

# NEWSLETTER

Feb 2022



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Since Goodbye, Mr Chips in 1939, movie companies have been making films about inspirational educators, teachers and people who support learners in schools. You may have watched Coach Carter, Freedom Writers, To Sir, with Love or my own personal favourite, Dead Poets Society and been moved, inspired or proud.

It has been a continual, additional challenge for many of our children over the past two years, a significant proportion of their young lives. It has also been a time of personal challenge for many of you as well. It is so important that you are able to bring your very best you to work everyday in order to help our children be the very best they can be. Have a read of the link below for some really helpful advice and support for the whole school community.

[Make it Count: Guide for teachers | Mental Health Foundation](#)

As we all know and have personally experienced, we have so much power to change lives; build confidence, inspire, motivate and help children truly believe in themselves. An inspirational researcher and education academic, Betty Ray, talks about the critical importance of modelling patience and sharing a 'contagious passion' everyday. Words which we all know are really important parts of our education tool kit when we are working with children if we want them to do well. For many of us, the last couple of years has made a bit of a dent in the ability to turn on our Contagious Passion every single day – but that is the job!

The very best, most rewarding and impactful job in the world and together we need to ensure we are all bringing our best us to work everyday.

*Tammy Mitchell*  
CEO



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# MEET BRIARY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## CAUSING A SPLASH!



September saw us dive back into swimming and ensure that all those children who hadn't completed their swimming lessons (owing to Covid) have now done a full course of three terms at Herne Bay swimming pool. In addition, we have sent another minibus full of children who joined Briary further up the school to Whitstable pool for their coaching.

Aside from the National Curriculum requirement, at Briary we consider teaching children to swim to be fundamental to our safeguarding duties so our children start their swimming lessons in Year One.

Having raised the profile of swimming this academic year, we now also have three children who have joined swimming clubs outside of school and are now competing on the club circuit regularly. Mollie (y3), Millie (y4) and Jacob (y5) have all had success at this level over recent weeks either winning races or achieving personal bests.

## CELEBRATING SCIENCE WEEK

Taking place in Term 3, this year's theme was Our Fragile Earth. Children explored topics ranging from global warming and the melting of the polar ice caps, to plastic pollution in the oceans; deforestation and the loss of habitats. As well as the effect of the global use of palm oil on the rainforest habitats and wildlife.

Children created art work, board games, posters, fact-files and newspaper reports during the week, alongside a home Science Challenge - designing a new device to save energy to help the planet; researching an animal or habitat that has been affected by pollution or global warming, or any local or global initiatives already helping to improve the environment; describing how they would protect a favourite habitat or animal if they had the chance.

The children loved Science Week... "science week is the best week of the year"; "we do science really well at Briary"; "I love it because we can do science every day"; "it is interesting and we learn lots"; "When we do science, it is like all the other subjects rolled into one".



# MEET BYSING WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL



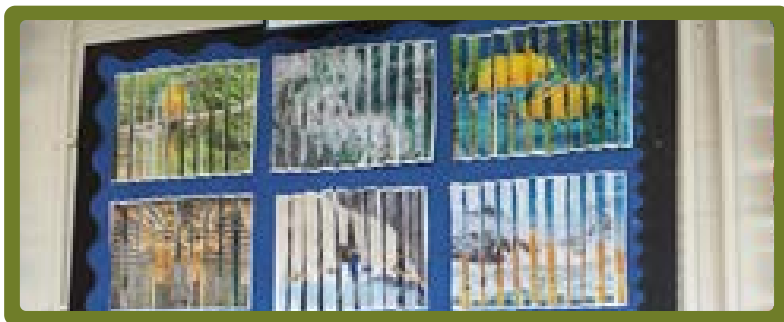
## BYISING WOOD GET CREATIVE

We have been creating a wide range of artworks throughout the school over the course of Term 3.

We have been experimenting with some of the art sessions being run by support staff with half class sized groups during teacher release time.

A key focus in these sessions has been developing art techniques with a range of media, supported by the resources from Kapow scheme of work.

Here are some of the fantastic creations to be found around the school at the moment...



# MEET HOLYWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL



## SPORTING FUN FOR YEAR 4 WITH OUR FRIENDS AT CANTERBURY COLLEGE

As part of our Trust, Group Partnership, our children have access to a range of trips and visits to EKC Group's Colleges to experience enrichment days. This Term, Year 4 had the amazing opportunity of taking part in a PE session at Canterbury College, taking part in a range of sporting activities, some of which they have never done before.

It was fantastic to see the children's faces when they walked in and saw huge trampolines in front of them! The children took part in quick-cricket, basketball, volleyball, football, games and team-building challenges. At the end of the session, all of the children played a game of rounders with the college students.



