

NEWS

The Mast Academy Trust

SPRING 2021



in this edition

A word from
Mrs Greenough

Learning in a pandemic
Our children share their stories

In our shoes...
Our colleagues share their experience

Spotlight on...
Curriculum Re-connect

Make a difference
Become a Governor



A word from Mrs Greenough CEO

Welcome to 2021 and the start of another new journey in the world of education. It has been another eventful and busy term at The Mast Academy Trust.

Our school leaders have stepped up to the challenge of opening schools to all children under the most extraordinary and unprecedented of circumstances. They have led their school communities through Risk Assessments; remote learning and navigated the complexities of bubbles and test and trace. This term, they also traverse the world of mass testing. The collaborative work of the trust has ensured that the enormous burden on workload has been distributed and shared where-ever possible to enable leaders to continue to function on the core business of education, but the effort it has taken to run schools under the current climate, should not be underestimated.

As always, they have been supported by a dedicated, hard-working and resilient team of teaching and classroom support staff; a team of administrators who provide the engine room of every school and an amazing team of additional support colleagues without whom our schools would simply not function. At The Mast Academy Trust, we truly value our people and we are very grateful for their continued commitment to our children and families. Throughout the pandemic, the welfare of our highly valued teams has been at the forefront of our minds and we have worked hard to ensure they have been supported.

We have also welcomed both new Trustees and new Governors to our Boards - all of whom have brought additional insight and expertise. We have seen the first cross board development sessions on curriculum and well-being which have been well attended and allowed us to ensure our work continues to reflect the vision and values of our full educational community.

Despite the challenges, we have been able to offer a comprehensive package of CPD for all stakeholders; embed our new structures and continue to strengthen our support systems.

Our incredibly busy term; the hard work of every member of our team and the relentless drive to continue to strengthen has all been for our shared value which places 'children at the heart' of everything we do. It is therefore poignant that this term's newsletter will seek to celebrate our amazing children and young people who inspire us every day with their kindness, resilience and good humour. At a time when it is easy to be diverted, they remind us why working in education is such an enormous privilege.

THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Talk



We start the Spring term in a very different place to where we expected to be.

The MAST Academy Trustees understand what the National Lockdown means to parents, teachers, children and support staff alike in terms of the additional pressure and stress this places on families. The Trustees are enormously grateful for the hard work and determination that all our Academy Trust people have shown throughout last year, over the Christmas period, and now in the New Year.

We remain dedicated to providing all the children in our care, with a safe but stimulating environment in our schools, which remain open for the children of critical workers as well as vulnerable children. We also remain focused on providing the best possible on-line remote teaching for all children having to stay at home. All our teachers and support staff have stepped up to the plate and have learnt, and are demonstrating, new on line presentational skills to make lessons as interesting, informative and interactive as possible. My thanks to all involved.

The spring term also sees changes both at Trust Board level and Local Governing Board level. I would like to welcome a number of new Trustees and Governors to our Trust, whose skills are wide ranging, from great educational experience to financial management, business strategic planning and in depth experience of risk management, all gained in either the public or private sectors. Either way, I am pleased to have them on board within the MAST. They will provide the challenge and support to the rest of us, to ensure that we provide the best education we can for our children, in a safe environment, optimising the funds we are given by the Department of Education to do this. A big welcome to you.

Also, as a reminder, we are still looking to further strengthen our Local Governing Boards at all our schools, with more parent or community Governors. If you are interested in participating and contributing to your community schools, please do get in touch.

Whatever happens in the coming weeks and months, I know that the MAST Academy team will continue to play their part in doing the best they can for our children, and the MAST Academy remains focused on and empathetic to, the well-being of all who work for us.

Martyn Jones, Chair of Trustees



Learning in a pandemic

It is nearly a year now since the children began a new way of learning; our teachers started a new way of teaching, and schools started a new way of operating.

