

Wellspring Newsletter

October 2019

Mark Wilson's Message

Mark Wilson, CEO



WELLSPRING
ACADEMY TRUST

We Make A Difference



Our newsletter brings together celebrations from throughout our community and aims to highlight the brilliant work of all our high-performing teams.

ONE Wellspring

A team ethic is crucial to our success. Our achievements thus far are wholly built on our commitment to common values. We want the best for every child... everyone of us. We put our young people at the centre of our thinking... everyone of us. We want to do the very best we can... everyone of us.

My message this month is equally a provocation: Anything we walk past, we endorse as good enough. Have you walked past anything in your work this week that wasn't, in your view, good enough? If so, what did you do about it?

Individually, we can contribute a little. Collectively, we can contribute an enormous amount. If every one of us takes the

responsibility to not walk past something that is not good enough – think about the transformational potential for what is already a highly-performing school system and professional organisation.

Teamwork is key to our success.
A shared culture that refuses to overlook anything that's not good enough has enormous transformational power.
Please take the time to read about the great things happening throughout our brilliant community.

Celebrate With Us.
Share your stories.
Amplify your message.
Help us all to help one another.

Business Award

By Karen Froggatt, Chief Governance Officer

The Trust was highly commended in the Business Growth Category at a recent Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards.



Said Mark: 'I'm delighted that we've been highly-commended in the Business Growth category, in recognition of the contribution that all members of the Wellspring Staff Team - centrally and at our Academies - as well as our Board and Governors, have made to growing the Trust over the last five years.'

We've been ambitious yet cautious - not least in respect of our financial sustainability - and have adhered to our values throughout our journey. The needs of the children and young people in our care continue to be our key priority, ensuring that we give them the best possible start in life'.

The category recognises businesses which have achieved significant growth or development. Our growth and success is demonstrated by:

- ✓ Growth from one Academy to twenty three (on thirty one sites) across South and West Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and the Humber. This includes an increase of seven academies in the past twelve months.
- ✓ Workforce growth from twenty seven employees in 2014 to over fourteen hundred at present.

- ✓ Total budgets from £1.492m in 2014 to £110.960m in 2018.
- ✓ Total net assets from £1.7m in 2014 to £93.8m in 2018.
- ✓ Strategic relationships with five Local Authorities.
- ✓ Investment of £100m in the Trust's estate, including the development of 7 brand new schools.

The award was collected by Mark Wilson and Hearl Lenton, Chair of the Trust Board.

Focus on Governance

By Karen Froggatt, Chief Governance Officer



Good governance is key to any successful organisation.

Strong leadership, appropriate structures and accountability are important elements of effective governance.

We dedicate significant time and resource to our governance and are lucky to have exceptional people involved at Board and Governing Body level. We can't be complacent and constantly look at ways to improve.

We're pleased that Mark Coppel, a National Governance Association (NGA) consultant, will support us with an external perspective to both the Board and Management. With Mark's support, both areas will see significant stakeholder engagement in coming months.



We can't be complacent and constantly look at ways to improve.

Throwing money at schools won't solve anything unless there is good governance

By Karen Froggatt, Chief Governance Officer



SCHOOLS funding, or the lack of it, has dominated much of the education agenda. More schools, local authorities and trusts are finding themselves in precarious financial positions.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson's announcement that schools can expect £14bn over the next three years, with £7.1bn more in 2022-23 compared to 2019-20, has received cautious welcome. Whether the amounts promised are enough to solve funding challenges is open to debate.

Regardless of where one sits on that issue, the impact of additional funding is undoubtedly dependent on the effectiveness of school governance. Without good governance, throwing money at schools won't solve anything.

The quality of the board of directors can make or break a business. Likewise, the board of governors at a school or academy influences its prospects for success. Yet we rarely hear about this essential aspect of school organisation when politicians discuss school standards.

As chief governance officer at Wellspring, a multi-academy trust managing 23 schools across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, I am acutely aware of the importance of both our trust-wide board members and our governing bodies at school level. Of course, good governors cannot entirely solve the myriad issues affecting the education sector, but they have a significant role to play.

The academy system has faced criticism.

From ideological opposition to them being outside public ownership (despite their charitable status) to accusations of unethical behaviour through to financial impropriety, it is easy to see why academies come under such scrutiny.

These are all problems that won't be overcome by simply increasing school budgets. Systemic problems within organisations are always about culture, not funding.

This is a space in which the right governance can have real impact. At Wellspring, our ethos is about behaving ethically and treating all children with unconditional positive regard. We have never permanently excluded a child and we believe all school pupils have the right to an excellent education, however challenging that may be to deliver and whoever it is educating them. That culture and ethos is supported and driven by a board totally committed to that approach.

In England alone, a quiet army of more than 250,000 volunteers devise our schools' strategies and visions, hold the leadership to account and ensure the finances are being properly managed. Without these individuals, schools would lack the checks and balances and strategic direction that any well-managed organisation should have. They are doing fantastic work, but there are obvious concerns with a system that is run entirely on the goodwill and sense of duty of volunteers.

First, the composition of school and trust governing bodies does not accurately reflect today's society. According to the recent School

Governance Report by the National Governance Association, 93 per cent of governors are white and just 10 per cent are under the age of 40. Diversity matters. Without a good mix of different life experiences and world views, it is easy to fall into groupthink which can be disastrous when it comes to determining a school or trust's vision and strategy. Getting a wider range of skills and experiences into our schools needs to be a priority. Linked to this is a shortage of governors overall. The NGA's report also revealed that each governing body or academy committee has an average of 1.26 vacancies, and an estimated 18,000 additional governors are needed to sustain school governance at current board sizes.

These volunteers are collectively responsible for £48bn of public money and Ofsted has repeatedly cited that effective leadership and management – including the governing board – is a key feature in the most successful schools. Yet the funding for training them and supporting them is not seen as a priority. If we are relying on goodwill for these important roles, the least we can do is make sure all their training needs are met.

As Emma Knights OBE, chief executive of the NGA, states in their report: "Government Ministers stress the importance of governance from many angles, but little has been said or done more widely over the past year to ensure the people who take on this responsibility are recognised." It is time these essential public servants gained the recognition and support they deserve. Our schools are counting on them.