It was lovely to see everyone playing together and working well as a team of mixed individuals. The students were incredibly supportive, engaging and approachable to all of our children and it is evident that they worked hard to achieve such a successful PE session.

Following from our PE session at the college, the children have expressed their enjoyment of their time at the college and have already asked us if we can go back again.... and of course we will!

## EXPLORING GREAT EXPECTATIONS IN MEDWAY



Year 6 have been busy exploring the work of Charles Dickens and his links with the Medway towns by delving deep into one of his most famous books, Great Expectations.

The children enjoyed visiting Cooling and High Halstow churches on the Isle of Grain to see the gravestones and surrounding landscape that inspired Dickens to write the opening chapter of the book. They even had a visit from Magwich the convict as well!

The children also met Jeremy from the Guildhall museum in Rochester who led them in a workshop about what life was like for the main character, Pip, during this time. After the visit, the children decided they would rather not live in the nineteenth century as "it was a bit hard for kids because they had to work and if you did something wrong you might get imprisoned on a prison hulk on the Medway or be transported to Australia!"

# MEET QUEENBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



## DANCING INTO THE NEW YEAR

It has been a fantastic term for PE at Queenborough, with every class across the school focusing on dance! When this was introduced at the start of term, some of our children were a little unsure of this PE topic as they love to be outside playing team games with friends and the thought of performing can be a little daunting for some.

However, from the very start, the children have been engaged, enthused and have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the journey that has led to some truly outstanding performances during our last week of term. It has been so refreshing to hear from so many of our children that they did not realise how much they would enjoy this topic and how much they have taken away from it, such as perfecting specific dance movements, trying something new, stepping outside of their comfort zones and, importantly, growing in their own self-belief.

From Reception right through to Year 6, each class has created a dance that links to their termly theme, allowing them to think carefully about what they have learnt in class and how this might be expressed through movement to music. It has been wonderful to be able to invite other classes along to enjoy the dances and act as critical friends to their peers. Each dance has also been recorded and we are looking forward to being able to share these with the children's parents and carers next term. Well done to everyone and a big thank you to Mrs Barton, our PE Teacher, for leading this project across the school.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR APPRENTICES!



This year, we have been very proud to employ six apprentices across the school as Teaching Assistants and Nursery Nurses in partnership with EKC Group. We are delighted to announce that our four Apprentice Teaching Assistants were nominated as finalists for the East Kent Apprenticeship Awards... and they won!!

While the ladies were sadly unable to make the award ceremony on 10th February, they were represented by Mrs Conroy and Mr Howard who were attending following the school's nomination for an award. Our amazing apprentices were presented with certificates and a trophy to mark their achievements in an assembly to the whole school the following day. We are so very proud of them!

# MEET OUR TEAM...

## AN APPRENTICES SPECIAL FOR NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK



### Abbie, Apprentice at Queenborough Primary School and Nursery

What is the best part of the role?

- *"Being a part of an outstanding school, which helped me gain the skills to become a Level 3 Nursery Nurse.*
- *Meeting a range of different and unique children, who gave me the opportunity to be part of their development and personal growth.*
- *Becoming more confident and outgoing due to the amazing people who I met along the way and have been a massive part of my apprenticeship journey."*



What are your hopes for the future?

*"To continue to learn and grow within the childcare sector. Become successful and strive in my career"* [Abbie is now on full staff at Queenborough and is looking to]

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### Megan, Apprentice at Holywell Primary

What are you enjoying most?

*"I have really enjoyed working with all the different children and learning about their different needs. I have been able to work in several classrooms, and this has given me an insight into different teaching styles.*



What are your hopes for the future?

*I would like to stay on as a TA in the Trust and become a qualified TA and continue to work with children."*

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### Abbie, Apprentice at Queenborough Primary School and Nursery

What are you enjoying most?

*"Really enjoying working within the Early Years setting, supporting children and being a part of the most important stages of their educational journey."*

What are your hopes for the future?

*"After completing my apprenticeship, I intend to study further and would love to continue being part of the Outstanding Queenborough School community supporting children."*

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*"It has been great to support young people to start their journey into employment through the traineeship and apprenticeship route. The passion and dedication from Megan is lovely to see, she has brought enthusiasm and a nurturing personality to the role, and is proving to be a very positive and aspirational role model for our children."*

Darran Callaghan, Headteacher, Holywell Primary.

# REFLECTING ON...

## DEVELOPING OUR TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND ECTS WITH KATE ESPLEY, TEACHING AND LEARNING ADVISOR

Having worked with Briary, Holywell and Queenborough throughout last academic year, to deliver a TA training project, I really felt akin with the vision of the trust and was eager to continue being involved as it continues to strengthen and develop.

My role is very different within each school, but the children, staff and leadership in both makes me wake each day looking forward to work (how good is that?). For this article, I will be focussing on my role in Queenborough, as Teaching and Learning Advisor.

