



Welcome from the CEO

As spring begins to bring the world around us back to life and we all prepare to take a well-earned rest over the Easter holidays, it feels appropriate to stop and reflect on how the year has gone for us so far. In reviewing the stories for this newsletter, a clear theme has emerged, characterising the activity of our collective year so far – our culture within our Trust family and how it is not merely a facet of who we are; it is the very heartbeat that propels our mission forward.

At Epworth, we deeply understand the profound importance of culture. It serves as the cornerstone upon which our entire ethos is built. We recognise that people matter most in cultivating a nurturing environment where every individual thrives - from our dedicated educators to the inquisitive minds of our children, each person plays a pivotal role in shaping the rich tapestry of our community.

This, of course, is all with the aim of 'doing all we can' to ensure everyone within our communities can flourish and thrive, guided by a strong moral compass. Our commitment to keeping this culture alive and thriving serves as the golden thread weaving through every aspect of our Trust – from the work we have done to support families in a child's earliest days, through to

creating new professional development opportunities for our staff.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and share our joy in seeing how well our schools are living out our Trust values and bringing joy in turn to their pupils.

There is much to look forward to over the coming months, but first I hope everyone has a wonderful Easter full of rest and relaxation!

Warm regards,

Julie-Ann Hewitt
CEO, Epworth Education Trust

Spotlight on: Bakewell Methodist Academy

Bakewell Methodist Academy is the latest school to join our Epworth family and we've interviewed Headteacher, Sarah Owens, to tell you more about the school and why they decided to join our Trust.

Where is your school based?

We are based in the historic town of Bakewell, in the Peak District. Bakewell is famous for – you guessed it – it's delicious Bakewell Pudding and Tart (two different things!). It's a beautiful town with the spectacular nature of the Peak District right on our doorstep.

What makes your school special?

I'm sure every headteacher thinks their school is special, but ours really is! We're a small but mighty 7-11 primary school offering a lively and interesting curriculum delivered by some of the most engaged, enthusiastic and skilled teachers I've come across. We work hard to make our school a friendly and welcoming place where all children can thrive and achieve their full potential.



Academically, we have a strong focus on English and Maths but value the arts highly, and we have a fantastic choir. We employ a qualified sports coach and run a Forest School programme. We also offer wrap around care, in partnership with Bakewell Infants School and host a baby and toddler group every Wednesday. We act as a kind of community hub and love to get our children involved in community events and activities.

Why did you decide to join Epworth Education Trust?

When we began to consider joining a multi-academy trust, the most important thing was that we found one that valued our individuality and existing strengths as a school. What we loved about Epworth was that their values aligned so closely with our own. The Trust mottoes of 'Do all you can' resonated really strongly with us, as did the Trust's collaborative approach to learning and development and how we can all achieve more in unity than in isolation.

Joining the Trust has opened up so many opportunities for our children and our staff and has allowed us to let go of some of the operational headaches that come with running a school and focus on providing the best possible education for our children.

What are you looking forward to the most about being part of the Trust?

I know our staff are really looking forward to making the most of all the professional development opportunities on offer, but I can't wait to bring our children together in person with the other schools and have fun at the many events and learning experiences the Trust holds, as I know how excited they'll all be!

Thank you, Sarah! We're so happy to have you and your school on board.

Celebrating 20 years of Wigan Start Well Family Centre

As our longstanding Start Well Family Centre and Wigan Council partnership comes to an end and a new chapter begins for the Start Well centres, we are proud to look back over the last 20 years and consider the legacy that has been created through this pioneering programme.

Going by many different names over the years – Sure Start, Children’s Centres, Link Workers – the vision and aims of the organisation have always remained the same: providing support and activities to help parents, carers and childcare providers give children under five the ‘best start in life’.

Through our Westleigh Family Start Well Centre, we have supported families in our local community to build relationships and provide advice and support around improving child and family well-being.

This has been provided in many different ways, from early help with safeguarding, sessions and interventions to improve school readiness and public health outcomes, advice and guidance on nursery provision, child minders, school attendance and supporting transition, advice and support around finance, debt and housing, training and support for families to get back into work, and support for children, young people and their families to access provision in their communities.



We’re proud to think of all the families that have had their lives made that little bit easier because of the helping hand they received from the amazing Early Years workers, and we’ve had so much positive feedback from parents, carers and children who have loved attending our community sessions, some leading to lifelong friendships. Some parents even ended up joining us as volunteers, giving back to the community the kind of support they know first-hand makes a meaningful difference.

