



LEADING LEARNERS

Guiding children to promising futures

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024



WELCOME FROM THE CEO

It feels like the blink of an eye since I wrote the introduction to our end-of-year newsletter, yet here we are, spring has sprung and the clocks are about to go forward!

If this year appears to be going by at the speed of light, it must be because our schools are filling every single day with inspiring and exciting learning experiences, alongside enriching cultural experiences.

The Trust Central Team has also been keeping busy, not least of all in welcoming an additional three amazing schools to our family. These schools, along with Mendell Primary School, are all based in the Wirral, creating a new hub for our Trust and adding some impressive expertise and experience to our already strong team.

Being able to slow down a little over the Easter break gives everyone in the Leading Learners' community a much-needed opportunity to catch our breath and reflect on everything that's been achieved since the start of the year.

I hope you all have a restful and relaxing Easter, and join me in looking to the next few months with the renewed focus and optimism that comes with the lighter nights and sunshine that spring and summer will bring.

Yvonne Brown
CEO

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR WIRRAL HUB!

The Leading Learners Multi Academy Trust grew a little larger this term, as we said a warm welcome to three new schools!

Manor Primary School, Sandbrook Primary School and Overchurch Junior School are all based in and around the Wirral, as is Mendall Primary School who joined us in December last year. This creates new geographical hub for us and a ready-made community of partner schools for each other, ready to share knowledge and best practice.

Yvonne Brown, CEO, said of the new additions: "We are incredibly proud to welcome these new schools to our Trust family and see the creation of a brand-new Trust Hub in the Wirral.



"As we went through the joining process, it was clear that each of these schools shares our values and is as deeply invested in creating opportunities for every single child as we are.

"There is so much we can all learn from each other. The schools have already started the process of working together in their new Hub, and with the wider Trust, to share expertise and resources. This is an incredibly exciting time for us as a Trust and we are so pleased to have our latest additions on board."

LEADING LEARNERS' CFO SHORTLISTED FOR NATIONAL AWARD

Our Chief Financial Officer, Liam Knowles, has been shortlisted for a prestigious award to recognise the significant impact he has on supporting the educational aspirations of the Trust.

Liam joined the Trust in 2020, and in recent years he has led significant cost saving, efficiency and futureproofing efforts that helped make the Trust's ambitious educational strategies a reality.

Yvonne Brown, CEO, said: "Liam is an absolute asset to the Leading Learners Trust. He got stuck in right from the moment he joined us - problem solving, future planning and generally tackling both historical issues and coming up with innovative ideas to support our vision and plans for growth.



"His competence is only matched by his integrity, both of which mean that when he suggests a plan of action, you know it will have been well researched and thought through from the point of view of the Trust and our schools. We couldn't have anyone better in place to see us through the next phase of our growth and beyond."

Following his nomination, Liam is now up for CFO of the Year at the MAT Excellence Awards, which aim to celebrate individual and team successes in a Trust.

CELEBRATING WORLD BOOK DAY 2024

Our schools had a wonderful time celebrating World Book Day this term! Here's a glimpse of some of the fantastic activities they got up to...

Carrwood Primary School made storytelling the focus of the whole week with lots of story-themed activities. Children had virtual author visits from Claire Freedman, the author of *Aliens Love Underpants*, and Will Mabbitt, author of the *Empire of the Dead* series. On World Book Day itself, all children in school visited a special shop and selected a book to take home. Parents were invited in to create story spoons with their children before watching a World Book Day parade.

Children at **Woodside Academy** came into school dressed up as their favourite book character! Children also entered a competition to design an egg as a book character with the winners receiving a voucher to spend at the book fair.

'The Colour Monster' by Anna Llendas was **Sandbrook Primary School's** focus book this year. Pupils dressed in different colours to represent their emotions and took part in lots of fun and exciting activities in their classes.

As part of the build up to World Book

Day, pupils at **Mendell Primary**

School welcomed author Saloni Surah to the school to hear all about her book 'Flora Investigates: The Case of the Missing Gold Eggs'. Children got the chance to ask why she became a published author. Saloni also ran workshops with the children where they had to use detective kits and clues to predict the suspects in the book and successfully locate the missing eggs!

Manor Primary School pupils had a fantastic day with some amazing costumes on show. Year 5 pupils took part in Book Speed Dating! The children spent 1 minute 30 seconds finding out about new books, before deciding upon their favourites.

