



SYNERGISE

Synergy Education Trust Newsletter



Welcome

NEILL OLDHAM, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Welcome to the second newsletter from Synergy Education Trust. The newsletter is a chance to share good news stories from across all school's in the Trust and celebrate important milestones.

We are pleased to announce that Moor Park Primary School and The Maple School joined the Synergy family on 1st September 2024.

This term it has been lovely to visit all of the schools be it for a school improvement visit, attending a nativity or visiting a Christmas Fair. The hard work and dedication of pupils and staff is evident in every single school.

At the beginning of November, Highfurlong opened its brand new hydrotherapy pool which marks the completion of all building work. We hope that in time, all Synergy pupils will experience the facilities across all schools.

As we approach the end of the longest term I hope you all enjoy a restful time with friends and family and we wish you a happy and enjoyable 2025.

Neill



Message from the Chair of Trustees

To staff at Synergy Schools

As we come to the end of the Autumn term, I would like to thank all our incredible staff who continue to work tirelessly as a team, putting the children and young people at the heart of everything they do.

We welcomed Moor Park Primary School and The Maple School into the Synergy Family of schools on the 1st of September and the cross schools working patterns have already been beneficial to all the schools within the trust.

Synergy Education Trust continues to face the challenges in our schools, however with our can-do attitude we will continue to provide safe, supportive, and inclusive provisions by doing it differently together.

We continue to focus on recruitment as a priority, working hard to ensure we recruit and retain the right people in the right roles.

At the heart of Synergy Education Trust our mission will always be to significantly improve life chances and outcomes for all children and young people.

We look forward to the New Year with optimism and I wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and restful Christmas and a peaceful New Year

Susan

Susan Strother
Chair of Trustees
Synergy Education Trust



School to School Support

This term, Synergy schools have been working together on improving outcomes for all Synergy children.

The Best Practice Networks have launched where Primary subject leaders from across the schools meet together to gain ideas, share best practice and collaborate. The experienced subject leads delivered these bespoke sessions in History, Art, PSHE and Science.

Boundary HLTA's also led a session at Stanley sharing their work on meeting the needs of EAL pupils and assessing progress.

Moor Park SLT have also led a session on the new pupil progress format and supported other Synergy schools on how to implement it.

Partnership working at it's best!



Boundary Primary School

At Boundary, what a start to our new school year and welcome to our new Reception pupils who have settled in to Boundary life incredibly well.



Earlier on in the half term, Year 5 pupils had an amazing opportunity to take part in an African drumming workshop. Pupils learned about the different percussion instruments from West Africa and had a go at playing a djembe – an African drum. They learned different dances and rhythms which they then performed in an assembly at the end of the day to parents and carers.

This term saw the return of our popular Together Time. We welcomed 120 parents and carers who joined in with their children's learning. There was a great range of activities including a quiz in Year 6, times tables in Year 3, coding in Year 5 and Art in Year 1.



"It was lovely spending time with my son. It's nice to see what they get up to in school."

"Exciting experience to participate with kids learning activities. A great thanks to all teachers and staff for good work."

Our Eco Warriors have had a busy and productive term. In early November, they were visited by the Blackpool Waste vehicle—Dennis to the Rescue! They learnt about local issues, such as litter, dog fouling, beach waste and recycling.



They also took part in a tree planting project to create a micro wood on Grange Park. They planted various different young trees with other local schools and members of the community.

Our School Council Elections have taken place this term. The process started with a visit from Chris Webb (MP) who talked to the children about his role in the community and in Parliament. All children were then given the opportunity to run for the role and to take part in a democratic vote.



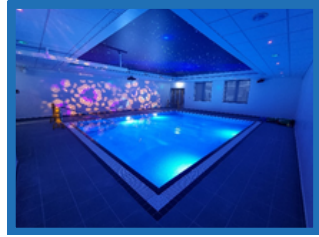
It had been another busy Christmas at Boundary. The children have enjoyed the fair, discos, parties and even a visit from Father Christmas. We have participated in our own Elf Run and all the money will be donated to Brian House. The choir have also been out and about singing in the community.