Communities of Practice: Trust Training Day

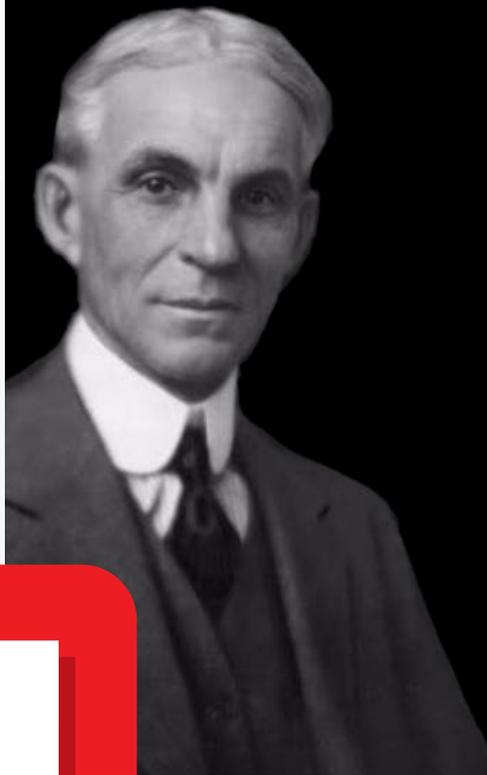
By Dave Whitaker, Director of Learning



A **Domain**: A shared interest which we all commit to. In this case the education of every child in our Academies.

Community: This is where the members of our domain interact and engage in shared activity, help each other, build relationships, enable each other to learn, share what they do well and what they may have got wrong.

And **Practice**: This element relies on the members of the community to be practitioners. The people who walk the walk. They share their practice over time, in different locations, and in a variety of ways.



Coming together is a **beginning**, staying together is **progress**, and working together is **success**.

- Henry Ford

On **February 7th, 2020** our **Community of Practice** will be alive in your school. You are encouraged to share what you do best, solve a problem, interact with others, seek experiences you may not have had before and learn.

Be ready to show off what you do well, or go and see and learn from others. It is all of you that drive our Community of Practice. Without your professionalism, creativity and enthusiasm the community doesn't exist!

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”

Étienne Wenger*

*Étienne Wenger is an educational theorist and practitioner, best known for his formulation of the theory of situated cognition and his more recent work in the field of communities of practice.

Harvest Festival at Littlecoates

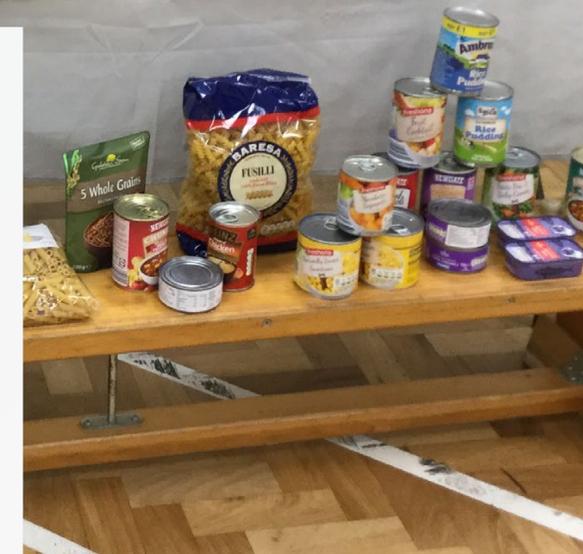
By Neville Wilkinson, Principal, Littlecoates



Generous parents and staff at Littlecoates Primary Academy donated a large amount of food for its Harvest Festival.

The efforts benefited the homeless in Grimsby, with the produce handed over to local charity Harbour Place. A special assembly for Year 4 – to which parents were invited – was held to celebrate the harvest. The school also raised in excess of £150 at its MacMillan Coffee Morning.

Principal Neville Wilkinson said: 'I'd just like to thank parents and staff for their much-valued contributions. It's been a terrific effort for two terrific causes'.



The school also raised in excess of £150 at its MacMillan Coffee Morning.



Top Athlete thanks Littlecoates

By Neville Wilkinson, Principal, Littlecoates



If Olympic hopeful Matt Lee makes the starting line in Tokyo next year, pupils at Littlecoates Primary Academy will have played their part. Littlecoates raised more than £1,000 in a sponsored sports challenge to assist the top British decathlete and raise school funds. Matt visited the school as part of the Sports for Champions UK scheme.

'It has been a fantastic effort by everyone,' said Principal Neville Wilkinson. They have really taken Matt's Olympic bid to heart and been keen to participate from nursery to Year 6. The money raised is split with Sports for Champions, with the school raising £600.' The not-for-profit Community Interest Company funds athletes who are unable to access Lottery monies. Matt, who competes for Harrow Athletics Club and is from Birmingham, dreams of making the Olympics next year.



'Tokyo is the goal, he said. I'm training hard under a new coach and everything's geared towards making the standard needed to get into the British team and be selected at the trials next June.'

In the meantime, he enjoys visiting schools and motivating their pupils. 'I've had a blast here. They are fantastic kids and very enthusiastic. They've been doing circuits, including press ups, burpees and sit ups, and then I've done an assembly. Hopefully, I've been able to inspire some of them with my story. It is about hard work, putting in the effort in order to achieve.'

The 24-year-old did not start his athletics career until he was 15, having swam at a national level and played academy-level football. The 6ft 4in GB athlete has had various injury setbacks but he moved to Liverpool under a new coach last year and is determined to get into the shape of his life in time for Olympic selection.

He left a positive impression on the children. Ryan (10) and Millie (nine) both raised £35 in sponsorship. 'We've been doing push ups and burpees and it's been fun, said Ryan. Matt was great'.

Millie, who has been attending Fusion Boxing in Grimsby for the past year, said: "I've really enjoyed the session. It's warmed me up for boxing tonight."

Neville Wilkinson thanks Matt for visiting Littlecoates and wishes him all the best with his Olympic pursuit. "Pupils and staff will be watching his progress very closely over the coming months. It would be great to see him at Tokyo and know we had played a small part."

Oakwell Rise – Grounds Maintenance Nomination

By Jessica Jenkins, Head of School, Oakwell Rise



Oakwell Rise Primary Academy works in strong partnership with the community to develop the education, provision and opportunities available to pupils, parents/carers, families and the wider community.

Oakwell Rise are passionate about ensuring the school is the heart of the community. The Academy works in partnership with many organisations such as Fare Share, offering free food prior to the weekend, food parcels for holidays, Christmas Dinner parcels and a free present shop for families to collect new gifts to ensure the children open a present from Santa on Christmas morning.