From festivals to coffee mornings, trips to the beach and making memories as a family and a community, our work with the Start Well team has always been a true partnership that fully aligned with our ‘Do all you can’ ethos.

We wish everyone at Start Well the very best of luck as they begin their new chapter and develop Family Hubs across Wigan and Leigh!

Celebrating World Book Day 2024

World Book Day is always a highlight for our schools and this year was no exception!



Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School used the popular children's book 'The Colour Monster' as a focus for the day's activities. Each class read the book in advance so they understood why colours can be associated with emotions and some of the ways that we can cope with and regulate these emotions when we feel them.

As the book is based on mental health, other activities throughout the day linked back to the Five Ways to Wellbeing: Give; Be active; Keep learning; Take notice and Connect. Pupils made bookmarks to give to others, took part in book scavenger hunts and quizzes, created book-based artwork and had a visit from a former pupil who is now a published author.



Nutgrove Methodist Primary School had a very comfortable World Book Day with everyone coming to school wearing their pyjamas! Amongst many exciting activities throughout the day, a member of the First Team for St Helens Saints R.F.C came in and shared a favourite book with Year 4 and older children shared books with Playdays, Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy pupils had a wonderful time celebrating books and reading during World Book Day. Children came dressed up as their favourite book character or in their pyjamas, and they all looked fantastic! Year 4 created some wonderful mythical lands based on their class novel, The Land of Roar.



World Book Day was a busy one for **Westleigh Methodist Primary School**. This year, children came into school dressed as a character from a story they have been reading in class. There was also an amazing catwalk display for everyone to show off their incredible outfits! Alongside this, the school has been running a competition for the 'Get Caught Reading' challenge, where children send a photo of themselves reading in an unusual place.

Summerseat Methodist Primary School welcomed pupils' family members into school to start the day off reading favourite stories together, before joining in with the Live Big Footy Quiz run by the National Literacy Trust. Next, the children decorated bookmarks while discussing their favourite books. Finally, everyone joined in with the BBC Teach Live Library Lesson where schools all over the country recommended their favourite books to add to the BBC library. A wonderful time was had by all!



Families at **Wesley Methodist Primary School** also joined in the fun at school, with children, staff and parents and carers all making amazing efforts to dress up as favourite characters! Everyone took part in great reading-inspired activities throughout the day.

Focus on: STEM learning

STEM learning is a fundamental part of the primary curriculum and provides children with a foundation for understanding the world around them. Our schools all work hard to create fantastic STEM learning opportunities as part of the entire curriculum and this term has seen some inspiring and engaging STEM activity take place!



Year 1 pupils at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School** have been busy learning about how sliders and levers work and using them to retell traditional fairy tales such as The Gingerbread Man and Jack and the Beanstalk. Their final pieces for this topic involve the creation of underwater moving pictures using the skills they've learned.

Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy has held Maths workshops for parents and carers. These were an opportunity to find out about how their child learns in Maths. Parents were given Maths packs to take home, which contained a range of resources to support home



learning. Parents commented that this was a good opportunity to find out about what happens in school and how they can support their child at home!

Year 5 and 6 pupils at **Wesley Methodist Primary School** have been learning about states of matter. In Wesley's Forest School area, children were able to observe the changing of states from solid to liquid to gas by melting ice cubes over the fire and examining the changes.

The school's Science Lead, Miss Waring, also organised a fantastic Science Week at Wesley, giving every child an opportunity to be involved in experimental and exciting investigations that developed the children's scientific enquiry skills. Every child from Reception to Year 6 took part in a range of investigations and explored new learning.

Rhys Jones, Headteacher at Wesley, said: "It has been wonderful to see the development of our science curriculum recently, with a large emphasis on scientific enquiry and ensuring the skills, knowledge, and vocabulary of the children have been significantly developed.

"We are seeing science come alive at Wesley with a real passion from our children coming through their learning. Our children are obtaining new knowledge by keeping an open mind and a curious approach while understanding how to research and evaluate information effectively."



Outdoor learning at Epworth Schools

All our schools incorporate outdoor learning into their days. The benefits of outdoor learning are myriad; improving child development, supporting mental health and wellbeing, deepening connections with nature and promoting more inclusive and engaging learning.



Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School staff are working to develop their outdoor spaces, recently completing a 'fire pit' area. This space allows a whole class to gather and promotes communication and social skills as well as learning about the outdoors through hands-on activities in Forest School.



