

# THE LINK ACADEMY TRUST NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2019

By Nicky Dunford, CEO

## 2018-19 was a very good year again!

This year we have seen the Link Academy Trust really develop as a group of schools; sharing best practice, collaborating with and supporting more of our small community schools than ever before. Our schools are central to their communities and we are proud of how they interact with community activities, from Scarecrow Festivals to Maypole Dancing in local fetes.

All our schools guide their School Councils, run by our brilliant pupils, to support charities from visits to local residential homes with home-made biscuits and helping in the community, litter-picking to sponsored events for causes such as Green for Grenfell, Red-nose Day etc.

All our schools have increased their pupil numbers and every year we are now full in Reception, often having to operate waiting lists. Schools are consistently operating almost at capacity, which reflects that fact that they are schools of choice and have a brilliant reputation within the locality. Ofsted visited five schools during this year and judged every one as 'Good' in every aspect of Inspection. Our safeguarding procedures, delivery of vibrant learning opportunities and rigour in teaching and learning shone through. Our results again this year reflect the fact that quality first teaching is at the core of all we do.

Many of our schools benefited from significant property improvement works during last summer, leading to better learning environments which are more conducive to pupil attainment and progress. An extensive maintenance programme is ongoing and will focus on specific improvements that keep our schools looking better than they ever have done. Through our Facebook pages you will all have seen the numerous experiential learning experiences happening in schools to make learning exciting- which is part of the five star pledge every school offers. We try to ensure the curriculum comes alive for our children through experiences which place learning firmly in the 'real world'. These 'hooks' for learning are highly effective in initiating enthusiasm, which ensures children want to explore the subject further.

As a Trust, we really value our staff and have tried this year to support their professional development and well-being. We have extended the professional development opportunities we offer to ensure every person within the Trust has the opportunity to learn more, develop and extend their expertise. The Inclusion and Improvement Hub has been integral to this, offering training to staff and support for schools to give the best we can to our vulnerable children and families. School leaders are increasingly getting the opportunity to extend their skills and expand into more responsible positions. We have a brilliant and strong team that always 'go the extra mile' and we are very proud of this.

Directors and Governors at all levels are completely voluntary and give hours of their time for no remuneration. We are so grateful for their dedication, it enables staff to focus on the most important thing for them, the children, and enables us to be an efficient and well-managed organisation. The Regional School Commission have recognised that the Link Academy Trust is operating highly successfully. We are now a Support Academy available to support failing schools and have featured significantly in a Department for Education Guidance Document: Running Rural Primary Schools Efficiently.



## **So, having achieved all of that this year, what are we going to do next year?**

We will be working to the New Ofsted Framework which commences in September. Our schools have already been preparing well for this and we are really excited as the new requirements better reflect our approach to learning. We have put in place a whole range of Curriculum Groups who will be ensuring that a broad and balance curriculum with all the usual exciting links addresses every subject well. Curriculum experts have already been identified across the Trust and will be cascading their expertise into schools.

We are expecting further Ofsted visits next year as Woodleigh schools 'come into the Inspection Window' and hope for the same excellent reports, especially given the hard work already gone into preparing for the new approach with 'deep dives' into subject areas. Schools will continue to put the children at the heart of everything they do. We will be focussing on improving Computing facilities further this year to really impact on enhanced learning. Mental Health and the new RE Framework will also be prioritised. Science teaching will be under the spotlight as we look at vocabulary in every subject area as research shows that this significantly improves children's knowledge and understanding. All of this while we continue to improve learning in Maths and English!

Across the Trust we are going to be looking at how we can improve the catering facilities within our schools in order to be able to provide meals wherever possible on site. We, also want to ensure the educational funding we receive into our schools is devoted to the education of pupils and not having to subsidise school meals. We want to look at the skills across our Governance Structure to ensure that we continue to be strong in this area and comply with all aspects of the new enhanced requirements of the Academies Governance Handbook. We will also consider working with any schools that require our support, including developing working links with schools nearby to collaborate and share expertise.

So another exciting year to look forward to!

Thank you for all your support in helping us achieve all we have this year- we hope you will continue to do so in order for our Trust to go from strength to strength.

Have a great Summer Holiday- enjoy the sun!  
Nicky Dunford, CEO



# Bearnes Primary School

By Alice Eeles, Academy Head

The summer term has been incredibly busy and the children have been taking part in an exciting array of hands-on experiences stemming from our five star pledge.

