

NEWS

The Mast Academy Trust

AUTUMN 2020



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A word from Mrs Greenough CEO

Welcome back to another school year!


Our school leaders have been working incredibly hard to ready schools for children and are delighted to see pupils back. During the final week of the holiday, all of our schools have had their risk assessments signed off from an external Health and Safety company who visited each site and met with leaders to ensure the highest standards for pupils return on Tuesday 8th September.

During the last 6 months, I have been incredibly heartened by the way our teams have embraced the values of our Trust centred around collaboration. We have seen teaching staff and classroom support staff coming together to ensure, as a Trust, we are able to continue to keep a provision open for our vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Our staff have worked selflessly to ensure this provision remained open across the holiday period including Easter. Our business management team have worked together to ensure all our schools were safe to re-open their buildings in June, and our senior leaders and Headteachers have supported each other to ensure no-one has felt isolated.

The true power of collaboration and support has shone through what can only be described as an exceptionally challenging period of time in education. I am immensely proud to work with such a dedicated and ethically driven team of staff who continue to put child centred decision making at the heart of all we do.

THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Talk



The academic year 2019/20 was certainly a year like never before for the Trust since we established in 2016. In the articles in this newsletter, our leaders demonstrate the challenges the schools, their pupils and their staff have faced. I hope you enjoy reading their stories.

We have seen change recently in our Trust Board membership with four new Trustees joining. They bring a wealth of experience from education, finance and HR sectors and will be an asset to our board. You can find out more about the Trustees on our website.

Our dedicated governing bodies have held their first meetings of the year and have started their plans on how they support the schools this year. They also have new members to their bodies and I would encourage you to see the updates on each school's individual website.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge **THANK YOU to all our colleagues in the MAST Academy Trust**. In what has been an exceptionally difficult educational year for colleagues, parents and children alike, everyone in the MAST Academy Trust schools have gone the extra mile to ensure that the children in our care have been kept safe, and had the disruption to their education minimised as far as possible. The Trustees would like to thank everyone involved both in front of the class and behind the scenes, for working so hard and cheerfully during what will prove to be a memorable, if tough, 2020. THANK YOU.

Martyn Jones, Chair of Trustees





Birdsedge First

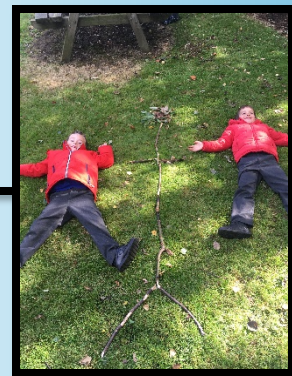
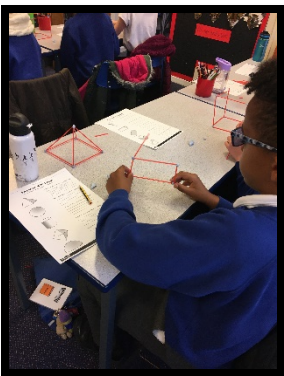
Anticipating joining Birdsedge in September, the summer was an incredibly exciting time for me in preparing to take on my role and getting to know the school.

It was great to see children learning at home through Lockdown in lots of ways and getting to know some children who were in school from the end of May. There was brilliant engagement through the summer on school's social media platforms and I began September feeling like I already knew lots about the very special place that is Birdsedge First School.

Children have returned to school in September so positively and we are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm and resilience they have shown. Together we have agreed our four 'Birdsedge Behaviours' that will help make our school a happy and safe place for everyone to learn and have started working together towards our vision of being 'Birdsedge Best'. We have relaunched our school House system and seen children working together to earn House Points in our weekly House challenge. We have also started working towards developing our outdoor curriculum this year and made a pledge to take our learning outdoors every week during our 'Forest Friday' sessions. Children are loving extending their learning to outside of the classroom and are already developing their creativity, leadership and group work skills.

What a wonderful start that fills us all at Birdsedge with such positivity for the year ahead.

Mrs D Waddington (Headteacher)





Whilst we certainly missed the usual Summer Term events such as Sports Day staff still embraced opportunities to feel ‘together’ as classes and as a school during the Summer Term. Class Dojo proved to be a necessary and useful platform for feedback to pupils and for celebrating successes but of course, we ideally wanted to be back at school...

