

# updATe



## Stef Edwards, Learn-AT Chief Executive

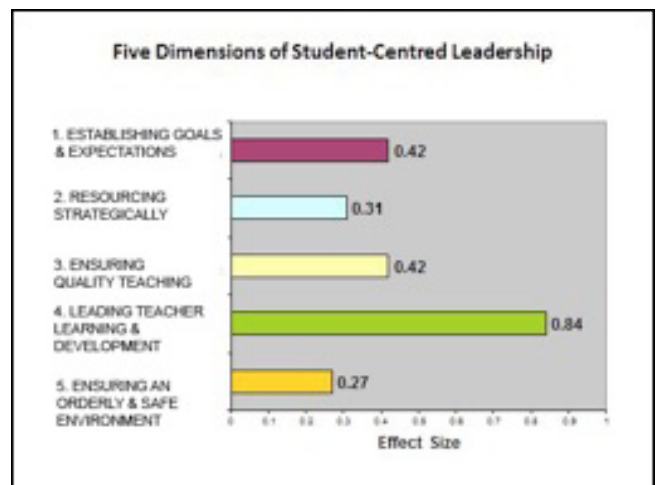
This term I have been invited to speak a couple of times to colleagues in other trusts and organisations about Learn-AT's approach to school improvement. Our trustees, headteachers and senior leaders have given a lot of thought to this over the last year. We have concluded that we want to develop authentic school improvement. By this we mean any activity that has a direct and positive impact on the quality of what happens in classrooms for our pupils. There is ample evidence that it is high quality teaching that makes the biggest contribution to school quality. Professor Dylan Wiliam said, *"Teaching is such a complex craft that one lifetime is not enough to master it, but by rigorously focusing on practice, teachers can continue to improve throughout their career."*

Because of this, we have developed a school improvement framework which puts a strong emphasis on continuing professional development and learning (CPDL). We have investigated what the research evidence suggests about the types of CPDL that have the strongest impacts on pupil learning and discovered that effective CPDL should be:

- Collaborative
- based in the classroom

- research evidence-informed
- supported by specialist expertise
- investigative
- focused on improving pupil learning
- sustained over time

Evidence suggests that leadership which promotes and participates in teachers' professional learning has an impact on pupil learning outcomes around twice that of other leadership dimensions:



For this reason, this term we established the Research and CPDL Steering Group to support our school leaders to provide effective CPDL at all levels throughout the Trust. Each school is represented on



the group by its CPDL Leader. Members of the group will plan and implement CPDL to target school and Trust training priorities. All CPDL will meet the National Professional Standards for CPD, published in 2016: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/537030/160712\\_-\\_PD\\_standard.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537030/160712_-_PD_standard.pdf)  
In Learn-AT CPDL for teachers will be provided in two main ways:

### **a) Collaborative Lesson Research (Lesson Study)**

Collaborative Lesson Research or Lesson Study is an approach to teachers' professional learning that originated in Japan and has become much more widespread in the West over the last 20 years. Teachers work together for two hours a week over about 6-8 weeks, in teams of about 3 or 4. They are supported by a specialist in the Lesson Study process (their school's member of the RCPDL Steering Group) and a specialist in the subject the team is working on. Together the team identifies what specific aspect of pupil learning they need to improve. This could be anything from understanding how to multiply fractions, using paragraphs in writing or developing scientific enquiry skills – but it will be something that the school has identified as an area for development. Together they spend time investigating current research evidence and exploring what is known about the most effective teaching strategies in that area. They may have some direct input from a subject specialist. They work collaboratively to plan a lesson based on what they have learned, then they teach the lesson. One teacher teaches the lesson and the other members of the team observe pupils closely as they learn. After the lesson, which might also be filmed, the teachers meet to discuss their observations and decide whether to plan another lesson. Once the cycle is complete, the teachers publish a report in the form of a poster. Sometimes they invite colleagues to see the lesson or lead a staff meeting

about it for other colleagues to share their learning. At the annual Learn-AT conference, teachers will be able to share their learning in Lesson Study with colleagues from across the Trust in workshops. From September this year, the expectation will be that one team of 3-4 teachers in all Learn-AT schools will be participating in Lesson Study every week. This means that up to 6 cycles could take place each academic year and between 18 and 24 teachers will be able to participate in this powerful form of CPDL. The Research and CPDL Steering Group will provide support for Lesson Study and make sure teachers and subject specialists have access to high quality, relevant research and literature.