Staff development is a particular passion of mine and one I get to live out daily at Queenborough. I coach three ECTs, our body of Teaching Assistants and our School Direct trainee teachers.

The entitlement of a significantly increased programme of development for ECTs is phenomenal in many ways. The investment on the behalf of the host school is undeniably a sizable increase in both funding and man power, but the rate of progress and implications on the standards of teaching and learning, when done right, is outstanding. I wish, as an NQT, I had weekly feedback and coaching on pedagogy, it would have been invaluable.

Thinking back to September and comparing the ECTs to now is mind-blowing. They know their children inside out, are making curriculum and delivery choices to meet need, plan and deliver engaging lessons, direct staff within their classrooms and are accountable for pupil outcomes.

To say this halfway through their first year is amazing and I'm positive it will continue to strengthen and practice develop.

As a school, we are eager to continue the investment in TA training and I am leading the coaching groups for our TAs this year. Having identified a missing step between the theory from last year's project and contextualised classroom practice, I will be focussing on what this theory looks like in practice and more importantly, in Queenborough.

We are using our 'Queenborough Standards of Excellence' as a starting point for our coaching discussions, with the aim from there to create a TA specific document outlining expectations and standards, with additional exemplification of what this looks like for a TA at Queenborough.

Throughout this collaborative journey, there will be opportunities for personalised skills audits, observation feedback through live learning walks or sharing Iris recordings and coaching led by need. We all agree that Teaching Assistants are a vital cog in our wheel called education, and thus to provide a comprehensive continued professional development package evidences the value we identify they can have on pupil outcomes.

I am honoured to be able to affect change through supporting staff and leadership, which in turn affects positive outcomes for our children.



# WELLBEING FOCUS

The wellbeing of our school community is uppermost in our minds, particularly supporting our dedicated staff so they can continue to support our children and families.

Action for Happiness, a registered charity, have dedicated themselves to encouraging happier living.

We invite colleagues across the Trust and beyond to learn more about these keys and how you might apply them in your daily lives.

There's a wealth of resources on the website [actionforhappiness.org](http://actionforhappiness.org) and we'll continue to highlight them here.

## Monthly Wellbeing Theme

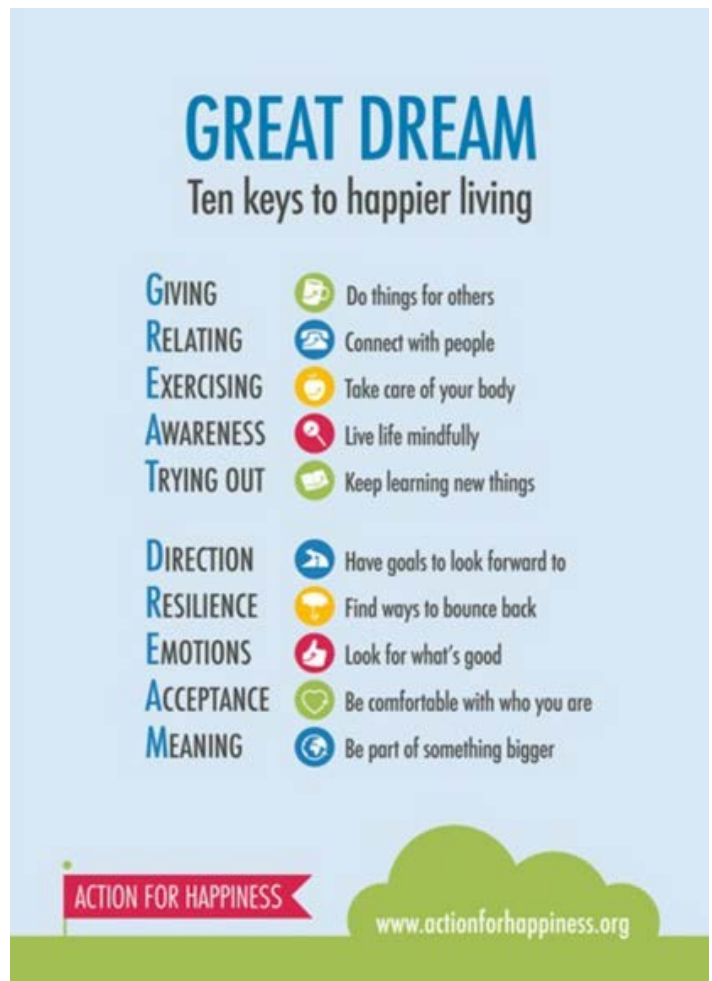


Check out today's daily action and give it a go, take some time for you!



Why not sign up to be receive future themes and calendars right to your inbox.

Or if you like your Apps, check out the Action For Happiness App.