We know that, amid all the uncertainty and change, it has been an overwhelming time for us all. We hope the next article enables you to have the opportunity to 'peek through' the windows of school and reveal the thoughts and experiences of some of the children whilst they continue to learn through a pandemic. Thank you to the children who wished to share their words with us all.

We also wish to thank all our parents and carers for their continued support and positive messages.



Birdsedge First School



A new school council has been set up during the Autumn Term and we meet weekly to discuss things about school and make decisions on the things that we want to happen. We also hold a weekly class council to gather any ideas, find out about any problems and share important information with our class. We think this is a great way to hear and share every pupil voice.

This term we have loved being outdoors in the outdoor area of our classroom. Inside we have enjoyed being able to be involved in art lessons and doing our daily writing and maths lessons. We have also been learning lots of new spellings! Another thing we have loved about being back at school this term is being able to play games in the playground and be with all our friends.

Class 1

We have been really happy to be back in school learning and really enjoy our music lessons where we are learning to play the ukulele. We have enjoyed our art lessons and finding out about World War Two in History. One of our favourite things about this term is that we have some reward time together on a Friday to celebrate the end of the week and all our hard work.

Class 2

We have loved being back in school this term and experiencing some of the new things happening in school. We have Forest Friday every week and have had lots of fun and exciting events and activities—particularly spooky day! We are enjoying some new assemblies, especially story time where we share a different book each week. We enjoy having lots of celebration on Fridays—we have a special mention assembly and celebrate any birthdays from that week. We have started some new lunch time clubs and are learning makaton. We have a new Headteacher and have enjoyed getting to know each other! We have carried on using Times Table Rockstars and have regular competitions between the classes. Which we love! We all feel really proud that we have kept going during the pandemic and any virtual teaching we have had to have at times.

Class 3



Shelley First School

I didn't feel nervous about going back to school in September. I was excited to be seeing my friends again and to be finally back at school.



Noah

It's rubbish being back in lockdown but at least we had a nice Christmas and I got to see my Grandma and Grandad. It's not so bad being at home because my mum is working at home too and we are safe at home. I miss my friends though.

To help my well-being I could use FOFBOC and tummy and chest breathing when I feel a bit anxious. Going out for a walk at lunchtime with my mum is really nice – we get some fresh air and exercise and chat. Speaking to my friends on Xbox or Whatsapp makes me feel happy.

I enjoy the online classes as it makes it feel like more of a normal school day. I like to have the teacher there and to see all my friends on the screen. However, sometimes I find it difficult to get heard in the class. It's a bit different than putting your hand up in class and the teacher seeing you.



In September, I was a bit worried about finding the right classroom and meeting my classmates again but it was all OK in the end. This lockdown feels like a big shadow or a cloud in front of the sun. I really want to play with my friends and talk to other people.

To help my well-being, I've done the finger breathing and FOFBOC (feet on floor, bum on chair) exercise from Paws B.

Although it feels a bit strange talking to everyone through the computer, it's nice to be able to see and talk to my classmates. Remote learning is also better than before because I understand what to do with my lessons as my teacher explained it to me. I've found it tricky because sometimes it's a bit glitchy and sometimes it makes people go quiet and then I don't fully understand what I'm meant to be doing.

Isla

I was excited to go back to school in September but I was also worried that I may have forgotten some things, especially maths. This lockdown has been disappointing as I am unable to see my friends in school.

I enjoyed the Paws B work and I have used some of the breathing exercises when I have started to feel worried.

In remote learning, I have enjoyed seeing everyone on the Teams lessons. I am especially enjoying the guided reading work as the book is really interesting. I think remote learning has been ok and I haven't had any problems. I know I can message my teacher if I am stuck on anything. She has helped explain what to press on Teams such as raise my hand.

I felt quite good about going back to school in September as I got to see my friends and my new teacher. I don't really like going into lockdown again as I feel we had only just got back to school.

I miss my friend's and socialising. I also miss my teacher and the normal day to day routine.