With the help of parent volunteers and the schools PTFA, **Nutgrove Methodist Primary School** has been transforming a previously overgrown and unloved outdoor area into a special space that complements teaching and learning opportunities across the curriculum and provides a space to enhance its spirituality offer.

Wesley Methodist Primary School places strong emphasis on delivering high quality and ambitious outdoor learning opportunities through its Forest School. This is designed and nurtured by Wesley's Forest School Lead, Mrs Seal, who gives every child every opportunity in their outdoor areas by adapting the school's curriculum maps to suit outdoor learning.

Outdoor learning isn't always on school grounds. Our schools provide a variety of outdoor opportunities in other places too!

Nursery children at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School** have recreated a garden centre in their classroom, inspired by a recent visit to visited Bents Garden Centre to learn more about how flowers grow and what seasonal flowers are growing at the moment. They investigated the plant life cycle by looking closely at vegetables to see where the seeds are and then planting the seeds to see what happens!

Year 2 pupils at **Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy** have been learning about different human and physical characteristics of our local environment and have been identifying these using maps. They spent an exciting day at Knott Hill Reservoir finding some of these characteristics and making their own maps to find their way around.

Gemma Yapp, Headteacher at Rosehill, said: "The trip to Knott Hill Reservoir was a fantastic way to really bring the concepts the children were studying to life. Whether through a trip out or simply making use of school grounds, shifting from a classroom to an outdoor environment helps to keep curriculum delivery as engaging and inclusive as possible."





At Epworth, we will build a family of schools with shared Methodist values, but who can support their individual communities in their own unique way. This term, our schools have been sharing the Easter story with loved ones, learning about forgiveness and making connections in the community.

Bedford Hall celebrates Easter with family and friends

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School nursery classes came together for an Easter egg-stravaganza!

Families were invited to school for a special morning of Easter-themed activities such as making cards, Easter baskets and Easter gifts to help them talk about the Easter story.

Children in Reception took the celebrations to High Legh Care Home, sharing Easter cards and performing songs for the residents.

Lisa Draper, Headteacher, said: "Our Easter celebrations are a chance for us to connect with our community and our younger children have had a lovely time with families and their friends at High Legh Care Home."



Nutgrove Methodist Primary School gets a visit from the Naughty Bus

The Early Years team at Nutgrove Methodist use books to capture the children's imagination and encourage them to become fluent, thoughtful and creative writers, as illustrated by a recent visit to Reception by the Naughty Bus!

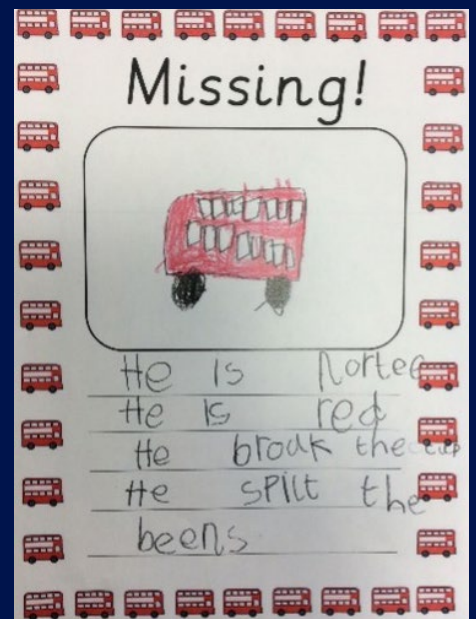
The book 'Naughty Bus', by Jan and Jerry Oke, was brought to life for Reception children when a toy London bus 'appeared' in the classroom one day. The children hoped the bus wouldn't be as naughty as its namesake and, at first, all went well. Pupils drew maps of the Naughty Bus's journey, made models

of London town following the pictures in the story, made 3D models of the Naughty Bus and lined people up at a bus stop in their ordinal numbers.

Unfortunately, the Naughty Bus began to show his true colours! Children returned from playing outside one day to find beans on the table and floor with tyre tracks in them, and Mrs Ridgway's brand-new cup smashed into pieces and her tea spilled – just like the book!

The Naughty Bus was nowhere to be seen and the children decided to warn the rest of the school about him, making 'missing' posters and let everyone know what he'd done. The Naughty Bus teased the children by sending lots of pictures of himself in various places around school, but was finally discovered by Mrs Bottell in her office where he had been typing a note to the class, apologising for being naughty and asking them to forgive him.