In June we welcomed back our reception and year 1 pupils with the vast majority choosing to attend. The children skipped into school through the bubbles that we blew for them and settled very quickly into familiar and new routines. I was overwhelmed by the many creative approaches that staff used to support learning across the curriculum – no minor task for 4-6 year olds seated at individual desks. Rainbows were painted, sewn and collaged; pond life including frogs and newts were discovered and our children worked out with Joe Wicks and embraced Cosmic Yoga. It was fantastic to come together – albeit in bubbles of 12-13. Pupils at school continued to follow the set work and staff used Dojo on Fridays to catch up with families.

The Key Worker Bubbles took our seventh and final classroom base as well as the school hall - we were certainly using every space to capacity! However, we were determined to offer the opportunity for our Year 5 pupils to come into school....but how?

We decided to offer Friday on-site learning to our Year 5 groups. Again, we had to work creatively as the Y5 teacher was unable to work on-site and the vast majority of staff were already leading bubbles. Thankfully our remaining Support Assistant agreed to lead one bubble and the Manager of our Teaching School led the other. Learning was complicated as the teacher had to teach ‘live’ via Teams to both bubbles on-site, to those at home and to Y5 pupils from the Key Worker bubbles. Technical hitches aside, this all went well and was greatly appreciated by pupils and families.

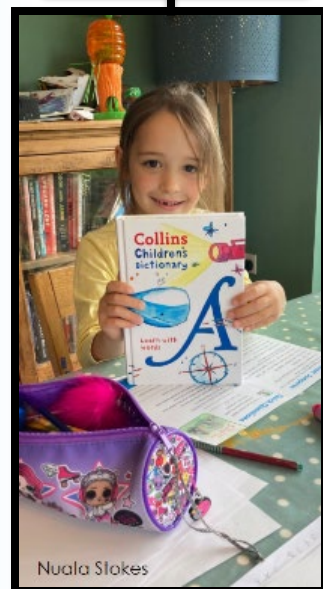
Our next challenge was to offer a transition meeting to all of our pupils – a chance to meet your teacher in school. We managed this – but with several sessions per teacher to ensure health and safety. Some issues ensued – including high winds destroying the gazebo that had been erected to provide us with sufficient space to meet. Best made plans...

As the term drew to an end we knew that we ideally wanted to give Y5 a chance to say a final ‘goodbye’ to First School life. The vast majority chose to come onto site with one family member. They shared a song that they had put together with help from staff and they enjoyed the film that we had created for them. This included photos from life before and during life at Shelley, as well as messages from staff. It was a fitting farewell for staff and families.

Staff at Shelley have been amazing throughout this unprecedented situation. They have as always given 100% and not let Covid 19 prevent the continuation of learning and relationships. Our families have supported children as fully as possible – despite their own work commitments and other challenges at home. Class Dojo evidences amazing successes – including charity work and fund-raising for school.

A huge thank you and well done to our school community: “Together we succeed”.

Mrs D Knowles (Headteacher)





Learning in Lockdown



Kirburton Middle

The summer term of 2020 will live long in the memories of all who experienced it and whilst it was a period in history we hope we never have to repeat, there were also many highlights during those difficult days.

For the first half of the summer term the Kirkburton Middle School (KMS) site was closed completely with most pupils studying from home; those pupils eligible to attend school attended our Trust provision based at Scissett Middle School. There were some pupils who, due to their parents working in key industries, attended the provision every day during the closure period including during their Easter holidays, bank holidays and half-term. These pupils deserve great credit for the resilience shown throughout this period and it was great for staff to watch friendships develop between pupils across all our Trust schools, friendships which we're sure will last long beyond the lockdown. It was also a great opportunity for staff across the trust to work together and share ideas and best practice in terms of teaching and learning. Thank you Scissett for having us!

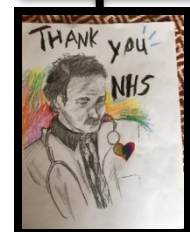
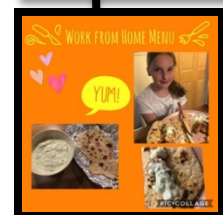
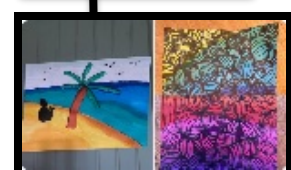
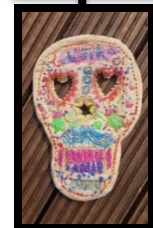
For those working from home, remote learning took place via ClassCharts. The determination shown by pupils in order to not fall behind in their learning during this period was great to see. At KMS we have a very strong tradition of providing a wealth of extra-curricular enrichment, activities and clubs. With most pupils working from home, it was great to see so many parents take on this responsibility with pupils learning a whole host of skills beyond the taught curriculum – cooking, DIY and design, arts and crafts to name but a few. A number of pupils also took the opportunity away from school to raise money for a variety of charities either setting themselves personal challenges or making things to sell.

