

# STILL



# Connected

*The magazine of Creative Education Trust schools*



## A Testament of Resilience

This special edition gathers articles from the online magazine published fortnightly during the period of school closure on account of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. It is a celebration of the tenacity and creativity of Creative Education Trust pupils and staff.

# The First Fourteen Days

Reflections from Stoke-on-Trent and Tamworth on sudden and universal lockdown

## FACE-TO-FACE WITH VIRTUAL SCHOOL

No amount of experience or leadership development prepared me for the first two weeks of lockdown. I thought in my first year of headship I had overcome many challenges and turned my hand to many tasks, from a school bereavement through to picking up litter in the community, but who would have thought I'd be adding pandemic to the ever-growing list?

Friday 20th March 2020 is a date I will never forget. When my staff and I walked out of school knowing we were closed for the vast majority of our school community, I was relieved, indeed, I cried with relief when I arrived home – I'd spent a frantic week organising, with my team rotas, contracts, home learning, safeguarding, food vouchers, the return of a ski trip to France, saying good-bye early to Year 11 and worrying about the safety of my staff, students and all our families.

I returned to school the following Monday, to put the continuity plan in place, into a different world of lonely roads, empty echoing buildings, hand sanitiser, vulnerable registers, social distancing, bewildered children. It felt eerie and I felt increasingly uneasy about this new world. I'm not ashamed to say that I now recognise this feeling as stress, a sentence I never thought I would say.



I found social distancing during those first few days difficult. I was inundated with volunteers for the in-school rota and one of the hardest challenges was ensuring that the staff stayed at home. Home working, remote working, whatever you want to label it, isn't in the DNA of people who work in an educational setting: we thrive on human interaction in a fast pace, vibrant, constantly changing environment. This is Thistley Hough to a tee.

Two weeks has felt like a never-ending, problem-solving test, but it's one that everyone at Thistley Hough has risen to. We've embraced virtual learning and are grappling with everything this throws at us in our endeavour to deliver to students not only learning opportunities, but the support, care and guidance that they deserve. I am hopeful that we'll all emerge from this time with an improved understanding of what is important, not just in the educational context but in life in general. March 2020 should mark a time in history when many aspects of life changed for the better. School certainly is not closed at Thistley Hough, it's just operating under a different guise.

**Jayne Schofield**  
Principal, Thistley Hough Academy



## social distancing became social connecting

The announcement that schools would close as part of the Government's social distancing policy was somewhat inevitable. We'd taken actions to prepare for it. Packs of work had been collated for all year groups and staff had arranged for children to have home reading books. It seemed to be good planning at the time, but the naivety quickly became apparent. Bigger decisions needed to be taken quickly to harness the staff's nervous energy and provide the best educational provision that we could.

The priority was to organise the staff and to get everyone behind the plan. There were some enormous hurdles: how could we engage all families when events and news were becoming increasingly worrying? How could we ensure the safety of all our children? How would we run an effective system while dealing with our own health and that of those close to us? As headteacher of a school of 400+, how would I manage to keep everyone positive and focussed while dealing with my concerns about my own children and elderly relatives who lived apart from me?

The first step was to establish a system that allowed children to feel safe, maintained the progress made in the first half of the year and kept us accessible in spite of the site closure. We also had to provide a safe haven for the children whose parents are key workers and those who would be most at risk in a lockdown situation. Roles were assigned, and in this process natural leaders – both experienced and inexperienced – came to the fore. In advance of lockdown, we had established the website as our primary method of communication supplemented by various social media platforms. We had identified our most vulnerable pupils and compiled a register of key worker children. We had created a staffing rota that enabled meaningful childcare, quality home learning and a system for contacting each Three Peaks child at least weekly.



As the first two weeks progressed, I discovered a new, deeper level of unity across the team and an even stronger desire to make the school the beating heart of support in the community we serve. Striving for ever-higher expectations with ever-greater compassion has not only showed many parents our ability to advance their children's academic and non-academic learning, but also how effectively they can contribute to it. In this respect, social distancing has actually brought people closer together. The challenge – both in the short and long term – is to foster this togetherness to elicit a real change in the nature of home-school working. Lockdown has brought the value of schools and the teaching profession into the foreground as a social force, and we need to stay there.

**Richard Penn-Bourton**  
Head Teacher, Three Peaks Primary Academy



# Bulwell DIARY

The Principal reflected on the first days of lockdown in the community of Bulwell, where year 10 students, at Mr Elland's invitation, created message boards inspired by Matt Kelley's poem *Our Heroes* and made a video so that students could see each other while separated.

The last two weeks have seen me start to really question what we mean by education and what is important. Is how much work the students produce the most important thing at this unprecedented moment, or is it their wellbeing? The teacher in me wants them to do their work and not fall even further behind their peers, although deep down I know that's going to happen anyway. However, as a human being I know that in the grand scheme of things their physical and mental health is more important. Should parents really be stressing about how much work their child is or isn't doing at the same time as worrying about a deadly virus and where they can buy toilet roll, flour and eggs? My heart says they should be learning how to be a family again and doing things that maybe they don't normally have the time or opportunity to do together and that our role is now to help them achieve this.

The first week of closure was certainly all a flurry of setting up online learning, making sure students and staff could access it all and producing work pack after work pack for those with no online access. And I'm extremely proud of what we have achieved.

Yet this week, after a conversation with a parent and a weekend of reflection, we've concentrated far more on helping families, talking to them about the importance of routines and of talking to their children and being open with feelings. It's been about building relationships between us and them but also between parent and child. About encouraging them to do what they feel is the right thing for their family and reminding them that this is likely to be a marathon, not a sprint. We don't have to do everything all at once.

As a result of daily phone calls and lots of school-home communications, we have made real progress with some difficult-to-reach parents and received some lovely messages of support and encouragement from others. We have had work from students who never usually do work and have seen many reach out to staff in ways never seen before. Staff are going above and beyond to support the families and the local community. Keeping up the good communication is going to be the key going forward.

There will, of course, come a time when we'll need to address the learning side and yes, we will need to work even harder than before to plug the inevitable gaps. But for now, I'm content to concentrate on being a stabilising and reassuring influence on families. When this is all over, we hope to have much stronger relationships with families and communities, to take the school from strength to strength together.

**Michelle Strong, Principal** 9 April 2020



# Bulwell Academy 2020  
#Team Purple  
#STAY AT HOME

# STAY UNITED  
Poem by Matt Kelly

WE SENT THEM TO WAR  
THEY DIDN'T HAVE BULLETS

To Lead and INSPIRE us

BY OUR BULLET PROOF VESTS

OUR HEROES

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD  
SO TIRED SO WEARY  
OUR HEROES



**Alex Norris**, MP for Nottingham North, taking a selfie with Paul's Pantry delivery driver, **Mr Lowther**.

# Fuel to learn

The link between nutritious, regular meals, learning outcomes and pupil wellbeing remained unquestionable and essential to Creative Education Trust schools during lockdown. As kitchen and catering teams adapted to the changes brought on by school closure, **Jessica Douthwaite** caught up with staff and pupils at three schools to find out what they were doing to ensure food provisions continued with as much normality as possible.

At **Bulwell Academy** in Nottingham, kitchen staff and teachers supported a new initiative called Paul's Pantry, dreamt-up by Linda Abbott the Education Action Zone Manager for Bulwell and set-up with the support of Michelle Strong, Principal. Paul, head chef at Bulwell lent his name and his time to this hot-meals service which delivered hearty school dinners to up to 12 families in the local area on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Three kitchen dinner ladies and several teachers working as delivery drivers completed the team. By early June, around 25 families had enjoyed a school dinner through Paul's Pantry, eating the same food that staff and students attending school were having for lunch on that day. The scheme was so successful it won funding from several sources, including the National Lottery, and Linda hoped to extend operations up to the end

A thank you card given to Paul's Pantry delivery staff after dropping off some popular school dinners.

Pictured left, Lidia Bromhead, Paul Smith and Rachel McCarron ready to serve lunch in the Bulwell kitchen. Pictured right, Michelle Strong, Mick Astle, Linda Abbott, Pete Deacon and Mike Cook stand in front of 'Paul's Pantry' ready to make Tuesday's food delivery to local families.



of summer term. Mr Lowther, year 11 Year Manager and delivery driver during lockdown spoke of 'a great sense of pride to be involved with supporting our community.' He said, 'all the families I have been delivering to have been extremely grateful. It's great to take time to have chats with the families face to face (whilst social distancing) and just see how they are doing. And most importantly they always speak very highly of the food. Well done Paul's Pantry!'

Over at **Milton Keynes' Academy**, head chef Dave Cook worked in the school kitchen alone from the moment that school closures were enforced in late March. Until mid-June, he took no time off, arriving in school on bank holidays, Easter and half term breaks, as well as school days, to cook staff and students breakfast and lunch. At first, there were about 30 mouths to feed but that number steadily increased, meaning most days Dave was cooking seventy meals by himself. He certainly deserved the certificate made and presented by grateful students! Here's his description of those months:

'We started by making up food packs for collection for the 340 students at Milton Keynes entitled to free school meals. Some of the packs that were not picked up were then taken to a local primary school who had no provisions available for their FSM students. Over time the number of students attending school during the crisis has regularly increased and it has been enjoyable watching children coming out of their shells and looking forward to school. They now interact with me and my team more than they ever have and are eating meals they would never normally try (the lasagne we do here is now a firm favourite). I am asked many times every day "what's for lunch Sir" to which I reply and get a "yessss" and a smile as they walk off!

Students certainly enjoyed Dave's cooking, some of them even presented him with a card saying: 'Thank you Mr Cook for making all of our lunches that are delicious! We appreciate all of your hard work!'

Meanwhile, Olivia Hepworth, at **Harpfield Primary** raised money and awareness for the recently opened school food bank. While school kitchens provided food for staff and students on site, food banks helped guarantee that families have enough to eat and cook at home and over the holidays regardless of the challenging consequences of lockdown. Olivia, knowing the importance of donations to the school food bank, raised £710 by running a sponsored half marathon—a mile every day for 13 days. On her JustGiving page she wrote, 'I want to help people that aren't as lucky as me.'



**Olivia** loves running, especially cross-country.

# PROTECTING US SINCE 1948

Coronavirus  
has forced us to

take greater care of our own, our families' and our wider communities' health. *Jessica Douthwaite* unfolds the social history of the National Health Service

This sudden change in our appreciation of healthcare is resulting in a national outpouring of support and respect for the frontline staff in the National Health Service who are saving lives and protecting us from the disease. In its 72-year lifespan, the NHS has garnered consistent criticism and provoked ongoing disagreement about its efficacy and utility. And, yet, this current crisis highlights the emotional attachment born by all of us to an institution that represents fairness, equality and a right to health. How did the NHS come to take such a **firm place in our hearts**, even if it has not always been as easy to rationalise in practical terms? To answer that question, we have to understand the context in which the NHS was established.

The National Health Service Act was passed in 1946 and launched in 1948, the only national system in the world offering free healthcare to every citizen regardless of income and wealth. The Labour government's introduction of this system represented a **radical shift** away from previous practices and attracted much disapproval; exacerbated by the relationship between the NHS and a series of other far-reaching welfare reforms, all representing greater state intervention and spending on ordinary people's lives.



Health Minister, Aneurin Bevan, meeting the first patient of the NHS, 13-year old Sylvia Digory.

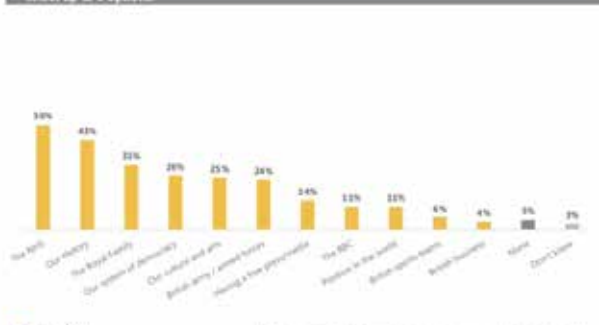
To an extent, the NHS was established in compensation to the British public for undergoing significant hardship during the Second World War (1939–45). It was also an acknowledgement by the British ruling classes that existing poor laws and social insurance policies were insufficient in preventing poverty from destroying the lives of the most disadvantaged in society. Before the war, the **economic depression** of the 1930s resulted in increasing unemployment; homelessness and the spread of disease wrecked millions of lives. To win the Second World War the British government relied on a rallying cry of unity and togetherness, yet many viewed such sentiments with cynicism, knowing that only recently circumstances had been far from equal.

Indeed, several wartime initiatives exposed the flaws in arguments against social reform because the 'war machine' required unprecedented intervention in individual lives. For example, while rationing policy might be remembered largely for its privations, the government discovered that **many families' nutritional intake improved** due to varied and guaranteed wartime rations. One **report on the urban working-class diet** noted that 'the general effect of rationing and rising incomes... must have narrowed the range of variation between rich and poor and brought consumption into closer conformity with needs.' The war highlighted that the state could have a positive impact on every day health.

Another largely unrecognised feat of wartime health improvement occurred in the industrial sector, where, using the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin co-opted Trade Unions, trade associations and business leadership committees to co-ordinate measures that improved wartime productivity through better conditions for workers. Prior to the war, individual companies decided their own safety procedures with little central oversight. Yet, factories, shipyards and mines were at the heart of

## The NHS makes us most proud to be British

Which two or three of the following, if any would you say makes you most proud to be British? Please select up to 3 options.





war production, with male and female machine operatives compared to soldiers using weapons.

Government intervention centralised, regulated and normalised safety measures and good working practices. Thus, Bevin instigated a wholesale overhaul of working life on the shop floor, from improved canteen food and regulated working hours, to free medical health checks and agreed sick pay. Bevin's legacy is with us today in the form of post-war transformations to occupational health policies in factories and beyond.

These are just two examples of how the wartime coalition government came to take an invested interest in the health and wellbeing of all British citizens. These experiences were also crucial to what working-class people expected of government and society in future. The biggest initiative that stoked public interest in the opportunity for large-scale welfare reform arrived with the Beveridge Report. William Beveridge, a rebellious civil servant and social economist, was commissioned to write a report that envisaged how society could be restructured in peacetime Britain.

Released in 1942, his publication, originally titled 'Social Insurance and Allied Services', was hugely popular – unlike most government reports people queued to buy it at the government publishers and it sold 50,000 copies in the first two weeks. Undoubtedly, its popularity stemmed from his ground-breaking recommendations based on the five 'Giant Evils' of society: 'Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness'. Beveridge believed that social care should be distributed regardless of individual income and tax brackets. Free healthcare at the point of access for every individual, regardless of wages and wealth was his recommendation to counter the effects of Disease.

Not all politicians or medical experts agreed with the recommendations in Beveridge's report, but his blueprint for a fairer democracy planted the seeds for a total reimagining of post-war Britain. By the time the Labour Party won a landslide victory in the 1946 general election a sea change had occurred in ordinary people's expectations of modern government.

Now, as we celebrate the NHS and we consciously curtail our own freedoms for the sake of other people's lives and the system that cares for them, it seems wise to remember the values on which this democratic healthcare system was founded on. In Bevan's own words: 'Society becomes more wholesome, more serene, and spiritually healthier, if it knows that its citizens have at the back of their consciousness the knowledge that not only themselves, but all their fellows, have access, when ill, to the best that medical skill can provide.'



# Over the Rainbow



For Wroughton's first 'lockdown' community project, Head Teacher Craig Avieson invited

pupils, parents, staff and neighbours to share rainbows made to thank staff of the NHS Foundation Trusts of James Paget and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals. As well as strong graphics and lettering, the portfolio contains an impressive and resourceful number of structural solutions.



# Hart supplies

Rachael Sandham, Assistant Principal at the Hart School, put the school's engineering facilities and equipment to outstandingly good use in providing supplies of PPE to local surgeries, care homes, district nursing teams and hospitals in the West Midlands and was flooded with messages of gratitude.

Over £20,000 was raised in donations towards the manufacturing effort of 26,000 face shields distributed to over 250 local organisations.



## CREATIVE ISOLATION

At the start of lockdown, a series of creative activities were released to stretch students' imagination. Here are some of the responses we received from across the schools.

### Isolation Photography

Make an image that documents the details of life at home during lockdown, construct a portrait of yourself or someone you live with, or frame objects in new and interesting ways.

From the 'Isolation' series by **Klaudia Gotowala** at **Wrenn**.







**Maxton Mountford at Thistley Hough**, inspired by Mary Stephenson's original, worked with his mother on a self-portrait.



**Nathan Crook at Weavers'** photographic exploration of similar shapes around his home.

## Who Knew?

We're all learning so much from this unprecedented, sad, strange experience. Write a blog post or magazine article about something you have discovered, realised, understood or been surprised by, living through the crisis.

## To appreciate the exposed people

The most exposed people are the doctors and the nurses, the people that save our lives. Coronavirus also teaches us how to appreciate the hardworking doctors who risk their own life to save ours. Health care workers are also at risk if patients with COVID-19 aren't identified quickly. If they're not, doctors and nurses might start to treat them without taking the necessary precautions, which leaves them more exposed to infection. It's a risk not only to health care workers, but to visitors and other patients at the hospital or care home. This disease has shown us how much healthcare is in need. The impact of COVID-19 has taught us the incredible value and essential need and support from doctors, frontline healthcare workers, nurse, cleaners, supermarket staff, royal mail staff and community people.

**Iulia Domsa, Weavers**

## What boredom helps discover

Being home 24-7, I've discovered a lot about myself, one thing for example is that I would think about anything slightly interesting, just to prevent my now frequent visitor, boredom, from returning. One subject I've thought about is school and holidays, I can't quite believe that we've been off school longer than the summer holidays (even though it felt like it along the way), it's just felt like a couple of weeks recently. Thinking back, I can hardly recall the first weeks of lockdown, as if it were years ago. I have also thought about what I would enjoy most once lockdown is lifted, and I think from then on, I would appreciate being able to go places more because of the reminder of the time today, and how deserted the streets once were.

**Erin McHugh, Weavers**

## Family makes you stronger

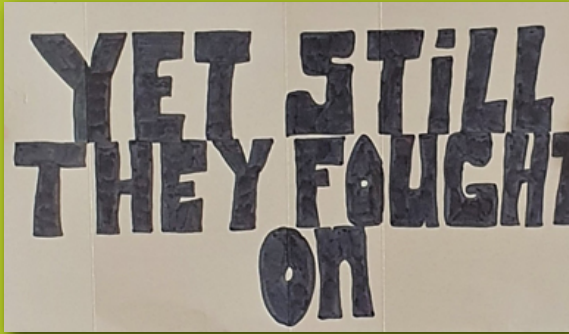
Who would have known that laying bed all day could get boring? Who would have known that suddenly the early morning birds are now nocturnal as it seems that sleeping patterns no longer play a role in our day? Who would have known that the sneaky trips to the kitchen to get a midnight snack are no longer exciting – the suspense of being caught isn't there because you just hear your parents shout to you "Get me a drink while you're at it". Who would have known that it's become perfectly normal to reply with "I've got nothing to do today", that you get looked at funny if you say you've got work to do. In times like these, the introverts that are usually being urged to go see the sunlight are now being encouraged to stay indoors. Who knew that although we sometimes despise it, the smallest amount of want to go back to school is there? Who would have guessed that binge watching is no longer seen as lazy; who would have guessed that all it took was a few minutes clapping for our NHS could be the reason you become friends with neighbours you'd never talk to before? Who would have known that the community you live in is stronger than you thought? Who knew that dressing up to clap for the frontline workers could make their day and everyone else's too? Who knew that putting on the Ronald McDonald costume and inflating that dinosaur suit is the reason why a mother daughter bond has grown stronger? Who knew that grandparents would line up at the windows of care homes just to smile wave and interact with you, no matter how stupid you may look? Who knew that the people who support you are supporting you now more than ever: who would have known that singing in your bedroom - whether it be classical or simple pop music - would make your dad's day as he sneaks up the stairs to send it to you, Grandpa, who are about a hundred miles away just so you can hear your "Billie Joe" sing? Who would have known that for the few minutes that you can stand each other's presence and you haven't wanted to lunge at your brother? Who would have known that you have to tell yourself that you're not hungry, you're just bored? Who would have known the number of times you've cried because of spiders that have horned their way into your bedroom? Who would have known that a family joke about your dog becoming your emotional support animal suddenly seems way too realistic? who would have known that your dad's new favourite past time is to watch the TikToks his niece creates? Who would have known that even though we may have been at each other's throats the majority of the time, family is stronger now than ever before? Who knew?

**Kimberley Faulkenthall Smith, Weavers**

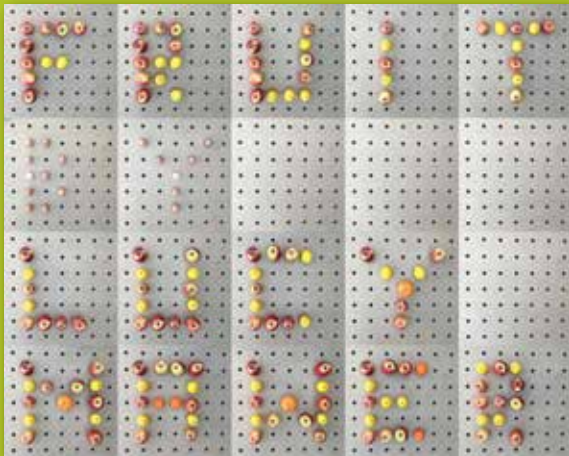


# Our Type

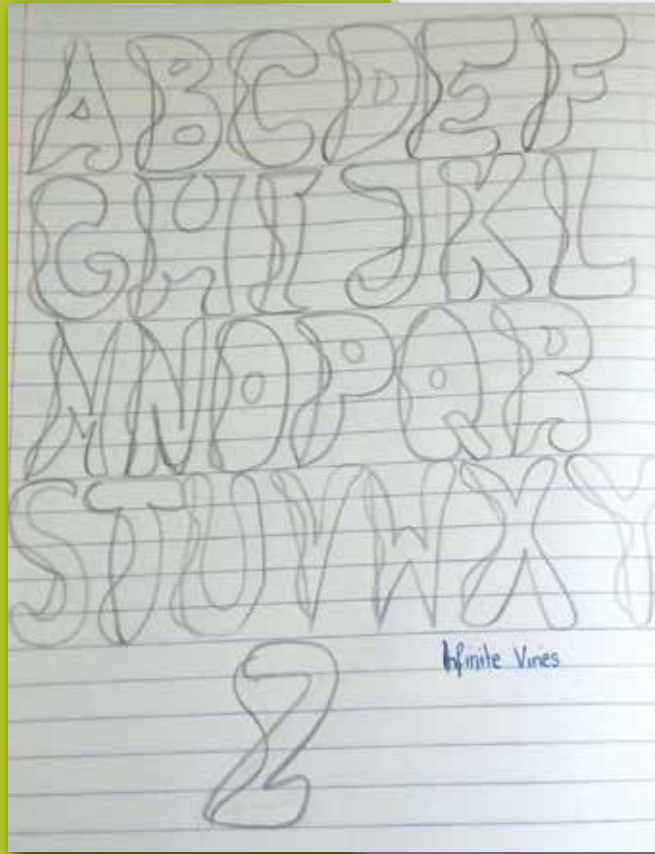
Design a hand-lettering font for Creative Education schools to use in commemoration of 2020.



Mitchel Martinez's lettering for the Y10 video project set by Mr Elland.

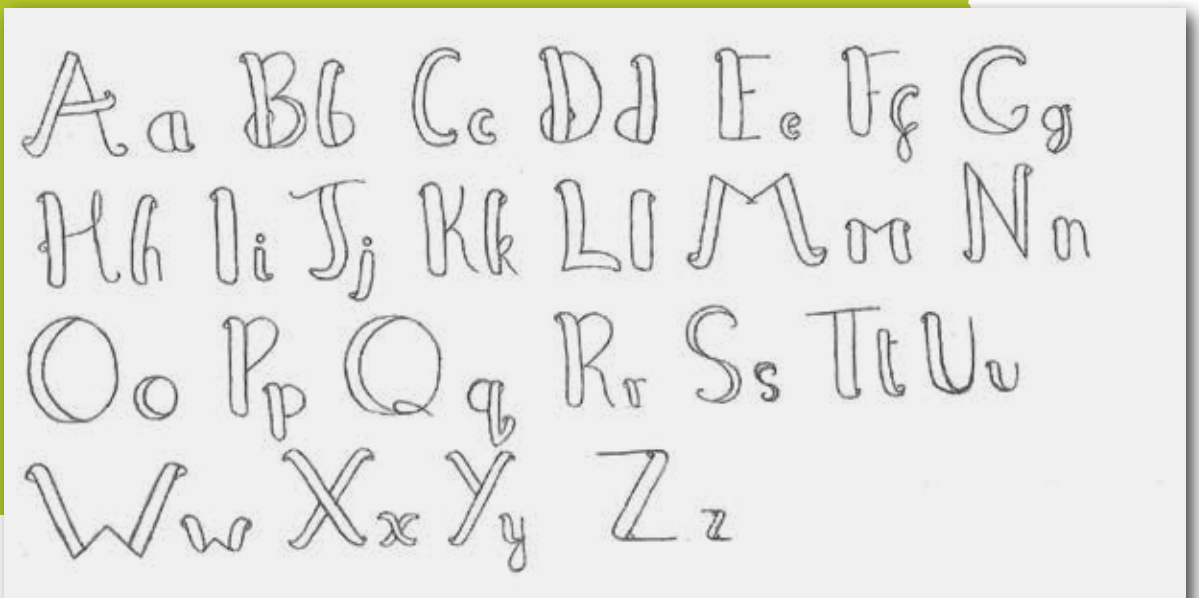


Lucy Wawer's fruit typeface at Weavers.



Infinite Vines alphabet by Erin McHugh at Weavers.

Alphabet by Tamara Mazumder at Weavers.



# Distance writing

Has this break from normality given you a new perspective on the world? Has it made you think differently about yourself? Are you imagining life after distance?

## Social distancing diary

One Day, it wasn't this bad.  
But now I'm just sad.  
I want to go to School,  
But now I'm running out of fuel.  
I miss my friends,  
But now it depends.  
I won't be able to see them,  
So, what's the point?  
I'll rate them a 10!  
I can't see them so I'm on breakpoint.  
But let's move on.  
We're in a global pandemic,  
Thanks to a worldwide epidemic.  
It's boring,  
But I get through it.  
Half of the time the rain is pouring,  
But being honest, I just want to quit.  
Going shopping has changed,  
It's way more arranged.  
There are only several people in at a time,  
The shelves are so empty it should be a crime.  
And people have to queue outside,  
They must be 2 metres away,  
The only way you can get in early is by  
hitching a ride.  
That's the only way you can stay.  
You aren't allowed out,  
Because of right now's layout.  
Only for shopping and exercise,  
It's ok but not very wise.  
The hospitals are filling up,  
And the deaths are piling up.  
Day by Day,  
The nicest people are prey.  
This is awful,  
In fact, Brutal!  
The people trying to help—the NHS and the  
government,  
Helping with amazing judgement!  
And sooner than later,  
There will be better times and happier days  
So, I must go to bed now,  
I pray that this will finish sooner and we can progress  
Happier in the rest of our lives.

**Ezekiel Young, Bulwell**

Staying inside with our families alone,  
Opening the window to speak to the outside,  
Caring for one another close to home,  
Isolating the poorly and vulnerable,  
Accomplishing new skills,  
Lockdown!

Distancing away from the people we love,  
Innovative ways of entertaining ourselves,  
Schools are shut learning from home,  
Teachers are teaching from behind a screen,  
A window of rainbows coloured by children,  
Neighbours coming out to clap for the keyworkers,  
Captain Tom Moore raising millions for the NHS,  
I'm missing my friends and family,  
NHS saving lives,  
Going to appreciate what we had before this happened.

**Daniel Toska, Weavers**

Days morphing into one,  
routines fading away with one sun,  
awaking to another boring time,  
where you certainly don't wake up at  
half past nine.  
Online shopping has become a reality,  
and clear-outs for the whole family.  
Memories of the outside,  
are blurred and lost day five.  
The weekdays are hard to remember,  
and for months, it's probably December.  
So that's my experience in lockdown,  
how's your life going being house-bound?

**Erin McHugh, Weavers**

## The TV announcement

As I sat in the assembly, very close to the  
person next to me,  
I never realised that it would get so serious.  
Everywhere I go I am alone,  
no-one to see or talk to.  
I sit in my room, wishing to be close to friends;  
talking, laughing and learning in large groups.

**Bradley George, Bulwell**

# They don't know -

The birds don't know,  
That the world is amiss,  
As we stay in our homes,  
They live in bliss,

The squirrels don't know,  
That the world is changing,  
That people are dying,  
As their bodies are failing,

The world will keep going,  
Even if we're gone,  
The birds will still fly,  
The squirrels will live on

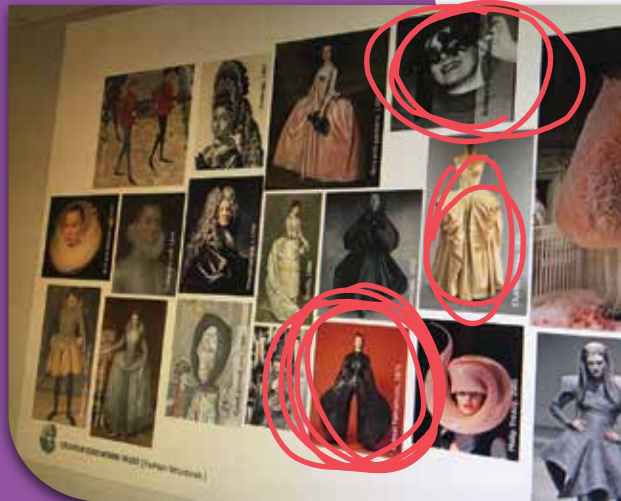
Jess Hackett, Abbeyfield



Lennon Steele  
and his mum, and  
Jade Ward

# Fashion Structures

Choose an item of clothing or  
an accessory from one of these  
images and recreate its structure.



Haris Giannakopoulos,  
Thistley Hough

# TO DWELL IN SAFETY

Lockdown conditions left pupils far more open to risk, as families faced challenging circumstances compounded for many by financial hardship. Mark Mumby, Director of Standards, introduced reports from Creative Education Trust's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs): "Pupils have lost the routine of school and the opportunities for expressing concerns and accessing support that comes with the daily systems. DSLs and their teams are working tirelessly to maintain contact with pupils, to provide openings for communication; responding quickly to concerns that arise. Many pupils are actively turning to their teachers and others in school for support."



## For a better experience of the world

Under normal circumstances, the emotional demands of being the DSL in a school that logged over 800 safeguarding concerns last academic year are eased knowing that I am surrounded by a team of dedicated and caring colleagues working tirelessly to ensure that we are 'keeping children safe in education'. However, on Friday

20th March, when we closed our doors to most students, I felt concerned about the safety of our most vulnerable young people, many of whom contribute to the estimated two million children living in households characterised by domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental ill health. We were confronted with

a new and unimaginable challenge of keeping our children safe *outside* of education.

Colleagues identified and offered school places to 130 of our most vulnerable students, working with social care colleagues to agree daily, twice weekly, or weekly calls to the children of parents who opted to keep them at home. Thanks to a decision two years ago to significantly expand our pool of DSLs and train key staff in bereavement, early help and mental health, we were in a strong position to meet the unprecedented demand for pastoral support. The team has made over 1,000 calls to vulnerable students since lockdown began.

A Wellbeing Survey reaches students directly every week, accompanied by thematic information on a range of safeguarding topics. Students report on their mental health and safety and are invited to request a call from a DSL. Concerns are followed up with telephone support



**Operation Encompass is Norfolk's early intervention safeguarding partnership between police and education that supports children and young people exposed to domestic abuse. Schools are contacted the day after any incident of domestic violence is reported to the police, and a stepped plan is put in place. Between September and March, I received one such report; since lockdown began I've had six calls. The incidents range from arguments and damage to property to common assault. Lockdown conditions make it very difficult to gauge the effect of these events on children. We always call the family to offer support to the victims, and we offer children either places in school (if necessary) or a nurturing call from one of the teaching assistants.**

**Vicky Simmons, Headteacher, Woodlands**

via pastoral teams or the counsellor, or (where appropriate) via home visits by our very own Police Community Support Officer. The survey has been a lifeline to students. We were even able to respond within minutes to a Sunday morning cry for help.

As lives appear to be moving almost entirely online, I am grateful for what technology has afforded. Google led me to what felt like a life-saving course on 'Managing Teams Remotely'; YouTube has introduced me to Yoga and the Joe Wicks' workout; and the wellbeing team has created a Virtual Staff Room. Many students have benefited from the wealth of remote learning resources available online, whilst others have been able to access anonymous online counselling at a time when face-to-face services are largely suspended. However, the increasingly visible digital divide provides a stark reminder that benefits are not available to all.

As we embrace technology, we must also minimise the risk of harm. Online risk can be largely categorised as: Content (exposure to inappropriate content, such as pornography or extremist material); Contact (being contacted by others who may pose a risk of harm, for example, grooming or peer on peer abuse); and Conduct (children behaving in ways which could increase their risk, for example, creating a negative online reputation).

**Class Teachers telephone every child in the school weekly, but there are always the families that are not known to us as vulnerable. I have a system to track the weekly calls, and if there isn't any response over two weeks, I chase persistently until I get one. I follow up the Class Teacher call with a phone call the same day. If there's no reply, I send a text message for a call back. This generally prompts a response, but on the two occasions when it hasn't, I've requested a check from the Education Welfare Officer. The calls are a lifeline to some families. I always ask parents how they are, which opens the door to others I've been able to point them to for relevant support. We have parents in several families who don't speak English. I communicate with them via email using Word's online translation function, and it works well. Until the end of term we'll be delivering breakfast packs, hoping to reach the children most at risk of hunger, through the NSBP Magic Breakfast programme.**

**Elaine Blaby, Pastoral Support Manager and DSL, Three Peaks**

# Certainties in Uncertain Times

Viv Swaida, Principal, reflected on the certainties that sustained her through the uncertain times at Weavers

## What's missing?

It sounds strange but we miss the million conversations with young people during social time: always an opportunity to understand their motivations, hopes and fears. I miss not seeing the work in their books or hearing them talk about the skills that they're developing; and especially their eagerness to show me how they've improved. It's been heart-rending to hear from older students who feel almost cheated out of the experience of taking public exams, with the summer rites of passage cancelled.

## Choices

Of course, when we re-start, school won't look like it did before the closure. We will all find the new social distancing norms counter-intuitive for a while. Staff are planning meticulously to help students fill the gaps of 'lost learning' quickly. It will be a juggling act, and we may have to make choices about the shape of the curriculum in order to meet

personal needs. Some students will be 'flying high' and will have found opportunities to accelerate; others will need support to catch up. Our detailed assessment of learning will need to be more systematic than ever yet flexible, adaptable and responsive to need so that we can plan with precision for each student. Right now, this is top of my agenda!



## Routines at risk

The learning routines that students had built up before they left us are among the factors that really drive our success. We will need to make sure that we build them up again quickly, with a combination of 'rigour and love'! The rapport with some students may need to be carefully rebuilt as well. For many of the more vulnerable, the turbulence will have wrought challenges in their family lives, and we may need to call on a wider range of agencies and professionals to support us. Some may have lost loved ones in the most tragic of circumstances and will need love and extra pastoral care for a long time to come. Above all, to reach the high expectations we had set before the closure we have to motivate, motivate and motivate the students! Fortunately, the motivation of the staff of Weavers is not at risk.

## A new kind of learning support

What has delighted me most during the Lockdown is the many, many messages of support from parents who have told us about engaging in their child's learning: we will capitalise on this in the future. This excites me and makes me want to build on this even further when the school re-starts. Meanwhile, I'm really proud of how our students are coping and embracing change. I know their resilience will get them through because they are remarkable. They never fail to amaze me.





## A New World

**Vicky Simmons, newly-appointed Head Teacher at Woodlands, drew strength from the daily presence of children in school**

Most children will be happy to be back; to see their friends and teachers again, to get out of the house and have life return to whatever 'normal' may look like. But we can't forget the anxious ones, the ones who can't cope with the bustle, the change in routines, the grief they may be feeling. Unfortunately, we've seen a rise in the number of families that are struggling, and others that have not made it through the lockdown period together. All these children will come back to us with a new set of worries and misunderstandings about the world around them. Not to mention the curriculum that everyone will need to catch up on. But now, we have between 15 and 25 children in school on a daily basis. They spend their mornings doing the set work and afternoons doing more creative activities such as art and design, or orienteering in the field and the woods. This little group keeps us all going when things are difficult and the news is bad – always ready with a smile and an eagerness to share what they've done. They help us look forward to the future, to when we can return to school and start creating our own new normal.

**Vicky Simmons**  
and **Glen Cooper**,  
Site Manager, with  
**Woodlands** pupils  
in the sunshine.



**'Crisis does not bring about character, it reveals it'**

**Harry French, Principal of Ash Green, drew strength from a community pulling together**

That's how the American novelist James Lane Allen put it, and the challenges we're facing have revealed the character of Ash Green School. Whether by individual acts of kindness and gratitude or by a corporate sense of service to the young people of our community, we are pulling together. We have lost a great deal during this crisis, not least the beloved people who will leave gaps in families that can never be filled. But we have all gained too. Ash Green is gaining strength every single day. We're transforming our approaches to learning in ways that will impact on our practice beyond this crisis. Our young people have developed new skills to work independently and creatively in lockdown. I am proudest of the support we have offered our families through this difficult time. Despite the social distance, we are closer as a community than ever before, with a greater awareness of what our young people and their families need.

**70s** In the late 1970s a few pioneering teachers in the UK were already experimenting with early computers like the Commodore PET.

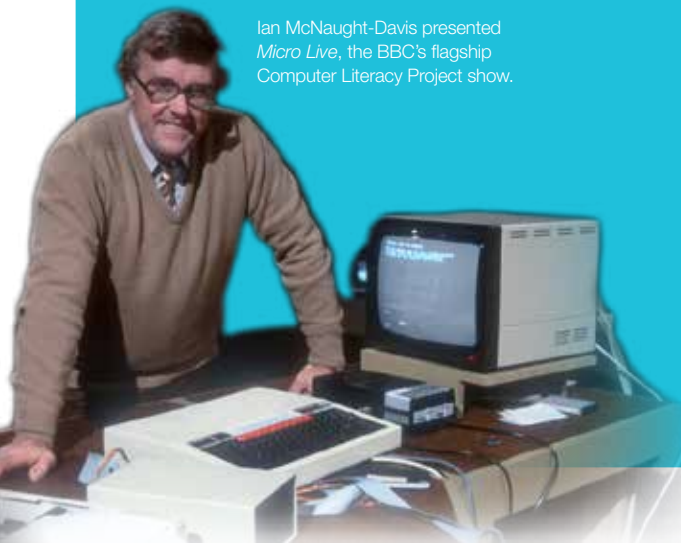
**80s** The 'Microelectronics Education Programme' was launched in 1980. Planned under a Labour government and launched by the Conservative Party, this funding intended to help schools to prepare children for life in a society in which devices and systems based on microelectronics were commonplace and pervasive. Fourteen regional consortiums were set-up across the UK to initiate three areas of strategic work: curriculum development, teacher training and resource support. The programme formally closed in 1986.

By 1981, after several years of research and development and amid concerns that the UK was falling behind in the 'microelectronics revolution', the BBC launched its 'Computer Literacy Project' – a public awareness and education initiative designed to motivate British people to join the technology boom.

In 1984, the first ever email to be sent was received at the University of Karlsruhe Department of Informatics from the US Computer Science Network.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 introduced a National Curriculum for the whole of the UK that made Information and Communication Technology (ICT) a compulsory subject for all pupils aged 5 to 16 in maintained schools.

Ian McNaught-Davis presented *Micro Live*, the BBC's flagship Computer Literacy Project show.



# Agents



As online provision ramps up, Jessica Douthwaite's whip-through the history of technology in education

In the same year, the Department for Trade and Industry provided £140 million in grant funding to all secondary schools so that each one could install a telephone line for data communication – the internet was coming!

**90s** By storing information on CD, educational providers realised the potential of CD-ROMs to publish vast amounts of multimedia information. In 1993, Microsoft launched its 'Encarta' range – an encyclopaedia series contained entirely on one disc. Popular in schools and homes, this CD-ROM was made obsolete by the rise of the internet.

The expansion of the internet allowed education providers to offer what had once been termed 'distance learning' as online learning. A small education provider in the United States, the Computer Assisted Learning Center, became the first institution to provide real-time, interactive courses online and changed its name to CALCampus.

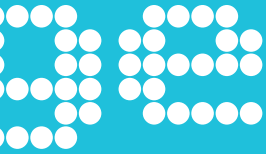
In 1997 in the UK, newly appointed Prime Minister, Tony Blair, commissioned the 'Information and Communications Technology in UK Schools' report, which recommended boosting numbers of computers in schools and increased teacher training for teaching through technology.

The report also led to the launch of the National Grid for Learning in 1998, an initiative intended to give schools funding to access educational resources on the internet.

Tim Berners-Lee innovated the use of hypertext to create the world wide web in 1989, it opened to the public in 1991.



for



00s

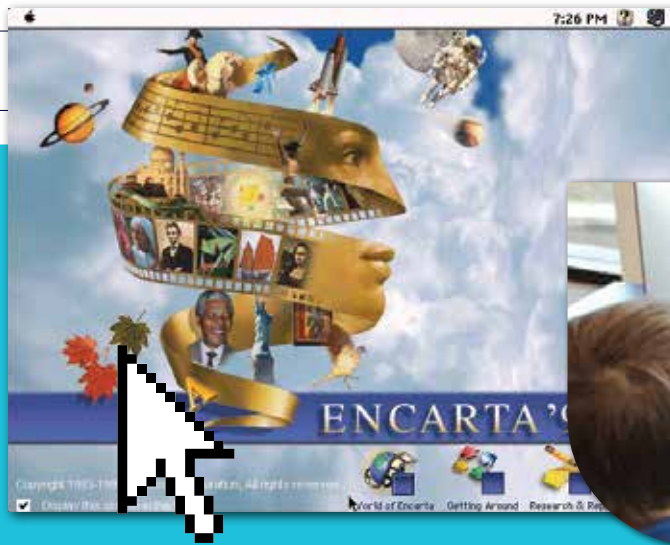
Now infamous the world over, the most successful online encyclopaedia – Wikipedia – was launched in **2001**. Today, the site contains over 52 million articles in 309 different languages.

In **2006** the free online audio and video podcast provider, Ted Talks, posted its first 6 videos online, within 3 months they had been viewed over a million times. Today, Ted Talks have a global audience and number over 2600.

Mobile technology had far surpassed computer ownership in Africa by **2011**, with over 500 million individuals owning a cell phone. This connection to the internet began to completely change technological innovation on the continent.

The first edition of Raspberry Pi was launched for school and public sales in **2012**. The circuit board and memory chip kit was intended to provide a cost-effective solution to classroom teaching in computer programming.