This led to a class discussion on forgiveness and remembering that Jesus said that we should forgive, 'not seven times but seventy times seven' (Matthew 18:22).



Rachel Bottell, Headteacher, said: "We all enjoyed the saga of the 'Naughty Bus', and it was great to see the children so inspired and enjoying their learning so much! It was a delightful way to help the children with so many areas of the curriculum and a fantastic method of introducing big ideas like forgiveness."





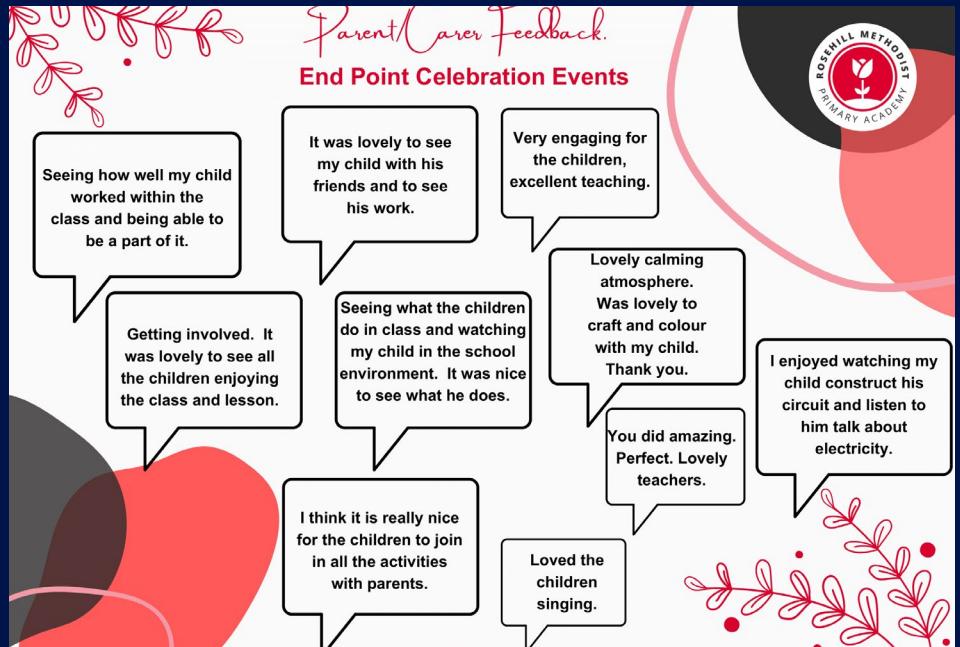
One of the roots underpinning our Trust is that each school will deliver a dynamic and creative curriculum that holds no limits on the achievements and learning of all pupils. Our schools have been celebrating achievements in schools and by the inspiring women from the past and in the present.

Celebrating achievement at Rosehill

Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy is celebrating the term's achievements and learning by all pupils.

At the end of each curriculum unit, parents and carers are invited into school to celebrate their child's learning. This term, children have made clay models as part of an Egyptian topic, shared songs they learned in music, and shared their knowledge through quizzes and presentations.

Gemma Yapp, Headteacher, said: "This is not only a fantastic way to celebrate learning but also an opportunity for children to become experts and share their knowledge with their parents and carers – as well as a great way to end every term!"



International Women's Day at Wesley

Wesley Methodist Primary School celebrated International Woman's Day this March. Every class chose a different inspirational woman to focus on. Wesley's PE Lead, Mrs Thomasson, organised the day, which not only had every class focusing on inspirational women but also got all girls involved in football sessions over the day.

Rhy Jones, Headteacher, said: "Cultural capital is incredibly important in all we do at Wesley, and each class in school is named after a significant role model from Bury and Greater Manchester, with many of these being inspirational women.

"We decided that during this day we would spend time learning about some new inspirational women from a range of backgrounds to give the children a wider range of people to look up to.

"During the day, each class completed a range of activities based on the inspirational woman they were studying and learned more about her life. We also took part in England Football's sporting initiative to get all our girls in school playing football on the same day. Every girl from Reception to Year 6 took part in a special football activity with Coach Lewis and, while the girls completed this, all the boys took part in a health and fitness activity with their class teacher. It was a wonderful day for all."





Kindness, connection, community and faith are golden threads woven through all we do as a Trust. We are always so moved by the thoughtful ways in which our schools and children work hard to demonstrate these values, and support each other and those around them.