I've used a couple of the Paws B exercises: sitting still on a chair and imagining we were going through different parts of our body anchoring each body part. I could do tummy and chest and focus on breathing too.

In remote learning, I have enjoyed that we actually can get to learn. I prefer this to the previous home schooling as I respond better to my teacher, as she knows what she is doing! I have also enjoyed seeing my friends even if only on screen and keeping some 'normal' routine. I am fine and enjoying it! However, the worst part about remote learning is you don't always know if you can log in and it gets me stressed out if I'm late if I can't get in. I don't like being late and I worry if I get logged out.

Alfie

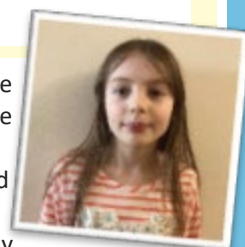
In September, I wanted to go back to school to see my friends but I enjoyed being at home.

I like the online learning in this lockdown but I do miss my friends.

My well-being has been fine during this lockdown. I've not had to use any of the Paws B activities because I've not been upset or stressed.

I find it is much easier to concentrate in remote learning and I am enjoying it. There are no distractions which help my learning. I do feel less confident answering questions, it's not the same as being in class. However, the afternoons are different and I lack motivation when it's not a live lesson; my mum is working so it's not always easy.

Jacob



Jessica



Scissett Middle School

My first term in Year 7 has been a really positive experience. Going back in September, I was pleased that I was able to see my friends again, although it has been slightly different as I can't see some of my friends from last year (due to the bubbles we have been placed in). However, due to my new bubble, I have been able to make more friends. I have enjoyed staying in one room because it means that I can be on time and organised for every lesson. I have hated having to wear a mask, but I know that I have to wear it to stop the spread of the virus and to protect myself and others. I have also loved having new teachers.

Lily

This first term has been great. I have especially enjoyed seeing my friends again at break times, even though we have had to socially distance. A good change to being back in school, is that we don't have to move around classes and as a result I have been given achievement points for being ready to learn at the start of each lesson. Another good thing about coming back to school, is that I have been able to make new friends within my bubble. I have found that my lessons have been much more engaging too.

Nathaniel

Going to school with the Coronavirus around has been difficult, but I really like school and I really like all my teachers at Scissett and the new friends that I have made.

The only thing I miss is being able to play and talk to my other friends, who aren't in a form or bubble with me. I like all the writing topics we have done so far; we are currently doing the Titanic, which is one of my favourite things to learn about. Since we are in lockdown now, when we get back to school, I look forward to seeing my friends, teachers and getting back into a bit more of a normal routine. Usually at lunch time, if the weather is nice, we take our food outside, which is one of my favourite parts of my day because I get to talk to my friends and play outside. The teachers on break time duty are nice and always talk to us. I like having form time at the end of the day because we get to read, complete our careers booklets and we get to watch Newsround too!

Mena

Every lesson that my children have been part of has been brilliant

A piece of artwork, completed by Phoebe, Y8, that needed to be shared with everyone.

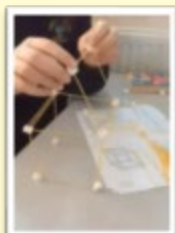
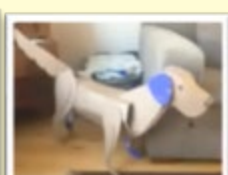
This drawing was completed over 7 hours, following the sad news of the passing of Sir Captain Tom Moore. As well as being an excellent piece of work, this is a very fitting tribute to the man who has become a national hero and a symbol of hope for everyone.



Phoebe, Y8

Screen Free Day

Students both at school and at home took part in a 'Screen Free Day', organised by Mrs Hull, which was enjoyed by all. The whole day was spent creating, building, drawing and simply enjoying learning without the use of technology. As you can see, even pets became part of the learning experience!