### **b) Incremental coaching**

Incremental coaching is a form of 'little and often' coaching for teachers and other members of staff. The Trust's aim is to provide fortnightly fifteen-minute incremental coaching sessions (plus feedback), based in classrooms, in practice, for all staff involved in teaching and learning. We will be developing this in all Learn-AT schools over the next year, for teachers (and eventually, we hope, support staff) who are not involved in Lesson Study.

Lesson Study and/or incremental coaching are already established in some of our schools. For example, plans are in place for a Lesson Study cycle to improve reasoning in mathematics to start at Meadowdale after the Easter holiday; teachers at Blaby Stokes have been working with one of the Trust's primary English specialists, using Lesson Study to explore ways of putting research evidence into classroom practice. We look forward to sharing the outcomes with you later this year. Members of the Research and CPDL Steering Group will be working with leaders and teachers in schools to implement the strategy. This an important part of the Trust's vision to be a school-led, professional learning organisation in which adults thrive and children flourish.  
Happy Easter!



## Blaby Stokes Primary School

The Year 3 pupils had a fantastic time visiting Glencroft Church to explore the life of Jesus, learning about important stories such as the feeding of the 5,000 and the healing of the paralysed man. The children met some of the key people from Jesus' time and had the opportunity to try on clothing and taste a range of food from biblical times, such as sultanas and goat's milk cheese. It was a fantastic morning and we thank all of the adults at Glencroft Church for welcoming us and ensuring we had such a fun and informative time.



It was lovely to see so many different books being brought into school for World Book Day. Mrs Smart and the School Council led an assembly where they talked about their favourite books and authors. In the classrooms the children were able to explain why they had chosen their book to bring in and to share their book with children in different year groups. Each class also did some work on a book chosen by their teacher - *The Day the Crayons Quit* was a very popular choice in Key Stage 1! Thank you to the school council and Mrs Kelsey for organising our second book swap. There was a huge increase in the number of books brought in to swap this time and the children were very excited as they swapped their books with their friends.



Shortly after World Book day, we were treated to a performance of the lovely children's book 'Charlotte's Web'. There were many moments of laughter, especially watching all of the talking animals on the farm. We loved watching Wilbur the Pig prepare for the end of season fayre, hoping to not end up on the dinner table! It was lovely to see his friendship evolve and him hatch a plan with Charlotte, a spider that lives in his pen, to ensure that this would never happen.

We have had a really successful term in PE and sport. Seven of our KS2 children were selected to represent the area at cross country, and Matilda was selected for the national competition. Our basketball teams have been fantastic all season, finishing 2nd and 6th out of 13 teams despite being one of the smallest and youngest teams. Some of the Year 3 and 4 children participated in a hockey tournament, with one team finishing 2nd and going on to represent the area in the county finals. Finally, the Year 6 Girls football team have been on fire all year! They are now twice area champions and county champions and will be competing in the Midlands championship and another Leicestershire competition next month.

At the beginning of term, Year 6 time travelled back to the 1940s as World War Two evacuees for the day, experiencing first hand what life was like on the home front! During the day the children went shopping with their ration books to find out what they could buy with their coupons and had to complete an Identity Book to make sure they weren't arrested for being a German spy. Finally, to end the day we all went down to the cellars to experience an air-raid. Everyone left feeling very lucky that we are alive in 2018 and not the 1940s!



We are very proud of the Year 5 pupils who took part in the concert held at De Montfort Hall to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Leicestershire School Music Service. It was an exciting and ambitious large-scale project, working collaboratively with the Philharmonia Orchestra which gave a unique opportunity to



**Church Langton  
CofE Primary  
School**



create a legacy for future musicians to enjoy and to give students the chance to show their creative skills by composing and performing their own piece of celebratory music working alongside professional musicians.