To keep spirits up, the staff group launched their first (and last?) music video – a slightly different version of the Rembrandts hit 'I'll be there for you.' We also held our first 'Burton's got talent' competition and it was great to see such a wide variety of acts from some very talented individuals. We were wowed with musical performances, gym and dance routines, horse riding, sports skills, magic and even an extremely impressive Lego KMS. Congratulations to all involved.

The second half of the school term saw the School reopen to Year 6 pupils and our key worker pupils; it was great to see the school building come to life once more. In line with government guidance, pupils were taught in bubbles of no more than twelve pupils and, in the main, by the same teacher. Whilst it wasn't school as we know it, pupils and staff were delighted to be back and they were keen to make the best of a difficult situation. Remote learning remained for Year 7 and 8 and they continued to work admirably from home.

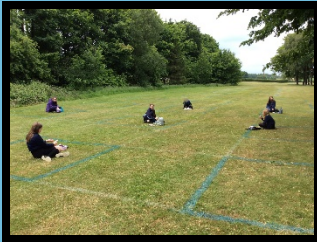
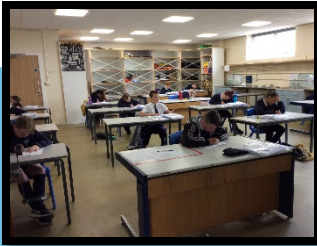
Towards the end of term we were able to invite the Year 8 pupils back for a series of socially distanced leaving assemblies. Normally Year 8 would have spent a day at Drayton Manor as part of their KMS leaving celebrations, this year they had to be content with a virtual rollercoaster on the big screen in the hall. They also missed out on the opportunity to sample Mr Martin's and Mr James' legendary leaving barbeque. Despite this they were in good spirits as they said their goodbyes. We were also able to invite Year 7 pupils back for a tutorial morning where they were able to share their experiences of lockdown with friends and staff. The final week of term would usually have seen our new Year 6 join us for their transition week. Unfortunately this couldn't happen however Mr Taylor did manage to visit most First Schools for a socially distanced question and answer sessions with pupils and some parents. The term ended with a super virtual sports day and then our Year 6 battle of the bubbles competition on the last day. There was great excitement as, in true Eurovision style, teams dialled in from all corners of the school via Microsoft Teams in order to hear the final results. At the start of the academic year very few people had heard of coronaviruses, bubbles were things blown at children's parties and remote learning meant going to school on the Isle of Skye. What little did we know! Despite all the challenges that life has thrown at us over the past few weeks and months, it has been great to see 'Team KMS' continue to do what it does best – 'Enjoying, Achieving, Succeeding Together'.

Mr C Taylor (Headteacher)





Scissett Middle



Who would have believed it?

As we closed our gates to all but key worker children in March, none of us had ever imagined that we would still be contemplating lockdown as we approached the summer holiday.

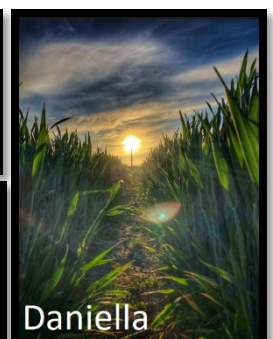
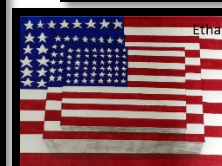
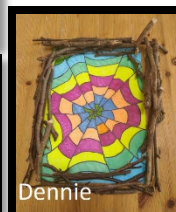
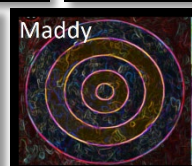
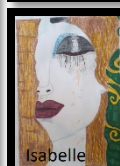
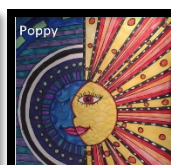
Scissett Middle School never closed during the lockdown period, but remained open for families of key workers throughout, including the holiday periods with a team of staff working collaboratively from all of our Trust schools. We welcomed our own pupils, and also those from other schools within The Mast Academy Trust: Kirkburton Middle, Shelley First and Birdsedge First. It was a fantastic to see the children from Reception playing alongside (at a safe distance, of course) our Year 8 pupils! It has reminded us all not only how resilient and adaptable our pupils can be, but also how kind and caring they are. Working with staff from other schools was fantastic personal development for everyone involved and it was wonderful to feel part of a much bigger team