We would like to express how impressed we are with the quality and ease of the online lessons

I am very happy with how the learning has been organised and for those at home



Kirkburton Middle School



I have been learning to look after my new tortoise during lockdown, his name is Phil. He is one-year-old and if I look after him properly he will live for over seventy years. I wish COVID was over because it is really annoying. I like being in school because I get help with the work and I like my bubble.

Will C

Kirkburton Middle School students have been very busy in lockdown and it is clear that we have some very talented students.

Also, online learning has been a huge hit and as always KMS students are happy to share their views, especially on the topic of Lockdown So over to them!

It's been really strange and new in lockdown and there's been lots of bad and good! I'm glad we have online lessons now. Instead of just getting worksheets, we get to interact with other people more, which makes it easier to learn. I haven't been in school for a while but I want to come back soon, because I miss my friends.

Nina

This Lockdown has been very different to the first one! The one that started in March felt horrible because nothing had really ever happened like that before but this one is a lot happier for me. We have live lessons instead of worksheets. We aren't going to be in it as long, I hope.

Libby J

I feel sad because I am not at home with my mum and brother. However, I am happy because I am spending lockdown with my grandma and grandad. To get through lockdown I have done plenty of baking because it is what I love to do. Also, I love to play games with the dog, she is fun to play with. I feel good about all the school work I am doing. I am happy that I still get to hear my teachers' voices every day on live calls. I hope we get through this soon.... Hands, Face, Space, Keep Safe!

Calleigh A



I miss my friends and going out to places (social life). I miss doing activities instead of being stuck at home. However, I like doing live lessons for schoolwork, it's much better than doing worksheets all day. To help myself relax, I try to remember that it's not anyone's fault and getting frustrated and angry at other people isn't going to change it or anything.

Emily M



I was really happy when I was asked to design the front cover for the village magazine after having contributed a piece of my work to the art page in a previous issue.

My inspiration for the design was the transition from 2020 to 2021. After a bad year I hoped to show the happiness to start a new year. My characters are inspired by doodle art and I have hidden the words 'Covid -19' inside the illustration.

Joe M

In our shoes...

... paints a picture of how brilliant staff have adapted. Those that have joined us during a pandemic; those that have returning from leave to a completely new environment and those that have discovered a new way of working.

The schools wouldn't be able to provide the fabulous education and experiences your children enjoy when they are in school without our colleagues; we thank them all for the their unwavering commitment to educate.

Although a second lockdown is less than ideal for teaching and learning, I felt well prepared to deliver live lessons as a result of training by senior management and planning ahead. I knew the expectations of my role and felt better about the potential to achieve a higher quality of learning than last time. My children have been engaged and produced much better quality work than I expected. I've felt a bit like an NQT again, trying to figure out how to deliver learning in this new format and day to day preparation takes so much longer so it's compatible for remote learning. During live lessons, a lot of children lose signal or apparently there is the odd glitch from me on Teams, but I do think the recording of core lessons will support this so the children can watch again at any point. I've tried to keep the learning and routine as close to what it would be like in school so the experience doesn't feel too daunting for the children. I'm having to provide more scaffolding than I would normally but it's allowed the children to get their teeth stuck in and they are confident to have a go.



After months shielding, I was excited and relieved to try and get back into a routine and teach and interact with children. I was apprehensive regarding the virus transmission but made sure I followed the guidance and my colleagues have been so supportive. This lockdown has felt more challenging than the first but has had its positives as well. I am having to work from home which can feel quite isolating but I am much happier that I can deliver the best teaching possible in these circumstances. The mindfulness training has provided many tips and the support from my colleagues has been invaluable. My top three priorities are: Children and staff safety, delivering quality learning and the well-being of staff and children. I don't feel like these have changed since September, just the way this has had to be facilitated.