## Online events

Action for Happiness host a regular series of free online events with world renowned speakers.

Upcoming events:



Here is one of our past favourites:



Click to book/ view or visit the [AfH website](http://AfH website) to learn more.

# CPD NEWS

JOIN US THIS MAY FOR OUR

## VIRTUAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE 2022

The Inclusion Agenda underpins everything we do in education, our culture, values and ethos, ensuring that every child and young person is treated with equality, with affection and with the respect they deserve as the unique people they are.

The importance of inclusion is always front and centre in our schools, colleges and settings, but it can be challenging to ensure every aspect of the agenda is current in our thinking.

Our annual conference with its abundance of speakers and workshops provides an opportunity to identify key areas that might need revisiting, a refresh or just a slight refocus.

### Event Programme

Your choice of incredible workshops and speakers.

**Keynote with #Inclusionist Sarah Le-Good, Director of Inclusion at Derby College** Inclusion and Support in the World of Education; and **Developing an Truly Inclusive Curricula – Intent and Implementation**

**Equality – One Trust's Journey to Greater Inclusion**  
Garry Ratcliffe, CEO The Galaxy Trust

**The Gift of Teaching to Support Cultural Change**  
Jo Campbell, Director of SEND Development & Katy Brown, Director of English, EKC Group

**How Difficult Conversations Can Lead to an Inclusive Culture.**  
Clare Bush, Counsellor and Well-Being Lead, Queenborough Primary School and Nursery

**Working With The Most Challenging Behaviour**  
Steve Wickenden, Drama Coach & Wellbeing Support Mentor, Queenborough Primary School and Nursery

**Website Usability and Accessibility**  
Nathan Hunt, Director of Digital Transformation & Customer Support

**Fostering a growth mindset to make the classroom inclusive and increase engagement and motivation in all learners**  
Neala Whybrow, Director of Education Improvement and Shabana Raman, Director of Maths, EKC Group

#### Date:

Thursday 19th May 2022

#### Time:

9.30 - 3.30

#### Location:

Online - Microsoft Teams

#### Cost:

£45 EKC Group & KMA Partners

£55 Other schools, colleges and settings

### Further information

To learn more and book your place visit

[ekcgroup.ac.uk/ekc-schools-trust](https://ekcgroup.ac.uk/ekc-schools-trust)



# DATE FOR THE DIARY...

## DO LESS BETTER

What really matters in school leadership & how much is just white noise? In the world of education, where it can be all too easy to get lost in the relentless waves of new initiatives, strategies & policies, how do we identify what's worth fighting for?

In this session, we explore with delegates what matters most to their schools and how they really could 'do less, better' in the pursuit of these goals.

Over the course of the day, participants will engage in four interactive workshops:

- Do Less, Better: Leadership
- Do Less, Better: Assessment
- Do Less, Better: Monitoring & Evaluation
- Do Less, Better: Wellbeing

All sessions will draw from published research materials, combined with presenters' own experiences of successful schools and leadership approaches.

This event is delivered by Tammy Mitchell, CEO EKC Schools Trust and partners.

### Further information



To learn more and book your place scan our QR code or visit [www.ekcschoolstrust.org](http://www.ekcschoolstrust.org).

#### Date:

Thursday 7th July 2022

#### Time:

9am for 9.30 start, finishing at 3.30pm

#### Location:

Canterbury College, New Dover Rd, Canterbury CT1 3AJ

#### Cost:

£75 EKC Group & KMA Partners  
£85 Other schools and settings

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Are you looking to the step next in your career?

Want to work in an amazing learning environment and amongst a fantastic team?

Interested in sharing your skills in a Trustee/Governor capacity?

Well our family of schools could be just the right place for you and your career!



If you're interested in joining the talented teams in one of our family of schools or in supporting our work as a Governor or Trustee, we would love to hear from you. Please visit our website to learn more.

# LET'S ALL SAY A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR SCHOOLS

The national THANK A TEACHER campaign recognises all staff working in schools; school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, and all support staff such as lunchtime supervisors, caretakers and cleaners. It celebrates the professionalism, passion and commitment of our schools.

Parents, colleagues and partners please take 5 minutes to thank an individual, team or school in our Trust (or other school/setting) for their hard work with a FREE Thank You e-card.

Not only is it lovely to receive a thank you but a card can be a springboard to entering the prestigious Pearson National Teaching Awards.

Please THANK A TEACHER today, it's simple, it's free and will make someone's day.

The THANK A TEACHER campaign is run by The Teaching Awards Trust and supported by Department for Education.



**Simply go to [www.thankateacher.co.uk](http://www.thankateacher.co.uk)**

**and they will send a FREE personalised ThankATeacher card on your behalf**

**If you're feeling shy you can send a card anonymously!**