Legend of the Sky is a composition by Fraser Trainer with a libretto from Hazel Gould, which includes a large orchestral ensemble with steel

pans and Indian classical musicians, a massed primary school choir which included our pupils and the LSMS show choir who, alongside members of the Philharmonia Orchestra, perform an epic oratorio re-imagining the ancient Leicestershire folk legend, The Griffin of Griffydam. The music narrates the tale of a griffin, a fabulous creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion who terrorised the villagers of Griffydam. A big thank you to all the staff who helped to create this wonderful learning opportunity.

All of the classes have been busy this term in the art room looking at the theme of Blue Planet. The children have used a range of different media to present different creatures and scenes. These include the arctic, coral reefs and some wonderful jellyfish. The whole school now feels like an oceanic world.



One of the highlights of our spring term is the Easter Play. Despite the challenges of a short term and lost days because of snow the pupils and staff in Years 3, 4, and 5 did a wonderful



job in presenting Resurrection Rock. The acting, singing and narrating lead to many proud parents, grandparents and siblings commenting on their achievement. This was followed by our ever popular Easter activities morning where the children work with others from all across the school. It was lovely to see the oldest pupils supporting the younger children and sharing their achievements.



## Great Bowden Academy

As part of our Easter celebrations Reverend Bryony Wood and her team created four "Stations of the Cross in church. The children tasted the food that would have been eaten at the Last Supper, took part in a court room scene and made decisions. They then thought about Jesus dying on the cross and his love for the world and finally went to the tomb with the stone rolled away and looked at how sadness turned to joy. Parents joined us for the morning and everyone was delighted with the impact the visit made.



Tiger the Therapy dog is the latest addition to the school roll. She comes into school once a week to hear readers and has been very impressed by the standard of reading across the school.

Year 6 completed their World War II topic by having a World War II Day. They all dressed

up and looked fabulous and took part in lots of themed activities, including making carrot scones using a war recipe.



This term Class 4 and 5 have been researching and presenting their findings on 'Ancient Greece'. The children worked collaboratively across the year groups to create their own presentations about their chosen topics. On Thursday 26th January, Class 4 and 5 had an 'Ancient Greece Day'. In the morning, they presented their work to both classes in the hall and to the rest of the school in the afternoon, as well as inviting parents to celebrate their hard work.

The children created a wide range of work including; PowerPoints, models and posters. All of the children's work was absolutely amazing and we were so proud of them all!

To celebrate World Book Day this year we decided to do something a little different! The children used potatoes to create a character from a book. They were wonderful! We had everything from Harry Potter to The Twits. Each potato had so much detail and it was clear how hard the children had worked on their character creations!





Class 1 have had an excellent time learning about Space this half term. They have been learning lots of new vocabulary and been using it in the 'space station' role-play area. They have worked hard with their art skills too and have produced some lovely space-themed pieces of art. Thanks to a charity called Scopes4SEN who have donated a brilliant telescope that the children have been taking it in turns to take home.

(By Charlie, Oliver, Finlay and Xander)



## Husbands Bosworth CofE Primary School

Year 5 and 6 have had a busy term. One of the many highlights was a visit from the Canal Trust, who came to tell the children about canals and rivers. The children enjoyed the hands-on activities such as bridge building and learned why canals were built.



Over 20 pupils took part in the cross-country races at Market Harborough with fantastic results. Y5/6 Basketball team came 2nd in the LASA basketball tournament; it was a great team effort and they went through to the area finals. Our team came second in the small school swimming gala east, another great result.

30 children from Key Stage 2 attended the Young Voices Concert at the Genting Arena. It was a fantastic opportunity to sing with over 5000 children in a large arena. The children had to learn and perform over ten songs from a range of genres.



Year 1 and 2 had a great time at the Sea Life Centre in Birmingham. We saw some very funny penguins who were keen to entertain us by diving and racing in the



water. We then made our way up to the rock pool where we were allowed to touch starfish and crabs and a kind lady talked to us about mermaid's purses. After that we explored the clownfish and manta rays before going to watch a special Octonauts movie in the 4D cinema in which we got squirted in the face with water! After lunch, we headed to the ocean tunnel and we were amazed at all of the huge sharks, sting rays and turtles that we saw swimming right above our heads!