Miss Dempster (SFS)



Well, where to start? I started at Shelley First School in September 2019 and... wow! What a 16 months it has been! I have learned so much about myself as a leader, a teacher and as a person but Covid 19 has forced me to develop skills I never knew I even needed. Throughout the lockdown, I have been lucky enough to work on site and this has really kept me sane. I thrive with a routine, and being with the children really makes my day. It hasn't been without its challenges however, the move to live teaching during this lockdown has been a steep learning curve. Thinking of ways to simplify concepts so that I can teach it through screen sharing has seemed an impossible challenge, but we're adapting and

making it work. Finding exciting ways to teach question marks to Y2 children through a tiny rectangle has certainly tested my capabilities but throwing in a good, old game of bingo has kept us going!

I've found remote teaching exhausting - I feel I need a power nap after each live call. Knowing you're recording and everybody is watching is so daunting and feels like you're on a stage performing an act - I suppose we are! After 4 weeks of performances, I feel I'm finally getting the hang of it. The children (and their grownups) have been fantastic; we have mastered the mute button, grasped the hands up icon and become experts in turning our cameras on and off! I am in awe of my 6 and 7 year olds, they have been incredible, being able to see and speak to them every day has really kept us all connected.

Whilst the past 12 months have been tricky, with still a way to go, there have definitely been many positives to draw upon. One day we'll look back and talk about the 2020/2021 as a moment in history that we survived. In the words of Dr Seuss, "sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory".

Mrs Moran (SFS)

Being back at Birdsedge has been so rewarding. Through trying to incorporate Music in a Covid-safe way, a love of singing using Makaton has exploded across the school. What started out as a lesson in Class 2 has now expanded into a Makaton club and Makaton assemblies. How lovely to see inclusivity and diversity celebrated. Teaching the children in person has just been the best feeling. I feel so lucky to be able to interact with our superstars every day. Birdsedge may be a small school but we certainly have a big heart, that is shining through this difficult year.

Miss Haigh (BFS)





My experience of the first lockdown was very different to this one as I was on maternity leave. It was a bit of a shock to return to work in the world of Covid 19. Nevertheless, I have enjoyed the challenges that this has invited.

The last minute announcement that schools would close and online learning would commence was the greatest challenge for me, I know lots of teachers feel the same! I had already planned and resourced the week and I just wasn't sure that they would lessons for the transfer well to an online format. I decided to keep things as familiar as possible for the children at home to prevent the online learning experience from feeling

completely alien. I planned lessons to be taught in 'chunks' with modelling from myself followed by short practise sessions for the children. This has worked well and enabled me to formatively assess progress within the lesson. It has also meant that children have been able to ask for support during practise time, much like they would in a normal lesson. To make learning as bespoke as possible I have set different levels of learning challenges for pupils to choose from. Where children have struggled to keep up I have used time in the afternoon for catch up calls.

The most time consuming part of online provision has been preparation of resources and providing catch up and feedback. I feel like I am getting into more of a routine with this now so it definitely feels easier than it did. Technology is marvellous but not without glitches. I've been locked out of a couple of my own lessons, much to the delight of some of the children in my class. Thankfully, I think these initial problems have now been resolved.

I am lucky to have a network of incredibly supportive people around me, both at work and at home so I don't feel that my wellbeing is negatively impacted. It's obviously a difficult situation for everybody but I am trying to focus on the positives.

The mindfulness training provided by the trust gave lots of helpful tips. I think it's important to have strategies to help when things feel overwhelming.

The top priorities for my role remain the same; to ensure equality of provision for all pupils, to provide targeted catch up and make sure that every child is a reader.

Mrs Smith (SFS)

September 2020 saw the children in Class 1 return to school with enthusiasm and joy.

The new Year 1 children were excited about being back in school with me and with their friends, who they had missed very much. The new Reception cohort were keen to begin their Birdledge journey and we all blended really well to form the new Elephant Class! Elephants are a happy family who look after each other and who help each other to grow and develop important skills and knowledge, building firm foundations for future learning and future life. All the Class 1 children loved being elephants and have really taken on board the intent behind the image.