During sports week we were visited by Kirsty Way, the European gold medalist in Double Tramp. We helped raise money for her training by hosting a sponsored walk. As a school we raised £1,700 with 50% coming back to school for PE resources. We were also joined by two of the rowers from the Astro to Atlantic Women's Rowing Crew that rowed across the Atlantic in January, coming 12th overall. The children and staff were completely in awe of the crew's achievement. Throughout the rest of the day there was a queue of children from Nursery to Year 6 and staff wanting to have a go!

Our annual Community Day was another huge success with our pupils bringing joy to visitors and locals of Newton Abbot.

The children were tasked with litter picking around the town while some were singing and baking for those in local residential homes, We donated to and worked at the Food Bank, while also tidying local green spaces and raising money for local charities. The children were such a credit to our school and made a big difference to the lives of others.

The Summer Fete was a fabulous afternoon of fundraising for the school and Mrs Sutton did a fantastic job of organising this. The Rock Choir performed throughout the afternoon and were outstanding, a huge thank you goes out to them for supporting us.

These are just a taster of what has been achieved this term, over the year we were also voted Community Sporting School of the Year, had a highly successful Ofsted Inspection and worked closely with our friends at Hennock School. What a brilliant year, Bearnes.

We wish our Year 6 children a wonderful transition to secondary school and know that they will do us proud!



# Cheriton Bishop Primary School

By Alex Waterman, Executive Academy Head

The children in Year 3&4 have been learning about Victorian Britain. To complete their block of work they organised a garden party with Victorian games, foods and music. Parents and friends were invited to attend, and many of our guests turned up in Victorian attire! A well supported event, thank you to all who came along.

The children across the school have enjoyed a plethora of sporting activities. Children in KS1 and Reception enjoyed an Olympic Day; events in KS2 have included rugby and netball tournaments, cricket matches, rounders and lots more! The children really enjoy being competitive as well as learning new sports and being supportive to their friends.

With our new library up and running, we were delighted to be awarded first prize in the raffle at Crediton Community Bookstore. This prize was the bookstores' Top 20 children's books. We were invited to visit the bookshop to collect our prize, a really rewarding afternoon. Year 5&6 enjoyed an action filled Activity Week which included climbing, canoeing, mountain biking and surfing. The children showed great teamwork and real enthusiasm and determination during this exhausting week!

Forest school has continued and the youngest children have also enjoyed 'welly walks' to the scout field joining up with the pre-school children to build friendships for when they start school. We have had nineteen pre-school children joining us on Fridays and they already feel very much part of the school. Class 2 have been working really hard to tidy up, weed and replant our nature garden. They have done a tremendous job, it looks great and we have lots of herbs and fruits. They will be holding a garden party in the last week of term to share all their excellent work with their families and friends!

A great term Cheriton Bishop, well done to all of you!



# Diptford CofE Primary School

By Lizzie Lethbridge, Executive Academy Head

What a fantastic year we have had, full of amazing learning, events, opportunities and a 'Good' Ofsted! Our lucky children have had some incredible experiences both in and out of the classroom. Mask making for our Ancient Greece topic was a definite favourite and Forest School continues to be an integral part of our every day school life.

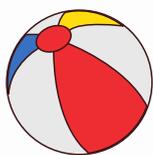
Year 6 celebrated the end of their time at Diptford with a very special Forest School led by their former Reception teacher, Mr Moore from Forest and Beach!

One of our highlights this year has to be the collection of amazing sporting events we have taken part in. We don't just have a sports day at Diptford, we have a 'Sport and Healthy Living' week! As part of this, KS2 had an amazing day at Adrenaline Quarry starting with the impressive zip line! Reception and KS1 went to Plymouth Ski Centre and enjoyed snow tubing and toboggan run activities. The week ended with an amazing sports day and family BBQ. And we even won the Link Inter-schools Sports Day!

Our 'Community Café and Crafts' event was highly successful. Pupils, parents and members of our community all contributed towards the creation of our beautiful new mosaic.

Many inspiring people visited, including explorers, lifeguards and Paralympian triathlete, David Hill from team GB.

We finished the year with a brilliant performance of 'Pirates of the Curry Bean' and a splendid display of talent at our first ever 'Diptfest'. What a year!



