



**PENK VALLEY
ACADEMY TRUST**

*Learning
Together*

Newsletter



Issue No. 2

December 2023



From our Chief Executive Officer...

A very warm welcome to the Autumn issue of our Trust newsletter 'Learning Together'.

We have included news and updates from across the

Trust including some stand out achievements and improvements. For example, schools exam results, inspections and training activities.

As we are in the first term of a new academic year, I would like to welcome all our new teachers and other staff to PVAT as well as new children and their families.

I would also like to say a huge 'thank you' to all staff for the dedication, the care and the support they continue to provide.

I hope that everyone in our community - pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and trustees - have a lovely Christmas break and that we all return safe and well for the start of the new term in January.

Happy Christmas and New Year!

**Strategic Priorities Overview 2023 - 2025**

The Trust has set out its new strategic priorities for 2023-2025. These are:

1. Ensure there is consistency high quality and inclusive education.
2. Establish effective school improvement systems.
3. Ensure the workforce is well supported.
4. Ensure high quality governance and leadership.
5. Ensure high quality finance and operations services.

As always our work is underpinned by our collaborative ethos of 'Learning Together' and our values - collaboration, challenge, curiosity and care.

**Wolgarston Exam Success**

For more information please see the following page.

**St Mary and St Chad
Ofsted and SIAMS**

For more information please see the following page.



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Things to celebrate...**SIAMS Inspection – St Mary and St Chad (September 2023)**

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) is a framework that inspects Church of England and Methodist schools in England. The inspection is carried out by the Church of England and Methodist Church to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's Christian vision and its impact on the students' education. The inspection focuses on three key elements: theology, school context, and vision and provides a unique way to evaluate school culture based on its character and values.

The SIAMS inspection carried out at St Mary and St Chad found that "The Christian vision and values permeate every aspect of life" and the school "is living up to its foundation as a church school and is enabling its pupils and adults to flourish". They also stated that "pupils behaviour is exemplary" and there is "visionary leadership of the school". The full report can be read at: [SIAMS Inspection Reports | The Church of England](#).

Ofsted Inspection – St Mary and St Chad (September 2023)

After receiving a 'Good' rating following a recent inspection from Ofsted in September 2023, it's clear that the school vision 'Aim High Believe, Fly High Achieve' is embraced by both students and teachers alike and St Mary and St Chad's presented the very best of themselves to the Ofsted Inspector.

The Inspector praised the school for its provision of a "wide range of learning opportunities for all pupils" and commented that there "is a calm and respectful culture, and pupils understand the importance of being kind and helpful. Staff demonstrate these values, and this helps pupils to understand the importance of positive relationships".

Well done to staff, pupils and governors for maintaining this standard of work across the whole school. The full report can be read at: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/147279>.

Wolgarston High School – A Level Results 2023

Wolgarston's success continues with news of very good A Level results in August. For example average A Level grades achieved by pupils are above the national average.

With pupil's continuing their studies from GCSE to A Level, Wolgarston is establishing very good academic standards. We very much look forward to seeing what the future holds for the pupils and the school.

Wolgarston High School GCSE Exams - Progress - Top 10% of Schools Nationally



Progress 8 is a measure of the progress of pupils from the end of primary school to GCSEs and the end of secondary school. It is based on the performance of pupils in eight GCSE qualifications, including English and mathematics. It is a type of value added measure, meaning that pupils' results are compared to the expected achievements of other pupils nationally who have the same prior attainment.

Wolgarston's 2023 GCSE results showed a rise in their Progress 8 measurement scale from +0.5 to 0.64, therefore, placing the school "well above average" and in the top 10% of the country.

This considerable achievement is a credit to all the hard work, commitment and dedication put in by children and staff together with invaluable support from parents and families.

Full details can be found at: [Secondary - Wolgarston High School - Compare school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK \(compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/secondary-school-college-performance-compare-school-college-performance-data-in-england)

Improved SATs Results – Penkridge Middle School



A key priority for Penkridge Middle School is to improve outcomes for Key Stage 2 (Year 6) SATs tests.

SATs tests are taken by all Year 6 pupils in England in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling, mathematics and writing.

Standards in reading, writing and maths as well as spelling and grammar, continued to improve with all areas having raised in both 2022 and this year.

Whilst we feel encouraged by the performance of last year's cohort, it is important to build on this and continue to improve standards even further so every child has the best possible chance of success as they complete their primary education.

First Schools Writing Priority

Writing remains an exciting key priority for our First Schools for this academic year. After a positive and informative external moderation of writing, school's, will be focusing on further improving SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) and increasing the amount of independent writing opportunities alongside the 'Talk for Writing' teaching framework.

'Talk for Writing' allows children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it, and then writing their own version. This framework has already helped the development and improvement of written work.

Our First School's are embracing the challenge of continuing to improve writing even further. We very much look forward to seeing the outcome in the coming months and years.



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Push Towards Sustainability



Tree Planting in Partnership with the Forest of Mercia

Our very own Gemma Handley (Health and Safety Manager) in partnership with the Forest of Mercia has organised and overseen the planting of 5,000 hedgerows and trees.