I feel so proud of the youngest children in Birdledge First School, who have had the very beginning of their educational journey disrupted in ways that a year or two ago would have been exceptional, but which are now unfortunately the norm. Despite these potential setbacks, our positive attitudes to school and to doing the very best we can shone through. We worked so well together which has led to all the children making great progress against their starting points. The children are so imaginative and creative. They make fantastic links in their learning because of the many ways in which they experience the world around them and then apply and present their knowledge. Communication has been an absolute priority, with the goal being that every child is able to express themselves and is heard. The children in Class 1 know they have a voice and we all respect the opinions of others, even when we don't agree! The values we share and cultivate enable us to co-operate and negotiate, advanced skills which are being seen on a daily basis.

This academic year, the co-ordinated approach throughout school to providing the best possible educational experiences to the children at Birdledge has revitalised and boosted the environment and our journey. Despite the differences due to the pandemic, the Autumn term was a great success. The following lockdown and return to remote learning has been challenging but so different to the previous lockdown - we are more united as a class and have daily contact and teaching time. The children have adapted so well and families are so supportive and engaged. Again communication is a backbone of the curriculum on offer now at Birdledge, and is firmly embedded so that whatever the future throws at us, we will be ready as a team.

Miss Hutton (BFS)

In our shoes...

Lucy and I joined the Business Support team at Scissett Middle School in September 2020. It was certainly an interesting time to start a new chapter in our careers!

Lucy moved from a financial management company where she had completed her level 2 Business Administration Apprenticeship and is now undertaking her level 3 qualification. I took on the role of Senior Business Support Officer at Scissett Middle School having previously worked within the Trust at Shelley First School.



Scissett was not completely new to either of us in September. I had worked here as part of the on-site team during the first lockdown during the last academic year. Lucy was also familiar with the school having been a pupil here not so many years ago! This was a huge help to me during the first few weeks, having someone on hand to remind me where all the different classrooms were.

If you phone or visit the school, you will usually be welcomed by Lucy or me - or rather Miss Hunt or Mrs Thornton (not to be confused with Mrs Thornton the English teacher!).

The main office is the central hub of the school where pupils, staff and parents come to seek answers to their questions, resources or lost items. If we do not know the answer, then we will always strive to find it out - there's a lot for us still to learn! It is also the place pupils to come if they feel unwell or injure themselves - both of us are first aid trained and we put this training into practice on a regular basis - in fact, we have some frequent visitors who seem to spend more time grazing their knees in the playground than anything else!

It is safe to say that any job description for working in a school office cannot come close to covering the vast array of jobs that we find ourselves carrying out. In my first few weeks at Scissett, I found myself chasing a duck on the school field; extracting a shoe that was stuck on a pupil's foot and removing a pair of scissors that a pupil had wedged on their fingers. Not to mention the fun we both had untangling the Christmas lights.

Covid-19 has further expanded our task lists as we have found ourselves monitoring the loan of reusable face masks and isolating pupils with persistent coughs. I have been helping to coordinate the Covid-19 lateral flow testing - to date the team have carried out over 500 tests. Meanwhile Lucy has been busy printing resources that we have packed, labelled and sorted ready to be distributed to all the pupils who are working remotely in the latest lockdown.

We have also been faced with many logistical challenges, including co-ordinating the Year 6 and Year 8 school photos whilst ensuring the pupils remain socially distanced from one another and within their class bubbles.

Lucy and I are yet to experience a 'normal' day at Scissett with assemblies, lesson change-overs, pupils eating lunch in the school hall and live concerts. We have also heard rumour of class 'runners' who take messages from the office to the classrooms - which would certainly make our lives easier! At the moment, Lucy and I are each racking up around 10,000 steps a day from walking the Scissett Middle corridors!

Without a doubt, this has been an incredibly challenging, enjoyable and fulfilling first term and a half for both of us. We are incredibly lucky to be part of such a kind and supportive team. We have received a very warm welcome from staff and pupils alike and we very much look forward to experiencing the normal Scissett life, hopefully in the near future.