Wow, what an incredible autumn term here at Team Highfurlong! It has been full of amazing activities, achievements, and experiences, all of which we are excited to share with you.

Opening of the new building

Highfurlong's new Secondary & Sixth building has officially opened this term. After a few initial challenges, the building is now fully operational, and we are truly enjoying the upgraded facilities. The new hydrotherapy pool is fantastic, and now that everything is set up and ready, we look forward to using it after the Christmas break! We are looking forward to hosting a 'Grand Opening' in the new year!



Over the summer, the library fairies paid us a special visit, transforming our space into a cosy and calming haven perfect for reading and working. Turtle class have enjoyed spending time in here choosing their next adventure!



MATP Centre of Excellence:

Highfurlong have been awarded with the Centre of Excellence Mark for MATP (Motor Activity Training Programme) which is the curriculum we use to deliver Physical Education to our pupils with Physical Disabilities. This prestigious recognition was presented by Laura Bexter MBE, Chief executive of Special Olympics Great Britain, and Angela Lyndon, National Manager of MATP after some of our athletes demonstrated their amazing achievements. We are incredibly proud of our amazing students and dedicated staff who have worked so hard to achieve this honour specifically Chantelle Altham, our Move lead, who drives and organises this subject - ensuring pupils get the best offer and staff trained to a high standard. This award recognises the hard work put into providing opportunities and celebrating the unique abilities of each and every child and young person at Highfurlong. Following the event, the team delivering the work said that Highfurlong were a beacon of excellence and that we were one of the best in the world.



Dance Festival

Highfurlong did an amazing rendition of Believe by Cher at this year's dance festival at the Winter gardens. Pupils from our lunch time performing arts club sang and danced their hearts out and even did some sign language. They had the audience joining along and everyone really enjoyed the experience.



TV Stars

Our amazing secondary and sixth form pupils took to the street outside our new school to cheer on the one and only Paddy McGuinness as he tackled his incredible ultra marathon for [BBC Children in Need](#)! Their energy and support was infectious, and we're so proud to see them rallying behind such a great cause.



Blackpool SEND conference

Highfurlong sixth form had a [giftbox](#) stand at Blackpool SEND conference 2024. Well done Sixth form for representing our school and Enterprise curriculum at such a fantastic event



Christmas

We have had a wonderful lead up to Christmas with the whole school performing for parents, a visit from Father Christmas himself and we even had Christmas dinners in the corridor! One of our favourite events was our class pool parties!



Stanley Primary School



What an incredible Autumn term we have had here at Team Stanley! Our school has been buzzing with energy and progress, and we are thrilled to share all the exciting developments and achievements with you.

The summer holidays saw much-needed improvements to the school building, including exterior painting and decoration, as well as the addition of our special educational needs resource provision, Embrace. This new provision offers our children access to tailored indoor and outdoor spaces that cater specifically to their needs. It's been wonderful to see the children settle in so well, quickly becoming an integral part of our school community.



At Stanley, we are committed to enriching our children's educational experiences, and this term has been filled with countless opportunities for them to learn, grow, and explore. We've had some fantastic educational visits and experiences. Year 6 enjoyed an adventurous weekend at the Waterpark Outdoor Learning Centre in Coniston, where they tried their hands at ghyll scrambling, sailing, kayaking, climbing, and much more. Year 1 went on a local walk as part of their Geography studies, while Year 2 explored Blackpool Zoo for their Science unit. Thanks to our pupils' fundraising efforts—through bake sales and non-uniform days—we were able to significantly reduce the cost of these educational visits.

We've also seen some fantastic competitive successes! Our school won the Blackpool Panathlon for the second consecutive year and are gearing up for the next round of competition in the new year. We also triumphed in the Blackpool Mixed Cup Football Tournament and are looking forward to representing Blackpool in the Lancashire Cup. Our Year 2 Fit2Glo team took first place in the initial stage of the Fit2Glo festival and came third in the overall final. Our athletics team placed third out of 12 Blackpool schools, and we're preparing to defend our two-year consecutive title at the Blackpool Cross Country Championships. Additionally, our girls' football team has enjoyed continued success and is looking forward to more fixtures in the new year.



