
Welcome to The Fallibroome Trust Autumn Term Newsletter



Our Trust of six schools has enjoyed a very productive term of collaboration and we had a very positive review of our work by the Regional Schools' Commissioner. As we look forward to a well-earned Christmas break this newsletter gives a flavour of our commitments and a view of our priorities for next term. My thanks go to teaching and non-teaching colleagues who have created vibrant learning opportunities for our children this term.

Governors' Conference

Governors from all six MAT schools welcomed the opportunity to meet at our second annual Governors' conference in October. The feedback we received confirmed the Governors appreciated the opportunity to share understanding of the MAT Business and Strategy plans and hear about the context, successes and challenges facing our schools. It is clear that there is a wealth of governance experience in the MAT and we are well placed to build on our current success.

Induction of Whirley and Adlington Primary Schools

We welcomed two new members to the MAT this term: Adlington Primary and Whirley Primary. Both Academies bring capacity and expertise to our School Improvement agenda and achieved commendable outcomes in the analysis of KS1 and KS2 outcomes. The two Principals, Amanda Bassett and Polly Broadhurst have enjoyed the induction process and along with Winsford Principal Amanda Harrison, bring energy and fresh perspective to the Headteachers' forum.

It has been my pleasure to join the School Improvement Partner reviews of several of our schools this term and gather the intelligence required to focus our School Improvement agenda.

Our Trust numbers:

- 6 schools
- 2871 pupils
- 435 staff
- £15.9m budget

School to School Support Projects

The Primary phase of the MAT chose to focus on the Early Years Foundation phase as our improvement priority this term. The four EYFS teachers have enjoyed working together under the guidance of Fallibroome's Teaching and Learning lead, Claire Burstow, to conduct

visits to sites of best practice, listen to advice from the Teaching School EYFS specialist leader, Caroline Richmond and conduct a lesson study project. The evidence of impact is recorded in a 'before and after' analysis and the group have committed to working together to sustain the exchange of best practice next term. In the Secondary phase we have re-established the subject based Peer Support project that had such an impact last year. Heads of Department from a range of departments met for a conference at Cottons and planned a programme of mutual support. We will meet again in the New Year to analyse the in-year tracking data and share best practice and intervention strategies.

In addition Winsford and Fallibroome have joined a 'Whole Education' numeracy project that is designed to promote a whole school approach to numeracy. Project leads Gordon Baillie and Hannah Moseley have established working parties in each school and generated action plans under the guidance of the Whole Education advisor.

Our association with the Whole Education Group has also created the opportunity for Academy Principals to join a 'Leadership, Culture and Change' programme, alongside leadership teams from other MATs. This includes input from business leaders and education professors and visits to successful MATs in order to share best practice.

It is vital that we look outwards and consider the impact of innovations in both MAT organisation and Teaching and Learning. The MAT Heads have appreciated the opportunity to work together to benchmark our practice against the best.

Growth Strategy

The MAT Business Plan is built on a growth strategy of expanding to four Secondary Academies and five Primary Academies within the next two years. We have therefore responded to approaches from a Cheshire East Primary and two Cheshire East Secondaries. The Board commissioned due diligence reports on two of the schools and approved the incorporation of a fifth Primary into the MAT in April 2017, subject to ratification by their Governing Body and approval by the Regional Schools' Commissioner.

The Secondary option is more complex as one of the options is for re-brokerage (transfer from another Trust) of a school that 'requires improvement'. The Board declined this option in the first instance, pending the exploration of funding opportunities that would bring the capacity and resources required (see below). Exploration of options continue, with a view to confirming decisions on Secondary growth in the spring term. Our intention is to then consolidate for a period of at least two years.

Funding Opportunities

The Government remain committed to the principle of Academisation, through Multi-Academy Trusts, and have announced three new funding streams:

- Sponsor Capacity grants of between £50-£100k
- Multi-Academy Trust Growth grants of between £50-£100k; and
- A School Improvement fund of £140m (criteria for award yet to be announced).

We will make strong bids for all sources of funding and, given our record of success in our establishment phase, are well placed for approval.

In addition we have submitted a bid to the NCTL for £20k for School to School Support for Broken Cross Primary and have been successful in bids for £18.5k in the previous capacity

bidding round. Winsford Principal, Amanda Harrison also negotiated a £15k School Improvement grant from Cheshire West and Chester LA.

At times of significant pressure on school budgets it is clear that the MAT agenda is the main source of School Improvement funding and we will build on our record of success and pursue every opportunity to draw resources into the MAT.

Visit by Regional Schools' Commissioner

The newly appointed Regional Schools' Commissioner, Mrs Christine Quinn, is keen to understand the capacity of MATs in the West Midlands region and has instigated a series of review meetings. We were pleased to welcome her deputy and members of the team responsible for Cheshire last week. The RSC team were impressed with our progress as a MAT and keen to support our plans for measured growth. They left us with a self-assessment framework which will provide useful comparisons with similar sized Trusts.

We will complete a review of:

- Governance
- Supporting School Improvement
- People and Leadership
- Financial sustainability; and
- Risk Management, in the Spring Term.

Focus for next term: The Teaching School Alliance

In addition to the self-evaluation process we intend to publish proposals for bringing the MAT and Teaching School agendas closer together. It makes sense to develop the notion of the Teaching School providing resources for the MAT and delivering the ITT and CPD opportunities via a Macclesfield and Winsford 'hub' model. Look out for further details in the spring term.

Academy Successes

Each Academy will publish end of term newsletters but highlights include:

- Oversubscription of demand for places in the Broken Cross Nursery for 2017.
- Over 200 applications for places in the Winsford Year 7 in 2017 and 192 students joining Year 7 in September.
- Successful entries from Winsford and Fallibroome in the National Shakespeare Festival.
- A very successful community event at Winsford that drew support from a range of community organisations.
- The opening of a first-class 3G floodlit sports facility at Winsford.
- A remarkable production of Footloose at Fallibroome; a stunning TEDxYouth conference and a ranking in the top 20 schools in England for sport and PE in the School Sport magazine.
- Wonderful Christmas concerts and nativity plays in the primaries.

It is also a pleasure to record the success of Mr Darren Christian, Vice Principal at Winsford, who has been appointed Headteacher of Salendine Nook High School in Huddersfield and Mrs Steph Porter, Maths teacher at Fallibroome who is a national champion in the triathlon and has been selected to represent Team GB.

I hope this newsletter brings a flavour of some of our successes and achievements this term. We have built a solid foundation for future success and our in-year tracking data is suggesting positive outcomes at the end of the year.

Governors, teachers, support staff and pupils have my thanks for their contribution to a very successful term and my best wishes for a restful Christmas holiday.

P W Rubery
Executive Principal/CEO
The Fallibroome Trust