Mrs Thornton and Miss Hunt (SMS)

September saw the return to school for all pupils. What a joy to actually see the children in person. Class 3 became the Lobos. I chose this for our class name because I wanted the characteristics of a wolf pack to be the backbone of how we were going to behave as a class. I wanted us to all pull together as a new group, to be loyal and to look after each other. Lobos are also very intelligent. So far, we have developed some of these traits and are continuing to work on building on these - despite the challenges the pandemic has brought.

We also welcomed two new pupils to Lobos class and I am pleased to say that they have brought to the class vitality, intellect and enthusiasm. A very welcome addition to our pack.

A successful term of learning ensued and culminated in some fabulous story writing - building on our experience of writing five paragraph stories. We started to read 'The boy at the back of the class' and look forward to continuing this when all the class are back in school.

Ms Spark (BFS)



Starting a new job in the middle of a pandemic is a first for me and one that has certainly brought new challenges. Who would have thought that masks and sanitiser would be the main part of the daily routine a year ago? I certainly didn't!

Yet here we are, several months later grappling with online resources that we have never used before, battling with unreliable Wi-Fi on a daily basis and communicating with each other over a screen. Even though I entered into this new world of learning with a degree of trepidation, I must say, in the weeks that have followed, I have been humbled with my peers' drive to deliver and maintain a varied and engaging curriculum and the students' willingness to be active participants in their lessons.

Online learning is difficult for all and I didn't go into this profession to educate via a screen but I am really impressed by the informal humour and "technical" support provided by our students in this difficult time. Hopefully, in the near future, things will change and we will see their (mostly) smiling faces in our classrooms again ... I can't wait!

Mrs Clark (KMS)



staff news

Congratulations to:

- Ann Large, the new Headteacher at Scissett Middle School
- Sarah Walters who has taken an additional role of Trust Operations Officer for the Mast Academy Trust
- Ashley Carver has moved into the role of Site Manager, working across all the schools in the Trust
- Jamie Fosbrook who has moved to a new role at the Trust as Site Operative and Grounds Operative.

We welcome:

- Adam Kitchen who has joined as the Trust's Cleaning Supervisor.

We bid farewell to:

- James Amber (Scissett Middle School)
- Katie Winstanley (Kirkburton Middle School)
- Nigel Barry (Kirkburton Middle School)
- Sarah Jessop (Scissett Middle School)



Helping a school community recover emotionally whilst addressing gaps in learning.

As a trust we identified the importance of reigniting that flame of curiosity to want to learn again; leaders from all four schools were the driving force behind the key indicators that were the focus in taking our children and families on a journey to recovery.

Relationships

As humans, the relationships we form with other people are vital to our mental and emotional wellbeing and really, our survival. Therefore, as educators the relationship we form, rebuild and renew with children are crucial in inspiring them to want to learn. Teachers must plan to ‘get to know’ their individual classes and find a route to build trust, making a commitment to bringing out the best in each child. Trust with pupils is built as they see your day to day actions matching the way you described yourself. Showing an interest in personal hobbies and strengths are key with this approach...believing in the children and breaking down barriers that ‘get in the way’ of learning.

Rita Pierson says: “Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be”.

“No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship”
James Corner



Retrieval

Retrieval practice is such an effective revision technique because it requires pupils to recall previously learnt knowledge, which creates stronger memory traces and increases the likelihood that the information will be transferred to the long-term memory. For children returning having missed core and foundation subjects, we need to ensure that we are exercising their working memory whilst plugging the gaps of knowledge missed during lockdown. Having this as a starter for most lessons becomes a systematic way of learning and the more we exercise our working memory the more information we retain.

Emotional Intelligence

The pandemic has created an opportune moment to invest more time looking at the important aspects of teaching life skills, such as the ability to get on with people, dealing with difficult situations and having a bank of strategies to deal with the most negative of emotions we feel.