All children have free access to a Breakfast Club supported by Magic Breakfast. Staff provide a range of activities to settle and widen the children's experiences such as computer skills, sport, construction and homework support.

The school has developed a key space within the building called the 'Community Den'. Within the Den, parents/carers have access to a kitchen with cooking and washing machine facilities. The Oakwell Rise staff are trained, via the Jamie Oliver Cookery School, to offer cooking lessons for parents alongside their children. This base also enables the community to partake in accredited adult literacy, accredited numeracy, accredited money management courses as well as CPR and life-saving skills in partnership with Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

The community can also attend a Gardening Club, working on skills to help the local environment that will benefit the wider community.

The dedicated Family Support Worker runs other key 'Stay and Play' sessions for members of the school and the wider community, pamper sessions, a Well-being Wednesday and also a Coffee Morning for parents who have children with Special Educational Needs.

The school continues to develop their links to the community with outreach work, including visiting the local care home to work on small activities with its residents and taking part in the Junior Warden programme, working with local partners including South Yorkshire Police. Through a team of volunteers, the school is the base of an evening Youth Club which has attendees from across the local area.

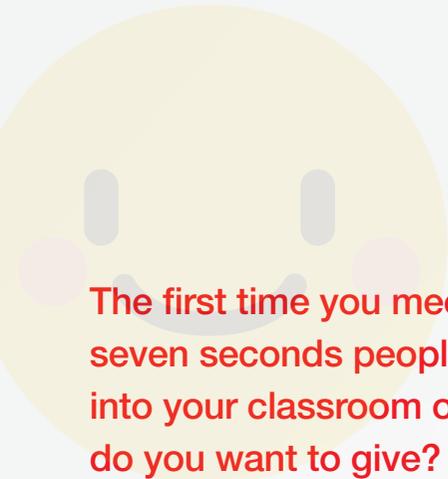
Oakwell Rise offers a range of Holiday Clubs for the community to attend, including a Street Art Workshop to educate the community on graffiti and how it can be used for positive artistic expression rather than destroying the community areas.

Head of School, Jessica Jenkins expressed what it would mean to the school to win the award. 'The team at Oakwell Rise has been on a huge journey together to engage and excite the community in positive activity in a community which serves one of the most deprived areas in the country. The team is dedicated and passionate about supporting not only a child's education but improving their life chances and that of their families.

We have seen a significant shift in engagement, appreciation and support from the community about the important work we do. The impact has been significant. Families have a place to turn to for advice, support, clothes and food. They trust us to have their best interests at heart and we feel privileged to support them grow in strength and independence. Winning this award would mean so much to the team, being recognised for work they love to do with families. This would empower and motivate them to impact even more families'.

First Impressions Count

By Chris Jessup, Director of Learning



The first time you meet someone you form an opinion of each other very quickly - within seven seconds people will have a solid impression of who you are. When someone steps into your classroom or your school - what first impression do you give? What impression do you want to give?

The great privilege of my role as Director of Learning is the chance to visit our Primary and Secondary schools to celebrate the 'everyday magic' that occurs in each and every one.

I often arrive along with parents, other professionals coming for meetings, pupils who are late or who have queries and all the usual turbulence that occurs in receptions on a normal day.

I am always struck by the welcome, the greeting and the inclusive feel of all of our schools whenever I visit. My first impressions of the reception area are how clean, how vibrant and celebratory they are. Many have beautiful examples of pupils' work for visitors to admire. Bright colours and positive messages adorn the walls. Values, ethos and purpose shine through in the pride taken to ensure the welcome is as inviting as possible. These are spaces where everyone is valued.

Above all, it is the warmth, professionalism and kindness of the reception staff that personifies these initial impressions of our schools. My role takes me predominantly to our primary and secondary sites and just in the last few weeks I have had the occasion to say thanks to: **Olivia and Lisa at Beacon Academy** for always being ready to help and the care with which they treat every enquiry. **Emily at Littlecoates** for making that amazing entrance such an inspiration.

Hayley, Angela and Emma at Louth Lacey Gardens and Eastfield Infants for their positivity and patience (even when I forget my access fob). **Katie at Elements** who is always cheerful even when builders are trailing through muddy boots. **Leanne and Claire at Bramley** for their ever generous offers of coffee and the way they treat every enquiry with thought and compassion. **Cindy, Carol, Tracey and Lynn at Victoria and Ebor** - where a fabulous and sunny welcome calms me down after the stress of trying to find a parking space.



Above all, it is the warmth, professionalism and kindness of the reception staff that personifies these initial impressions of our schools.



Proud of Barnsley, proud of Greenacre

By Diane Greaves, Executive Principal,
Greenacre & Springwell Barnsley



Barnsley is a town that is incredibly proud of its community, its culture, and all the positive things that this town stands for.



A highlight of the calendar in Barnsley are the 'Proud of Barnsley' awards, an annual celebration that builds on this town's shared pride for our community. The award shines a light on those who make a difference and who go that little bit further to help others. By recognising these contributions, the award provides the foundations to inspire others and reminds the people of Barnsley that nothing should prevent them from realising their aspirations.

This year, we at Greenacre School are excited to have reached the final selection stage for not one, but two key awards!

David Winnard has been nominated and subsequently shortlisted for the 'Children's Champion' category.

David first came to belong to the Greenacre family as the parent of a pupil who was admitted to the school seven years ago. Beginning his career as a school-meals support assistant and relief teaching assistant, David soon found his niche as the children's champion through his work with the Greenacre's most complex and vulnerable young people, including those with life-limiting conditions.

As a result of his priceless contribution David soon progressed to take up a permanent role within the school. These days, in order to maximise his impact on as extensive a group of children as possible, David works as many hours as we can persuade him to work each and every day! David's pace and commitment take everyone's breath away and he works with tireless enthusiasm.

Nothing is ever too much trouble for David Winnard! He will do anything and everything in his power to make sure he is getting it right for our young people – whether that

be in relation to their emotional wellbeing, their positioning in equipment, in fact any aspect of their care. David is a true gentleman who epitomizes Greenacre values and ethos – we couldn't manage without our very own 'Children's Champion!'

In addition to David's exceptional achievements, we are incredibly proud to share with you the news that Greenacre School has been shortlisted for Barnsley 'School of the Year'.

