

NEWS

The Mast Academy Trust

AUTUMN 2021



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A word from Mrs Greenough CEO



Welcome to this term's newsletter.

We have had another busy term at The Mast Academy Trust. All of our schools have had great starts to the year and it has been wonderful to see our children back at school learning and socialising. We continue to face some restrictions and many challenges, but despite this, we are proud of how well our children have settled into school. This is down to everyone in our teams, but also the fantastic support we receive from our families - Thank you

Last year, our Trust wide priority was around developing reading cultures. We have seen some significant strengths in this area of work across all of our schools. Despite the pandemic leading to school closures in January, we have seen pupils from all year groups make really strong progress, and of equal importance, developing a love and enjoyment for reading. A special well done to our children in Year 2 who **all** passed the phonics screening check demonstrating that they have mastered the core essentials of early reading.

This year we are working together to further develop provision for children with special educational needs or disabilities and embedding our 'Healthy Relationships' curriculum. We are also looking to develop a 'Pupils' Charter' across our schools. All of our schools have had elections and have put forward two children who will represent their school in our Pupil Parliament. One of our key values is to 'put children at the heart' of everything we do, and what better way to do that than to ensure their voices are heard. The first meeting will be in January. You can find out more about how we celebrate democracy in this term's newsletter by reading about all of our school councils.

This newsletter also includes representations from two of our newest colleagues who joined us in the last 12 months in the role of Strategic Leaders. These roles are central to our new ways of working - particularly across the middle schools - ensuring every child receives the highest possible quality of education. These pieces will give you an insight into their roles and how we work together to secure the best outcomes for each and every child.

As we rapidly approach the end of term, I **would like to wish all of our families, children and staff a wonderful Christmas break.**



THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Talk

The new academic year is well underway, and happily school now feels a lot more 'normal' for children and staff alike.

Three of our schools had open evenings this term, and it was good to see people being able to visit and get a really good impression of what our schools have to offer. These events were very well organised, and our visitors clearly enjoyed them; in particular it was great to see so many pupils involved in showing people around and talking to both parents and children about the facilities and activities at their schools.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll also hear from some of our pupils who are talking about democracy and the fabulous work of our school councils.

Before the end of term we will be holding our annual conference for Governors, and through a series of videos and a networking event in December we will be focusing on the Trust's priorities from our improvement plan for this year. These include Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND); healthy relationships and consent; civic responsibility and the community; and the benefits of collaboration for pupils and staff.

Additionally, we will be warmly welcoming our new school Governors. These voluntary roles are so important in helping to ensure that our schools are well run and managed, and we are grateful to everyone who gives of their time to be a Governor at one of our schools.

On that note, I must say a big thank you to Victoria Green for her many years of dedicated service as Chair of Governors at Kirkburton Middle School. She stood down as Chair in September, and we are delighted that John Jolly has stepped in, providing continuity at a very important time for the school.

The Board of Trustees remains unchanged from last year, however there have been a few changes to the memberships of our Board Committees and to our Link Trustee roles.

You can read more about the governance arrangements at our schools and across the Trust in my Spotlight on Governance article later in this newsletter.

We are looking forward to a good year for our schools and for the Trust as a whole; and we are very keen for Ofsted inspections to take place at our schools so that the hard work and improvements carried out in recent years by everyone involved will be recognised, helping our schools and the Trust to look and move forward.

Finally, whilst I'm looking out at the autumn colours as I write this, I know that for many of you, your thoughts are already beginning to turn to Christmas and the joys that this time brings. So, for when it arrives, I wish you all a most enjoyable, peaceful and restful time.

Philip Marshall, Chair of Trustees

Democracy



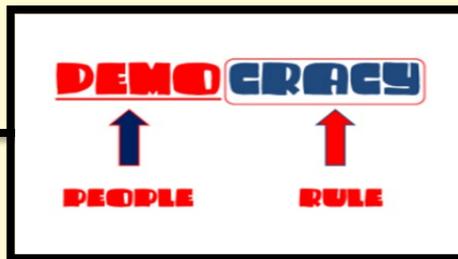
Birdsedge First



At Birdsedge First School, we take part in democracy to help run our school.

The school council are the voice of all of our children and they help our teachers make decisions about some of the priorities in school. The school council is a bit like a school parliament and the representatives from each class are a bit like MP's. In the same way we vote for our chosen government, the children vote for their class spokesperson.

