



Vanguard Learning Trust Newsletter

Edition 11: December 2022

Indian delegation visit

In November 2022, a delegation of eleven headteachers and chief executive officers (CEOs) from across India visited Vyners School and Ryefield Primary School on Wednesday 9th November 2022 and Thursday 10th November 2022 respectively.

The visit was organised in collaboration with Eduexcellence India and its purpose was for the participants to learn about the English education system as well as providing them with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice.

The day at Vyners began with a presentation by Dr Martina Lecky, CEO, about the history of Vanguard Learning Trust. This was followed by a presentation by Mr Mullings, Headteacher at Vyners, on the school's journey over the past ten years. The delegates were given a tour of the school and also had the opportunity to observe lessons and meet with students. The afternoon included presentations by senior leaders on teaching and learning and staff's professional development.

The day at Ryefield started with reflections on the previous day, including specific areas that the delegates had found useful at Vyners, which included the process for marking students' work, followed by a presentation by Mr Tucker, Ryefield Primary School's Headteacher, on teaching and learning at the school. The delegates then took part in various activities including a visit to the forest school, observing lessons and meeting students.

A highlight for our CEO was at Vyners when the delegates had a discussion with students from all year groups. She commented afterwards that there was a genuine interest by everyone to explore and



The delegation at Vyners School

discuss how cultural experiences can be considered by reflecting on a country's education system; the students' questions were insightful and thoughtful and they were all a credit to themselves and the school. In addition, the delegates loved their visit to the forest school at Ryefield, especially the younger students' reaction to seeing their headteacher.

The delegates found the visits inspirational and shared some extremely positive feedback afterwards.

'Ryefield is a living example of collective intelligence working to make authentic classroom learning happen in synergy.'

Lekhashree Patnaik, Principal St. Xaviers High School

'Vyners is an outstanding school where the strong leadership instils responsibility and accountability of learning in students. It has a committed team of teachers who make sure that students are successful and happy in learning. Each and every corner of the school clearly explains the learning philosophy.'

Father Varghese Puthusserry Pappu, Director, Rajagiri Christu Jayanti Public School

'The visit to Ryefield and Vyners was enlightening and I want to thank Martina Lecky for organising this visit. Under her inspiring leadership, the schools are happy places of learning and the children are taking accountability and ownership of their learning.'

Dr. Kavita Monga, Director, St. Froebel Senior Secondary School



The delegation at Ryefield Primary School

Student activities

Student awards

Each school in the Trust selected students, one from each key stage, except for Field End's who were all in KS2, to receive an award for demonstrating the Trust's value of 'Aspiration - Endless possibilities with limitless boundaries'.

The recipients received a certificate and a Trust pin badge, and a postcard was sent home to their parents/guardians.

The recipients were as follows:

Field End: Madison, Volodya and Rhiyan, KS2

Hermitage: Rian, EYFS, Naira, KS1, Madia, KS2

Ruislip High: Lorena, KS3, Olivia, KS4, Anthony, KS5

Ryefield: Jana, EYFS, Ellia, KS1, Omed, KS2

Vyners: Ibrahim, KS3, Jasmine, KS4, Rawd, KS5



Students on the visit to Cambridge University

We are confident that they are as inspired as the students on last year's trip, following which more than fifteen Ruislip High/Vyners students made an Oxbridge application!

'The day was really insightful, and a great opportunity to see what studying at a top university would be like. I really enjoyed it.'

Ruislip High School student

'The talks were very informative and eye-opening. We had opportunities to ask questions to numerous students and also explore the university buildings and grounds.'

Vyners School student

'It was fantastic to see students from across the Trust fully engaged in discovering what making an Oxbridge application entails. The students asked a number of perceptive and intelligent questions, and were a joy to take on the trip.'

Ben Peacock, Teacher of Geography and Head of Year 13, Ruislip High School

University of Cambridge visit

On Monday 14th November 2022, students from Years 11 and 12 at Ruislip High School and Vyners visited Robinson College at the University of Cambridge. The purpose of the trip was for students to explore what making an Oxbridge application is like as well as to see what life is like studying at Cambridge. The students were a credit to themselves and their schools throughout, asking intelligent and thoughtful questions.

A highlight of the day was a visit from Emma Masters-Oca, a former Ruislip High head student who is currently in her second year studying law at the University of Cambridge. Emma spoke about her experiences applying from Ruislip High, and gave her top tips to the students, who were inspired by her story. After a series of talks, the students had the chance to tour Robinson College and other parts of the university in the afternoon.

Maths Challenge

On Wednesday 19th October 2022, Ruislip High School hosted the second Trust-wide maths challenge with Year 6 and 7 students from all schools in the Trust.

The maths challenge consisted of five rounds including the 24 game in which participants were given four individual numbers and had to make the double digit number 24 using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The other rounds involved financial mathematics, UK maths challenge questions and problem solving.

Student activities and school improvement work

At the end of the competition, there was only one point between the top ten teams which meant it was a very close contest! The gold and silver medals both went to Vyners School teams and the bronze medal went to one of Field End Junior School's teams.

The maths department at Ruislip High School would like to congratulate all the participants of this challenge, especially the winners. They look forward to hosting the event next year. Tia, one of the Year 12 students at Ruislip High School who helped to organise and host the event, commented afterwards:

'We were delighted to see the passion the students have displayed in developing their understanding and knowledge in mathematical problems as well as working together as a team.'