By June , we had 125 of our Year 6 pupils in school along with approximately 50 of our Year 7 and Year 8 key worker children. When looking forward to the full opening in September it was really encouraging to see how quickly the Y6 pupils adapted to the new systems that had to be put in place to ensure that the school was as safe as possible, as well as providing teaching that would help pupils 'catch up' as quickly as possible.

We must also acknowledge the great work that was completed at home during lockdown – both by teachers, pupils and their families. Our staff rose to the challenge of devising engaging and accessible lessons for pupils, and by summer, teachers were teaching 'live' lessons via Microsoft Teams. The Pastoral Team worked closely with many families keeping in touch via email, phone, Teams and sometimes a socially distanced home visit. We received many excellent examples of work that had been completed at home, including 'non-curricular' activities ranging from quizzes, gardening, cooking and even instrument making!

We experienced a very unusual end to the year as July is usually the time when we would have welcomed our new pupils and said goodbye to our Year 8 pupils. Although not being able to have our usual transition arrangements was very disappointing, due to that hard work of our Pastoral Team, the Year 5 pupils and their parents all had the opportunity to meet a new teacher remotely via a Teams meeting. Y8 were able to visit the school in order to meet with their classmates and Form Tutor in order to say their final farewells.

Mrs A Large (Head of School)



It is four years now since we established the Mast Academy Trust; the Trustees felt this was an ideal time to review and reflect on the journey that the Trust and the schools have travelled. A journey that has seen changes of leadership; Ofsted visits and most recently COVID-19. There have been highs and lows, but the constant is always focused on the outcomes for those at the centre – the children and our communities.

We felt it was the right time to look at our visions and values; to consider if they had evolved with the changes in the Trust? After consultation with the school leaders and the governors, the Trustees concluded that there needed to be slight adjustments. The new vision and values signify all that we are as a trust in 2020.

V I S I O N

- We celebrate **individuality**
- We **collaborate** for the good of our children and staff
- We **inspire** our children, and our employees to **achieve** their ambitions
- We all **learn** from our experiences
- We ensure a **safe** and **caring** environment for everyone

V A L U E S

As individual schools and a Trust, we commit to:

