

The magazine of Creative Education Trust schools

Issue no.14 March 2019

Connected



Spoilt For Choice

Prizewinning sixth-form speeches and essays

Dream Team

14 Curriculum Leads write Knowledge Connected year 8 lessons

Comedy, Tragedy, History

Shakespeare 9 x 9

The Game of More and Less

Alison Mobbs reports on a new timetable

Universal Betterment

Nicole McCartney, Director of School Improvement



HOT-A-TWEET

140 characters from the Chief Executive

I hope the addition of new member schools in Nottingham and Wellingborough prompts more joint celebrations such as the wonderful Great Yarmouth Schools' carol service.

Cross-Trust events

13 March Milton Keynes Academy
Sixth-form Creative Collaboration
Prize launch

13 March Swedenborg House, London
English Partnership Group meeting

14 March Harpfield, Stoke-on-Trent
Primary Headteachers' meeting

28 March CET Head Office, London
Principals' meeting

29 March Abbeyfield, Northampton
Primaries' Day of Change

4 April Weavers, Wellingborough
Teaching Leaders participants' conference

29 April Bulwell, Nottingham
Day of Song (Bulwell and Milton Keynes)

1 May CET secondary schools
Year 8 Knowledge Connected Key
Concept Day of Human Interaction

16 May CET Head Office, London
Principals' meeting

23 May Wroughton, Norfolk
Primary Headteachers' meeting

O Come All Ye Faithful



The traditional Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

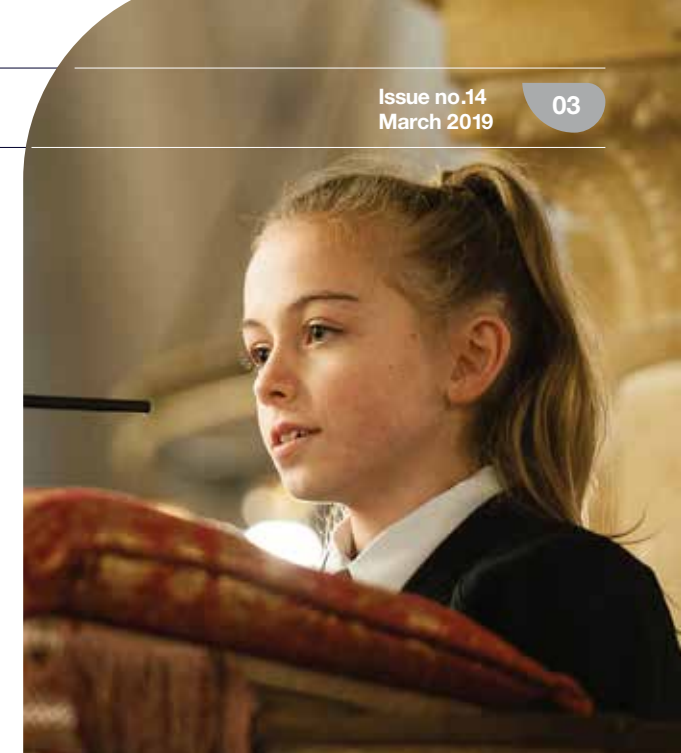
was invented at the close of the First World War as a means to bring variety and pleasure to church worship at Christmas. The Creative

Education Trust Great Yarmouth schools' carol service in Great Yarmouth Minster drew over 800 parents, students and dignitaries to a centennial, adapted service of traditional carols and readings. Four choirs, two vocal soloists and an impressive number of instrumental players – including the Lynn Grove Academy Organ Scholar, Jamie Harrison – made for a rich and memorable occasion.

In this issue we also invite you to sample the winning entries from this year's sixth-form competitions in public speaking and essay writing; survey the nine marvellous half-hour plays that made up our Shakespeare festival and consider new pedagogical ideas from Alison Mobbs, Nicole McCartney and the 14 year 8 Curriculum Leads for Knowledge Connected.

Finally, the warmest of welcomes to our two new member schools: Ellis Guilford in Nottingham, and Wrenn, Weavers' neighbour in Wellingborough.