# Harbertonford CofE Primary School

By Lizzie Lethbridge, Executive Academy Head

We have had an amazing year including positive Ofsted and SIAMS inspections that recognised our nurturing, caring and inclusive family ethos. Our highlights include two incredible residential trips. Year 3/4 went to Start Bay and Year 5/6 completed the Gold 'Young Spirit Explorer Award' which included orienteering, crossing rivers in a dinghy, raft building, canoeing and a 5 mile hike (in the rain)!

As part of our commitment to leading fit, healthy lifestyles – and to take advantage of our beautiful surroundings – we have taken part in some fantastic experiences, including kayaking at Decoy Park and surfing at Bantham beach. Some of our youngest pupils showed just how brave and resilient they are when climbing at Dart Rock.

We have also enjoyed a wide range of new and exciting sports this year, including fencing, tri-golf, cycling and archery. We are always looking for exciting ways to discover new talents by learning new sports and skills we have never tried before. Two of the inspirational women who took part in the Talisker Whiskey Challenge – a 45 day row across the Atlantic Ocean – came to visit to tell us all about their journey. We tracked them during their journey and were really pleased to meet Helen Symons and Chloe Harvey in person.

Visitors to school have also included many from the animal kingdom! We loved hatching and looking after our ducklings, watching our caterpillars turn into butterflies and looking after the kid goats.

Forest School continues to be a special part of our school life, especially when lighting fires to toast marshmallows!

What an amazing year!



# Hennock Primary School

By Sarah Clarke, Academy Head

Big celebrations have been held at Hennock this term as we finally opened our outdoor classroom. This is on a piece of land close to the school and much time and effort has been spent by Gemma Houghton in providing shelter, toilets and an excellent learning environment for our children to access the curriculum in. The Inclusion Hub have used this space this term and our year3/4 pupils have experienced a unit of learning based around gender and differences. We are very excited about the opportunities that will be presented to our children next year.

Our Enrichment week was a huge success and provided our children with a variety of experiences designed to widen their viewpoints and broaden their horizons. One of our favourites was an engineering day when a visiting engineer came into school to support the children in designing and making their own powered boat. We then went up to the local reservoirs to test their designs and think of any alterations that would need to be made.

We also had a visit from author Grant Koper who shared his story 'The Day Granny's Knickers Blew Away'. The children were given an insight into him as an author, what inspired his ideas and how they could become better writers themselves. We then held a knickers day in school where the children used their initiative (and sewing skills) to make something from nothing and feed into our 5 star pledge.



# Landscape CofE Primary School

By Jill Ryder, Academy Head

Art and performing have remained a high priority for Landscape this year. An artist in residence, Mandy Ellis, joined us for our annual arts week where we studied portraits. Our Exhibition & Open Evening of Art work took place in October ~ a great opportunity to share and celebrate fantastic, artistic creativity. In addition to this, Musical performances have taken place across the year. We have held two concerts, which celebrated all our musical talent as well as our public performances in church ~ where Song machine are regular performers. Song machine were also invited to perform in the Grand Finale of the Ashburton Choirs Festival, at St Andrew's church, Ashburton; it was great for our children to perform alongside some amazing adult choirs.

FAB (Faith and Beliefs), HARVEST IN A DAY really did live up to its name, with children fully engaging with the four workshops all based on the story of The Feeding of the Five Thousand. They demonstrated a great ability to work together, with the older ones supporting the younger ones and a creative time was had by all. The produce collected supported Buckfastleigh foodbank ~ demonstrating our values and supporting our local community, who remain important to our school. Local charity coffee mornings are attended by our Children's Ethos Committee once every term. They always do themselves proud and delight the older members of our parish with their easy chatter. Members of Song Machine choir enjoyed sharing their talents with the residents of Redmount Residential Home. The children are true ambassadors of the school and sing beautifully, chatting with the old folk there, who tell us that they really enjoyed our visits...so do we, the children want to go again!

PE continues to play a significant role in our school week. We have shared annual Sports days, May Day dance, & annual PE event day with parents and the local community. Clubs ranging from cricket to tennis to dance are all well attended. We were thrilled for our dance club to attend the SDDC Just dance evening, performing on a huge stage, with professional lighting, sound systems and with amazing confidence and skill. PE days with parents are always fun and this summer PE event was no exception ~ we loved the fact that our mums couldn't wait to get involved in fencing!