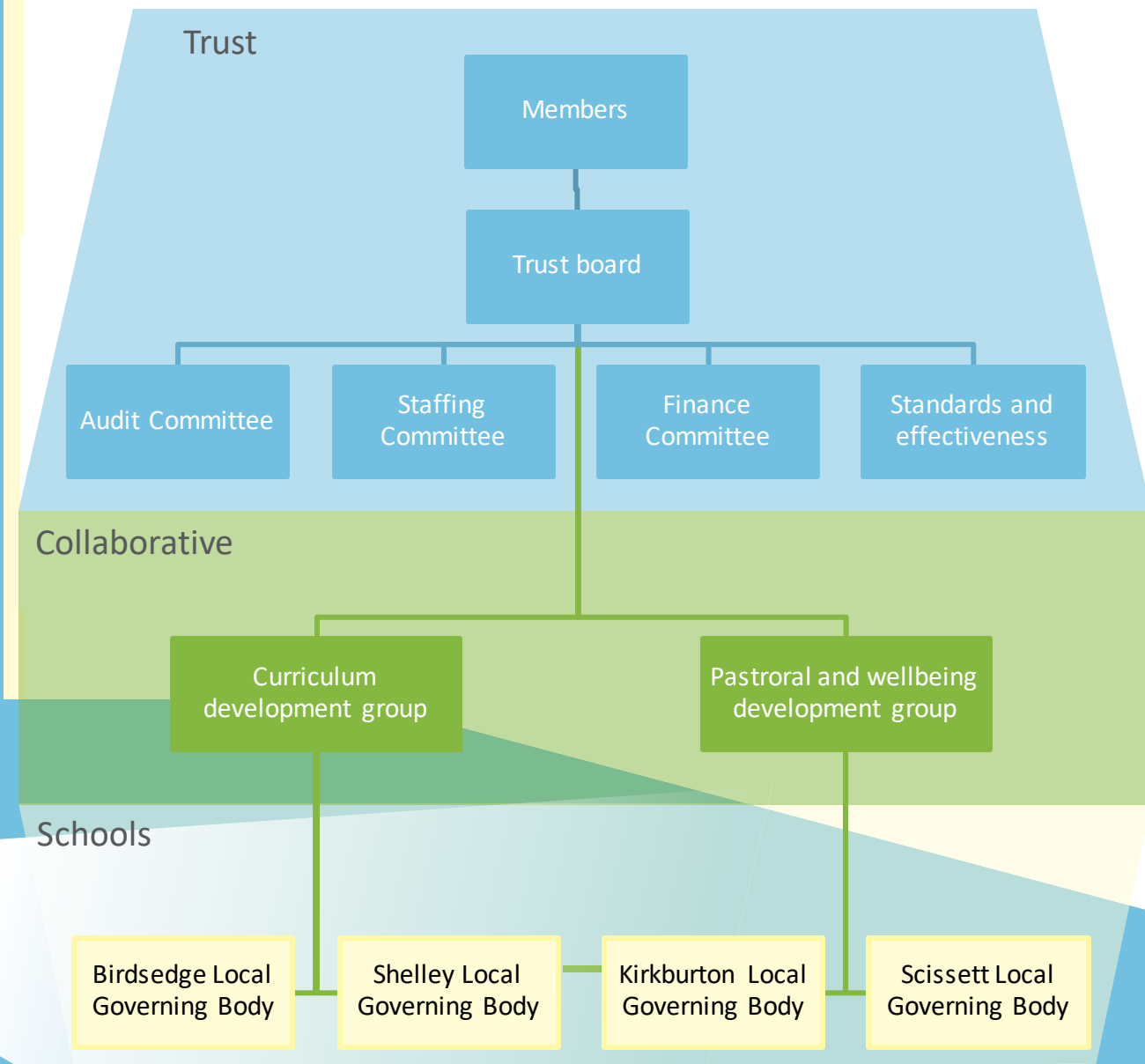
- Put the **children** at the heart
- Value all our **people** and respect their well-being
- Serve the **community** around us
- Respect** different opinions and then unite together
- Be willing to **challenge** and accept challenge
- Support** all areas within the MAST Academy Trust
- Adhere to the Nolan Principles

Spotlight on...

Governance in the Trust

Vision and values were not the only area reviewed in the Trust. Considerations were made to the governance structures. We considered carefully how this needed to be adjusted to improve collaboration and help our governing bodies support and challenge our schools to get the best outcome for our pupils?

Again it was concluded that adjustments should be made by introducing new ways for the governing body's to collaborate, between themselves and with the Board of Trustees; developing working parties to harness strategic thinking and developments; removing unnecessarily duplication.



In my shoes...

Christopher Taylor joined the trust as
Headteacher of Kirkburton Middle School
in January 2020.

[Hear his story.](#)

It seems an absolute lifetime ago when, last October, I received the call to offer me the Headship at Kirkburton Middle School (KMS). I don't think any of us in our wildest dreams could have predicted the times that followed – the word bubble has certainly taken on a completely new meaning of late.

Having spent 18 very happy years teaching at Holmfirth High School I always knew it was going to take something **very special to tempt me** away. From the moment I walked through the door at KMS I knew it was that something very special. Prior to applying for the post I met with Mr Johnson, the outgoing Headteacher, and listened to his vision for the school - it resonated with everything that I believe a school should be.

KMS is a place which strives for the very highest academic standards but with a relentless focus on the **education of the whole child**. Being one of only five middle schools in the country which admits pupils between the ages of 10-13, KMS is already a very unique school; however what makes it so special extends far beyond this. Our pupils enter the school as children and leave as confident young adults, each developing at the rate that is right for them. The very best schools are **full of energy, places where everybody enjoys attending and where long lasting memories** are made. Anybody familiar with KMS will know it has all these elements in abundance; as our motto says, we are committed to **'enjoying, achieving, succeeding together.'**

It was not without a little nervousness that I stepped through the doors in January on my first day however the initial weeks seemed to go very well. I ticked off a number of key milestones; first pupil assemblies, first presentation to the staff, 'meet the new Headteacher' presentation to parents. Indeed I was just starting to enjoy things when on one cold February morning the boiler decided not to work and it took two weeks before our gas supply was returned. Everybody rallied round to keep the school open, at this point I felt the school had passed the crisis situation test would flying colours and the rest of the school year would surely continue very smoothly.