Emily Campbell
Director of Programmes



Anticlockwise from lower left:
The candlelit procession;
Lamin Njie (Wroughton) reads
the second lesson; Freya Notman
(Woodlands) reads the third lesson.



Spoilt for Choice

Right: **Henschel Freduah-Agyemang (Abbeyfield)**, winner of the 2018 public speaking prize.

Six finalists delivered provocative responses to this year's theme in the annual sixth-form public speaking competition, treating the audience to a wide range of interpretations, or perhaps rather, ways in which we could be said to be spoilt by that cornerstone of modern life, choice.

Weavers' Chelsea Bingham articulated a global situation of anxiety brought on by an excess of consumer choice and made manifest in a new psychological diagnosis of "post-decision regret". In the aftermath of the armistice centenary commemorations, Lachwan Barlow of the Milton Keynes Academy reminded everyone that we should not forget or dismiss – in the stream of revisionist history – the causes for which so many lives were lost. Amy Stafford (Ash Green) presented big ideas with a light touch; a critique of her generation's preoccupation with celebrity and news, delivered with kindness and an excellent turn of phrase: we have been, she conjectured, "paralysed by our liberty". Zane Folorunso (Bulwell) made a powerful and persuasive argument against the abusive garment production practices that give us wardrobe choices unimaginable to earlier generations. Eddie Jenkins of the Hart School entertained the audience with his reports of government-enforced legislation regarding haircuts in North Korea and first names in Sweden, reminding us that personal choice is contested even in the most apparently liberal of societies.

Henschel Freduah-Agyemang of Abbeyfield was lionised by the jury as born to the lectern; preacherly in his vocabulary of strange tongues and sacrifice; winsome in his autobiographical confidences. A former bad boy (by his own admission), he recognised after yet another afternoon in the isolation unit that he was wasting his choices. Rather than striving to be a ringleader, he urged us all instead to "run with those who make you the weakest link in the chain".

Our guest panellist Hashi Mohamed, barrister and regular BBC Radio commentator on social mobility, praised each speaker thoughtfully in turn before telling the audience about his own advancement, from immigrant child with refugee status and no English, to eloquent professional in the midst of two great but perennially contested bastions of merit and mettle – the bar and the BBC.

From Henschel's speech on Spoilt for Choice:

Choice can be likened to oxygen. And we are bathing in a sea of oxygen. Just as oxygen allows us to live, choices allow us to live like who we were meant to be, like who we want to be. Do we breathe it all in or hold our breath? Many worldwide are pleading for breath. What are you doing with the choices you have, while children in Mali – although they're suffocating – run 20 miles to school each day?

Among the people I associate with, I always think I'm doing a lot or that I am working hard because I'm doing more than those around me – making more choices to move myself forward than they are. So I must be doing well, right? But I've realised that I should be the weakest link in my chain of association, because that will make me work harder, take more opportunities and make more choices. Think about it this way: if you run with slow people, you will always win, you'd have no reason to work hard. But think if you were to run with professional runners, if you were to run with Usain Bolt, you'd lose, you'd tire, but you would have every reason to work harder, to run faster, to improve yourself. You'd be making the decision to push yourself not just to be the best, but to beat the best.

I don't want to reach the end of my journey regretting the choices I didn't make or the chances I didn't take. I want to feel pride, not shame and disappointment. How do you want to feel at the end of your journey? I urge you ladies and gentlemen – do not run with those who are spoilt for choice. Run with those that make you seem like you're not trying hard enough, so that you have to push further, to run faster, to keep up.

And choose before you run out of oxygen, because without it you cannot run at all.

"You'd lose, you'd tire, but you would have every reason to work harder"

The judges:
Kirsty Dias, Hashi Mohamed
and **Nicole McCartney**

Sixth-form writers determine their own theme for the 1,500-word essay. Every entrant received one-to-one tuition and written feedback, with the shortlist invited to revise their essay in the light of the judges' comments. This year's shortlist ranged over feminism, Nazism, transhumanism, collectively produced Korean pop music, the economics of football and the overuse of antibiotics.