Built on unity and cohesion and underpinned by our seven values of 'Nurture, trust, dignity, respect, aspire, together and pride,' the Greenacre family is an incredibly special place to be and an asset to the community of Barnsley.

As the only generic special school in the borough, Greenacre provides inspirational and truly personalised learning opportunities for 331 of Barnsley's most vulnerable and complex young people. Learning at the school is socially inclusive, caters for the individual needs of all pupils, promotes independence and ensures that our young people are well-prepared for adulthood.

Our holistic and deeply child-centered approach however, would not exist without the commitment and hard work of the most inspiring group of staff. Working at Greenacre challenges, surprises, inspires, motivates and is an exceptionally fulfilling role. Our work family supports young people to grow, to flourish and to reach their full potential and being a part of this amazing school is our privilege. We are proud of our community and exceptionally proud of Greenacre School.

Springwell FM

By Shona Crichton, Principal, Springwell Leeds



Live every Friday...
Bringing Springwell to you.

Chapel FM believes in offering people as many opportunities as possible to get involved and get creative. Chapel FM have a vision: East Leeds - a community that has pride, vision and hope for the future.

A group of students from Springwell East have embraced that vision and have taken over the waves, producing fantastic radio shows for the local community and beyond.

All students are enrolled on the Arts Mark Bronze award and Chapel FM have given our students a real life project.

It's live.
It's Brilliant.
It's Springwell
FM.

The long list of skills we are learning to develop are below.

- ✓ Learning interviewing skills and interview local people or people all over the world (phone or Skype interview)
- ✓ Developing studio discussions around key topics or even arrange debates in front of an audience in the radio theatre
- ✓ Creating a full radio show for live broadcast, either made completely at Chapel FM or starting in school with interviews, vox pops etc
- ✓ Creating and recording a radio drama and live streaming a play
- ✓ Focusing on poetry and spoken words and running a poetry slam competition
- ✓ Developing the most amazing revision podcasts
- ✓ Using the studios and the radio theatre to highlight music achievement with live performances of music and singing
- ✓ Taking part in practical sessions in music technology with the amazing resources at Chapel FM.

Strategy Groups: The voice of our Academies

By Dominika Fenner, Organisational Development Lead



Teamwork is the best way to create a sustainably outstanding school system.

We all improve through professional dialogue, sharing ideas and collaboration. The Trust provides access to networks, ideas, learning and support.



Our Strategy Groups focus on areas vital to the ongoing strength of the Trust. Each group is chaired by an Academy based colleague.

Decisions made by the Strategy Groups, drawn from stakeholders throughout our system, become the strategic developments within the Trust in general.

Notable enhancements initiated by Strategy Groups include the creation of Wellbeing Champions in each of our Academies, the development of an Apprenticeship strategy for the Trust, and the introduction of a Trust-wide Inset Day.

We all improve through professional dialogue, sharing ideas and collaboration.

Transformational Stories – Bramley Park Academy

By Carrie Green, Executive Principal, Bramley Park



We are proud of our fully inclusive and refurbished setting for our community. The transformation at Bramley Park Academy has been a revolution and the impact has been staggering.

Every area of our school has enjoyed some form of enhancement whether that be windows, new play equipment, new flooring or even a stroke of blue paint. This has resulted in the overall provision now being clean, inviting and purposeful.

This could not have been achieved without the support of Josh Greaves and Steven Boldy and the Estates Team. Support from the Trust has enabled us to replace all the windows, repurpose our entrance and library to be inviting and welcoming for our whole community. One of our pupils described it as 'a little bit of magic' and I could not agree more. Every day I drive in and feel goose bumps at what we have achieved in such a short space of time. It's fundamentally about one thing, making a difference for our pupils and putting them first! With the dedicated support of HR, Estates, Finance and the sheer grit and determination of the whole team here at Bramley we have achieved just that. Here are some thoughts from some of the team to further enhance our story:



'I stepped over the threshold on September 2nd, and my first thought was, "Wow. We are finally a school". I was amazed at the building work, and what a transformation it has brought to the school. I walk down the corridors several times a day, and never used to take much notice of my surroundings, but now, I make a conscious effort to look at the amazing learning environment that we have created for our kids. One that they take pride in, that motivates them, that empowers them to learn and to strive for their potential. I am so proud of them, and I know that we are moving mountains in order to get them everything that they are entitled to!'

Kirsty Thorpe, Attendance and Pastoral Officer



'I have worked at the school for 20 years and I have never seen the school looking as fantastic as it is now. Both the inside and outside of school with all the improvements that have been made over the last year, especially the library. There is a positive vibe throughout the whole school with the children and staff. This has also reached our local community, only today taking the Year 4 for their weekly swimming lesson, a neighbouring school we passed commented on how smart the children looked in their new school uniform. I am proud to be part of Bramley Park Academy.'

Bev Sarchet, HLTA



'The school has seen huge improvements over the summer to create a wonderful and stimulating learning environment for all the children! The new outdoor play equipment has meant children are excited and stimulated during break times and it is lovely to see such positive play! The children absolutely love our new library and are so enthusiastic about their weekly library slot, it is instilling a love of reading in even the most disengaged reader! Each week, children get chance to sit and read a book with a partner in the library, providing them with that invaluable experience of just enjoying reading and making it a part of their every day. The learning environments inside the classrooms are beautiful too, particularly the reading corners, which the children love to access.'

Mollie Gregory, Y3 Teacher



Support Centre News

By Josh Greaves, Deputy Chief Executive

This year has seen personal and professional growth for a number of Wellspring colleagues.

Sam Corbett has progressed in to the new position of Governance Manager.

Clare Stevens and **Amie Goodyear** progressed in to the new positions of Head of Regional Operations.

Claire Chappell successfully progressed in to the new position of Head of HR.

Jonny Wathen's remit was significantly broadened to incorporate the Trust's strategic approach to commercial activity.

Adam McDermott's role shifted to Procurement and Projects Manager, following his successes to date.

Dom Fenner's remit broadened to incorporate wider workforce development as Trust Organisational Development Lead.

Dave Whitaker and **Chris Jessup** were appointed to two Director of Learning roles, finalising the formation of the Trust Executive Team.

Josh Greaves was appointed as Deputy Chief Executive in recognition of the level and complexity of the work he is involved in.

We also welcomed new colleagues in to various departments, reflecting the revisions to our operating models and the Trust's overall growth and maturity.

