

NEWSLETTER

Jan 2022



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Welcome back everyone and I hope that you all managed to banish your end of term coughs, colds and sore throats, swap Night Nurse and Paracetamol for Mulled Wine and Quality Street and really celebrate with loved ones!

I always have a smile to myself in schools in January. The majority of us are desperately trying to reduce our waistlines after the Christmas festivities, cut down on the treats and nibbling between meals and avoid too many little extras at breaktime. We therefore, generously bring all of our left over biscuits, chocolate pressies and sweet treats into the staff room for all of our loved co workers to enjoy!

Ironically they all do the same and we spend January trying desperately not to be tempted by all the yummys on offer, secretly cursing the generosity of our colleagues 😊

So, as I introduce another fantastic addition of the Trust's Newsletter, literally packed with fantastic news and celebrations, why not find a cosy corner, make yourself a cuppa and sneak one of those left over cookies while you enjoy a really uplifting read about all that's been going on in the Trust.

Tammy Mitchell

Tammy Mitchell

CEO



Want to receive a copy of our termly Newsletter straight to your inbox?

[STAY IN THE KNOW](#)

MEET BRIARY PRIMARY SCHOOL



#WideningHorizons

Year 5 had a fabulous trip to Chatham Dockyard – a day linked to their learning about Ernest Shackleton and Life at Sea at the start of the 20th century. During the day, the children visited HMS Ocelot, a Cold War Submarine; HMS Cavalier, a Second World War Destroyer; and walked the deck of HMS Gannet, a Victorian Sloop. They also had the chance to watch Master Ropemakers at work using centuries-old techniques in the Ropery.



#MakingBriaryProud

Our Year 6 children proved to be fantastic ambassadors when leading the tours for prospective families. Many of the adults commented on their confidence, courtesy and enthusiasm for the school.

#BriaryLovesReading

This term has seen the opening of our dedicated Reading Room. Parents and their children can visit the Reading Room after school to complete their daily reading before they leave our playground. Parents have commented that this means that it is done in a supportive atmosphere and helps them to ensure that it happens every day. One of our wonderful support staff, Mrs Wotton is on hand to help with any issues and provide support as necessary.

BRINGING THE FESTIVE CHEER

We were determined to celebrate and share some Christmas joy with our families this year, having been unable to last year.

So we planned early to take our festivities outside. Storm Barra made an unexpected visit; however, we weathered the storm and all year groups were able to perform their own selection of songs to their families.

Seeing all our children, from our youngest to the oldest, enjoying performing again brought a tear to the eye and left a lump in many throats.

MEET BYSING WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bysing Wood Primary School



WE WON! WE'RE PRIMARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR WITH CHANCE TO SHINE!

Last term, we were bowled over to win Primary School of the Year 2021 with Chance to Shine.

We've been working with Chance to Shine to give all our children the opportunity to play, learn and develop through cricket.

Working closely with Chance to Shine and Kent Cricket coach Jamie Harris, we've revolutionised how we deliver cricket to our pupils. As well as offering sessions to Years 3, 4 and 5, Jamie ran leadership training sessions with the Year 6 'Sports Crew' so they could deliver their own coaching sessions to younger pupils.

"I really enjoy playing sports and cricket is one my favourites. The reason why I want to help other year groups is because as I really enjoy sport, I think other people should as well."

'Sports Crew', Esme, 8

Attending Lord's Cricket Ground (the home of cricket to accept our award), we were commended for our whole school approach and how our teachers have taken to cricket, joining in with the sessions and learning how to deliver sessions themselves once coach Jamie had left.

To be recognised on a national stage is an amazing achievement for the whole school.



"Congratulations to all the incredible winners... Bysing Wood has played a vital role in helping young people to get active through cricket and to develop in so many different ways. Cricket has the potential to change people's lives for the better and we have seen that in the winner's stories tonight. We are immensely proud of the work that they do."

Chance to Shine
Chief Executive, Laura Cordingley

MEET HOLYWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL



WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY BEEN RE-ACCREDITED WITH THE PRIMARY SCIENCE QUALITY MARK.



One of the aspects of this was to work with staff to create the 'Holywell Vision for Science'. Staff were keen to see Science was enquiry based, led by a key question which the children would investigate using one of the five types of Science enquiry to explore further:

- Pattern seeking
- Comparative and fair testing
- Secondary sources
- Identifying, classifying and grouping
- Observing over time.

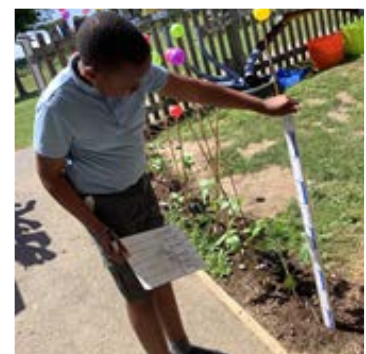


Alongside the need to begin each lesson with an enquiry questions, each session focuses on developing the specific skills required to carry out a particular enquiry type.

This allows us to ensure the 'Working Scientifically' portion of the Science Curriculum is at the forefront of Science teaching, whilst supporting children to obtain the specific knowledge to be taught during the year.