Maths challenge participants

Christmas concert

On Tuesday 13th December 2022, students, staff and family members from the five Trust schools came together at St Giles' Church in Ickenham for the Trust Christmas carol concert. There were musical items and readings from each of the schools as well as a recital of a number of well known hymns by the entire congregation. It was a heartwarming occasion on a cold and chilly afternoon. Thank you to Mr Cullum, Director of Music at Vyners, for organising the event and the Reverend Felicity Davies for being such a welcoming host.



Ryefield students singing at the Christmas concert

'Our children and staff had a wonderful time at the VLT Christmas Concert at St Giles' Church in Ickenham. All members who attended really enjoyed singing, and were delighted to be part of the Trust's annual concert. Our Year 5 children are members of the upper school choir and rehearse weekly with our in-house musician and class teacher Mr Short.'

Parmjit Varaitch, Acting Headteacher, Hermitage Primary School

School improvement work

Let's Think hub

The Trust is continuing to work with Let's Think Forum and this year's course involves termly sessions on developing teachers' pedagogical understanding of the Let's Think methodology through online sessions; observations during the autumn and spring terms with experienced Let's Think tutors; and a conference in the summer term to reflect on the progress that has been made as well as to agree plans for the following academic year. All schools in the Trust are involved in the Let's Think programmes and therefore it is an excellent example of a cross-phase school improvement work.

The course participants have found the sessions and lesson demonstrations very insightful.

'It was a great interactive lesson where the students were all engaged. I found the different techniques, such as being devil's advocate to get the students to think about answers themselves without letting others sway their minds, really useful and I intend to implement this into my Let's Think and curriculum lessons.'

Hannah Jones, Science teacher, Ruislip High School

'Having not been involved in any Let's Think training before, it was an interesting introduction to encouraging children to think about their own thinking and construct new reasoning strategies.'

Amy Reeves, Acting Assistant Headteacher, Hermitage Primary School



Science demonstration lesson at Vyners School

School improvement work and Trust-wide initiatives

School improvement work

Peer reviews

During the course of this academic year, each school in the Trust will host a peer review of reading. The reviews will focus on the following five themes:

- The quality of phonics teaching and its application in the Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1;
- The quality of reading across the curriculum from Early Years to Key Stage 5;
- The quality of reading in English;
- How far all pupils are reading for pleasure; and
- The quality of reading at transition from KS2-3, including support for the students with reading ages below their chronological ages.

Ruislip High and Hermitage had their reviews this term on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th November 2022 respectively, and Field End, Ryefield and Vyners will have theirs during the first half of the spring term. The aim of the reviews is to establish and promote best practice across all of the schools.

Colin Tucker, Executive Headteacher, was involved in both days at Ruislip High and Hermitage and commented afterwards: *'The peer reviews have been an insightful and inspiring way of sharing best practice and moving learning forward. Everyone benefits.'*

TeachMeets

A TeachMeet is an informal meeting for teachers to share good practices, practical innovations and personal insights in teaching. Earlier this term, teachers from across all of the primary schools assembled to share their collective intelligence on how they promote and develop a love of reading. Future TeachMeets will showcase successes and support teachers in ensuring that every child is a reader.

'Meeting, sharing good practice and having an open forum discussion centred on high-quality reading provision and opportunities for our children not only developed our passion for reading as a school but supported a more collective vision for equitable outcomes for all.'

Catherine Tobin, English Lead, Field End Junior School

Trust-wide initiatives

Staff charter

Progress has continued with agreeing a Trust-wide staff charter. The working party, with representatives from all schools and the central team, had its third meeting on Monday 14th November 2022 to discuss the latest draft and agree amendments. The schools' and Trust's leadership teams are currently considering the charter and there are plans for focus groups, with staff from all schools and the central team, to meet and consider the charter during the spring term as part of the preparation to launch it at the beginning of the summer term following trustees' approval. Karen Williams, Business Manager at Vyners, is a member of the working party and reflected that: *'The focus of the group's work has very much been on ensuring the charter will be relevant to all Trust staff, both from a teaching and non-teaching background.'*



Staff charter meeting on 14th November 2022

Environmental sustainability week

The environmental sustainability working party has been meeting regularly this term to progress plans for the first Trust-wide environmental sustainability week which will take place from Monday 27th February to Friday 3rd March 2023.

It will be an exciting week including activities such as a *'how low can you go'* competition which will challenge the Trust's communities to reduce their carbon footprint; an opening ceremony relay on bikes between schools; swap shops for reusing unwanted items; challenges for students in different year groups, including a visit to Ruislip High School's eco hub; and presentations by expert speakers. More information about the week and the activities taking place will be provided early in spring term 2023. Anita Tree, Estates and Facilities Manager, is a member of the working party and commented:

'Working with the team planning our sustainability week has been inspiring. The commitment from colleagues, students and suppliers to provide a fantastic, fun experience shows total engagement to our vision of a green, sustainable education estate which will impact communities long after the events have finished.'



Save the date

Environmental sustainability week
Monday 27th February to Friday 3rd March 2023

More information about the week will be circulated throughout the first half of the spring term including the Trust-wide challenge: *'How low can we go?'*

Save the
date flyer