We feel it is very important that we all vote. As a school community we remember that people have fought to make sure we can all vote in national elections and we enact this in our democracy. Up until 87 years ago, women were not allowed to vote (actually up to 100 years ago only 50% of men could vote – you had to have money and own property). Men didn't think that women would be able to understand how it all worked. They could have learnt much from our school council! Many women were arrested and put in prison for campaigning. There are other countries around the world today where people are not allowed to vote. Being able to have a say, even if it is a small one, is one of the important values we have.



Our school council

Lately, we have been composing ideas to help raise money for 'Children in Need'. We reported back to Classes and our Classes shared their ideas. The council decided which activity would make the most money.

Ethan – Class 3

When I am in school council, I have to record what is said to help me remember so I report back to my Class.

Alex – Class 2

We share with our Class the key discussions we have had. We have to be very clear and prepare well for this.

Polly – Class 3

We have to think carefully and come up with different ideas to help school.

Ananya – Class 1.

We get to make important decisions that benefit our school.

Sienna – Class 2

It's a really important role but also interesting – it's a really popular thing to want to do here.

Jacob – Class 2



We have signed a Councillor contract agreeing to:

- ✓ Work hard to improve our school
- ✓ Listen to other people
- ✓ Attend meetings
- ✓ Communicate with our class
- ✓ Set a good example for others to follow

So far this term we have planned how to celebrate Children in Need. We would like to discuss how to ensure that children speak to our 'RP (Restorative Practitioners) Legends' or an adult if they have playtime issues as we think that this could improve.

We also have a Health & Safety Council that helps to keep our school safe and a 'Looking for Learning Council' that helps to make the learning in school the best that it can be.





Democracy



Kirkburton Middle

Sam R Year 8

We can take ideas from our class and teachers are good at making it happen

Joe M Year 8

I like being on the school council because I can represent my form's ideas. It is nice to be part of something as well

Olivia WB Year 6

I come up with ideas and being on the school council allows me to put my ideas forward. I use the school council book and get ideas from others in my form too

Pupils at Kirkburton Middle School have been busy this half term demonstrating their democratic rights. They have taken the theory of their PHSCE lessons and brought it to life.

The pupils have taken our school council very seriously and it is well attended. The School Council have made suggestions about such things as the running of Children In Need; which charities we should support and even where the school nurse should be based. Our Form Reps were nominated by their peers and they act a conduit for ideas that they bring to the table fortnightly.

Our pupils relish the opportunity to share their opinions. They were fabulous ambassadors during our recent Ofsted inspection and have been articulate speakers in our pupil voice activities. School is a large part of a pupil's life and we value their perspective and welcome their suggestions.

We are encouraging pupils to find their own voice in a constructive and purposeful way through a variety of activities such as Discuss and Debate, Befrienders, Reading Buddies and Corridor Prefects.

It is clear that the pupils have great plans for the way they want to exercise their democratic voice. We are looking forward to the upcoming election campaign where pupils will choose MPPs (Members of Pupil Parliament) and their voice will be heard Trust wide.

They are the next generation of leaders and we are giving them the skills to make great leadersso watch out Boris Johnson, because our young people are after your job!

Tracy Clark





Scissett Middle

With democracy at the forefront of our minds, it was important that we undertook an election process that was fair and at the heart of our students' voice. Having sat down and thought about the style of Student Council team we wanted, the decision was made to have to Student Leaders for each year group, who would then line manage a Head of Form for each of the form groups in school. The Head of Forms would be reporting developments directly to the classes. As such the election process was more vigorous for the Student Leaders than the Heads of Forms.

All students were invited to apply for the roles-having been briefed by their form tutors about the decisions and choices they would be involved with within school. They filled out an application form, which required them to sell themselves alongside highlighting the areas of the Student Council they felt most passionately about.

After this point, the election process differed for each role. Student Leader applicants had to produce a short video, which was then shown to their year group. Students then had to vote for the person who they felt most represented their views. Head of Form applicants presented a short speech, to the other members of their form, who then voted for their most favoured candidate.

After a tense couple of weeks post application, our Student Council team had been chosen by the children in school, and are now proudly wearing a gold tie and Student Council badge as they work hard to make important changes for the benefit of the student body. So far, they have had a meeting with Mrs Large where three major areas have been highlighted for them to work on: catering, recycling and rewards. They have been working hard as a team to project manage a stall for the Christmas Fayre to raise funds for the school, and are also looking at how they can raise money for some of the Afghan refugees that are currently housed in Leeds.

