

The magazine of Creative Education Trust schools

Issue no.9 July 2017

Connected



The Goods

Four new Ofsted inspections

Getting Ahead

A new cohort of Teaching Leaders

All Change!

World-changing ideas from Year 5

A Place to Learn

Making the best of our estates and property



Contagious ideas



Connected is the Creative Education Trust's vehicle for sharing news and good ideas across the network of schools. In issue no.9:

Years of dedicated work and unwavering faith in the potential of

young people paid off, as the most recent round of Ofsted inspections classified more than half of Creative Education Trust schools as good. *Connected* interviews several of the new cohort of talented Teaching Leaders about their projects across the academic spectrum of subjects, and gleans reflection from those coming to the end of their certification. The world-changing propositions inspired in our primary schools by the creative agency 7billionideas take the centre spread.

Connected introduces readers to the new marketing campaign for Ash Green and new architectural projects in Great Yarmouth and Coventry. We remind readers of the rich programme of cross-trust events unfolding in the summer term – opportunities for young people to pitch their skills against their counterparts in other parts of the country.

As always, we devote two pages to individual successes and special commendations due to staff, pupils and students across the Creative Education Trust.

Emily Campbell Director of Programmes

HOT-A-TWEET

140 characters from the Chief Executive

Innovation and great leadership can change our world. This issue contains inspiring examples of both from our primary pupils and from our Teaching Leaders colleagues.



This term marks a really exciting and important moment for Creative Education Trust. After

a flurry of inspections, Ofsted now rates more than half of our schools as good. This is a remarkable achievement given that most of the schools were in special measures before joining the trust. Congratulations to Thistley Hough, Ash Green, Lynn Grove and Weavers, and good luck to all of those schools still expecting the Ofsted call.

Marc Jordan, Chief Executive, Creative Education Trust said:

“This is a proud moment. Congratulations to the leaders, staff and pupils in all of these schools. I am delighted that Ofsted saw what I see when I visit – great schools, full of great teachers and leaders, giving their all to transform the lives of their pupils. Next step ... outstanding!”



oodness!

Thistley Hough Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

“unlocking the potential in all pupils”

Thistley Hough's report placed particular emphasis on the school's rapid improvement in results, high-quality teaching and the outstanding personal development students receive.

“The Principal provides inspirational leadership to all staff and pupils in the school. Her determination and commitment to do the very best for each pupil is mirrored by the senior leadership team.”

Lynn Grove Academy, Great Yarmouth

“a strong academic core of subjects ... complemented by strong artistic, sporting, technical and cultural provision”

Good in all categories, Lynn Grove's report spoke of strong leadership and an excellent professional development offer for teachers, as well as the school's role in developing their pupils into leaders and engaged members of their community.

“The school provided many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles including pupil ambassadors, prefects, librarians and mathematics mentors ... The learners' voice group meet regularly to discuss with leaders areas of improvement ... Pupils views are listened to and considered.”

Ash Green School, Coventry

“having a real impact”

Inspectors were struck by the staff's “shared vision, drive, determination and capacity to improve the school”. They also praised “noticeable improvement” since their last visit and a new “culture of ambition” among pupils and staff. They were also impressed by the school's approach to careers education, guidance and support, which was highlighted as a particular “strength”, having “real impact” on the lives of pupils.

Weavers Academy, Wellingborough

“significant improvement in a short period”

Inspectors were clear that strong leadership has brought about a rapid turnaround of the school in a short period of time. They were impressed by the positive approach of staff and their determination to develop teaching and learning in order to improve outcomes for pupils.

“Teachers are keen to develop their practice. They meet weekly to discuss innovative and creative ways to improve pupil engagement which leads to pupils making greater progress.”



Leaders the next generation



Ambition School Leadership (formerly The Future Leaders Trust and Teaching Leaders) aims to transform the lives of children in disadvantaged areas by building a network of exceptional school leaders. Creative Education Trust is a partner multi-academy trust with two cohorts of secondary teachers now enrolled in the Teaching Leaders programme. Each has been identified by senior colleagues as having the potential to lead teams, establish consistent systems and disseminate good practice.

Teaching Leaders combines intensive coaching from a mentor assigned to each candidate, face-to-face training at 'challenge days' and evenings at the local hub, and online learning. Each candidate embarks on an 'impact initiative' to improve pupil outcomes in the key areas of reading, writing and maths and close achievement gaps for disadvantaged children.

Connected interviewed members of the first and second cohort about their impact initiative, their experience of the programme and the scope of leadership.

Tracy Warrener, faculty head (Design and Technology (D&T), Food, Computing and Child Development) at Thistley Hough was accepted for the programme on the strength of her work as head of D&T. Alongside aspects of classroom pedagogy and behaviour, she had concentrated on establishing consistency in marking and reporting. When her role extended to the other practical subjects in the faculty, the priority was to make sure that the school's policies were consistently followed across the four subject areas. The promotion coincided with her selection for Teaching

Leaders, and this became her impact initiative. Computing was a particular challenge. As a new subject, it had no evidence base from marking, and there was a resistance to handwritten work arising from the assumption that computing is all about tapping a keyboard. Now the department's work is orderly, students have pride in their folders and they are better prepared for an exam that – after all – comprises written elements like any other.

Tracy is a forceful representative of middle leaders to school leadership teams, and an advocate of open dialogue. "It would be selfish not to spread what I've learned from Teaching Leaders more widely among colleagues", she says, and is excited by Thistley Hough's current commission to work with Nottingham schools on improving standards. Her special leadership expertise – in combining subjects to improve consistency across the range – doubtless owes much to her earlier professional experience in retail management and logistics.

Michelle Mason is also a D&T teacher, at Caister. Her impact initiative investigates the effect of withholding target grades from Year 10 students; instead talking only of progress. "Before", she says, "those predicted a D would lose heart, while those predicted a B would stop trying". It's early days, but she observes that the work from this year group is better than any before, with similar results for Art (which has also withheld grade predictions). The course has helped Michelle discover qualities that she didn't know she had, and she "second guesses" herself less.

Coaching in particular – for Michelle and others interviewed – has been revelatory; the technique of getting others to come up with their own solution rather than giving it to them. Marie-Claire d'Arcy Barron, director of Modern Foreign Languages at Hart, also singles out coaching as the epiphany. She is now the professional mentor to all the Hart NQTs, in charge of their CPD and acting as

2016–17 cohort of Teaching Leaders at our annual Teaching Leaders participants' Action Research Day

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their regular classroom observer. Coaching is the human aspect of leadership – understanding what people are like and how they are likely to behave. Katie Pointon at Thistley Hough names the most useful part of her training as “the idea of planning for different personalities in a team”.

Anna Dade, a maths teacher, took on whole-school responsibility for challenging the most able students at Abbeyfield in her second year of Teaching Leaders. Progress 8 revealed that those at the top end of ability were missing out. Anna sifted through research on provision for gifted and talented students, and did her own investigations through student and parent voice. What are parents’ ambitions for their children? How well do they think the school is providing for them? What motivates their children? A combination of qualitative and quantitative insights helped to make the case for a challenge team, and to start ideas such as an off-timetable day in years 7–10 with staff leading sessions on intellectually ambitious subjects such as philosophy, engineering and oracy. Latin club is on the horizon.

Katie Pointon is an English teacher at Thistley Hough whose impact initiative, across years 8 and 9, probes how key stage 3 systems can accelerate progress at GCSE. Katie discloses a fascinating sample insight – backing up research by the Education Endowment Foundation – that peer support to subgroups in key stage 3 with a low reading age has much more impact than phonics. Now in her seventh year of teaching, and second year of Teaching Leaders, she ascribes her promotion to director of English as “very much down to the support and knowledge from the programme”. She is a key agent of change at the school, particularly in implementing the new GCSE specification. As well as using the GCSE mark scheme from year 7 onwards, she and colleagues have introduced a thematic approach centred on big common questions that gives, from text to text, “a structure to

hang everything on”. Like other interviewees, Katie is excited by the potential of the subject groups across Creative Education Trust to propagate good ideas.

Gemma Wilderspin, Assistant Principal and Director of English at Weavers, articulates how Teaching Leaders not only consolidates her experiences as a ‘new leader’, but also develops resilience through a structure of milestones and opportunities for reflection which make each next step less intimidating. Her impact initiative has been focused on teaching and learning; specifically, the quality of feedback to students. “I love marking”, she declares. “How can the hours we spend marking lead to progress?” The answer is to be highly diagnostic, to show students specifically how to make an improvement, exactly what to do, where; and why precisely an element of their work is good when it’s good. Crucially, she and colleagues allocate dedicated class time for the students to respond. The next stage, in which students start to diagnose for themselves because they’ve learned to predict what the teacher will say, is already happening. Progress data looks good, notwithstanding it is for a cohort that is 33% pupil premium and 66% boys, and in the context of a new exam specification. Gemma counts it an advantage that her team of (mostly) Teach First candidates and NQTs were mercifully free of prejudice from the old spec.

Philip Cantwell, Director of Education, identifies Teaching Leaders as a fantastic way to accelerate all our schools’ progress and attainment. “From the point of view of our schools’ leaders, the programme provides ambitious colleagues with an “action research” project that will benefit their schools. Crucially, however, it gives them a first real experience of an essential element in school improvement. After all, some of them will be leading our schools in the not too distant future!”

The K-C Club at Lynn Grove

David Corby, science teacher at Lynn Grove, took Knowledge Connected, Creative Education Trust's vision of creative education, and has embarked on a project to turn it into a set of workable practices in schools. The six 'key concepts' – structure, pattern, meaning, performance, human interaction and practice – are posited as a way to help young people perform the essential act of creativity which is to find links between knowledge or phenomena that others might not see.

"Creative Education Trust wants to turn all young people into creative individuals. My impact initiative is about the all-important 'how?' How can the theory of knowledge connected via six big concepts be turned into a workable set of practices? By starting small and accepting successes and failures, could we build something that could be rolled out across the trust?"

The Knowledge Connected after-school club for 18 of the most academically able year 9s at Lynn Grove introduced the six concepts week by week, and required club members to synthesise their understanding into a presentation, book or display. The results are impressive.

A member of the club reflected that the concepts "helped us to visualise the ground basis of knowledge and sort what we know into different categories". "Secondary school is so much about learning facts" another said, "this is more like helping you to learn for yourself". Several strove to express a feeling that the six concepts gave you "a way to cope with new experiences", "a set of ways to understand whatever you might be faced with" and "a head start in solving problems".

While the project does not conform to a controlled study with measured data, it has great potential, David points out, to support Ofsted's grade descriptors for an outstanding secondary school, in which "confident, self-assured learners ... understand how their education equips them with the behaviours and attitudes necessary for success".

Lynn Grove plans to expand the club to a mixed-ability group, with the enthusiastic endorsement of this year's members. "It should be for everyone, not just the clever ones, because we all have the same responsibilities when we mature into adulthood." Fellow members nodded vigorously and one closed with a beautifully concise case for an integrated approach to knowledge. Education, she said, needs to be "the continuous things that help us fit in to society".

A marketing campaign for

Ash Green

The days of modesty in the education system are over. It is not enough to be a great school; you have to let people know that you are a great school.

As Ash Green School in Coventry continues to go from strength-to-strength under Principal Harry French and his team (see page 3 of this issue), we have been working to ensure that everybody knows it. At the beginning of the year, the school began a messaging project with marketing agency, Lucent Creative.

In workshop after workshop, conversation after conversation, Ash Green's people – staff, students, governors and parents – kept coming out as the factors that made it special. After considering three or four potential messages – some better than the others – it became clear that there was one that perfectly captured the Ash Green experience: Everyday Extraordinary.

We selected case studies of students and staff who are extraordinary every day. A student who did not speak English a year ago is now planning to be a doctor. There are students who have fundraised for incredible local causes, staff who have gone the extra mile to help their pupils, and one student who, voluntarily, helps her visually impaired classmate to navigate the school.

Ash Green is creating new signage, updating its website, editing a new video and running a social media campaign using these case studies to ensure that everybody knows that this is a school where the extraordinary happens every day.



Great messaging can also help you to shape what is going on internally by projecting a shared vision in a common language. Harry and the team at Ash Green are working together to define what the everyday should look like and what the extraordinary is that they are aiming for, so that pupils can be encouraged to strive for the extraordinary every day.

Ash Green School. Everyday Extraordinary.

Ash Green is a school where the extraordinary happens every day – in big moments of academic achievement and extra-curricular success as well as in small moments of self-discovery, perseverance, kindness and community. Our pupils are enthusiastic about learning and we support them every day to become well-rounded young people ready for life in school and beyond.

Messages adapted for different audiences:

Every day teaching delivers extraordinary outcomes.

Ash Green School. Everyday extraordinary.

Every day support builds extraordinary confidence.

Ash Green School. Everyday extraordinary.

Every day training, development and support leads to extraordinary teachers.

Ash Green School. Everyday extraordinary.

11

IDEAS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Top left to right:
Sharomi Vimalakanthan and
Libby Currie, Harpfield, and
Jonathan Lugube, Queen Eleanor

Bottom left to right:
Cleo Barrett, Harpfield; **Ruby Ellis**, **Zak Etheridge** and **Lucy Singlewood-Dodds**, Wroughton; **Emily Beattie**, **Ciar Jennings** and **Bola Sonuga**, Three Peaks; and the winning team from Wroughton, **Darby Ives**, **Ruby Copping**, **Lilly-Renee Pilgrim** and **Elina Pamzina**

Main picture:
David Harkin, Group Chief
Executive of 7billionideas



Are you ever too young for enterprise? In January, the creative agency 7billionideas set in motion an enterprise challenge for Creative Education Trust primary schools which culminated in a March final at Abbeyfield School in Northampton.

The challenge, supported with excellent resources to guide brainstorming, prototyping and presentation, was simply to propose an idea that could change the world. Eleven teams of finalists set up stalls to present their ideas.

Awards for the best stall, poster and model were won by – respectively – Three Peaks Primary Academy for their ‘Dazzling’ high-tech security doorbell, Queen Eleanor Primary Academy for their ‘Spelltastic’ self-correcting pen, and Woodlands Primary Academy for their prototype ‘Flick-it-up’ retracting shoe heel (featuring a moveable part).

Third prize went to Harpfield Primary Academy’s ‘Wi-Fi Lightbulb’, an 80-metre high beacon for governments to supply free Wi-Fi to whole nations.

Wroughton Junior Academy’s paper-cleaning printer came in second – a device that ingeniously wipes paper clean of ink and toner to be re-used, and explicitly addresses the risk of excessive paper consumption by schools.

The winning team of young inventors, also from Wroughton, impressed the judges – Marc Jordan and Emily Campbell of the Creative Education Trust, and Tony Mills, Head of the Sixth Form at Abbeyfield – with a virtuosic demonstration of their world-changing invention, an earpiece that whispers information and guidance into the ears of blind people.



Successes and special commendations

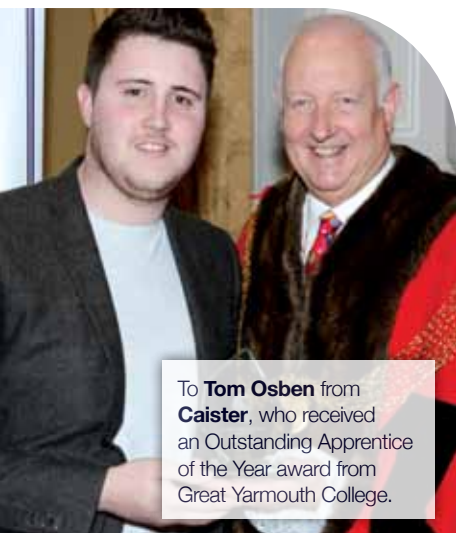
Students

To **Lynn Grove's** year 11 football team and their coach, **Steve Goddard**, who won the County Cup for the fifth year in a row.



To **Laura Simmons** of **Ash Green** who won a place on the XMaS Scientist Experience 2017 trip to the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) in Grenoble on the strength of her two-page essay on women in science.

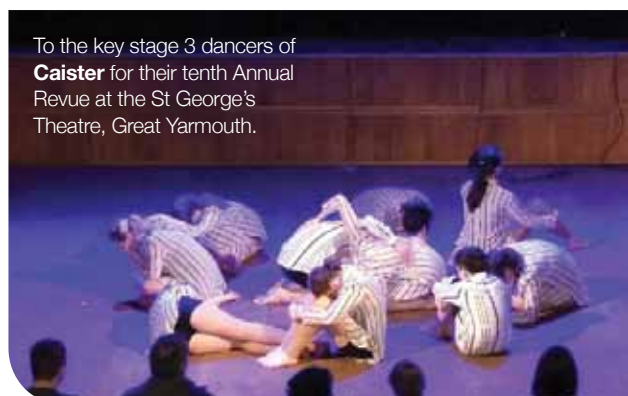
To **Richard Penn-Bourton** for securing a grant of £4,000 from the Foyle Foundation towards new library books at **Three Peaks**.



To **Tom Osben** from **Caister**, who received an Outstanding Apprentice of the Year award from Great Yarmouth College.



To **Kyra England**, **Caister** year 9, called up to the England Under-15 football squad.



To the key stage 3 dancers of **Caister** for their tenth Annual Revue at the St George's Theatre, Great Yarmouth.

To **Alice Platt**, year 7, who won the **Caister** baking competition.



To **Kim Andrews**, announced as Teacher of the Year at the Pride of Tamworth Awards organised by Tamworth Round Table, for her tireless commitment to the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages at **Three Peaks**.



and staff



To **Lynn Grove's** Expressive Arts department for staging *We Will Rock You* over three nights in March.



To **Cameron Tinker, Lynn Grove**, who qualified for the Kangaroo national maths competition.



To **Abbeyfield's** music department who hosted the first evening 'Live Lounge'. A sell-out audience of 40 enjoyed modern classics and current hits by solo artists, duos and groups from years 7 to 12 (including **Jo Wickham** and **Oliver Evans**, pictured). Held in a classroom, the soirée was intentionally intimate and informal, pursuing the ambience of a BBC2/Jools Holland-type studio performance. **Katelyn Lewis** in year 8 expertly compered the show, bringing the whole evening together and introducing all the acts. Special thanks are due to **Richard Walker-Glenn** and his technical team, including **Josh Bastow**.



To **Jane Shelton-Smith**, Deputy Head at **Three Peaks**, who achieved her post-graduate SENCO qualification, in difficult personal circumstances.



To over 100 year 7 students at **Thistley Hough** who played fabulously together in an orchestral concert for parents, teachers and friends. They showcased two terms' worth of work on the *In Harmony* project that provided every student in year 7 with a classical instrument and three hours a fortnight of classical music tuition. All but a handful of students had never played their orchestral instrument before starting in September. Next time, they perform alongside the Halle Orchestra at the Victoria Hall in Stoke-on-Trent. Jointly funded by the Arts Council and the Department for Education, the project expands to year 8 in the next academic year.



To **Lynn Grove's** science department for hosting two visits by children from the John Grant Special School.

Photo: Loryn Race

To Link and to Learn

External view of **Wroughton** Infant and Junior Academies linked by DK-CM's proposed structure

The built environment influences our behaviour, performance and feelings. Creative Education Trust's Estates and Property Committee exists to help schools balance design quality and value for money so that buildings, learning spaces and surrounding landscapes contribute positively to educational outcomes and to students' appreciation for the built and natural environments. Architect Sasha Bhavan and structural engineer Michael Dickson CBE are expert members of the committee.

Like all multi-academy trusts, the Creative Education Trust is granted a modest sum of money annually by the Education Funding Agency for the maintenance of all their member school estates. As well as presenting recommendations to the Board for how the School Condition Allocation is dispensed (according to the trust's published priorities and principles), Michael and Sasha have been focusing on two exciting new projects.

When Ash Green's Man Block, a timber-framed building from the 1950s, was found to have structurally failed, the Education Funding Agency stepped in and, under the Priority Schools Building Programme, agreed to fund the construction of a



Above: A workshop with pupils led by DK-CM to explore the possibilities of the new building in the space it will occupy.

replacement block. Three new science labs with prep space, two ICT/business suites and nine general classrooms for humanities are scheduled to open in September 2018. As well as optimising light and space, Ridge Architects' design sets new standards for environmental efficiency.

Wroughton Infant and Junior Academies in Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, are to merge from September 2017 as Wroughton Primary Academy. The current Wroughton Junior occupies an uncommonly handsome and spacious 1950s building eloquently expressing the optimism and educational ideas of the post-war period. It is a single-storey building with very wide corridors, unusually generous classrooms and remarkably high ceilings. Wroughton Infant Academy is a single-storey building dating from 1991 and occupying an adjacent site to the Juniors. Although the two schools are separated by an 8-metre gap, security and institutional culture have precluded easy access between the two. Executive Head Teacher, Craig Avieson, has driven collaboration since he took up his position in September 2016 (see *Connected* no.8), and with Creative Education Trust, has asked DK-CM architects to propose an intervention to link the two buildings, create a common reception, and prominently signify the union of the former Infant and Junior schools.

David Knight, Director of DK-CM, describes the project as 'very exciting for us', because 'the proposed building is a new heart and a new front to Wroughton Primary Academy, and a real chance to celebrate the joining of the two schools'. Their proposal is a new 'front room' for the school which integrates carefully with the two existing school buildings and provides a delightful new interior for pupils, staff and visitors. The design takes motifs and design principles from the original building and reinterprets them in cross-laminated timber and bespoke furniture. 'A useful room, not just a lobby, with space for exhibitions, meetings, private conversations, storage, relaxing and working, as well as an internal connection between the two existing buildings'.



Sasha Bhavan



Michael Dickson CBE

Below: The east façade of Ash Green's new 14-classroom block by Ridge Architects.



Round-up



Writing for the screen

English teachers across the trust, led by **James Read of Caister**, have masterminded a creative writing competition for year 8 students. Fourteen finalists meet in London in July for the climax of the competition: a screenwriting challenge set by TV scriptwriter and children's author Harry Oulton (pictured). Collaborating as a pair from each school, finalists have to write a screenplay of up to five minutes in which a character overhears something they shouldn't. The authors will combine narrative and dialogue in this exercise inspired by the famous apple-barrel scene in Robert Louis Stephenson's *Treasure Island*. The day ends with a private screening of the 2012 *Treasure Island* directed by Steve Barron at the British Film Institute. The winning screenplay will be filmed on location at the winners' school in the last week of term.

Days of Song

The Voices Foundation 'Chorus' project has been rich and rewarding for teachers and students alike. Pictured here at the first CPD workshop with **Sally Cathcart** are **Lucia McLernon, Louise Oxlade, Natalie Gibbs** and **Lisa Ademiec**, in an exercise demonstrating pentatonic pitch. The Creative Education Trust Days of Song complete and celebrate the year's activities in July: three joint concerts of paired schools: **Lynn Grove/Caister, Hart School/Ash Green** and **Abbeyfield/Weavers**. As well as choral works performed by each school together and separately, the programmes include a solo repertoire chosen by the Voices Foundation vocal coach Charles MacDougal for a small number of 'singing ambassadors' at each school. His selection includes 17th and 18th century Italian songs, a Handel and a Mozart aria, and Schubert's lied *Nacht und Träume* – adventures into unfamiliar classical territory for all these young singers, while being reassuringly accessible and gorgeous.





Young Poets' Society

Three finalists from each Creative Education Trust primary school will compete in the London final of a new year 6 poetry competition. There are two prizes, one for reciting a poem from the short anthology compiled by Richard Woollacott, Headteacher of **Harpfield**; the other for a new poem by a pupil. The two recitalists – a boy and girl from each school, will start their day at Pure Soho, a state-of-the-art commercial recording studio, committing their rendition to electronic record. Thence by bus to the Foundling Museum – a former home for so-called 'foundlings' built on the proceeds of the first London performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1743. There, their recitations will be judged by a panel including Creative Education Trust Chief Executive, Marc Jordan, and the celebrated writer and actor, Ian Kelly (pictured). These judges will also choose the winning poem from ten entries.