## Lubenham All Saints CofE Primary School

The whole school took part in an Easter themed RE day – the children were grouped with their friends throughout the school and spent the day doing different activities including sewing a heart of forgiveness, decorating a palm leaf and making a wooden cross. Each activity was linked to an event in the Easter story. The children showcased their work in our Easter Service on Wednesday this week. Last Thursday was also our whole school Science Day to coincide with National Science week, where the children were lucky enough to have two visitors in to talk about Robots and Space – both the children and the teachers learned lots of new things!

Robins Class have had a busy half term. The children really enjoyed pampering their mum's for Mother's Day with a

session of pilates followed by a relaxing massage and afternoon tea – a well-deserved treat!

Blackbirds Class launched their topic Scrumdiddlyumptious this half term to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight, and by finding out about a Fairtrade Banana farmer called Foncho, who lives in Columbia. The children learned how paying a fair price for products enables farmers to send their children to school and provide basic things for their families. They were eager to share their knowledge with others by writing letters and making posters to persuade others to buy Fairtrade products. The children particularly enjoyed making delicious Fairtrade banana smoothies

Swallows class have had another busy half term. The children have been studying the topic called Misty Mountain Sierra. They have produced some lovely work, including some beautiful water colour mountain scenes, and then wrote a poem to describe what they had painted. The children are really focusing hard on presentation and fluent joined handwriting, quality of vocabulary and editing and checking work to make improvements. As the geography part of the topic they have studied how mountains are formed and looked at Ordnance Survey maps to gain an understanding of contour lines and how to use maps. On the last Friday of this half term the children are looking forward to putting their learning into context as they head over to Beacon Hill in north Leicester, the highest point in Leicestershire. The children will do a circular walk, which will take in the trig point at the top where hopefully they will get some good views across the county, and complete a scavenger hunt.

The highlight of the term for Swifts Class was their trip to the Houses of Parliament. *"It was very interesting seeing the two chambers and seeing where The Queen gets ready."* – Grace.

*"On the way to the Houses of Parliament we saw The Queen! It was really exciting!"* – Riley.

*"I really liked the intricate designs of the ceilings and walls."* – Georgie. The children found out about how democracy works by holding a mock general election. They also met their local MP, Neil O'Brien, and asked him questions about his occupation. When they got back to school they wrote letters to Mr O'Brien, telling him about issues that affect our school and local area.



The Nicholls Cup was first awarded to Year 6 students in 1948 for their interpretations of 'The Last Supper'. The vicar of St Dionysius teaches the children for one session a week during the second half of the Spring term and they then produce a piece of homework relating to 'The Last Supper'. Poems, animations, baked bread, Lego models and diary entries are just some of the ways in which the children have chosen to express themselves and remember this special time in the Christian calendar. As is



**Market  
Harborough  
CofE Academy**

always the case, the children's work is of an extremely high standard, with much of it being extremely thought provoking and moving. The winner, who will have their work displayed in St Dionysius for members of the public to admire, will be announced on Friday!

Last week we were invited to open the new Co-op food store on Leicester Road. 5HS attended the opening, and all posed for the cutting of the ribbon photo. We were then presented with a generous donation of £500 from the Co-op, which will be put towards our Forest School project, and goody bags for the children that included Fairtrade products. Look out for our photo in the Harborough Mail this week.

The development of the first phase of our Forest School is going well. We now have a wheelchair-friendly hard path going through the copse. The fire-pit area has been extended and space for woodworking is in place. Tools for Self Reliance (Northampton) has donated some wonderful refurbished tools that will be perfect for woodcraft. A removable sail has been fitted to create an all-weather cover and we've already received more hedging free from the Woodland Trust ready for phase 2 of the development. A welcome grant from The National Lottery has helped with the cost and there are more fundraising ideas afoot including a sponsored run and a chance to get into the Guinness Book of Records! Our first member of staff is about to complete her Forest School training, with another due to complete in June. We are hoping to see the first pupils engaging in this wonderful outdoor learning area early in the summer term.