Finally, we end the year saying some goodbyes... After nearly 20 years we will be saying a very sad goodbye to Sharon Lord at the end of term. As my right arm and one of the 'Old Landscovers' her skills and understanding of our special school will be much missed! She is moving on to a job developing a Wellbeing for Children programme at Buckfast Abbey as well as being employed by our Trust to oversee and maintain the highest standards for the church schools, at least she's not going far. A traditional Landscape send off in church for the Year 6s and Sharon will round off the term nicely. Huge thanks to the Landscape team, without whom, all these amazing opportunities would not be possible!



# Stoke Gabriel Primary School

By Matthew Medd, Academy Head

Stoke Gabriel has gone from strength to strength this year. It was really pleasing to be recognised for all the work that we have done on developing our curriculum by Ofsted in December.

The Five Star Pledge has ensured that all the children get a rich and varied learning experience. Among some of the places that the children have visited are: We the Curious at Bristol, Slapton Sands, Blackpool Sands, Paignton Zoo, Kents Cavern, Two Bridges, Dartmoor Zoo, Two Bridges and Dartmeet as part of our pledge for a minimum of two trips per class each school year. We have also harvested our first crop of vegetables from the school garden which Barbara has served as part of the lunchtime menu.

In September our Year 5 and 6 children were able to try sailing thanks to Stoke Gabriel Boating association and so fulfilled our pledge of travelling on the river Dart. Woodland learning has made a welcome return to the curriculum with all the children accessing our beautiful woodland area. As part of their woodland learning, the year 5 children designed and made Egyptian shadufs which they tested out at the millpond.

This year also saw some of our children's poems published in the Live Canon Children's Poetry Anthology which can be found on Amazon.

We are all looking forward to seeing what next year brings as we continue our exciting learning journey here at Stoke Gabriel Primary School as part of the Link Academy Trust



# Tedburn St Mary Primary School

By Andy Keay, Academy Head

As another successful year comes to a close, the school can once again take real pride in the achievements of all our children across the school. There have been many highlights this year but none more than our School receiving the Prince of Wales Trust Award for our recycling project 'Tedburn Turns the Tide'. From a lesson in class and a walk around our village, collecting rubbish and realising that our school could help make an impact on reducing waste, to award winners. All the children involved featured on the news and two children gave a real heartfelt speech at the Devon County Show, to carrying out recycling projects across school and the village. Our children have really taken on board the importance of looking after our environment and doing their bit to spread the message. We certainly hope to carry on this good work next year.

A real success this year has also been our Sports partnership with QE. Every child across the school has had the opportunity to visit the secondary school and take part in a variety of sporting events including multi skills, orienteering, cricket and rounders. The children have loved competing against other schools and winning events such as the athletics and cricket. Staff have also benefitted with the support of PE teaching from a secondary school PE teacher, which has really supported the delivery of high quality PE in school. We again hope to build our curriculum so that it continues to offer a wide range of exciting learning and opportunities for our children. All classes have been out on visits to support learning in the class room including trips to Morwellham Quay, The Eden Project and Exmouth, all of which led to lovely work being produced in classes. One special week in school that saw lots of amazing learning was our Science Week, which started with Science workshops, afternoon lessons and ended with a Science fair for parents. Year 6 had another super week, when they took part in an activity week, which saw them tackling activities such as surfing, kayaking, climbing and bush craft. As we move forward to next year we will keep offering our children the best opportunities to support their learning.



# Yeoford Primary School

By Alex Waterman, Executive Academy Head

Summer term at Yeoford has been lots of hard work and plenty of fun. We have been working hard and playing hard both inside and outside the classroom. The whole school thoroughly enjoyed meeting our chicks which were incubated in the classroom. Out of 10 eggs, 7 hatched healthy, causing lots of excitement!

In May, the Year 6 children showed great determination and mature attitudes during their statutory tests, a really challenging week. They enjoyed a post SATS treat with the Year 6 children from Cheriton Bishop and visited Dawlish Warren. The day was spent making sandcastles, burying friends and hunting for nurdles (tiny pieces of plastic found in the sea). We have been learning about plastics in the sea, and have a school target to fill a full jar of nurdles by the end of term.

May also saw more than 20 children taking part in the Exeter Marathon Children's Challenge. In order to achieve this award, the children were set the challenge of running a half-marathon over a period of weeks, with the final part of the challenge to run the Fun Run in May. It was fabulous to see children aged 4 to 11 achieving this goal!