Nicola Lightwing, Headteacher at **Manor Primary School**, said: "World Book Day is always a highlight in our calendar and this year was as delightful as ever with so many children engaging in reading-based activities.

"Promoting a love of reading from an early age is so important in supporting learning across the entire curriculum, and we're always happy to pull all the stops out to celebrate this fun day!"



OUR TRUST VALUES

At Leading Learners, we have five values that underpin all that we do.

These are

- Community
- Ambition
- Resilience
- Integrity
- Pride

Our values lie at the core of everything we do within our Trust. They inspire our all our communities' best efforts and direct our actions when it comes to helping each and every one of our children be the very best they can be.

COMMUNITY

We recognise how important it is to help our children want to be a positive part of the world around them.

CARRWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL'S FURRY FRIEND

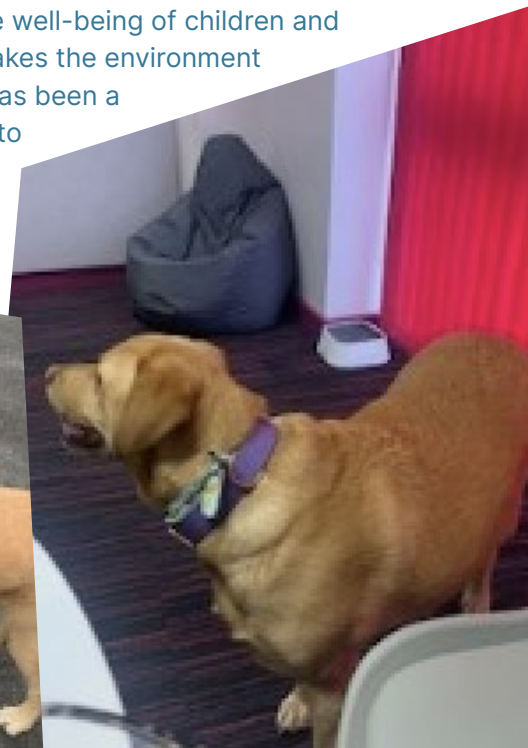
Carwood Primary School had a very important new member of staff join this term – Martha the Labrador Retriever Therapy Dog!

Research was carried out to find the best breed of dog for the school, and Labrador Retrievers have all the qualities of great therapy dogs. They learn quickly, can master obedience skills easily and are some of the friendliest pets out there – which is why they make wonderful service, therapy and emotional support animals.

The school hopes that Martha will be able to support pupils and staff in areas such as reading and well-being groups.

Martha has spent some time getting used to the sights, sounds and smells around the school. She has met some of the children who were very calm, kind and gentle with her. She was very excited to meet lots of new people and gave them a big sniff!

Nicola Malt, Headteacher, said: "We were all so very excited to welcome Martha to our school. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can improve the well-being of children and lower anxiety levels. Martha simply makes the environment happier and more enjoyable. Martha has been a model employee and everyone wants to join her classes!"



NATURE RETREAT FOR WORTH VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL FAMILIES

As a result of Worth Valley Primary School's ongoing role as an ambassador school for the Yorkshire Dales National Parks Authority (YDNPA), the school was delighted to offer families a free weekend residential opportunity at Dower House in Malham.

Through the use of the Dark Skies Grant Scheme, the accommodation was reserved exclusively for Worth Valley Primary School families to enjoy.

Ceinwen Lodge, Headteacher, said: "The families had an absolutely brilliant time and the feedback from parents was phenomenal! It was a really special way for our school community to bond, as well as spend time outside watching the stars in this incredible Dark Sky area."



REEVY HILL'S FIRST IFTAR CELEBRATION

Reevy Hill Primary School hosted its first ever Iftar this week as part of a school-wide celebration of Ramadan.

Muslims observe Ramadan by fasting from dawn until dusk, praying, reflecting and helping those in need. Iftar is the evening meal that breaks the fast for the day.

Over 50 parents, carers, pupils and staff from all faiths and backgrounds broke fast together. Everyone had dates and fruit before enjoying traditional Asian cuisine together.



Gary Stott, Headteacher, said: "We were proud to host our very first Iftar at school and mark this important time in the Muslim faith calendar. Learning about all faiths and cultures is important to us and we want our community to feel inclusive and welcoming to all."