The two joint-winning essays are excerpted here. Ayo Arowolo's (Abbeyfield) on our tyranny by social media was judged by the panel to be a fresh take on a familiar subject written in remarkably literate style. Natasha Fyfe's (Weavers) interrogation of the perverse enjoyment of suffering that has characterised drama and storytelling since Ancient Greek tragedy, was ambitious and impressively researched.

We are, as always, grateful to our judges, Oxford professor of classics Dr Jonathan Katz, science writer Hugh Aldersey-Williams and Kate Bassett, biographer, critic and Literary Advisor to the Chichester Festival Theatre.

From Ayo Arowolo's essay *The Curse of Social Media*

Every time we post on these sites we're trying to portray an image, that is, our best self, a persona. With every tweet, status and picture we upload we are contributing to this persona that we've created. We spend ages trying to come up with a funny tweet to elevate the humour of this persona, or hundreds of takes trying to get the perfect selfies to elevate its beauty. Because we care about people's opinions of us, the more we post, the more we subconsciously condition our brain to depend on the judgement of others. Everything we leave out or delete contributes to this persona or image we're trying to create as much as what we insert or add – we'll delete a picture if we think we look ugly, or a boring tweet to maintain the image that we're endlessly funny. Wanting to be judged positively leads us to place our self-esteem in the hands of others. This is dangerous because we get attached to our persona; we let it become our identity, and sacrifice our real lives trying to protect it. This traps us because no matter how much we try to convince ourselves of it, the fabricated identity isn't who we truly are. For some of us this can destroy our self-worth – the real us doesn't match up with the 'us' we construct, making us feel lesser for not being able to adopt it unflinchingly.

Constantly exposed to everyone else's 'best self', it seems to us that we're not up to par, although it's a par that doesn't exist.

From Natasha Fyfe's essay *Our Addiction to Suffering*

Catharsis occurs at the end of all successful tragedies when the two emotions of pity and fear are released. As a result, an audience will remember the experience as positive. We fear for our own lives, hoping that the fate depicted in the story will not happen to us, while pitying the likeable and relatable characters who suffer. The sadness we experience lets us forget our own problems. We purge ourselves of pent-up thoughts and frustrations and feel rejuvenated. Although our modern-day protagonists are not as elevated as Shakespeare's famous tragic hero kings and warriors, the realisation of the tragic hero's imperfections still causes us to feel sorrow. The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet – read as a script, performed in the theatre and adapted into modern-day film – speaks to the hearts of people across centuries and worldwide. Romeo and Juliet's tragic change of fortune causes an eruption of fear as we are tormented by the thought that one day we may be split from the ones we love. The calamitous denouement caused by Romeo's rashness reminds us of our own imperfections of character, and strengthens the pity we feel towards the lovers. Our addiction to suffering is an addiction to catharsis – the process that liberates the intensity of our emotions.

Universal Betterment

An interview with Nicole McCartney, Director of School Improvement and Secondary Education

In your own words, what is school improvement?

I think the phrase 'school improvement' is often used to mean 'fixing that which is broken'. In any well-led school it should mean a cyclical, self-sustaining process of doing, evaluating impact, improving, doing and so on. The improvement then becomes a consistent feature of quality practice and reflection. The benefit of being in a multi-academy trust is that those processes are shared across a range of organisations and propel each other like gears in a watch.

Why did you become a teacher?

I grew up in quite difficult circumstances and as much as I wanted to learn as a child, I did not have a quality education available to me. It took a lot of hard work to redress those failings when I did finally reach university, and I was keen to use my experience and my love of literature to become a great teacher.

What do you know about education from experience?

I know two things. Firstly, that high expectations are crucial; secondly that a varied range of experiences must be available to children.

How do these relate to your definition of school improvement?

If you have high expectations of everything, you're constantly looking to improve practice and provision, to enhance leadership and leadership capacity; and to ensure that schools are places that children want to be.

Tell us about the best educational practice you ever witnessed

I once visited a year 10 photography lesson in the company of an Ofsted inspector. There was a very wide range of ability in the class. The children walked in, grabbed their own folders and began to create absolutely brilliant work. It was clear that they knew what they were doing, and more importantly why they were doing it. This is the only time I have ever seen a teacher acting purely as a facilitator. Though the teacher spoke individually to pupils, she never once addressed the whole class. I was a bit anxious that the inspector might not be seeing what I was seeing. Clearly he was: the lesson was graded 'Outstanding'.