Emotionally intelligent people can harness their own emotions and also use their empathetic responses to other people in helpful ways. These skills are especially important for children to learn early on as they have a significant impact, not just on their education but their lives as a whole.

Companies today are increasingly looking through the lens of emotional intelligence when hiring, promoting and developing their employees.

Spotlight on... Curriculum Reconnect



Modelling & Metacognition

"Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling; from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action."

Albert Bandura 1977 (Canadian Psychologist)

Modelling is demonstrating how to successfully perform a task and this can take on many forms. It helps children to know what is expected of them and as most of us learn visually, watching instructions is usually the most successful for the majority of people. However, the most effective technique involves thinking aloud and is a new technique we are asking our schools to consider when delivering lessons.

"This thinking-out-loud approach, in which the teacher plans and then explicitly articulates the underlying thinking process... should be the focus of teacher talk."

Bandura

Metacognitive modelling demonstrates how the children should think in lessons. This enables the child to work independently or with a partner and know how to tackle difficulties using a range of strategies. Teachers would talk through their own thought process while they do the problem on a board or collaboratively with a class member. Evidence suggests where modelling is performed well, the lesson outcome is more likely to be achieved.

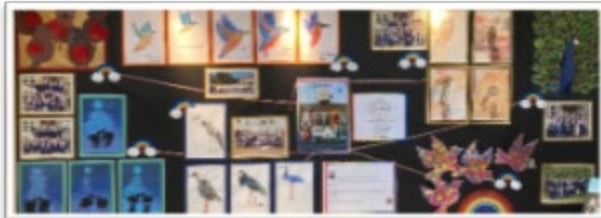


As a Trust we feel it's important not to think our curriculum is ever complete, but instead to reflect and respond to what we are presented with.

Preparing the children for the 21st century and exposing them to as much as we can about the world around them.



Louise Stinson
School Improvement Officer



Explaining the news & tackling stereotypes

No matter how old our children are, threatening or upsetting news can affect them emotionally. Many can feel worried, frightened, angry, or even guilty. And these feelings can last long after the news event is over. So what can you do as educators to help the children in our care deal with all this information?

The bottom line is that primary school-aged children and some middle schoolers have trouble fully understanding news events. Even though older teens are better able to understand current events, even they face challenges when it comes to sifting fact from opinion - or misinformation. This is exactly what we need to emphasise. The news can misinform and we must search for the facts before investing our emotions into something that may not require our energy.

On 25 May 2020, George Floyd was killed by police in the city of Minneapolis in the USA. This situation has increased support and awareness of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement which began as an outcry to this issue of violence against black people. It has encouraged people worldwide to talk about anti-racism.

This movement created a new opportunity to revisit and think about what it symbolises and reflect on our own behaviour and actions.

Thinking about stereotypes and challenging them is an ongoing exercise; it's a difficult concept to grapple with - and one that can't be explained easily. Our children must learn to challenge their position in the world, and understand the imbalances that they are part of. The topic of inequality is incredibly divisive which highlights its priority in terms of reconnecting and seeking justice for all.





WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BECOME A SCHOOL GOVERNOR



Do you, or know anyone who may, wish to make a valuable contribution to children's education, opportunities and futures?

The Mast Academy Trust are seeking community governors for their schools.

A community governor is a person appointed by the school governing body and who, in the opinion of the school governing body, has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

A community governor does not need to have a child at the school, it can be anyone from the local community who has the time and will to support in providing the best education for our pupils and developing a diverse and inclusive school community where our pupils are inspired and our colleagues achieve.

If you would like to find out more go to <https://themast.co.uk/governance/governor-recruitment> or to express and interest email office@themast.co.uk.

Sian Hyett-Allen
Chair of Governors
Birdsedge First School

Tracy Pinnock and Dan Baker
Co-Chair of Governors
Shelley First School

Victoria Green
Chair of Governors
Kirkburton Middle School

Nichola Thorpe
Chair of Governors
Scissett Middle School