AMBITION

We have the ambition to not only create aspiration and be the very best we can be, but also to make the best of the world around us and leave it better than we found it.

OVERCHURCH JUNIOR SCHOOL PUPILS LEARN ABOUT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN LAW

A group of children from Overchurch Junior School visited Liverpool Civil & Family Court to experience what it would be like to be a judge, barrister, solicitor, member of the jury, clerk, usher, or witness.

Meeting two real judges, one a criminal judge and one a family court judge, was fascinating and the children questioned them about their roles in court before acting out a cyberbullying trail.

After reading the case background, the children took on their roles brilliantly and with great concentration. They were able to question witnesses to elicit information about their view of the defendant accused of cyberbullying. One child playing the role of the judge took his role very seriously and got to wear official robes.

Pupils also learned about the career path to becoming a judge and many returned to school with an aspiration to work in law.

Anne Sheridan, Headteacher, said: "It was an incredible opportunity and experience. The children impressed everyone, demonstrating respect and an inquisitive, positive attitude. They made us all very proud!"



OUT AND ABOUT WITH CARRWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children at Carrwood Primary School have been on lots of different trips this term to enhance curriculum understanding.

Early Years children looked at minibeasts this term, and had a visit from 'Into the Wild', who brought with them a range of unusual bugs and animals for them to handle.

Children in Year 5 visited a local high school, Tong Leadership Academy, where they competed in an inter-school Olympics - and won!

Year 2 pupils visited Knowsley Safari Park to support their learning in this term's Geography topic, 'Let's Go On A Safari'. As well as exploring the safari park, the children took part in an 'Animal Detective' workshop and watched sea lion and bird of prey displays.

Nicola Radcliffe, Head of School, said: "One of our core aims as a school is to provide diverse learning opportunities where all children are encouraged to question, challenge themselves and think creatively. Providing trips and experiences for our children really helps to develop these skills, as well as bring the curriculum to life in new and exciting ways."



WORTH VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS BECOME TEACHERS

Worth Valley Primary School's Sports Coach, Mr McNulty, challenged Year 5 and 6 pupils to create their own lesson plans and deliver the lesson to their peers.

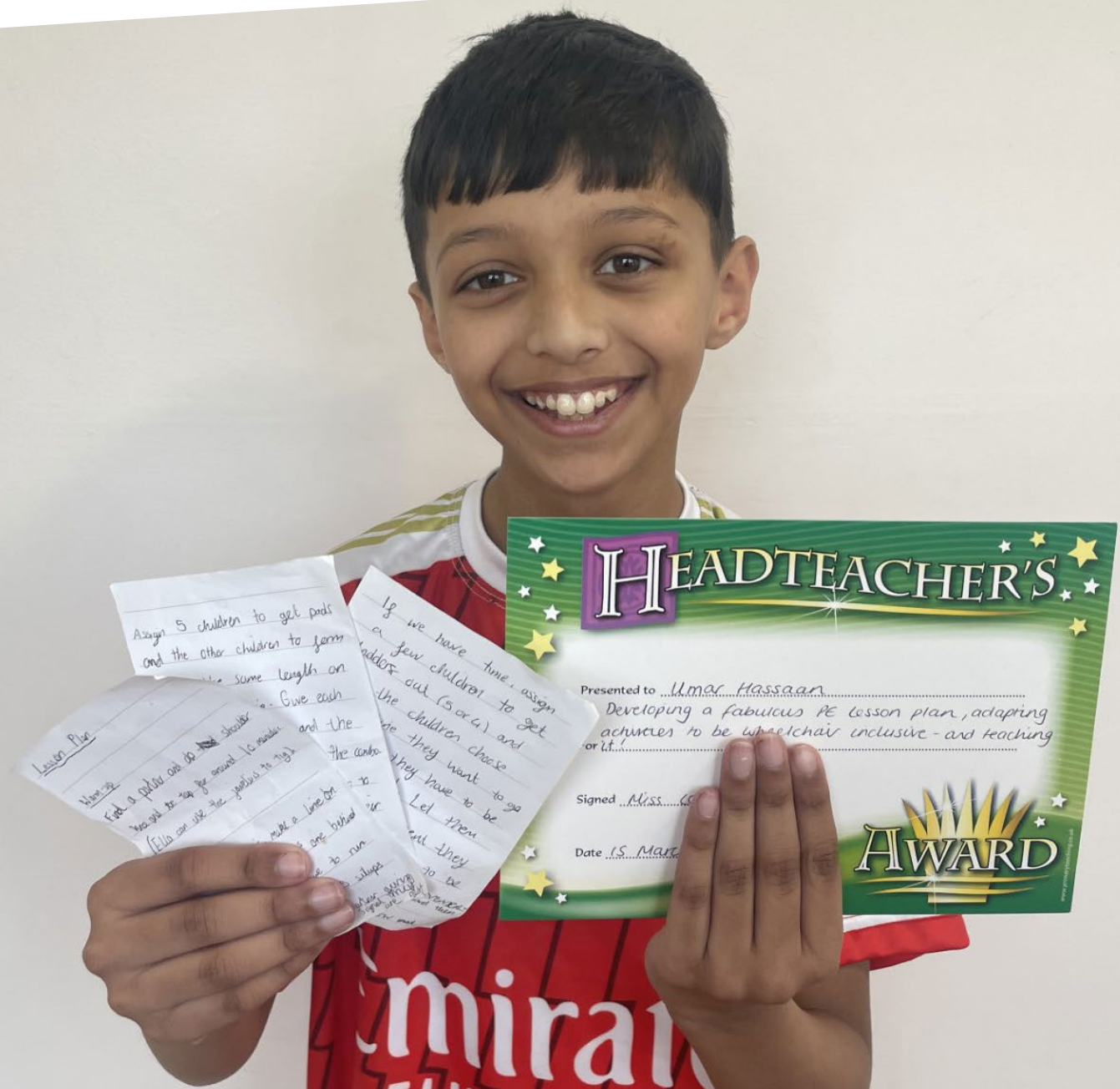
Mr McNulty said: "Despite some light-hearted ribbing from pupils about them having to do my job for me, I was really impressed