This is a cause for celebration, both for each individual and for Wellspring collectively. With growth comes – almost inevitably – change. It is important that we recognise and seize the opportunities presented by this change for personal, professional and organisational growth.

Sincere congratulations to all.



Recent Appointments in Operations

We are pleased to report that we made excellent appointments in our operations team:

Head of Capital: **Shaun Kiernan** (external)

Head of Regional Operations, Lincolnshire and NE Lincolnshire: **Clare Stevens** (internal)

Head of Regional Operations, Yorkshire: **Amie Goodyear** (internal)

These appointments will support the Wellspring Support Centre as a whole - and in particular the work of the Estates department - to resolve current operational challenges, drive the effectiveness of our cross-cutting regional hubs and plan effectively for the future.

I know you will join us in congratulating Amie, Clare & Shaun.

The Power of Teams

By Josh Greaves, Deputy Chief Executive



Following the successful completion of three of the four Lincolnshire Free Schools, Wellspring is now a family of 23 vibrant, unique Academies.

The conclusion of works at Springwell Lincoln, Springwell Grantham and Springwell Mablethorpe sees the end of over three years of planning, design, consultation and construction. Head of Regional Operations, Clare Stevens and Estates Manager, Paul Dunwell have been instrumental in the successful completion of these projects, alongside the leadership teams headed by Lisa Ashcroft-Day and Phil Willott in the North and South of the County.

In the background, our finance, HR, administration, governance, procurement, information services and project management teams have quietly and effectively nurtured the essential supporting infrastructure, creating the foundations on which our settings thrive.

By doing so and in providing new, purpose-built facilities for learners across Lincolnshire, these projects demonstrate the power of Wellspring Support Centre colleagues, working in deep partnership with our Academy leaders, to make a difference. **An enormous well done to Clare and Paul.**

We look forward to seeing Springwell Spalding progress at pace early in the new academic year. Three down, one to go!



Over and Above

By Josh Greaves, Deputy Chief Executive

Keith Brown, a member of the North East Lincolnshire Estates Team, has generously given his time this academic year to lead Beacon Academy's model-railway club.

Well-attended, the club has created another opportunity for Beacon's engineering enthusiasts to explore, learn and innovate.

Thank you for making a difference Keith.



Springwell Leads on TV

By Mark Wilson, CEO



BBC LOOK **NORTH**

Springwell Leeds were the subject of an extended news feature recently on the BBC Look North News programme.

With footage from the school sites and interviews with students and Principal Scott Jacques, the news feature celebrated the Academy's recent Ofsted rating, after replacing a previous school that had spent ten years in Special Measures.

Of the experience, Principal Scott Jacques said 'It's a bit daunting, speaking with a TV camera pointing at you. The broadcaster was brilliant. It showed our work in a very positive light and is great for the staff, students and community at Springwell Leeds'.



Wild Days at Oakwell Rise

By Claire Batley



The children at Oakwell Rise have been taking part in an exciting new part to the curriculum based in the outdoors. Each class will attend a Wild Day every Half Term which is underpinned by the need to arm the children with basic survival skills, develop language, collaboration skills and develop a thirst for active, healthy lifestyles.



The sessions offer our children the opportunity to develop their wild skills 'beyond the four walls'. The children have already begun to learn a variety of skills such as forest skills, language development, fine and gross motor skills, keeping safe and understanding the world around them. Each half term the children go out with their class teachers and Tom, from Green Man Learning, to work together through a personalised curriculum. This is working towards an accredited course via the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

Year 6 were the first class to take part in this exciting project. The children completed various activities from den building to fire lighting. As the photographs and blogs below show they had an amazing time!

'The wild day was really fun and exciting. We went into the forest and did lots of things like playing hide and seek and building dens out of waterproof sheets, string, trees and sticks. We also made fires out of bricks, flint, steel and cotton wool. My favourite part was when I hid under my den but it was really low down so me and my friends had to crouch down to fit under it. Tom, our instructor, was really nice and friendly - he made sure we were all safe'. Olivia Year 6

'The wild day was extremely good fun; we had such a super time! We were set lots of activities such as den building. To do this we had to use string, some plastic sheets and sticks. You had to tie the string to two trees and cover them with the sheets (which were waterproof). After that, you covered it with sticks and then you could sit underneath to keep dry - ish! We also played hide and seek in the woods (some people used camouflage to blend in better). After that, we had a different version of the game called Dobby. This was where we had to run away from the teachers (as fast as possible) and when Tom, the instructor, had finished counting we had to stop where we were. If the teachers saw us... we were out! We won if you got to the teachers and tapped them on the shoulder without them seeing you.

We also lit fires with a brick, flint and steel and cotton. Tom was our instructor and everyone liked him, he was very nice and calm. Overall, we had a fantastic time - even if we got a little wet!!!' Jack Year 6

'On Tuesday 24th of September we made our way down onto Oakhill's premises to enjoy a brilliant day ahead for Year 6. Once we arrived we made our way into the woods with Tom and had a little talk about all the things we would be doing during the day. Tom was brilliant and had shown a lot of care for each one of us, even though he was incredibly cold like everyone else. We played many games like: hide and seek, hot potato and Dobby. We all know that the other classes would enjoy working along with him as we loved it'. Lilly Year 6

Year 2 have also ventured out in to the wild. Here is what their class teacher had to say...

'On Tuesday 1st October, Year 2 went to Oakhill Academy to explore the woods on their Wild Day. The marvellous children had a super day with Tom (our Wild Day expert) making dens, exploring the natural environment and creating a safe space for a woodland creature. Although the weather was not on our side and the downpour continued all day, the children were wrapped up in their waterproofs and warm clothes and did not let the weather spoil their fun!'

Although the first two days have been wet and wild, they have also been a huge hit with the children who have already gained so many important life skills.