It's safe to say, they have already blown us away with some fantastic ideas and we are excited to see what the future holds for our amazing Student Council.

Rebecca Wilson

Emily 8GB

One of the many things I enjoy about being on the school council is that you get a say in some of the things that happen in school. I enjoy coming up with ideas with my friends (who are also on the school council) about ways we can make the school a better place to be.

To me, democracy means everyone gets an equal vote and voice. Our school is very democratic as all pupils get a say in things that happen in school. Having democracy in a school is important as it means not just the teachers get to decide what happens here.

The school council benefits other students in the school as it gives them a voice and a chance to say on things going on around school.

In the school council at the moment, we are looking at how we can make the school more environmentally friendly. We are also looking to work with the school caterers to improve the lunch service.

It means a lot to me to be on the school council as I spent a lot of time trying to make sure my application was as good as possible. It also means a lot that I get to listen to other peoples' ideas about how we could improve our school.

Sam 8SH

The school council is good because it helps students to speak out about things they're not happy about and make the school better.

It's fun being on the school council.

Scissett Middle School is a great school, I like being on the school council so I can help make it even better for everyone.

This may not sound like the most interesting topic in this term's newsletter but it's definitely one of the most important!

Those who are responsible for helping to ensure there is good governance across the Trust are doing so on behalf of the children in our schools, and their parents, and on behalf of everyone who works in, uses or visits our premises.

Importance of Governance

It's about making sure that our schools - and the Trust as a whole - are well run and well managed for the benefit of the children, our staff and other stakeholders in our communities.

Good governance covers a wide range of things. Ultimately, it's about ensuring that we are able to deliver the best educational outcomes for the children in our schools.

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Spotlight on...

Governance in the Trust



Responsibility of Governance

Everyone working in our schools and across the Trust contributes to ensuring that schools are well run and managed. Trustees and Governors are dedicated volunteers who freely give their time to help ensure that this is the case:

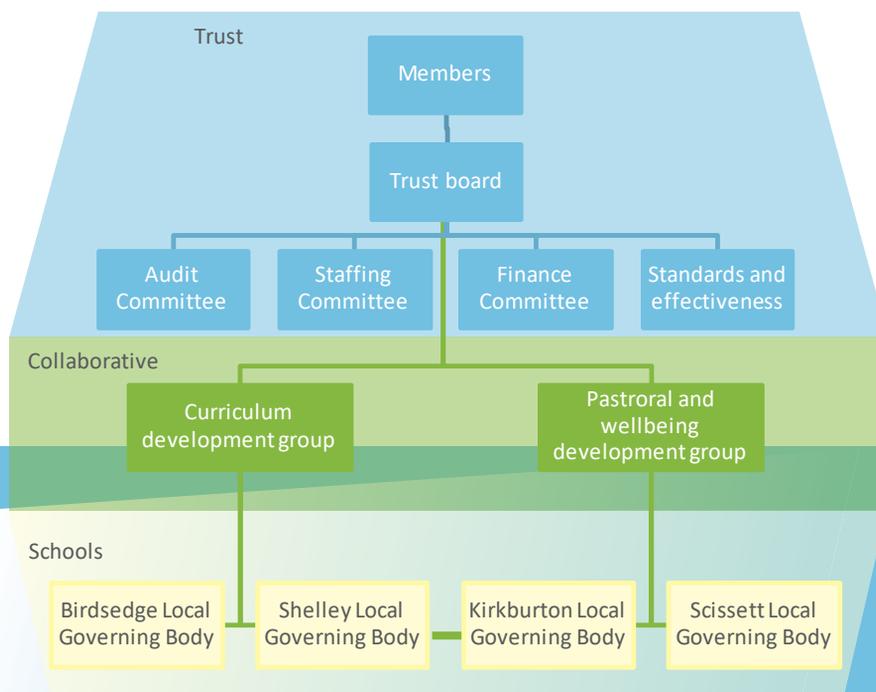
- Each of our schools has Governors, including Parent-Governors, who sit on the school's Local Governing Body and who provide oversight and scrutiny of the governance arrangements in their school and a link to the local community;
- The Trust has a Board of Trustees who provide oversight and scrutiny of the governance arrangements across the Trust as a whole;
- The Trust also has a small number of Members who provide oversight and scrutiny to make sure the Trustees are acting in accordance with the Trust's stated charitable objectives, similar to the way shareholders hold company Boards of Directors to account.