We were honoured to host three very well-known authors this term. In October, Jack Meggitt-Phillips visited, and just last week, we welcomed Jacqueline Wilson and Hazel Gardiner. The children had the opportunity to attend workshops led by these talented writers, which was truly inspiring for them. We also had Oliver Langford, an English Football League referee, deliver an exciting workshop for our Year 5 and Year 6 children, offering a fascinating insight into the world of refereeing. In addition, a dance workshop from The Lowry saw Year 5 students creating and performing expressive interpretive sequences.

Also a huge well done to all of our pupils for their incredible performances in our Christmas nativities and carol services.



The Maple School

As the first term comes to a close our school community reflects on a period filled with growth, learning and achievement. Thank you to all students, staff and families for your dedication and support.

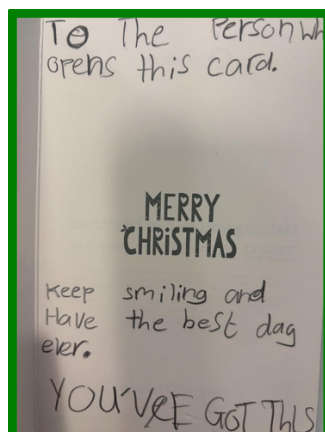
This term Local MP Chris Webb visited school and was greeted by the school council. Mr. Webb was given a tour of school and then hosted a Q&A session with the students.

Some students had the opportunity to attend the 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign in partnership with Blackpool and the Fylde College. The event helped the students to understand equality and what it means in the wider community.

For Harvest this year students took part in the Harvest Festival challenge. They had to use their numeracy, budgeting and teamwork skills to buy food produce to donate to the local food bank. Also for Christmas the students have been collecting for Streetlife and writing Christmas cards to local residents.

This term we have also seen the launch of our new school name, accompanied with branding and a new website. In January the uniform will be available and all signage completed.

We also welcomed families to a coffee morning that was supported by Blackpool Council, Blackpool Mental Health Services and other agencies. This was a great opportunity for families to come into school and see all of the changes that have been made since September.



Moor Park Primary School



We have had a fantastic start to the year at Moor Park Primary School. Since September, so much has happened!

DfE Visit – We were chosen by the English Hub to showcase the work the school has done on the Voice 21 project. During the last Voice 21 Development Day we were described as a Beacon of Excellence – a fantastic opportunity to share our success with the DfE. This was shared on Facebook and in the Gazette



Hive and Halo creation! Over the summer holidays we had lots of building work completed in school to create our two new SEND provisions funded by the LA: The Halo, an 8 place provision for reception children and the Hive, a 16 place provision for KS1 / KS2 children. Both provisions have got off to a calm start with good feedback from external consultants / professionals.

We now have an Educational Psychologist and counselling weekly in school which is benefitting our children massively!



KS1 playground Markings – New, bright markings on the KS1 playground added over the summer. Children love using these at the start and end of the day as well as at playtime!

Pupil Leadership – we have established our Pupil Leadership Team including School Council, Head Boy and Girl and Sports Captains.



Democracy Week – During this week children were able to put forward cases to their classes as to why they wanted to be a School Councillor. Children voted for the councillor they wanted. The successful councillors were announced in assembly and badges given. We had our first meeting and shared some of the areas they felt needed attention in school. We chose three key points to work on: 1) Fund raising for Crumble the guide dog (our chosen charity) 2) Plants in classrooms 3) Quiet areas on the KS1 and KS2 playground.



Black History Month – History Lead gave year groups key, influential black people to study including black women in history. Children designed posters for this.

Space Week – An exciting week of learning about space. A home learning competition to learn about living in space. We had a fantastic response to this including videos / booklets / posters made at home. The winner got to meet Tim Peake!