What drew you to Creative Education Trust?

The vision was clear and attractive to me – focused on quality of provision and quality of experience for the children in our schools. I knew the focus on Knowledge Connected and creativity would mean that I would not be faced with a narrow curriculum or an exam factory.

What's the most important strategic thing for you in 2019?

I'm really intent upon delivering our Leadership Development Programme. We need to use the outstanding leaders we currently have to grow our next generation of leaders who are passionate about everything that makes Creative Education Trust tick and will realise the vision with us.



The Game of More and Less

100 days in and counting, *Alison Mobbs* reports on the new timetable at Lynn Grove



How do we reconcile doing more with less while tackling the very pressing concerns relating to excessive workload? We know working together raises standards, motivates and cuts workload, but can we find more time for our teachers to work collaboratively without having a negative effect on our learners? Is there time in the school day that we could use more efficiently for everyone's benefit? Is there anything we can do to streamline learning for our pupils whose educational experience is increasingly driven by the demands of exam-based final assessment? These were the questions that drove our thinking as we embarked on a curriculum review earlier this year.

At Lynn Grove we had a long-standing attachment to the weekly 30-period timetable giving us six lessons of 50 minutes a day. There are, without doubt, many advantages to this model; the weekly timetable for a start, lunch at a sensible time in the middle of the day and regular lessons – daily for the core subjects. True, period 6 can feel like very hard work, true, the additional movement round the school does waste time, true, it can be hard to fit everything into a 50-minute lesson, but on balance it worked for us. It worked particularly in the days when class sizes were smaller and teacher contact ratios were less demanding. But these were beginning to feel like things of the past. It was time for a careful review.

Continued on page 13 ►

Romeo and Juliet
Weavers Academy

Macbeth
Caister Academy

The Taming of the Shrew
Abbeyfield School

Julius Caesar
Lynn Grove Academy

A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Hart School

Macbeth
The Milton Keynes Academy

A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Bulwell Academy

Romeo and Juliet
Thistley Hough Academy

The Merchant of Venice
Ash Green School



SHAKESPEARE 9x9: COMEDY, TRAGEDY & HISTORY

Background: the main prop of *The Hart School's Dream*, a striped parachute

Inset, from top: *Darragh Kemish* and *Chennai Pink* as *Romeo and Juliet* (*Weavers*)

Hannah Fearn, *Andreea-Denisa Olaru* and *Nyree Petrie* as *The Three Witches* in *Macbeth* (*Milton Keynes*)

The robustness of a Shakespeare play, its messages prevailing across the centuries through an astonishing range of settings and interpretations, was once again revealed in our two-day festival of Shakespeare: nine plays performed back-to-back in expertly abridged half-hour versions.

The opportunity to witness multiple versions of a single play by different directors is one of the fascinating aspects of Creative Education Trust's project. While Nicky Evans' *Romeo and Juliet* for Thistley Hough recast the Montague and Capulet warfare as "modern-day high-school rivalry ending in tragedy", Laura Marriott's version for Weavers distilled the drama elegantly and ingeniously around a central frame. One of the two 2018 *Macbeths* was also set by Kristal Watkins for Milton Keynes Academy in a school classroom; the overweening Scot's ascent to monarchy construed as a popularity contest played out around a school dustbin. Caister's *Macbeth*, directed by Helen Wells, unfolded as "a timeless reminder of how evil can take root in the imagination of a good and loyal person." Bulwell's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* showed off both acting talent and imaginative design focused on fantastical headgear – a horned Puck and Oberon and elaborately masked faeries – while the Hart School's *Dream* was a tour de force of circus-themed invention. The main prop, a striped parachute, morphed ingeniously under the cast's control from big top to faery bower to rehearsal tent for Peter Quince and the mechanicals.

Top, centre:
Charlie Mullin as Bottom in
A Midsummer Night's Dream

Inset, top row:
Angel Sharrard as Helena in
A Midsummer Night's Dream (**Bulwell**)
Chennai Pink as Juliet with **Vonnie Tapster**
and **Arpana Kumari** as her nurses in
Romeo and Juliet (**Weavers**)
Elle Bousfield as Portia and
Poppy-Louise Whitaker as Nerissa in
The Merchant of Venice (**Ash Green**)
The cast of *Romeo and Juliet*
(**Thistley Hough**)



Inset, bottom row:
Malakai Higginson as Bassanio
and **Cole Sheehan** as Antonio in
The Merchant of Venice (**Ash Green**)
Lily Leatherhead and **Kayla
Leonardi** as Titania and Bottom in
A Midsummer Night's Dream (**Bulwell**)
Rhys Williams as Puck in
A Midsummer Night's Dream (**Hart**)
Sarah-Jane Noble as *Julius Caesar*
meets her fate (**Lynn Grove**)

Main picture:
Aday Lambarki-Lopez as Puck and
Billy Dunks-Hopper as Oberon in
A Midsummer Night's Dream (**Bulwell**)



Rachael Dedman, directing *The Taming of the Shrew* for Abbeyfield, promised “a twist on the original play, which was written when it would have been perfectly acceptable to end with a strong-willed woman getting her spirit curbed by a man”. Changing the gender of the lead characters exposed the coarseness of ‘Cat’s’ treatment at the hands of his opposite number and her cronies. The themes and politics of Julius Caesar were modernised by Chris Dungan for a contemporary audience. Confident and moving performances directed by Rebecca James brought the second Creative Education Trust Day of Shakespeare to an arresting close in Ash Green’s *Merchant of Venice*.

Many thanks are due to Siona Robson, Principal of Abbeyfield School, who hosted the festival in the superbly appointed Abbeyfield theatre under the technical direction of Richard Walker-Glen and his team.



Main picture:
Rosie Amundsen as Lady Macbeth
in *Macbeth* (Milton Keynes)

Inset, from top:
Isla Marshal as Macduff and **Sonny King** as Macbeth, with **Ruth Agua Marquina** behind. *Macbeth* (Caister)

Paris Read, Trinity Ward, Corina Patulea, Jasmine West and **Charis Phillips** in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Abbeyfield)

Sarah-Jane Noble as Caesar and **Misha Marjoram** as Decius
in *Julius Caesar* (Lynn Grove)

“Consistency is the holy grail – can department leaders be sure that every child gets the same deal?”

The first question we asked ourselves was, can we fit in everything we need if we adopt a five-period day; in fact can we fit everything we need to in a 24-period week? Then we asked how we could redress reduced time with improved quality. We had heard about highly successful schools that had driven improvement by finding a way to free-up time for an extended weekly period of professional development. Numerous curriculum plans later, we arrived at a model that we believe is going to meet all our requirements.

In September, we adopted a five-period day, four days per week with four periods on a Wednesday. One lesson each day will last 75 minutes; the rest will be 60 minutes. On Wednesdays, school will end at 2pm for our pupils and all teachers will go straight in to a timetabled continuing professional development (CPD) period.

Directed time, which has been on a Monday ever since directed time was ‘invented’, will move to Wednesday, giving us two hours a week to work collaboratively on activities broadly described as professional development, with shared planning, and careful moderation high on the agenda. “Here’s the scheme of work, get on with it” is an experience most teachers will be familiar with – but it really isn’t good enough and we are determined that it won’t be a feature of professional life at Lynn Grove in the future. Consistency is the holy grail for all department leaders – can they be sure that every child in their department gets the same deal? Extending the time available to work as a department will, we believe, make this aspiration a bit easier to achieve.

Pupils will benefit from the teachers’ professional development, but we were determined that there should be no direct cost to them in contact time. We have achieved this; in fact, we’ve increased overall teaching time by 15 minutes a week. And we can see other advantages for the pupils in an earlier end to lessons one day a week: with as many fixtures, music lessons and rehearsals as possible on a Wednesday, and for those pupils who want or need to stay at school we will run homework clubs and catch-up classes in this slot too.

When planning the curriculum, we looked at the pupil experience across the five-year course and took the view that the distinction between key stage 3 and key stage 4 is increasingly irrelevant. We’ve preserved the range of option subjects, giving pupils an element of choice as they move into year 10. As part of Creative Education Trust and true to our belief that pupils should have multiple opportunities to discover what they’re good at, we’ve preserved our commitment to a broad liberal arts education.

Timetablers will be wondering how we managed to fit the proverbial quart into the pint pot. We moved to a two-week timetable to give us sufficient ‘slots’ to fit everything in. We decided to teach ICT across the curriculum in the lower school. We took a fresh look at our current religious and social education offer. Next year we will teach the social element through form tutor time and will teach religious education fortnightly but enriched through a programme of specialist visitors to school and carefully devised visits out of school.

During the planning stage we consulted staff and parents on their views and took care to make sure that we explained in detail the rationale for the plans; how the changes would impact on every year group and how we would evaluate that impact. The feedback we have received has been thoughtful and positive.

Any innovation brings challenges and unexpected consequences. We will be evaluating the changes carefully. We will need to track ICT provision in the lower school diligently. Team leaders will need to plan very carefully to make sure they get the best out of their precious additional professional development time. We will need to scrutinise the provision of RE – freeing it from the weekly 50-minute lesson must be turned into an advantage. We will need to plan our lessons differently – particularly the 75-minute lessons – and the impact of this change will need to be monitored. We will need to be vigilant and respond to unexpected consequences too as they arise. But whatever happens, we are optimistic that we have found a way to preserve standards with fewer resources; and we’ve done something real to chip away at the workload in a way that will bring daily benefit to our pupils.



Successes and special commendations

Students



To **Kieran Allen**, year 9 at **Bulwell**, who scooped two Nottingham Sea Cadets trophies for 100% attendance and community service.

To **Ash Green's** year 7 5-a-side football team, who will represent Nuneaton and Bedworth in the Midlands Area finals.



To the **Weavers** student ensembles who performed at the Winter Music concert to showcase the curriculum, culminating in *This is Me* from *The Greatest Showman*.

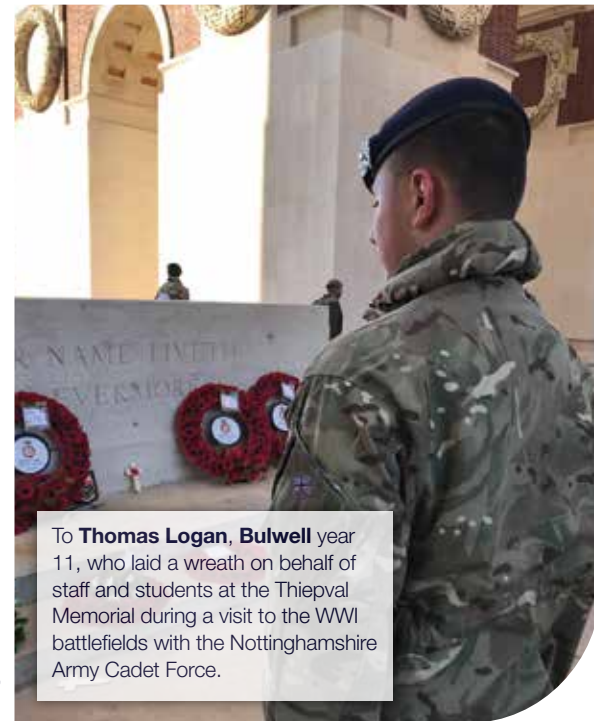


To **Lewis Melvin** and **Luke Salzman**, **Ash Green**, who have received offers from Lincoln College, Oxford to study Maths and Physics respectively.

To **Loleta-Rose Spencer** at **Weavers** who came first in her category at the inaugural Boxing Womens' Winter Box Cup, amidst gold medallist boxers from all over the world.



To **Rheia Doody** at **Bulwell**, whose clear head, calm voice and precise knowledge of her best friend Chloe's epilepsy won her the Nottingham Evening Post Heroes award.



To **Thomas Logan**, **Bulwell** year 11, who laid a wreath on behalf of staff and students at the Thiepval Memorial during a visit to the WWI battlefields with the Nottinghamshire Army Cadet Force.

To **Ash Green**, whose whole-school initiative to support LGBTQ students has been launched in pursuit of a truly inclusive environment that mirrors society's diversity.



and staff



To **Mrs Strong**, newly appointed Principal at **Bulwell** for her leading role as 'Security Guard Strong' in the school's Christmas pantomime *Robin Hood and the Seven Dwarfs*.

To current and former students at **Caister**, whose academic excellence and contributions to the school community were honoured at the Awards Evening (pictured: **Isabella Weller**, **Ben Moore** and **Ella Bishop**).



To **Caister** students who joined 12 other schools for the Great Yarmouth Schools' Music Association's 68th Festival of Carols in Great Yarmouth Minster.



To year 8 *In Harmony* students at **Thistley Hough**, above, whose performance for Willows Primary School included a brass fanfare, an introduction to the instrument families and a vocal workshop.



To **Thistley Hough** for being named the happiest high school in Britain. A panel of judges from Laughology at the National Happiness Awards recognised the school's commitment to community life, positive relationships, character-building and confidence.

Season of Goodwill

To **Caister**, for several impressive charitable and fundraising initiatives in the lead up to Christmas: £123 raised by the School Council towards a printer for Thogoto Primary school in Kenya, sent off with messages from pupils and donations of stationery; Christmas Gift Appeal proceeds donated to the Children's and Young People's ward at James Paget University Hospital; and a Christmas tea party for senior citizens.



Ash Green raised £322 for Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day, below; while the sixth-form students organised a host of fundraising events and a visit for Health and Social Care students to Haven Nursing Home, above.



Knowledge Connected

By the time this issue of *Connected* is printed, 1,000 year 8 students in nine secondary schools will have completed the inaugural Knowledge Connected day simultaneously. Using lesson plans specially authored for the Trust by a team of curriculum leads nominated for their subject expertise and conceptual agility, every year 8 lesson in every school on 12 February 2019 was prompted by the concept of Pattern.

This is a summary of the range of learning experiences delivered on that day with a common learning outcome: "Students can recognise a range of patterns and say how they are generated."



Sandip Dosanjh
Hart

Computing
learning outcome
I understand how a computer code makes a pattern continue without variation



Emma Ingham
Caister

English learning outcome
I can recognise patterns of language and imagery in texts (semantic fields) and I can create a semantic field of my own



Charlotte Cowley
Hart

Dance learning outcome
I can set up, develop, vary and break the patterns in a dance

Drama learning outcome
I can identify and use the techniques that artists use to build and release tension within a dramatic scene



Kelly Giles Abbeyfield

Art learning outcome
I can recognise a work of Pop Art because I know the features and techniques that pop artists use



Tracy Warrener
Thistley Hough

Design and Technology
learning outcome
I can make the rules to generate a surface pattern

Food and Nutrition
learning outcome
I can establish rules to standardise the production of food items



Ariane Nicholls
Lynn Grove

Geography
learning outcome
I can identify 'push' and 'pull' factors that generate patterns of international migration



Chris Weight
Caister

History
learning outcome
I can infer historical information from the patterns of data in historical sources



Marie-Claire d'Arcy-Barron
Hart

Modern Foreign Languages
learning outcome
I can identify the part of the verb that indicates the perfect tense in four different languages



Stephen Darby
Milton Keynes

Music learning outcome
I can identify patterns in music and create my own composition by using the technique of phase-shifting



Cheryl Smith
Weavers

PE learning outcome
I can create a dance sequence of set movements and use choreographic tools to make it more interesting



Chris Dillon
Thistley Hough

Gareth Long
Ash Green

Maths learning outcome
I can give examples of the Golden Ratio in nature and the man-made world, and explain how it relates to the Fibonacci sequence of numbers

Andrew Dudley
Ash Green

Religious Studies
learning outcome
I can identify the patterns of religious observance across several faiths

Kirstin McRae-Smith
Weavers

Science learning outcome
I can group substances by their properties (of density, atomic radius and boiling point) and use my groupings as an example of pattern in science





Great Estates

An interview with *Jon Ward*, appointed in September as Head of Estates & Facilities for Creative Education Trust

In your own words, what are you doing for Creative Education Trust?