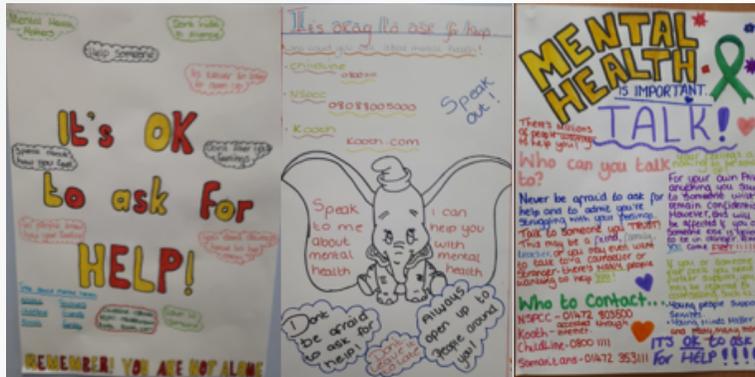
In the next few weeks the remaining classes will head out into the forest to see how in touch with their basic instinct and inner warrior they are. Details will be on our new blog...

<http://www.oakwellriseacademy.co.uk/page.php?id=10665&readpost=1136>

World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day is an International day for global Mental Health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. Our Academies got involved to raise awareness and encourage discussion.

Phoenix Park investigated 'What is Mental Health?'



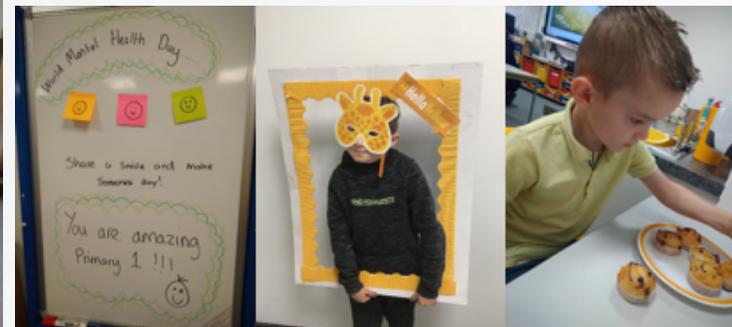
Greenacre had a pop-up photo booth with lots of yellow accessories and a mood wall to encourage everyone to express and talk about how they were feeling #helloyellow



Springwell Mablethorpe held a Bake Sale and wore yellow to raise money for charity. #helloyellow



Sevenhills celebrated World Mental Health Day through a focused fun packed day.



Springwell Lincoln had lots of fun wearing yellow, eating yellow and sharing smiles!

School trust staff tackle Three Peaks for children's charity

By Karen Froggatt, Chief Governance Officer

Staff from Wellspring Academy Trust's head office in Barnsley have walked their way to more than £2,500 for charity.

The team of colleagues, including Wellspring Academy Trust's chief executive Mark Wilson, recently completed the demanding Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge, a route comprising 24 miles and 1585m of ascent which takes on the peaks of Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough.

The challenge was organised to raise cash for The Rainbow Trust, a charity which supports families who have a child with a life-threatening or terminal illness, providing a broad range of emotional and/or practical support.



Lorraine Ford, Wellspring Academy Trust's finance officer and organiser of the walk, said: 'We became aware of the excellent work that the Rainbow Trust does to support families who are having to deal with the emotional and practical challenges of having children who have very serious illnesses, and wanted to help. We are delighted to have been able to support their work and we thank everyone who sponsored us.'

Wellspring Academy Trust manages 25 schools across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, and believes in treating all pupils with 'unconditional positive regard,' ensuring that they are supported and valued throughout their school career.

The team of colleagues, including Wellspring Academy Trust's chief executive Mark Wilson, recently completed the demanding Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge.

Well@Work Finalists

By Dominika Fenner, Organisational
Development Lead



The 10th of October was World Mental Health Day. We recognise that wellness of our people is a catalyst for well, happy and engaged students. Kindness, understanding, compassion and care for ourselves and one another is how we make this happen.



Wellbeing is a key strategic priority and we're proud to share that we're Well@Work Award Finalists for our Wellbeing Framework. We're only at the beginning of our journey but it was great to be recognised for the work we've done already.

Investing in people through Apprenticeships

By Natalie Hardman, Chief Administration Officer



We are able to use our Apprenticeship Levy fund to develop our workforce in a wide variety of ways. Qualifications are available from Level 2 through to Level 7 (Masters Degree) across a broad range of topics.

Our commitment is to invest in colleagues at all levels through creative pathways to help them achieve their ambitions. In September Chief Officers Natalie Hardman, Josh Greaves and Jonny Wathen headed back to school to embark on an Executive Masters Degree in Business Administration at The University of Sheffield.

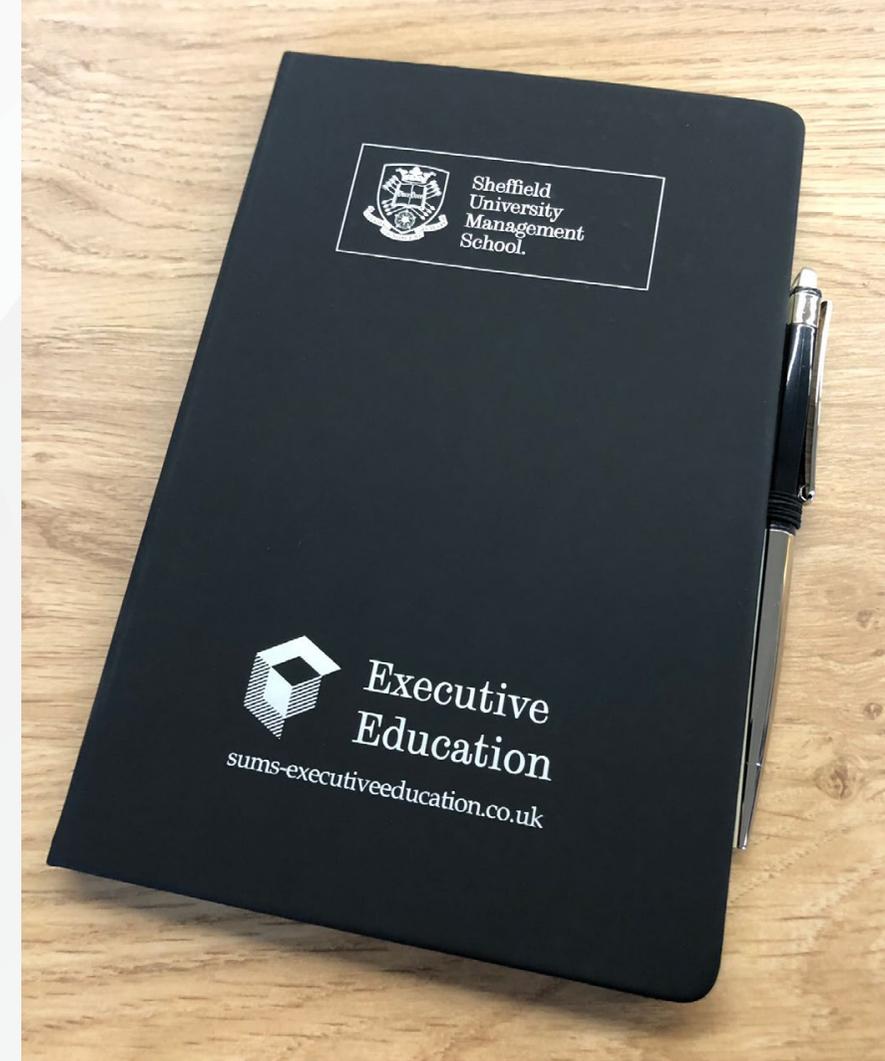
The Executive MBA is a part-time and internationally recognised qualification. Funded through the Apprenticeship Levy, the programme is a Senior Leader apprenticeship.