What little did we know.

As we moved through the start of March the school was busy as usual. Every child in the school took part in the 'Great Kirkburton Sport Relief Cycle Challenge'. Between us, the pupils, staff and even some parents cycled a total of 818 mile in four days on three static bikes which we'd installed in the entrance hall. We had presentations from a high court judge, a TV script writer, and university and apprenticeship providers. Pupils attended a number of visits including trips to New College and Syngenta. Finally our sporting success continued with victories in the sports hall athletics and other competitions.

It was therefore with great sadness that we watched events unfold in Italy and elsewhere knowing that life in the UK was also about to change. As the coronavirus outbreak turned into a pandemic we saw our three trips abroad cancelled, extra-curricular activities suspended and then finally the closure of the school to all except our critical worker and vulnerable pupils. **Just sixty school days had passed between starting my new job and locking the school gates for the foreseeable future** as we moved all our provision to Scissett Middle School.



What followed has most definitely been one of the most challenging periods of my career to date, something I'm sure I have in common with most people across the country regardless of their profession. There have however also been many, many highlights.

Our pupils have been a real credit to the school and their families throughout, stoically dealing with the challenges the lockdown and beyond threw at them; always maintaining a calm and focused approach to their learning. It was great to see that, in and amongst their studies, pupils kept the schools tradition of extra-curricular and enrichment activities going. **Many learnt new skills during the lockdown**, we held our first (virtual) talent show, also our first virtual sports day and a number of pupils spent their free time raising money for charity. It was also a **real privilege to watch how the school and the wider community pulled together in a time of great adversity** in order to ensure everybody was well looked after and nobody was forgotten. The **school staff regularly went the 'extra mile'** in order to ensure pupils felt safe, secure and happy in their learning- always thinking of others before themselves. It was humbling to see how many of them came forward to volunteer to work during their holidays and bank holidays in order to run our critical worker emergency childcare club at Scissett Middle School. Many staff went out into the community delivering work packs for pupils, carrying out home visits where parents have raised concerns about their child's well-being and supporting those families who needed our help the most. We recognise this was also an **extremely difficult time for parents** and we are extremely grateful for their ongoing support. The African proverb says '**it takes a village to raise a child**'; we have most certainly seen this in action during these difficult times.

As we moved into June, and following numerous risk assessments, external health and safety audits, classroom redesign, safety markings spray painted on the playground and even an instructional video, it was with great delight that we were able to reopen the school on my 90th day in post to our Year 6 pupils. The remainder of the summer term saw a mixture of on-site and off-site learning. Our Year 6 numbers on site steadily grew and we were also able to invite all Year 7 pupils back for a pastoral morning prior to their return to school in September. We also managed to say goodbye to our Year 8 cohort in a series of socially distanced leaving assemblies.

It is sometimes said that **Headship can be a lonely role**. Whilst this may be the case for some, **for me it has been anything but**. I feel extremely lucky to work as part of a very strong and very close academy trust. During all the challenges that have come my way, there have always been people to turn to for advice, support or just the offer of a friendly ear. It has been a real privilege to work with colleagues at all levels across our four schools where expertise has been pooled and shared and workload divided in order to ensure every child gets the best possible education and our staff are supported in their work.

I can safely say my first 100 school days at Kirkburton Middle School have brought some of the most challenging times of my career to date, they have also been some of the best. I can't wait to see what the next 100 days bring.



Finance and Funding

Mr J Field CFO

It has been an extraordinary time for the Mast Academy Trust as it has been for everyone I am sure. The whole team across the Trust has had to work in new ways at incredible pace just to keep our operation going and do the best that we can for the children of the Trust. During lockdown, we consolidated onto one site at Scissett Middle School and physically closed Kirkburton Middle School, Shelley First School and Birdsedge First School for a time, providing key workers with a provision centrally. We then re-opened under the guidance of the Department for Education guidelines and in consultation with both our health and safety advisors and the respective trade union bodies during the latter part of the summer term. This has meant a phenomenal amount of work for all of our non-education staff, in particular the site teams who have had to completely reinvent the way that we clean sites on a daily basis to keep everyone safe. Many other staff have been working offsite through the magic of tools like Microsoft Teams to source all the new products and PPE we need, to respond to the changing requirements of the local health situation; to create new procedures and protocols for running the physical environment in schools as well as doing the normal day to day tasks such as paying the bills.