Eco Green Flag – At the end of the summer term we were awarded the Eco Green flag (with distinction).

Thank you to everyone who attended one of our Christmas performances. The children performed beautifully and we are so proud of them. In English lessons Year 2 have been busy writing letters to Father Christmas. They put them all into an envelope and walked down to the post box to post them.





The Executive Leadership Team

The Trust Executive Leadership team provide the core business functions to ensure that the Trust complies with its statutory responsibilities and supports the operations and educational performance of our schools. The team operates under the leadership of the CEO; working with staff, trustees and governors in schools to ensure that the required outcomes and priorities of the Trust are achieved in accordance with the Trust's strategic priorities as agreed by the Trust Board.

Executive Leadership Team

Neill Oldham - Chief Executive Officer
neill.oldham@seteducation.org.uk

Suzanne Hamilton- Director of Education/Deputy CEO
suzanne.hamilton@seteducation.org.uk

Hilary Wood- Chief Financial Officer
hilary.wood@seteducation.org.uk

Lisa Tupman- Chief Operating Officer
lisa.tupman@seteducation.org.uk

Supported by;

Anne Clark- Trust Accountant
HR and Payroll- Blackpool Council - Julie Marlow and Dan Watson
Health and Safety- Croner
ICT- Blackpool Council, Remedian, CompTech and Virtue
DPO- Blackpool Council

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In **Synergy** we are stronger together
With an all-inclusive **Education** approach at our heart
We **Trust** and value our schools and communities

”

Trust Team Insight

In September we were proud to welcome Moor Park Primary School and The Maple School to the Synergy family. This has led to further collaborative working between all of our schools leading to school improvements and an enhanced educational offer for our pupils.

Highfurlong School's new building was finally completed and some of the team went to the Christmas fair and were able to visit the new community cafe 'Canteen' and enterprise shop.

The central finance team have been working incredibly hard on preparing the financial accounts for audit and also onboarding two new schools. The team were also externally audited by the ESFA and subject to an internal scrutiny audit. We are pleased to say that all audits were passed with flying colours with only minor amendments.

This term we have launched our new Synergy website www.seteducation.org.uk and also our social media profiles on Facebook and LinkedIn. Please have a look and share with friends and family.

We have also been working hard on pulling together the Trust wide policies and are pleased to say these have all now been ratified by the Trustees and implemented across all schools. The operations team are currently going out to tender for new telecoms and ICT providers for the Trust to be implemented in April 2025.

In November the Synergy central team moved offices to Stanley Primary School. This move promotes further collaborative working across the whole team and is in a central location to all Synergy Schools.

The team have also been busy visiting schools all term working with leaders on school development planning, estate management, communication and marketing. We have also attended Christmas Fairs, nativities and carol concerts. Well done to all staff and pupils in every school for being magnificent and pulling it all together at a busy time of year!





Spring term priorities

The Spring priorities for the Trust will include:

- Implementation of the ICT Trust wide strategy
- Arbor MAT platform launch and assessment module across all mainstream primary settings
- Launch of the staff benefit and discount platform
- Embedding and establishing Synergy policies across all schools
- Recruitment at both central and school level
- Further developing of the Best Practice networks to support high quality teaching and learning
- Launch of the personal development process for all support staff across all schools

In December Synergy schools have taken part in 18 different Christmas plays, nativities, fairs, carol concerts and much more. The Synergy central team were privileged to attend these events and wanted to thank each and every staff member and pupil for their hard work during this busy time. You are all amazing!

Synergy staff will:

- Be supported to fulfil their job role effectively
- Work in a culture where their learning is valued as much as the pupils' learning
- Experience the benefits of working in a caring supportive Multi Academy Trust
- Have an unerring focus on improving the quality of education they provide



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FIRST STEPS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE SCHOOL STATUS!