At the same time, we developed our understanding of language and knowledge retention and the use of a spiral curriculum approach. We decided to swap the knowledge focus of each lesson from one week to the next enabling children to build their confidence within the subject; embed their knowledge, understanding and ability to apply tier three vocabulary in context; gain experience of the enquiry types and the skills needed to undertake them and to learn the specific knowledge identified for each year group within the National Curriculum.

Doing this over the course of each school year means the children are given frequent opportunities to revisit previous learning and make links between Science and other areas of the curriculum, peppered with opportunities for children to lead their own enquiries.



MEET QUEENBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY



HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM EVERYONE AT QUEENBOROUGH SCHOOL & NURSERY!

With the winter spike in COVID-19 cases, we were faced with a difficult decision about our Christmas celebrations at the end of last term.

Last year, like so many other schools, we were sadly unable to invite our parents into school to celebrate Christmas with the children, and we were so determined that this would go ahead this year in some form. So, we decided to wrap

ourselves up warm and hold the concerts outside in the style of 'traditional carol singers'. Our children were superstars and were not fazed at all by singing to their parents on the playground. It was so wonderful to hear our children singing in public again, and it was such a lovely way to round off the year.



PERFORMING ARTS WEEK

Term 3 has got off to a flying start with our annual Performing Arts Week. This term, our whole-school Personal Development concepts are DIVERSITY, EQUALITY and AUTHENTICITY and so we have sourced performers who embody these values to work across the school.

The children have enjoyed workshops in body percussion led by a STOMP! performer, African storytelling and music with a Zimbabwean theatre-maker, pantomime workshops with an (in-character) panto dame, as well as street dance.

As always, our children have been amazing at welcoming some larger-than-life characters to the school and trying new things that have pushed the boundaries of their comfort zones. We have made some wonderful new links with practising members of the Arts community and cannot wait to invite them back to school for future work with the children.



MEET OUR TEAM

Meet Jason Howard, Head of School at Queenborough Primary School & Nursery and, Director of its Teaching School Alliance.



You've been with Queenborough for 12 years; what have been some of your highlights?

That's a tricky one as there have been so many! I suppose the biggest highlight for me was in October 2016, when Ofsted recognised the school as outstanding. Sitting with Barbara, our Headteacher, listening to the inspectors discuss and debate the judgement, I think we both stopped breathing! The sense of collective pride that followed for our school and wider community was just incredible, knowing that they had all played a part in making history and smashing through the glass ceiling that had hovered over the Island for a long time. We might have been the first educational institution on the Island to have reached this accolade, but I have no doubts that it will not be the last!

As Director of Queenborough Teaching School Alliance; what have you learnt whilst leading the development of others?

Yes, Queenborough became a Teaching School in June 2017 and formed QTSA. Since then, it has been my privilege to work with over 40 Kent schools (and the FE Colleges). I am most proud of the work that QTSA has done in recruiting, training and developing new teachers to the profession; it's always such a buzz when you meet someone at interview who you know is going to be an incredible teacher of the future! For me, the most important element of delivering training to other colleagues is authenticity. Nobody wants to turn up to a training session and hear an idealised version of how great things could be if they just worked a little bit harder! Generally speaking, everyone turns up to work wanting to do the best job that they can, and so I believe training sessions should foster an environment where colleagues feel safe to discuss the good, the bad and the ugly of their practice which combine practical tips and takeaways with a sprinkling of academic research. Most recently, I have enjoyed working with the Education Services Team at EKC, and there are some really exciting projects in the pipeline!

Ahead of our 'Do Less, Better' CPD event... can you share a top tip on how you practice doing less, better?

It's a funny thing, in the world of education we are often guilty of imposing countless systems, procedures and proformas on ourselves and then wonder why we don't have enough time in the day to focus on what really matters! Do Less Better came about through a conversation with our CEO when we were trying to really dig down into the issue of teacher and leader workload, particularly in light of the additional pressures faced by COVID-19. The old US Naval adage, 'Keep It Simple, Stupid' has always been something that I try to keep in mind when implementing a change or new idea into school life. I am also a massive fan of the work of Simon Sinek, whose book, 'Start With Why?' really encourages leaders to consider the core purpose of their organisations. I suppose a very simple tip could be to ask yourself, 'Who am I doing this for?'. If it isn't going to have an impact on the life chances of our children and communities, is it worth it? Another thing that I can't stress enough is the importance of keeping up to date with current research. Make time in your busy week for reading, thinking and planning where you want to go next... and don't feel guilty that you're doing it!

REFLECTING ON...

