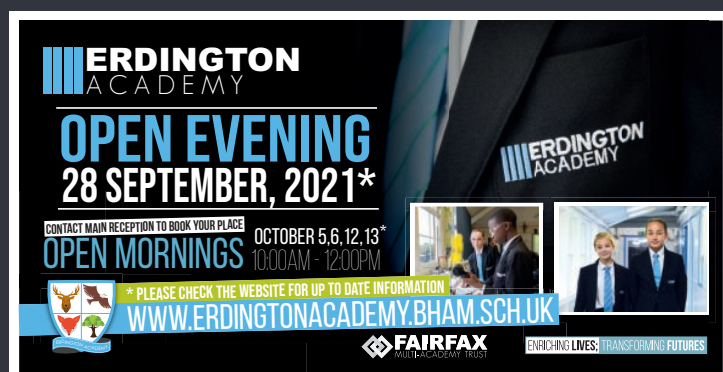
We ran a two-week Facebook campaign for Bournville, Erdington and Smith's Wood. The Fairfax Open Evening was earlier in September so we will run a Facebook campaign for their Sixth Form Open Evening in November.

Facebook advertising targets a relevant audience using geographic and demographic factors, ie, within a 5 mile radius of the school and parents/carers of a certain age who are likely to have year 6 children. It also targets people who have googled secondary schools in the area. We've all looked at that pair of shoes we shouldn't be buying only to find it popping up on our social media, enticing us to make the purchase! This works in exactly the same way.

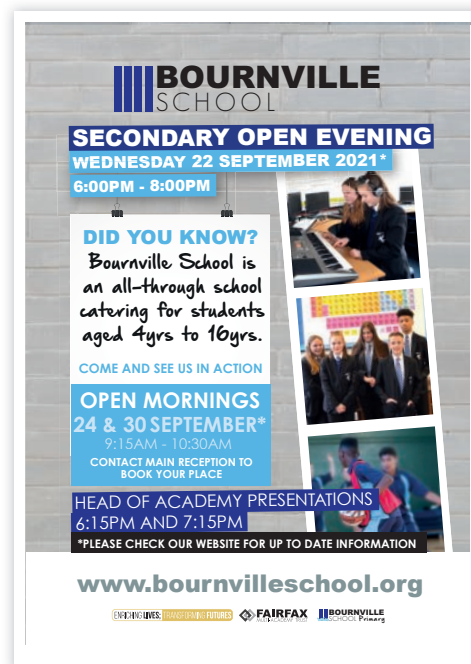
I'm waiting for the data to come through to see how successful this was in terms of the number of views and how many people clicked through to the websites. Once we have the data we can make an informed decision as to whether to use this platform going forward.

We have also held discussions around professional videos being made for each academy, which can be used on websites, events at the school and shortened versions on social media. With the unfortunate cancellation of Smith's Wood's Open Evening, we are trialling this sooner than expected to enable prospective parents to see the school, its facilities and staff. If successful, we are hoping to send the film crew into each academy at a later date.

KEELEY CLARKE | GRAPHIC DESIGNER



BILLBOARD



TRAIN STATION



BUS STOP



NEWSPAPER

KAREN CORNELL | TRUST PASTORAL LEAD

As a Trust we understand that the first few weeks of a child attending school are crucial and so, across all our academies, we have been preparing for this day for months! Our academies have gone above and beyond to ensure our children, both new and existing, have had the best possible start to the year. The support ranges from fun and engaging summer schools, to intensive induction programmes to ensure the young people instantly feel at home in our community. Our staff have worked tirelessly to support our young people to adjust both emotionally and academically and the evidence speaks for itself in the confidence that I am seeing our Reception, Year 7 and Year 12 students demonstrate.

- mark webm
- plan for location
- Focus on Quality

With kindness in mind and in view of the fantastic work that the Evelyn's Gift charity are doing within the Trust, to support families with not only food but high quality toiletries, perhaps we can all try to carry out at least one small act of kindness today which will undoubtedly make a huge difference to someone's day.

KAREN CORNELL | TRUST PASTORAL LEAD



EXCELLENCE.
DEDICATION.
AMBITION.
INTEGRITY.
TRADITION.