After completing a tree survey which showed that 90% of the trees at one of our sites were either dead or dangerous, Gemma, had the trees removed and looked at the next step for our ongoing Eco Strategy to reduce our carbon footprint.

After some research, Gemma, made contact with the Forest of Mercia who viewed three of our school sites (Marshbrook, Penkridge Middle School and Wolgarston High School). The Forest of Mercia not having enough sites with space to plant trees and hedgerows, were very excited at the prospect of working with the Trust.

This has been an extremely successful project and our thanks go out to Gemma for organising and the Forest of Mercia for their trees. As we make a push towards sustainability we are hoping to run more projects that will help take care of the world around us.

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School Review 'Focus Days'



The trust continue to carry out regular focus review days in our schools. These regular school reviews take place in conjunction with school leaders. They focus on an area that might need improving in order for us to continually challenge ourselves further to deliver the very best results in educating and nurturing our children. By visiting classrooms, talking to staff and children and looking and listening to what is being taught, a clearer understanding of the next steps to be taken are agreed with school leaders and staff.

Curriculum Symposium Meetings



Our final symposium of 2022-23 took place in June with it's core purpose being the continuing development of the curriculum across the Trust.

Teachers took the opportunity to 'learn together' and to share and discuss aspects of the curriculum to further enhance the learning for all our children.

Working collaboratively in this manner is vital so that we plan and deliver clear progression as our children journey through different schools and key stages.

Attendance



At Penk Valley Academy Trust, we know that excellent school attendance is necessary if academic outcomes are to be achieved. The more children are in school, the better their outcomes will be.

The vast majority of Penk Valley Academy Trust schools are above the national average due to the ongoing efforts of parents, students and staff. However, we also know that attendance rates are still not quite up to 2019 pre-Covid levels. We will continue to work together in order to support children, families and schools to achieve excellent attendance.



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Staff Wellbeing



PVAT offers support for all employees via 'Schools Choice' which is a free, around-the-clock and confidential assistance programme.

Contact details, if required, are as follows:-

Freephone: 0808 168 2143

Website: www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk

Username and password are available from PVAT HR.

Cycle to Work Scheme

With rising fuel costs and vehicles' impact on the environment becoming apparent, is it time to make a change?

The Cycle to Work Scheme is an employee benefit, promoting a healthy and eco-friendly way of commuting to work. Instead of driving to work, the benefit scheme gives employees the opportunity to swap four wheels for two.

Adopting this healthy way of commuting brings with it considerable benefits. Alongside keeping fit, cycling to work positively affects mental well being, helps the environment and even saves employees money on tax payments and fuel costs.

Using a salary sacrifice scheme, employees can save on the price of a new bike and accessories.

Employees have a choice of vendors including local independent bike shops or online retailers.

Please contact PVAT HR for more information.



Fond Farewells and Warm Welcomes

Towards the end of the last academic year we said “goodbye” to a number of people who have contributed so much to our schools and Trust over the years. We also welcomed new faces to join us in the next steps of the journey.

Trustees and Governors

Simon Blackburn stepped down from the Board of Trustees after being with us since the Trust was formed. He has been helpful and encouraging as Chair of our Standard Committees and we will undeniably miss his wealth of knowledge. We wish Simon all the best for the future and would like to thank him for his many years of support.

Clive Noak also stepped down from the Board of Trustees in the summer term. As the Trust Safeguarding Lead, Clive’s wealth of knowledge and contribution has been outstanding. We wish Clive all the best for the future and would like to thank him for his many years of support.

Our new Trustee, Kevin Maycock, is well known to many people as he is already involved with three of our Local Governing Committees. Kevin, as many are already aware, has a professional background in secondary education and has held key governance roles for a number of years not only within Penk Valley Academy Trust but also in other local schools and Trusts.

As always, it is important that we acknowledge that Governors and Trustees give their time freely to support and challenge our schools and Trust. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our Governors and Trustees for this continuing support.

Trust Staff

For those colleagues leaving the Trust we would like to say a huge “thank you” for all their hard work, dedication and commitment. Good luck for the future and we hope they enjoy the next phase in their life and career!

Recruitment

In addition to changes within Governance we welcomed over 15 new members of staff to the Trust in September in readiness for the new academic year. On Wednesday 12th July we held an Induction Day with a morning of briefings from the Executive Team explaining the vision of the Trust and imparting other essential information. The afternoon was spent with their ‘home school’ ensuring the best possible start with Penk Valley.

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The Next Chapter

All schools have enjoyed welcoming and meeting new children who joined in September. Everyone has worked really hard across the Trust to ensure that children are settled and happy.

We hope you all have an amazing Christmas and very much look forward to seeing you in the Spring term.



Local School Governors Required



We have school governor opportunities available in our schools across the Trust.

Becoming a school governor is a rewarding role and will allow you the opportunity to use your skills and attributes to have a positive impact on the education of all of the children in one of our school's. You will be able to develop and learn new skills, take on different challenges and work as part of an established and successful Governing Board.

If you are interested, please contact Caroline Harley (c-harley@penkvalley.co.uk).

Keep Updated with Our Social Media Pages

We regularly update our social media pages. To keep in contact, please see below:-



@PENKVALLEY



/PENKVALLEY

or <https://www.facebook.com/Penk-Valley-Academy-Trust>



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