The MBA apprenticeship group is comprised of around twenty five professionals with a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences making it a great forum for networking across different sectors.

Peer to peer mentoring gives colleagues the opportunity to learn from other like-minded professionals and learn from other organisations. The programme is a work-based learning route, described as stretching and challenging by our team.

Apprenticeships are available in your area. There are apprenticeships available to suit everyone's development needs and aspirations. If we do not use our Apprenticeship Levy fund it will be clawed back by the government.

Consider your development needs and ambitions. Consider those of the workforce as a whole. Do some research into apprenticeships in your area as a means to help us all make an even greater difference.



The programme is a work-based learning route, described as stretching and challenging by our team.

Ongoing Engagements with PRTSA

By Jonny Wathen & Amy Hinchliffe

School Direct 2020/21 - Initial Teacher Education

UCAS is now open for the 2020/21 School Direct programme!

The Positive Regard programme provides a pathway into teaching, allowing individuals who have just completed their degree, or those considering a career change, to combine teacher training and learning within a school-based setting.

We are excited to be working in partnership with three universities; Bishop Grosseteste University, Leeds Beckett University and Sheffield Hallam University to ensure that candidates can train locally.

Placements are available across all sectors and phases of education utilising our network of Primary, Secondary and Special school settings. Bespoke programmes can be designed to meet individual needs and aspirations.

Our inclusive programme is delivered by our network of expert practitioners and demonstrates throughout that relationships really do make the difference.

Interested? Further information is available at our information event taking place on **Friday 15th November 2019 (9:00 - 10:30)**. Individuals can access the event virtually from your local Digital Hub or attend in person at the Digital Media Centre, Barnsley.

Maths Network

The next Maths Network will be held at Greenacre School, Keresforth Hill Road, Barnsley S70 6RG on **Wednesday 29th January 2020, 10:00 - 14:00**.

The focus of the session will include:

- ✓ Maths Of The Day
- ✓ Third Space Learning resources
- ✓ Big Maths and Corbett Maths
- ✓ Early Bird Templates
- ✓ Calculations Policy - Progression

Further information about the network group can be accessed via the Maths Portal link on Wellspring Digital.

Primary Reading Network

On Wednesday 25th September 2019, Forest Academy hosted the Primary Reading Network meeting that focused on reading and writing vocabulary development. Ten colleagues from across the Trust were in attendance and able to share ideas, best practice and resources. A product demonstration of Reading Cloud software was also received by the group. The next Reading network will be held at Bramley Park Academy, Fairfield Hill, Bramley, Leeds LS13 3DP on **Thursday 23rd April 2020, 10:00 - 14:00**.

Ongoing Engagements with PRTSA

By Jonny Wathen & Amy Hinchliffe

Arbor Training

A programme Arbor training was delivered at locations across the region during the autumn half term. The first of these sessions demonstrated the power of the Arbor 'Interventions' module to track, monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions, such as pupil premium activities. The session was held on **Friday 20th September 2019** in order to support colleagues who attended the Pupil Premium conference at the Holiday Inn, Doncaster.

Arbor 'Assessment' workshops were also scheduled to demonstrate the assessment tools available that support **formative, summative** and **ad hoc assessments** tracking. An exciting new development was showcased that enables standardised test data to flow automatically from Hodder products (PIRA, PUMA & GAPS) in to Arbor for instant analysis at individual Academy or Trust wide levels. Assessment workshops were held at:

- ✓ Beacon Academy, on **Tuesday 15th October 9.00 - 15.30**
- ✓ Springwell Alternative Academy Grantham, on **Monday 7th October 9.00 - 15.30**
- ✓ Springwell Leeds Academy (South Site), on **Wednesday 16th October 9.00 - 15.30**

The 'Communications and Parental Engagement' sessions looked at a range of tools that are also available to improve parental engagement such as; the new **parent app**, the **parents evening** booking system and **parental correspondence** tools. During the session, some academies identified potential cost/time savings that could be realised by reducing the number of systems they currently use or streamlining their current ways of working. The sessions took place at:

- ✓ Littlecoates Primary Academy on **Thursday 26th September 9.00 - 15.30**
- ✓ Springwell Alternative Academy, Lincoln on **Monday 30th September 9.00 - 15.30**
- ✓ Springwell Leeds Academy (South Site), Leeds on **Friday 4th October 9.00 - 15.30**
- ✓ Digital Media Centre, Barnsley on **Tuesday 1st October 9.00 - 15.30**

This coordinated approach resulted in a saving of over £6500 in training costs to our academies in addition to providing an opportunity for colleagues to network with peers from across our growing community.

The times and locations of all future training sessions is available on the **Wellspring Digital calendar** and **Positive Regard** website.

Leadership Development Programmes

Positive Regard welcomed the first two cohorts of colleagues to our new leadership programmes in September.

The 30th September 2019 saw our Level One Aspiring Leaders Programme explore concepts such as ethical leadership, leadership styles and becoming a reflective leader in their first module. Delegates are now looking forward to the next part of the programme... the professional encounters residential!

Our Level Two Senior Leadership Cohort commenced their programme on 11th October 2019. Leaders undertook critical self reflection, developed professional learning networks and considered their personal leadership manifestos. The next module will support leaders to develop their financial knowledge and data analytics skills.