Love, Bedford Hall

A lovely time was had by the Reception class at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School** when they invited their grown-ups into school to share why they were loved.

Suzanne Pierce, Foundation Governor, was in attendance and said, "The children performed a number of songs about the world being a special place, about themselves being special and unique, and one about giving away love and gaining more. It was a lovely morning and was very well attended."

After the performance, the children spent quality time with those that they loved and made cards and heart-shaped coasters to take home.



No Outsiders at Rosehill

Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy welcomed Andrew Moffat from No Outsiders into school.

No Outsiders is an inclusive education programme for primary school children authored by educator, Andrew Moffat, who has been awarded an MBE for services to equality and diversity in education.

Andrew worked with each year group, sharing stories about accepting difference and making sure that no one was made to feel like an outsider. The vision of No Outsiders is inclusive education, promoting community cohesion to prepare young people and adults for life as global citizens.

Gemma Yapp, Headteacher, said: "The No Outsiders programme resonates with our values at Rosehill, and we are excited to continue our journey with them to make sure that every child at our school feels safe, welcome and included."



High Peak Lodge residents visit Bedford Hall Reception class

Reception children at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School** paid a special visit this term to the residents in the care home, High Peak Lodge.

Residents were treated to songs about love from the children, who had also learned sign language for one of the songs too. Pupils gave every resident an Easter card and some daffodils. A lovely time was had by all!

Rosehill pupils 'Do Something Funny for Money'

The theme for Comic Relief this year was 'Do Something Funny for Money', and children at **Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy** definitely did their best to do so!

Pupils were invited to come to school with 'crazy hair', with some seriously wild and wonderful hair styling on display.

Gemma Yapp, Headteacher, said: "We were amazed by the creativity of our children! It is always so wonderful to see the generosity of our families when it comes to supporting others."



Bedford Hall Eco Council update

The Eco Council at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School** wrote to the Woodland Trust requesting some trees to help with drainage on the field and to improve air quality.

They were successful in their application and have received a full range of trees that pupils can learn all about. Pupils are especially looking forward to having a fruit orchard on the school grounds!

The Eco Council hope to leave a sustainable school as their legacy – a school that produces their own fruits and vegetables to use in DT lessons!

Lisa Draper, Headteacher, said: "I am continually impressed by the tenacity and enthusiasm of our Eco Council in finding new and creative ways to be sustainable and raise awareness of green issues. This orchard will stand as a testament to their dedication to leaving the world a better place than they found it."



Across the Trust, we pride ourselves on delivering best practice through school-based models of excellence. This means making every effort to learn new skills that can strengthen the support in place for all pupils, as our staff have been doing this term.

Wesley and Summerseat staff complete Neuro Linguistic Programming diplomas

Mr Jones from **Wesley Methodist Primary School** and Mrs Oakes from **Summerseat Methodist Primary School** have completed their Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) diplomas!

NLP is a multi-dimensional process that involves the development of behavioural competence and flexibility, but also involves strategic thinking and an understanding of the mental and cognitive processes behind the behaviour.

Julie-Ann Hewitt, CEO, said: "This has been a fantastic opportunity for both Mr Jones and Mrs Oakes to learn new skills and develop them into a school-based model of excellence."



This spring has seen the launch of Epworth Education Trust's National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), in partnership with the Church of England.



in the classroom to achieve the best from the children I teach and share with other members of staff throughout the school and within Epworth Trust."

Trust CEO, Julie-Ann Hewitt, said: *“We believe that by delivering NPQs in our own community of schools, we can shape the core content to align with our vision, values and approaches, personalising them, in part, for our Trust.*

- "In turn, this supports our core principles of delivering best practice through school-based models of excellence and providing high-quality continuous professional development that enables staff to shine and advance in their careers. Flourishing staff leads to flourishing children!"*

Staff across the Epworth family of schools have had access to a multitude of personal development opportunities this year already, including writing a staff curriculum.

Mrs Hewitt added: "It's been fantastic to see how our school leaders have grasped these opportunities and just ran with them. Their own enthusiasm and pride in being recognised and given these opportunities translates directly back into classrooms to the benefit of all."

"I have been given the exciting opportunity to participate in additional learning in the form of a National Professional Qualification in Leading Teaching. I have only just started this 12 months course but already I have refreshed my knowledge of updated evidence-based classroom practices. I am looking forward to learning more about what outstanding teaching looks like and using this knowledge





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