We are lucky that our funding streams have continued largely unaffected, although we are disappointed not to have been able to interact with our communities in the normal way that we do - sending our children on wonderful trips as far afield as the Alps and also doing fun events in school. We are pleased that we have been able to promptly reimburse our parents and this has not had a long term financial impact on schools. Financially, we remain strong overall as a trust and have received some funding from the government with regard to exceptional costs that we have incurred for important activities such as distributing vouchers to some families where needed for food as well as some of the additional cleaning and site costs that we have incurred. We have also spent additional funds out of our own funds to ensure that all our sites are being managed safely and that children are put at the heart of what we do.



Our financial strength has meant that we have been able to continue investing in our schools without any concern of slipping into the red - a concern I am sure that many schools face at present. We are delighted to continue to implement nationally agreed pay increases for all our staff, as all of us would expect, as well as invest in our infrastructure both intellectually and physically. We are migrating fully to Microsoft Teams over the course of this academic year to ensure that we have resilience and consistency across that Trust. This is as well as training staff at a pace that they support so we can communicate more consistently and effectively in the future. A number of projects relating to sites have now been completed or are being planned meaning that our sites are in better shape. All of our schools will have had upgraded internal fire safety measures put in place at their site and both Kirkburton and Scissett are having large areas of roofing replaced to ensure that children are warm, safe and secure. Kirkburton Middle School is also having additional safeguarding measures put in place to ensure that site is fully secure alongside improvements at Scissett Middle School to make sure that additional space is available for pupils at playtime and that the Multi Use Games Area can be refurbished. This amounts to capital investment of around £2.5m since we converted to becoming a Multi Academy Trust. We will continue to invest in our schools so that they can grow whilst retaining financial strength and prudence that the community can trust.



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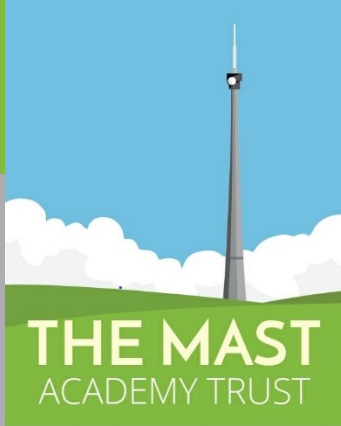


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THE MAST
ACADEMY TRUST



staff news

We welcome:

- Donna Waddington as headteacher at Birdsedge First School
- Louise Stinson as school improvement officer across the Trust
- Sorrel Hellewell as an apprentice in the Trust office
- Frances Thornton who has moved from Shelley First School to Scissett Middle School in the school office.
- Lucy Hunt in the office at Scissett Middle School
- Andrea Pepper who has moved from Birdsedge First School to in the office at Shelley First School
- Rebekah Peace, Rebecca Wilson and Grace Booth as teachers at Scissett Middle School
- Rebecca Donkersley as SENDCO at Kirkburton Middle School
- Tracy Clark as Teacher of English / Head of Year 7 at Kirkburton Middle School
- Georgia Hayton-Pilkington as an administrator apprentice in the office at Kirkburton Middle School
- Samantha Bunn as lunchtime supervisor for Kirkburton Middle School

We bid farewell to:

- Sue Lockwood (Scissett Middle School)
- Beth Hampson (Scissett Middle School)
- Phil Stronell (Scissett Middle School)
- John Papworth (Kirkburton Middle School)
- Suzi Crowther (Kirkburton Middle School)
- Jodie Hindle (Kirkburton Middle School)
- Kathy Lockwood (Kirkburton Middle School)

Thank YOU!

Through such unprecedented times we can truly say our staff have lived and breathed the values of our Trust.

They celebrated **individuality**, they **collaborated** for the good of our children and their colleagues, they **inspired** our children to keep learning and their colleagues **achieve** and embrace new ways of working, they **learnt** from their experiences (and continue to learn and adapt), they worked tirelessly to keep in touch with our children and provide a **safe** and **caring** environment.

TO ALL THE STAFF AT THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST;
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU