



Vanguard Learning Trust Newsletter

Edition 13: July 2023

Equality Week

Vanguard Learning Trust's annual Equality Week was held the week beginning Monday 19th June 2023. Schools in the Trust collaborated to provide opportunities for students across all year groups to explore the themes of equality and diversity. In addition to a variety of classroom-based activities, the Trust was delighted to secure the award-winning author of four widely acclaimed non-fiction books on stereotypes, unconscious bias, reproductive justice, and racism, Dr Pragya Agarwal, as the keynote speaker.

Field End students took part in a workshop delivered by Bigfoot Arts Education. A Year 5 student who took part in the workshop commented: *'It made me feel like we can be whatever we want to be.'*

Hermitage hosted a number of talks delivered by members of the wider school community whose jobs challenge gender stereotypes such as a female train driver and a male nurse. The students listened to their life stories and career experiences, and also had the chance to ask questions.

'It gave me a chance to see that different people can do different jobs and as a girl I found that very empowering.'

Year 6 student, Hermitage Primary School

At Ruislip High, Year 7 students took part in a Gamelan music workshop (the traditional ensemble music of Indonesia); Year 8 students took part in a Kathak dance workshop, which is an Indian classical dance; and Year 9 students made Moroccan couscous salad.

'I have never eaten couscous so thank you for introducing me to it. I really liked it and would be keen to have it at home again.'

Year 9 student, Ruislip High School

At Ryefield each year group was assigned an influential woman to focus on, allowing them to explore the achievements and contributions of remarkable women throughout history. As part of the celebration, the school encouraged students to reflect on the importance of women's contributions to society, fostering a sense of appreciation and respect. The work showcased their understanding and enthusiasm for learning about these remarkable women.



Work on influential women by students at Ryefield

Students at Vyners dressed in an array of different outfits, which included sports teams, guides and scouts and traditional cultural dress from numerous countries from around the world.



Students at Ruislip High taking part in the Kathak dance workshop



Students at Vyners in traditional cultural dress

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 *'Equity: opportunities for all to achieve equitable outcomes'*.

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: Charlotte, Avanthi and Antoni, KS2

Hermitage: Roscoe, EYFS, Maarya, KS1, Audrey, KS2

Ruislip High: Christopher, KS3, Lierta, KS4, Meghan, KS5

Ryefield: Samuel, EYFS, Keeva, KS1, Aishbeer, KS2

Vyners: Catherine, KS3, Matheus, KS4, Sarah, KS5



Table tennis tournament

On Wednesday 21st June 2023, the annual Trust-wide table tennis competition took place at Field End Junior School. Teams comprised Year 7 students from Ruislip High and Year 6 students from Field End, Hermitage and Oak Farm, with all teams having some great first-time players. There was fierce competition and every student took home a medal.

The overall winners of the tournament were Field End Junior School. A great day was had by all the students who took part and Mr Williamson, Year 6 teacher, is thanked for organising a wonderful event.

'It was great to have children from Oak Farm getting involved in a Vanguard Learning Trust event; there was a friendly atmosphere that made our children feel welcomed and motivated to compete in a new sport. Our children really enjoyed competing against the other schools and working together to earn medals, which they wore with pride back in school!'

Mr Pope, Oak farm Junior School



All the table tennis teams together

'We had a great time playing the other schools in the Trust, and it got even better as Field End Juniors won the tournament this year.'

Year 6 student, Field End Junior School

'I was nervous at first as I am not a great table tennis player but I grew in confidence as the tournament went on and I ended up winning quite a few games! I had a really good time.'

Year 7 student, Ruislip High School

Debating competition

Ryefield hosted an exhilarating inter-school debating competition that brought together some of the brightest minds from the schools within the Trust. The event showcased the students' eloquence, critical thinking, and persuasive skills as they tackled thought-provoking motions.

The debate topics included whether or not being famous is positive; whether the voting age should be lowered to 12; and the impact of digital technology on children's lives.

The final was between Ryefield and Vyners, with Vyners' students making the most compelling argument. Throughout the competition, students demonstrated exceptional research, critical analysis, and public-speaking skills. The debates fostered intellectual growth, encouraging students to consider various perspectives and construct well-reasoned arguments. Ultimately, the Trust-wide debating competition proved to be a platform where students thrived and honed their skills in the art of persuasion.

'It was really interesting to see how the older students debated. The way they linked their arguments to the world helped make their ideas make sense.'

Year 6 student, Ryefield Primary School

School improvement work

Let's Think conference

The Let's Think conference took place on Wednesday 28th June 2023 at Brunel University; the programme for the morning involved three sessions which were a review of the year regarding professional development; lesson simulations of the classroom methodology; and a discussion on the plans for next year. The highlight was the lesson simulations as participants and the tutors took part in activities which allowed them to consider students' reasoning, in particular how students respond to lesson challenges.

'I enjoyed the science demonstration and the English poem/picture correlation. I can see how the right kind of questioning can lead the students to solve the problem on their own.'

Ms Malegaonkar, Vyners School

'I thought it was very useful. I feel it would be beneficial for all teachers within the Trust, especially primary teachers, to be given the same information as it helped to really understand how Let's Think works and how we, as teachers, can deliver sessions better.'

Ms Stephen, Hermitage Primary School



Let's Think conference



Delegates reflecting on the course this year

Inclusion project

A new planning group, involving inclusion champions (ICs), has now been formed for this exciting new Trust-wide project. The group is led by Ms Hill, Senior Deputy Headteacher, Ruislip High School who chairs the SENCo forum. Dr Keith Tysoe, the Trust's SEND advisor, is part of the planning group, along with Mrs Varaitch, Head of School, Hermitage Primary School. The group is being enriched by the expert advice and active involvement of Margaret Mulholland who has a national profile in inclusion. The project will last throughout the next academic year. It was launched in June 2023 with the first session led by Margaret with the ICs, focusing on ensuring systems and processes enable students who find learning hard to achieve. The ICs are now auditing provision in individual schools and identifying the areas of priority to focus on over the coming year.

'It was a really thought-provoking session and Margaret clearly had some real wisdom to share with regards to inclusion within the educational setting. I am looking forward to helping implement some of her ideas here at Ruislip and looking forward to working more closely with other members of Vanguard Learning Trust.'

Mr Maud, Ruislip High School

'Being a part of the inclusion project is a privilege. It was great to attend the first meeting with the other schools in the Trust. Moreover, I was inspired and in awe of the knowledge and expertise that Margaret shared with us on the day; it definitely led to thinking about the successes we already have at Hermitage Primary School and a moment of reflection too. I look forward to working with Margaret and the wider team for this inclusion project, as well as being part of the shift in mindset when we think of being inclusive.'

Ms Rowland, Hermitage Primary School

School improvement work and governance day

Virtual reading presentation

Following this year's reading peer reviews, the Trust's primary schools presented aspects of their reading programme that were identified as significant strengths by each school's review team on Tuesday 13th June 2023. Participants came from each of the Trust schools with representation from primary and secondary school colleagues as well as Oak Farm Primary School.

Mrs Varaitch, Head of School at Hermitage Primary School, gave a presentation on developing reading fluency and prosody. She emphasised the importance of fluency and accuracy, and clarified that this is not the same as reading prosody. Reading aloud to children is one of the most important ways of developing prosody, which is essential for language comprehension in reading.

Mrs Hope, Opening Doors reading lead at Ryefield Primary School, focused on the use of archaic texts in the development of reading and writing skills. Of particular note is the way that language comprehension for primary-aged children can be tackled through planned radial questions.

Governance day

The summer Trust-wide governance day was held on Wednesday 28th June 2023. The morning comprised school-based activities which focused on the theme of student voice and the afternoon session was held at Brunel University where everyone came together.

The afternoon session started with reflections on the morning session provided by governors from each school. This was followed by presentations from staff who have been involved in collaborative projects throughout the year. Martina Lecky, Chief



Project lead staff giving their presentation

Executive Officer, then gave a review of the year and shared the priorities for next year. Finally, presentations were made to Janet Beater, who is leaving the Trust after many years as Company Secretary, and Damian Brooks, a teacher at Vyners School who received a long-service award for 25 years' service. The day ended with an afternoon reception enjoyed by all.

There was representation from the Trust's governors, members, trustees and central team at the morning and afternoon sessions and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.



Janet Beater being presented with flowers



Mr Brooks receiving his long-service award

'It was a great honour to attend governance day and receive recognition for long service. I am so lucky to have found a workplace where I count my colleagues among my friends, and I wake up looking forward to a day at work.'

Damian Brooks, Vyners School

'Having a structured session was really useful. Student voice is so important and the children were enthused and forthcoming in sharing their thoughts and ideas. I was so impressed with the Year 3 and 4 children who for such little people were articulate and confident in putting forward their ideas.'

Raj Pragji, Vice-chair of Governors, Field End Junior School

'I find these opportunities now feel like a Vanguard Trust community rather than different communities coming together.'

Claire Clarke, Vice-chair of Governors, Vyners School

'As part of the central finance team, it was lovely to listen to the feedback from governors about the morning visits and to also hear from staff about the positive impact being part of a Trust is having on pupils' learning and staff development.'

Anita Evans, Chief Finance Officer