Wellspring Blog

#WellspringTalks

Chris Jessup, Director of Learning
Primary



Visit
www.wellspringacademytrust.co.uk/news/category/blog

NQTs Welcome

I recently had the privilege of presenting at the Wellspring NQT event in Doncaster – one of my favourite events of the year. The enthusiasm and commitment of young – and young at heart – colleagues never ceases to inspire me and give me renewed hope in the teaching profession.



A lesson I have learned and try to pass on – and one that applies equally to NQTs and teachers at whatever stage of their career – is to remain curious and discipline yourself to continue to learn. This may sound like a strange and obvious comment – after all we are in the learning business. But I am often struck how little time is available to read, engage with new ideas and continue to learn... unless we commit to making it a priority.

An interesting way to think about learning is whether it is defined by the incorporation of experience and information into your existing mental model, or whether learning is the transformation and enhancement of this model. I wonder if, as we get older and more successful and comfortable in what we do, challenging and changing our ideas and beliefs, being open-minded, slowing down your thinking and decision making and being challenged becomes more difficult. Is it easier to fit information and experience into existing patterns?

The American author Edward Hess suggests there is a lot of evidence to suggest that arrogance is a huge inhibitor to learning. And arrogance often comes from success in positional authority. I only half-jokingly say to NQTs that they should never work for a Headteacher who doesn't read. When I go to the doctors, I expect that she will have up to date knowledge of the latest treatments and diagnosis. It would be rare to find a doctor or a dentist who treated patients in the same way they did when they qualified. As a Headteacher, you should be the lead learner in that organisation. As a teacher, you should be the lead learner in that classroom.



That means finding the time and the space to engage with ideas. It means, I would suggest, reading articles and books that wobble your thinking too. An example of this is 'Blueprint' by Robert Plomin. There are few areas of science more fiercely contested than the issue of what makes us who we are. Are we products of our environments or the embodiment of our genes? Is nature the governing force behind our behaviour or is it nurture? While almost everyone agrees that it's a mixture of both, there has been no end of disagreement about which is the dominant influence. Are inequalities explained by inherent differences or by social conditions? Controversial ideas with obvious and interesting consequences for education. The importance of heritability, of environmental factors and the science behind assumptions and what it means now we are able to modify genes are all discussed. A fascinating book, full of science I wouldn't normally engage with and an example of reaching beyond the boundaries of my everyday thinking.

We model the behaviours we seek from our colleagues and our students. I hope these monthly blog posts will be an opportunity for me to share what has made me think, wobble my thinking and create curiosity.

Wellspring Blog

#WellspringTalks

By Phil Hutchinson, Executive Principal,
Sevenhills Hills and Phoenix Park



Visit
www.wellspringacademytrust.co.uk/news/category/blog

It's a Funny Old Game

Hailing from North East Lincolnshire - the geographic region of footballing excellence, my blogging debut sets out to draw parallels from our nation's most popular sport and our working environment.

In my lifetime as a 'Mariner' spanning thirty something years I have embraced the highs of four promotions, the agony of four relegations, six awful years of non-league football but also the pride of nine Wembley appearances, however, only four of those occasions were enjoyed!



Let's kick off with:

1) Manager

The leader. Accountability and responsibility. A few poor results and the manager is sacked. Coaching the team to achieve improvements is a very satisfying part of a leaders job. Alarmingly, in my locality I am the longest serving Secondary Principal due to the high stakes of accountability and league tables. Those in leadership know too well that journeys have 'ups and downs' the good times and the challenging ones but we recognise the need for stability and continuity and as leaders we retain our strong belief in our values. Effective leadership is crucial to achieve your aims.

2) Squad

The staff team is vital, as a Trust Wellspring are strong advocates for staff wellbeing and this is appreciated by the teams. I have not experienced anything that comes close to matching the support available to all and the moral purpose exhibited by leaders. The more together the staff teams are the better they will function. Communicate well, be interested and approachable, listen and get to know them - they are your biggest asset so work with them.

3) Tactics

In football much is made of styles, patterns of play, formations, set pieces and how they contribute to results. Pundits are paid handsomely to voice their opinions and fans debate and dissect post match but in our organisation we have a clear set of core values that keeps it simple. Being ethical, inclusive, caring and socially responsible exist in all our work each day.

4) Attendance

Attendance matters. When teams are playing well the stadium is sold out, when it's a struggle attendance drops. The current non-chairman at Grimsby Town knows the exact attendance figure to be achieved to break even each match. We must make our schools and work environments ones that students and staff want to come, create that positive culture.

5) Transfer Window

Get recruitment right! Plan it well, allow yourself time to get it right, values based interview questions ensure you get the right person with the values to join your team and follow safer recruitment practices throughout. At each recruitment opportunity I endeavour to add something different to our teams so we keep evolving.

6) VAR

Technology is a hot topic of conversation at the minute and it is something never far from teachers thoughts followed by sheer panic. I received feedback from SLT during my first teaching post - 'would have been better if technology had been used.' Excellent, I'm teaching in a temporary wooden hut the other side of the field with electric heaters being the closest thing to technology! iPads, Iris, google classrooms, immersive spaces etc. absolutely have a role to play in creating engaging learning and developing our teaching practice - but only if quality time is invested to explore and understand how it can be best used and improve users confidence and individuals (like me) competence.

7) The FA, EFL, UEFA, FIFA

The policy makers and Governors of our beautiful game. The lack of connection to real life, the players, the fans, the officials with each and every tweak of a rule. I have played and coached the game, can I explain the latest offside rule? DFE and OfSTED set many criteria for us in education through various frameworks and inspection handbooks. Although there is a perception of being more open to consultation with our sector I often ponder how it could be different if Ofsted didn't exist. I like the messages we support across our Trust that we do what is right for our students and we don't do things for Ofsted.

8) Europa League

This link refers to transition which from Alternative Provisions can occasionally be back to mainstream. Our reward for students that do really well in our settings is to send them back to an environment they didn't like and were not welcome. Similar to those clubs finishing 5th and/or 6th in the Premier League in that they are rewarded with a competition meaning extra fixtures, often long trips all over Europe on a Thursday night and which ultimately leads to clubs trying to exit the competition as early as possible. The Europa League (after Baku, Azerbaijan hosted the final last season for two London teams in a half filled stadium) and student transition both need further work to ensure their success.

To summarise this blog a quote that highlights the importance of our work and the difference we can make to our students, families and communities,

'Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I'm very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that.'

Bill Shankly (Grimsby Town manager, 1951)