First and foremost, we've been working to ensure our schools are well-maintained, safe and fit for purpose so that they support great outcomes for pupils. As the Trust has grown, a more robust and systemic set of management arrangements are required to collate and monitor the data. Since September we've completed a self-assessment for each school on Health and Safety, maintenance and compliance. We've identified several opportunities to improve regimes and tighten up some of our policies. We have a list of about 70 capital investment projects, from key Health and Safety issues to new windows, boilers, decoration and refurbishments. As you would expect, we've also been gathering an overview of the quality and cost of site support, catering and cleaning services to our schools in pursuit of better quality and efficiency. We've embarked upon detailed condition surveys for a small number of schools where the need is greatest and are now working towards a capital investment programme for these.

What's your business background?

I've been working with school estates and facilities since 2007, on more than 50 academy projects for a range of multi-academy trusts. In 2017 I was recruited as a consultant by Creative Education Trust to manage the construction of the new Michael Dickson Building for Ash Green. Prior to 2007 I worked on regeneration projects for the London Development Agency and before that had been in aerospace engineering, running factories to make aircraft and automotive components.

How would you explain your responsibilities in words that everyone can understand?

All school environments and their systems are designed around design and safety standards laid down by the Department for Education. Schools are all very different in their layout and design, and this is often the case with systems too, so maintaining schools is a complex task. Each building has to be known and understood – there are over 200 statutory regulations for equipment alone and our job is to ensure we meet them all. There are differences in design and layout for primary and secondary schools – different kinds of spaces inside and outside; toilets at different heights – our job is to make sure they're all safe, well-managed, clean and tidy environments for learning.

How has the context changed since you first began working with schools?

Back in 2007 it was normal for new sponsored academies to get new buildings under the old Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative. These were often grand with lots of space and facilities; expensive too. Nowadays we see fewer new buildings and expect older ones to last longer. The costs of running schools – heating and lighting, maintaining and upgrading IT services, servicing equipment – only go up. The older buildings cause more challenges, but fortunately materials technology changes too. For instance, we're planning to install air source heat pumps to supply new boilers – technology that has only emerged recently – and you will start to see more LED lighting.

Tell us about a beautiful school you've seen.

It's in the eye of the beholder, but I really do like many of ours. Wroughton Junior was designed with a dual purpose after the Second World War, doubling as a back-up hospital. The grand façade at the Wrenn, the amphitheatre at Bulwell, the impressive vista of Milton Keynes and the new Michael Dickson building at Ash Green are all great, but each school retains its own character. I've worked on some great looking schools but most impressive is when you can see how the children interact with the facilities because they're keen to learn. I've recently been reminded that children look forward to break times as much as lessons – we need to recognise how children can talk and consolidate their learning during social time. The schools of the future will be sustainable and energy efficient and they'll have robots cleaning the corridors, but above all, they've got to be really nice places to learn.

Money's really tight. What can we do?

We can ensure our heating, water and electricity systems work as they should, our systems are tested frequently and we undertake repairs when we need to. We can buy-in specialist contracting support. We can try to benefit from some capital funding in addition to revenue income, and this year we have funding to support health initiatives too. We can save money by buying more wisely, helping schools to budget carefully and get the best deals. All this contributes to children having the best possible experience of education.



Clockwise from left, continued from page 3: **Jessica Tait (Lynn Grove)** reads the fourth lesson; **Patrick Farrell (Caister)** reads the fifth lesson; the candlelit procession; the joint choir of **Lynn Grove** and **Caister** sing *Mary Did You Know?*; staff members from **Lynn Grove** and **Caister**

Creative Education Trust inspires and enables young people to build successful lives on foundations of learning, resilience and employability.

Creative Education Trust is a growing multi-academy trust educating over 13,000 children in England.

Creative Education Trust schools are transformed by integrating a knowledge-rich curriculum with skills and creativity.



Creative Education Trust
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Finalists in the Creative Education Trust sixth-form essay and public speaking competitions outside Swedenborg House in London.