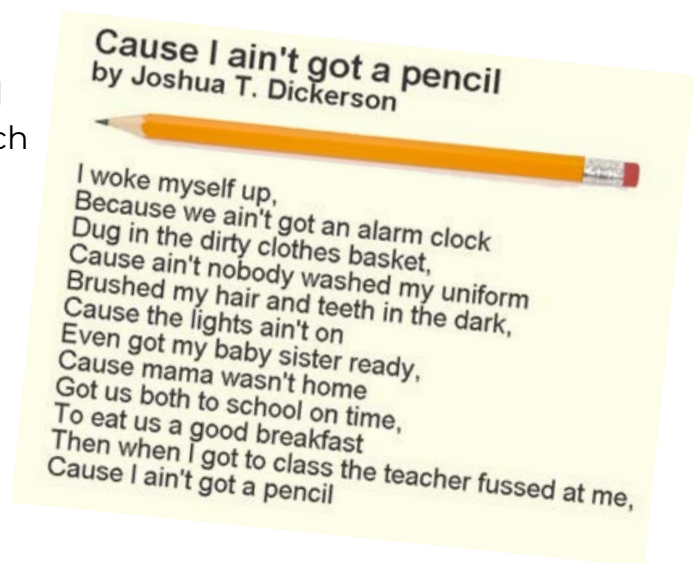
HELPING CHILDREN TO BELONG

Most teachers have seen or read the incredibly powerful and moving poem by Joshua Dickerson. The harsh realities of the lives many children live whilst trying to grow up and access an education. Unsurprisingly, this poem went viral when it was first written and continues to be published and referred to as a reference point for all educators around understanding context. It serves as a constant reminder to us all about the impact we can have and the difference we can make if we understand the children we serve.

Less well known is a response poem inspired by Joshua. An extremely powerful piece which also reminds us as teachers and support staff about the importance of teaching our children independence, ownership and accountability.

Supporting them to succeed for themselves so that when we are not there to 'give them a pencil' they have all the tools and skills they need to help themselves.

Have a read of [D'E Grant's response](#) and think about how you can help all the Joshuas we meet everyday to firstly feel wanted and understood enough to belong in our classrooms, feel safe and confident enough to ask for a pencil and then equipped enough to use it!



WELLBEING FOCUS

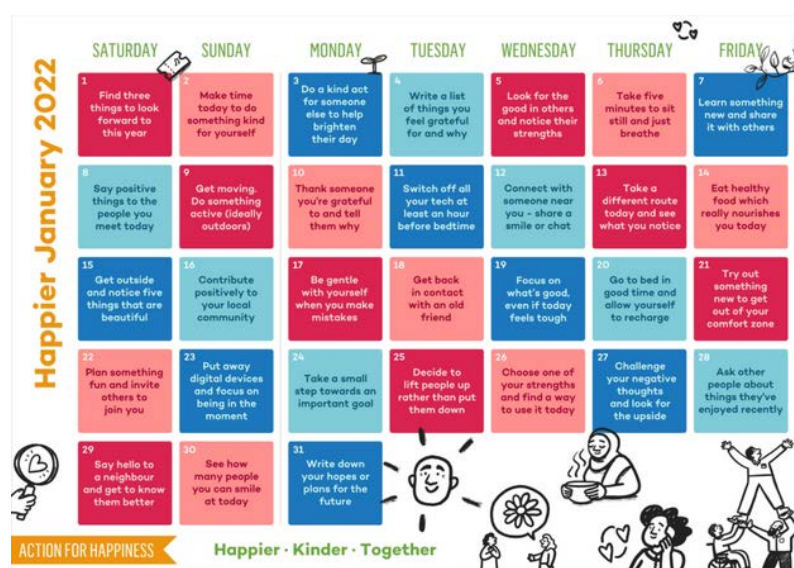
The wellbeing of our school community is uppermost in our minds, particularly supporting our dedicated staff so they can continue to support our children and families.

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 and we'll continue to highlight them here.

Monthly Wellbeing Theme: Happier January



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. Here is one of our past favourites:



Click to book/ view or visit the AfH website to learn more.

NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY HUB

OUR ECO PLEDGE

We recognise we have a responsibility to the environment and our pupils have pledged to:



A FOND FAREWELL TO PATRICK HOLLIS

We're privileged to work with a passionate and committed team of leaders, none more so than Patrick Hollis, whose support as a Member of the Trust Board has been invaluable to our journey as a Trust.

Having stepped down last month, we'd like to celebrate Patrick, a pillar of strength in helping us in all we have achieved, and we wish him all the health and happiness for the future.

Thank you, Patrick, from our Schools, staff, and pupils.



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CPD NEWS

Serving our communities is at the heart of everything we do!



Educational Services, our professional development hub, offers our EKC family and the wider education community access to a rich offer of high-impact CPD and support that inspires outstanding practice and strengthens educational improvement.

UPCOMING CPD EVENTS



To learn more about our upcoming events and book your place visit our website.

You can also learn more about we support our communities.

SUPPORT FOR OUR COMMUNITIES



START YOUR CAREER IN EDUCATION

Whether your passionate about Primary, looking to specialise in Secondary or Special Educational Needs or fancy yourself in Further Education we can help you find the right route to your dream career.



DEVELOP YOUR CAREER

We believe wholeheartedly in our moral purpose...to strengthen the opportunities available for everyone within our communities, this includes professional development.



SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Our rich offer of support inspires outstanding practice and strengthens educational improvement; and with funded opportunities to support colleagues and serve our communities, we're proud to share our offer.

JOIN US

Are you looking to start a rewarding career in education? Or know someone who is?

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

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

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

ekcschoolstrust.org