Prowess

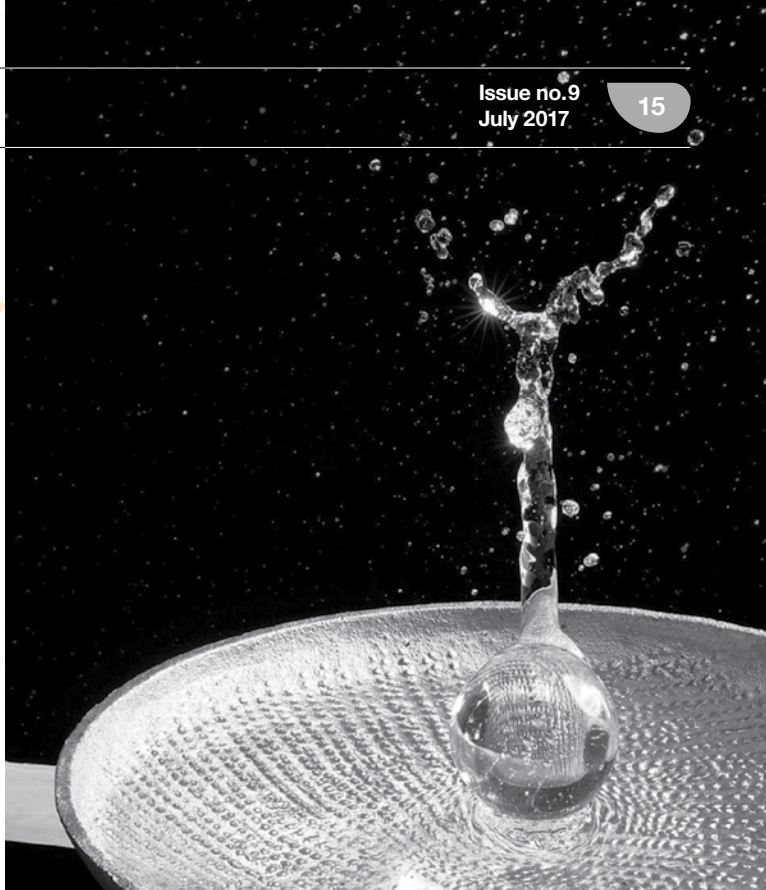
Two Days of Sport loom in the summer calendar. At **Three Peaks** in Tamworth, year 6 pupils from across the trust will take part in an exciting morning of coaching classes from Wasps Rugby, Marc Albrighton Football Academy and Spartans Volleyball. In the afternoon they will put their newly honed skills to the test. The secondary event, at **Weavers Academy**, will be a day of both team and individual contest; all contestants fighting to take home the coveted Creative Education Trust Day of Sports trophy for their schools. Our celebrity guest is former England Women's Rugby Union Captain Catherine Spencer.

The Spirit of Enterprise

Enabling Enterprise Challenge Days provoked innovative and strategic thinking from year 8 groups across the trust around manufacturing businesses, social enterprises and political parties.

Competing to set up their own company, year 8 students at **Thistley Hough** and **Ash Green** were tasked with designing, making, marketing and selling special souvenirs for a specific event, place or customer (pictured).

Next year's project will culminate in a cross-Trust competition, the Day of Enterprise, with further challenges hosted at business locations for the winning teams from each school.



Young Photographer

Serendipity: the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way. Otherwise known as a 'happy accident'.

Taking photos on the theme of Serendipity, participants in the fourth annual Young Photographer competition will receive expert advice and a one-to-one tutorial with a professional photographer. Helping students to find and photograph chance occurrences are Steve Macleod, Leon Chew, Nadia Bettega, Othello De'Souza-Hartley and Marysa Dowling. The final exhibition promises to feature unusual combinations, curious coincidences and chance moments captured on camera. The winner of the Creative Education Trust Young Photographer 2017 will be announced at the London exhibition of the shortlisted photographers in July.

Leon Chew's *Liquid Displacement* 2017 exemplifies the spirit of the brief.



Creativity is the ability to find connections between the things we know and turn these connections into new ideas and action.

The academic arts and the sciences, practical subjects and life skills all need creativity.

Creativity is highly valued by employers.

With knowledge, skills and creativity, every young individual is equipped to succeed in the knowledge economy.

Creative Education Trust

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Front cover image:

Benita Umeh of **Harpfield Primary Academy**

demonstrates the Wi-Fi
Lightbulb at the Day of Change