at how well our Year 5 and 6 pupils rose to the challenge. The task required organisation, understanding how to impart key information clearly and confidence in delivering a lesson. I think we have some future teachers in our midst for sure!"

Umar from Year 6 was singled out for his exceptional work. He wrote a comprehensive lesson plan, including a warm-

up, team activities, independent challenges and a cool-down. Not only this, but every activity was adapted to be inclusive for a pupil in his class who is a wheelchair user.

Ceinwen Lodge, Headteacher, added: "We were blown away by how careful, considerate and thorough his plan was. For us, he encompassed our school and Trust values. Well done, Umar!"



RESILIENCE

Our children have shown resilience and determination this term in the classroom and the community.

SANDBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL CELEBRATES CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Pupils at Sandbrook Primary School celebrated self-love and self-worth

through a series of activities during Children's Mental Health Week.



The school also welcomed Donna Parkhill from the Wirral Mental Health Support Team. Donna visited the children to talk about the importance of looking after your mental health, as well as your physical health, and what pupils can do if they feel down.

Claire Temple, Headteacher, said: "Supporting our children in becoming resilient, confident young people who can express and articulate their feelings is an absolute priority for our school. Events like Children's Mental Health Week give us the opportunity to really explore how children can support themselves in maintaining healthy minds and bodies, and make it clear where else they can access support if they need it."

MANOR SCHOOL PUPIL RAISES £2,000 IN MEMORY OF HER FATHER

Manor Primary School pupil, Imogen, has taken on a special challenge in memory of her dad who died from a brain tumour.

Alongside her mum, the amazing duo successfully cycled 100 miles in loving memory of Tim, who sadly passed away in 2015, when Imogen was just 10 months old.



They have helped to raise over £2,000 to be split between Clatterbridge Cancer Charity, where Tim received his treatment, and Manor Primary School.

Nicola Lightwing, Headteacher at Manor Primary School, said: "This was an incredible undertaking by Imogen and her mum. We are so proud of her achievement and thoughtfulness in raising funds to support the school and help even more families access services provided by Clatterbridge Cancer Charity."

MANOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS TAKE PART IN THE BEACON PROJECT

A group of Year 6 pupils at Manor Primary School took part in the Beacon Project, a six-week youth engagement programme, run by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

As part of the programme, children attended different workshops each week at their local fire station, learning new skills and taking part in various activities including:

- Practical Fire Service Activities (Hose Drills/Youth Breathing Apparatus/Hydrant Drills/Foam Making Equipment/Search & Rescue Techniques)
- Team-building, Energiser & Communication Tasks
- Community Safety Awareness (Safety in the Home/Fire Escape Plans/Arson/Bonfire & Fireworks Safety/ASB)

- First Aid, Health Awareness
- Child Exploitation/Healthy & Unhealthy Relationships
- Road Safety/Water Safety

At the end of the six weeks, parents were invited along to watch pupils put their new skills into action and attend a certificate presentation.