The Sporting theme continued with a musical twist. Sport's afternoon was launched with every child in school joining in a Samba parade around The Rec. This lively musical start, was followed by a plethora of competitive races and fun team games. It was lovely to see the children enjoying the competition and also supporting each other to complete each challenge and finish activities. Well done all! The children across the school have also enjoyed lots of outdoor activities. The Year 5&6 children enjoyed Activity week. During the week they experienced climbing, kayaking, surfing and mountain biking; an exhausting but thoroughly marvellous week. Pupils throughout the school have also enjoyed Forest School this term. The grounds at Yeoford are fantastic and our new Outdoor Classroom has really added to the outdoor facilities. Each session, children have cooked on a fire from nettle bread to battered wild garlic; used tools to whittle and make; and had time to be creative and play in the wonderful outdoors! Well done to all the children at Yeoford for a brilliant term!



# Drake's & Otterton C of E Primary School

By Pete Halford, Executive Headteacher

From January, the Link Academy Trust have been working in a management partnership with the Raleigh Federation, consisting of Drake's C of E and Otterton C of E Primary Schools. The summer term is always a busy one with SATs, residential visits, performances, transition visits to secondary school and school reports sent out to parents.

The Year 6 children prepared for the Year 6 SATs test with such a positive and mature manner, which meant when the test week came they took it all in their stride! The week after SATs, both schools went to Pixie's Holt and enjoyed an action packed week of caving, mountain biking and walking, with the week ending with a watersports day and a trip to Escot.

In both schools the Toddler groups have been very popular and the toddlers enjoyed their very own Sports Day with certificates and medals being awarded. In the final week of term the children enjoyed a joint end of term party.

At Otterton the children did an amazing performance of 'Ocean Commotion' in the church next to the school. There was brilliant acting, singing and some excellent solo singing. At Drake's the children performed 'Pirates of the Curry Bean' which was fabulous and very well attended by the parents and local community.

During this term the school have held a parents consultation to join the Link Academy Trust with the confirmed conversion date of 1st October 2019. By joining the Link Academy, staff and children will benefit from being part of a wider network of schools and this will have a positive impact on the quality of education for the children.

We have lots of exciting things planned for next year including; Forest Schools, whole school swimming lessons, a new curriculum, developing our outside areas and working more closely with the other Link schools. Before the next academic year starts, the staff and children have worked extremely hard this year and they all deserve a well-earned summer break!



# Broadhempston Primary School

By Dan Turner, Headteacher

2018/2019 has been an exciting year at Broadhempston Village Primary school with lots going on, both inside and outside the classroom.

We are really proud of how the pupils, in all classes, have adapted to our new maths scheme of work. They have all tried exceptionally hard to increase their fluency, reasoning and problem solving skills in all areas of the curriculum. It is great to see the progress being made by all the pupils and the confidence that they are developing in this subject area.

We have increased the number of Forest School sessions on offer this year as well as increasing the use of tools and fires. It has been fantastic to see pupils across the school be able to access this great provision. From wand making to den building and even cooking on an open fire the pupils have had many opportunities to broaden their understanding of the local environment around us. With the success of Forest School this year, we are now training up a second member of staff in order to run more sessions in the years to come.

Activities Week 2019 was a huge success with all the pupils being able to take part in a variety of activities during the week – some that they had never tried before. Year 5 and 6 had the opportunity to try paddle boarding and kayaking, as well as taking a trip to London to see 'School of Rock: The Musical'. Other year groups travelled to The Eden Project to take part in fun and exciting tasks – including baking a cake from ingredients collected from 'The Domes'. Our trip to Morwellham Quay was a real eye-opener for the pupils when they went back to 'Victorian School'. The entire week culminated with our sports day – we were very lucky with the weather and it was great to see our house teams competing with one another – well done to Chapel who took the win this year. We are already planning next years week and we hope to make it bigger and better!

Our Year 6 pupils have worked so hard this year and overcome many hurdles. It has been amazing to see their resilience develop and how this in turn has helped them overcome tricky content and questions. Their hard work and determination paid off with them all achieving the expected standard or above in their SATs. They have been a fantastic year group and to celebrate we have been to China Blue to create a piece of 'memory' pottery and to Plymouth Ski slopes for a private snowboarding lesson. It was a great day and I was so proud to see them develop throughout the lesson, in something they had never tried before.



# Have a lovely Summer