The last half term has seen a multitude of skills being put into action in our exciting 'Unlocking Gifts' Project. Our project has a local history focus and aims to develop the pupils' oracy skills. All children from Years 3 to 5 have been exploring 'famous' people linked to Market Harborough, including a Harborough Heroes workshop at the Market Harborough Museum, and have been creating and presenting biographies through character role play and PowerPoints. The children have also had singing lessons with a visiting vocal coach, choosing and composing songs to complement the various characters being studied. The project culminated in a Presentation Evening on Thursday 22nd March.





## Meadowdale Primary School

It has been a very busy Spring term at Meadowdale and the children have had some wonderful learning experiences in this time. We have had a few special occasions and special visitors this term too! We have also been learning about character and resilience in our whole school and class assemblies and the children have enjoyed being nominated for our display board if they have demonstrated a particular trait really well.

Samuel Pepys popped in! The children in Year two had a wonderful visitor who had

travelled through time to see them and to talk about the Great Fire of London. Samuel Pepys Day was a wonderful opportunity for the children to ask their special visitor all about the things they had been learning about and the children were all enthralled listening to what he had to say!



This week, Year 3 rounded off their learning about the Anglo-Saxons with a very special Anglo-Saxon visitor who came into school to show children artefacts and to talk about life in the 5th Century AD. They discussed why we think the Saxons invaded our country (farming) and what changes they made to our way of living- the children dressed up too and had a wonderful time.

Our Foundation Stage children have been learning about life on and under the ocean waves and did a wonderful performance to a very packed hall of parents, grandparents and carers all about Pirates. The children were amazing and spoke confidently about sea creatures they had learned about and they recited a story in groups brilliantly. It was wonderful to see just how far they have come since starting school and we know their families were really proud of them too.



The workmen have been busy building our shiny, new Reception toilets and the children have been very interested in what they have been doing. They have been asking questions to find out more and the builders even gave us some pieces of wood so that the children could hammer and drill too. We now have new toilets across the main building what a difference they make.



**Ridgeway  
Primary  
Academy**

Following a visit to Three Bridges Primary School in London, Key Stage 1 is trialling a new approach to the teaching of Mastery for Mathematics. This involves the use of anchor sheets which model the small steps of learning that the children progress through during a unit of work. The children are able to see mathematics represented in different ways and help to develop these alongside the teacher.



Years 5 and 6 have been learning about the Victorians. As part of their project, they visited the Black Country Living Museum. Whilst there they explored the life of a Victorian child and travelled back in time for a Victorian lesson.





## St Andrew's Primary School

It has been a very cold half term with lots of snow! The children in Acorn enjoyed trying to make snowmen although the snow wouldn't stick together! They talked about how snow is formed and what happens when it gets warm. During our maths lessons on capacity we used the snow to fill containers and learned the language full, half full and quarter full.



Willow were invited to take part in a schools Dance Festival. Lutterworth College were superb hosts and the other schools involved created amazing dances to reflect different stories including; The Jungle Book and Chronicles of Narnia to name a few. Willow were absolutely fantastic and despite unavoidable time constraints, dazzled us all with their dancing ability. With the guidance of Mrs Stirland, they produced a very lively and exciting dance based on... of course, Charlie and the

Chocolate Factory. Well done to all the fabulous children who took part and a huge thank you to the parents for your support. It really was appreciated.

Maple have had several Forest School sessions, learning about tree types, winter dormancy and we have been looking for signs of Spring! We have painted winter tree shapes and played '123 where are you?'

As a class, we've set ourselves a challenge to read 100 books by the end of the Summer term. It's fantastic to see that some children have already risen to the challenge and we've been able to start ticking off the books on our list.

Our focus in R.E. this half-term has been Easter and the children particularly enjoyed the R.E. day where they had the opportunity to take part in nine activities each representing a different element of the Easter story.



Oak started the new term with a trip to the Houses of Parliament in London with Year 6 from Lubenham. The children thoroughly enjoyed finding out about how our government is run and the history behind the building. We even participated in our own election to re-enact how our own country chooses the next prime minister—our prime minister was Toby Frapel!