The Board of Trustees has legal responsibility for the Trust, in the same way that Trustees of charities or Directors of companies do.

To help the Trust look more closely at certain aspects of the governance there are four board committees – **Audit, Staffing, Finance, and Standards & Effectiveness** – and individual Trustees lead on specific areas, for example we have a Link Trustee for safeguarding.

The **Curriculum development group** aims to promote best practice across our schools and provide recommendations for improvements to enhance and develop curriculum standards. This year its focus is SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

The **Pastoral & Wellbeing development group** aims to promote best practice across our schools and provide recommendations for improvements to enhance and develop the pastoral and wellbeing standards of all pupils and staff in the Trust. This year its focus is consent and healthy relationships.



Each Local Governing Body at our schools in effect acts as a sub-committee of the Board, with governors feeding helpful information about the governance arrangements at their schools up to the Trustees.

The link between Trustees and the Governors is further enhanced through:

- A Trust Appointed Governor sitting on each school's Local Governing Board;
- Link Trustees and Governors working together on specific aspects of governance; and
- Nominated Trustees and Governors sitting on the Trust's development groups.

In my shoes...



In the last academic year we developed a new role in the Trust of strategic leaders in the Middle Schools. Two of our strategic leaders tell their story.



I'm now in my 21st year of language teaching and have recently moved from a very large secondary school where I taught French to GCSE and A-Level and led the languages team.

I'm passionate about students having the opportunity to learn a foreign language and it's wonderful to see that languages are valued in the Mast Academy Trust.

Coming from a working class background, languages opened many doors for me and gave me the opportunity to live in a foreign country, experiencing the culture and enabling me to experience things that would not have been possible had I not taken my language learning further. Through going to university to study languages and living in France, I have made lifelong friends who, like me, are passionate about languages and all use their languages in their chosen careers.

Living in the local community for the past 9 years and having a child who attends a school in the Mast Academy Trust has also given me a much greater appreciation of how our middle schools work. When I saw my role advertised, I leapt at the opportunity to be able to give something back!

I'm really enjoying my new role. I'm especially enjoying teaching so many new students at Scissett Middle School who are fantastic and very polite. It's also been an absolute pleasure watching the students in French at Kirkburton Middle School too. I look forward to developing my role across both middle schools in the future.

Sarah Barker
Strategic Leader for Modern Foreign Languages

Having started initially at Scissett Middle School after Easter 2021, I was immediately supported by colleagues when getting to know the school and I quickly settled in. From September 2021 I have found my more permanent home within the team at Kirkburton Middle School; settling in just as quickly! As the Strategic Lead of Humanities, it is a very different role to any I have taken on before – you are leading a department (or two) across two schools with a lot of similarities but also some key differences that make each school special. Balancing these differing policies and ideologies is most definitely a challenge, however it provides a direct networking opportunity with another school for each member of the Geography and History department; this has only been a positive. There is a real drive to improve standards of disciplinary literacy and increasing the students' oracy in each school – How do we get our students to think like a geographer? To speak like a historian? Liaising, collaborating and sharing best practice from each school has only accelerated our development in such initiatives as this. Yes, it is a challenge to balance and communicate consistently with so many stakeholders; however I feel the trust Strategic Lead structure serves as a real strength for support within each school.

One thing I need to say, and I really mean this, is that I have never managed to settle in so quickly and I never dreamed I would be able to settle in to two workplaces so quickly in such quick succession. Yes, we have fantastic staff with a real drive to develop and provide the best possible experiences and outcomes for our students. Yes, we have a driven leadership team that leads by example and drives us to the best possible performances from ourselves as staff. However, the biggest yes has to go to the incredible students that we have the pleasure to nurture day in-day out. They are some of the most incredibly well behaved, polite and conscientious young people I have ever worked with and it is an absolute pleasure to be able to go to work each day and know that however I am feeling, however hard I am working, however tired I may be... the students absolutely make every effort to make your day as easy and as purposeful as possible.

I am dedicated, committed and excited to continue embedding an effective and balanced curriculum and teaching and learning pedagogy within the humanities department and for these practices to become our habitual nature. What a fantastic school Kirkburton is, and what a fantastic trust the Mast is to work for.

Scott Egan
Strategic Leader for Humanities



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Meet the Trust team



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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
Chair of Governors
Shelley First School

John Jolly
Chair of Governors
Kirkburton Middle School

Nichola Thorpe
Chair of Governors
Scissett Middle School