Nicola Lightwing, Headteacher at Manor Primary School, said: "This was a unique and enriching experience for our pupils. It gave them the chance to take part in an educational learning experience outside of school that encourages self-development, resilience and pride in themselves."



INTEGRITY

We recognise the importance of instilling strong moral principles in all of our children.

REEVY HILL PUPILS LEARN TO KEEP THEMSELVES AND OTHER SAFE

Pupils at Reevy Hill Primary School have been busy learning valuable lifesaving skills.

Children took part in Flat Stanley workshops where they learned essential basic first aid and CPR skills, giving them important knowledge that could one day save lives.

A road safety team also visited to educate pupils on staying safe on the roads around the school. Through practical sessions both inside and outside the school grounds, pupils learned vital road safety awareness techniques that will help to reduce accidents when walking and cycling around.



PRIDE

We take pride in our achievements and growth, both as a Trust and as individuals.

LEADING LEARNERS' WORLD POETRY DAY CELEBRATION

The 21st of March was World Poetry Day, and schools from across our Trust gathered at Tyldesley Rugby Union Club for a fantastic poetry competition. Pupils from Overchurch Junior School, Woodside Academy, Reevy Hill Primary School, Worth Valley Primary School and Tyldesley Primary School all came together in person, with video submissions from Carrwood Primary School and Mendell Primary School.

Each pupil taking part performed with confidence and enthusiasm, some delivering humorous verses that had the audience in stitches. Some even had routines prepared to bring their verses to life.

But the excitement didn't stop there! Our pupils engaged in a friendly competition with quizzes that tested their knowledge of poetry and music.

One pupil from each school earned well-deserved recognition for an exceptional performance and Worth Valley Primary School were crowned Leading Learners Poetry Champions overall.

Yvonne Brown, CEO, said: "What a special day! Congratulations to all pupils for their bravery and hard work. Everyone demonstrated so much enthusiasm and a genuine love for poetry, which meant the



day was filled with energy and positivity. I was bowled over by the writing and performing talents of everyone who took part.

"A huge thank you must also go to all the staff who helped organise and run the day, and of course our judging panel who also bravely took to the stage to read their own poems!

"Our inaugural Leading Learners' Poetry Competition was a great success and I look forward to doing it again next year!"



LEADING LEARNERS' SPELLING STARS!

Writing leads from our schools across Bradford and Wigan have been working to highlight the importance of good spelling in all areas of schoolwork.

To celebrate pupils who have made significant progress in this area, teachers were asked to identify a 'Spelling Star' from each class.

Janet Shorrock, Headteacher at Tyldesley Primary School, said: "Learning how to spell correctly helps to develop literacy skills in children by allowing them to use words correctly and express themselves in writing.

"Our pupils were eager to engage in the term's spelling focus, which tied in well with World Book Day, and there was fierce competition to be named as a 'Spelling Star'!

"A huge well done to all our Trust Spelling Stars – keep up the good work!"



SWIMMING GALA SILVER FOR TYLDESLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eight Tyldesley Primary School Key Stage 2 children represented the school in the Atherton and Tyldesley Sports Association swimming gala this term.

The gala saw thirteen schools competing against each other. Pupils at Tyldesley showed amazing ambition and resilience which paid off when they came in second place overall with 120 points.

Janet Shorrock, Headteacher, said: "Congratulations to our young swimmers on this fantastic achievement!"



SANDBROOK'S JUDO CHAMPION

Sandbrook Primary School is celebrating one of their pupil's award-winning Judo talents. Joshua, in year 6, entered the British Schools National Judo Finals in Sheffield, taking home a bronze medal in his category. What an achievement!

Joshua has been practicing Judo for around two years, training three times a week at the Wirral Judo Club in Birkenhead with his coach, Chris Soakell, who comes to Sandbrook to give taster sessions each year.

Joshua is currently a 5th Mon yellow belt and is hoping to gain his orange belt later in the year. Well done, Joshua!



**Leading Learners
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