We are delighted to announce Synergy Education Trust, Blackpool have chosen to register all schools of the school in their Trust with IQM! In line with their child and family-centred vision, the Trust has taken the ambitious step towards earning Inclusive School Status for all of their schools! Welcome to the IQM Family!



My Money Matters- Shared AVC (Additional Voluntary Contributions)

What is an AVC?

Synergy Education Trust is now working with My Money Matters to facilitate our salary sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (Shared Cost AVC) scheme.

This benefit is available to **all** Local Government Pension Scheme members that helps you save more for your retirement. The platform will be available from 2nd January 2025.

The AVC allows you to build an additional pot of money alongside your pension contributions, saving you tax and national insurance contributions at the same time, with the potential of a tax-free lump sum when you retire.

How does it work?

The AVCs are held with the AVC provider (Prudential) and are processed via a reduction in your salary via a salary sacrifice arrangement.

What next?

If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, you need to register on the [My Money Matters platform](#) to begin the process.

My Money Matters have a team of experts with many years' experience in public sector pensions and are available for you to book in a Coaching Session.

This session will give you an opportunity to learn more about the benefits of switching to a Shared Cost AVC scheme and how you can manage your scheme through our new platform and learn all about the exciting financial wellbeing service that you now have access to.

To book your place, please visit the [My Money Matters knowledge hub](#) and sign into your account.

Then, select 'Book your 1-1' in the AVC Coaching Sessions section.

If you have any questions, please email support@my-money-matters.co.uk, call 01252 959 779 or visit the My Money Matters website to use the live chat service.

You can also email Hilary Wood at hilary.wood@seteducation.org.uk

There is also further information here.

Please see links below:

How to retire early and with more money - <https://youtu.be/PUoBUTCviDc?si=6SZqVHuYsUiV8Cii>

Understanding the LGPS - <https://youtu.be/mt7cz8VrH8c?si=wc0wp0U6PKGHBmrf>

Savings Example

With a Shared Cost AVC £100 only costs a basic rate taxpayer £72.08! That's an immediate value increase of **38%** before the money is even invested.

If an employee were to contribute the above in a Shared Cost AVC for **15 years**, their pot could be worth **£22,697.27** at a cost to them of only **£12,974.40!**

That's a growth of over 74%*...

Recruitment Day

22nd January 2025

We are recruiting for classroom support assistant roles in our schools in Blackpool. Register your interest using the QR code and for further information

Synergy Education Trust
Recruitment Day - Expression of
Interest Form



WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

- Teaching Assistants
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant
- Special Support Assistants
- SEND Teaching Assistants



Secondment Opportunity



Secondment Opportunity 12 months

Phonics and Library Support Assistant Grade D 32.5 Hours

An exciting opportunity has become available at **The Maple School**.

Since September 2024, The Maple School has introduced the Read, Write Inc. Phonics Programme – Fresh Start.

They are looking for a Teaching Assistant to deliver this programme to identified pupils in the school and also work alongside The Maple SLT and the Director of Education at Synergy Trust, to develop a library for the pupils within the school.

About The Maple School

The Maple School is a specialist provision for secondary aged pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The school has been purpose built to accommodate pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Maple can cater for up to 48 students, ranging from Year 6 to Year 11. All students have access to a number of curriculum pathways which deliver all core subjects, meaningful qualifications, and therapeutic interventions that will help them to develop and fully engage with school life.

The school is committed to ensuring that all its pupils can read, which is why they have adopted this specific approach.

The Role

- Experience of RWI is not essential as training will be provided – however an understanding of phonics teaching would be helpful.
- The role would entail one to one phonics sessions with pupils daily.
- All sessions are resourced and scripted.
- Ongoing Phonics training will be available.
- The role will be based in the library area. The successful candidate will help shape the design and development of it.

**If this is something you would be interested in, please contact me on
suzanne.hamilton@seteducation.org.uk**

Please note this may be subject to your current school being able to release you from your role for 12 months

Thank you!

to all pupils, staff, governors and trustees for your incredible hard work this term. Have a wonderful Christmas break!