In the Netherlands, a new group of ‘Steve Jobs Schools’ opened in **2013** in which books were entirely replaced with iPads and an educational philosophy arose from this online learning style. While schools in the UK were not basing the curriculum on tablet technology, an increasing number of iPads were being used in education.



By **2014**, as a result of increasing concerns that the Information & Communication Technology curriculum did not equip young people with the adequate knowledge and cutting edge skills needed in the modern world, the National Curriculum for ICT was transformed to emphasise Computing.

This announcement was followed in **2017** by the DfE’s decision to replace ICT with Computing in the national curriculum. The new subject was to ‘place much greater emphasis on teaching the principles of computational thinking and practical programming skills.’

Meanwhile in India, **2017**, the government made it compulsory by law for all school buses to be installed with GPS (Global Positioning Software) tracking systems.

With increased concerns over the low numbers of girls pursuing Computing subjects at school, in **2019** a consortium of organisations funded by the DfE launched a research project called ‘Gender Balance in Computing’. Through randomised controlled trials in 550 schools and involving 15,000 students, the project will investigate the barriers to girls’ participation in Computing and solutions for supporting more girls into the subject.

In Africa, the outbreak of Covid-19 in early **2020** was met with a boom in mobile applications to raise awareness about the virus, identify cases and support communities in preventing and treating its spread. The rate of Covid-19 cases have been noticeably low, a success attributed by many experts to this use of social media and mobile technology.

Code Club, established by the Raspberry Pi Foundation, is a free after-school club for children aged between 9 and 13 years old. There are over 8,600 Code Clubs in UK schools to date.





Ash Mudaliar, Group ICT Lead for Creative Education Trust introduced the challenges and opportunities brought on by the rapid adoption of online everything:

“Our fantastic, dedicated IT Support team pulled out all the stops to overcome a number of challenges as the events of the pandemic unfolded.

These included scaling up our remote access systems and Cloud services, setting up school devices for students and staff who don't have access to one at home, implementing remote telephony solutions and setting up numerous class groups for online learning platforms – all done in a very short space of time to enable staff and pupils to work, teach and learn from home. A silver lining to all this has been the significant uptake in usage of our Cloud platforms, such as Office 365, which have proved essential during the pandemic to meetings, collaboration, and online learning. When we return to some normality, I can see these tools continuing to shape the way that teaching and learning takes place for everyone both in and out of the classroom as we go into the future.”



Lockdown work: configuring Chromebooks for students without access to a device to use from home; setting up laptops for staff that normally use desktop PCs; dealing with everyday requests and issues.

The more challenging task has been setting up mobile Internet access for students and staff that do not have it at home. We thought this would be easy, but had to overcome all sorts of issues by talking with suppliers, carriers and negotiating with our web filtering provider. With the help of SLT and the admin and finance staff, the majority of Ash Green staff and students are now able to carry on working from home.

**Michael Brown, ICT Technician,  
Ash Green**



I've really missed face-to-face contact but bridging that gap via technology has been incredibly rewarding. Our staff and students have quickly maximised their use of technology; from keeping-in-touch virtual coffee mornings to ramping up the next phase of blended learning. As a regional team we've been busy prepping Chromebooks for loan to students identified as vulnerable. Procurement has become a major challenge. IT supply chains started to break down early in the year, but the finance team has worked fast to secure the purchase orders we needed. The situation has made occasional, reactive site visits necessary, but it's also highlighted how much support the team can give remotely. As we move to the next phase, this will enable us to continue providing first-rate support, while enabling staff to comply with social distancing guidance.

**Dan Shilito, Regional ICT Manager,  
Hart School**

**Adam Johnson, Senior ICT Technician for Creative Education Trust played a pivotal part in the production of Creative Education Trust's first live stream event with Lancaster University and has been working flat out since March to support students and teachers with their online learning.**

### What has your role been since the lockdown?

Configuring and getting Microsoft Teams set up to allow everyone across the Trust to connect, teach and learn.

### What were the challenges?

The biggest has been the speed at which we needed to get online services up and ready. In the first few weeks of lockdown Microsoft data centres suffered several outages because of the number of new users trying to get online. We had to wait for Microsoft to return to normal, but when you realise that Microsoft went from 44 million to 75 million daily active users in a matter of weeks, you can understand how that slowed us down. Fortunately, even before coronavirus hit, we'd been preparing for challenges we knew online education would raise, such as students' access to files; folders and channels for teams; and making sure we had good quality guidance for teachers to use remotely.

### What's been the highlight of the last three months?

Just seeing how fast and well staff have adapted to the situation. The bit I've enjoyed most is being able to witness teachers' Teams classes. I've seen the great ways that they've been using the platform and how well students are engaging with it. Doing the data reporting on online usage, it has been fantastic to see excellent results on student participation from home. It's stunning: I've been wanting this kind of engagement for years and in the space of three weeks we've hit an all-time high!

### Describe your vision for the future of technology in schools.

I'd love to see every school embedding the one-to-one Chromebook scheme in daily teaching. I also foresee that the access we already have to free platforms and automated applications will help speed up processes such as marking and grading, bringing benefits to teachers and students alike. Almost all young people use devices to access whole worlds online, and it would be great to see schools incorporating the technology that's familiar to students to support their learning. Creative Education Trust schools have made incredible progress and from what I can tell, there's a real appetite to integrate this technology more meaningfully within school life.

**Since lockdown in schools was introduced from March 2020 the provision of technology and IT support across Creative Education Trust certainly saw lots of changes.**

Home schooling during a pandemic has foregrounded technology and the Internet. The EduTech Group, chaired by **Alison Mobbs** (Principal of Lynn Grove), is thinking quickly to formulate an online education strategy across the Trust. **"Our schools have made remarkable progress in establishing remote learning for all pupils"**, observes Mrs Mobbs. **"Innovation is often driven by urgent and compelling need and this was certainly the case as we hurried to close our schools. We're determined to make sure that the progress we made is sustained and extended by sharing good pedagogic practice and managing our teachers' work load so that we continue to develop the independence of our learners."** The Group will audit existing online programmes across subjects, quality-assure new methods, identify best teaching practice, recommend CPD opportunities and provide a model of high-quality blended learning for short-and long-term use.

Teachers and staff across the Trust have been experimenting with meeting layouts, instant messaging, document sharing and many other online learning functions including live event streaming. **On Friday 22 May, Creative Education Trust hosted its first live stream event for year 12 students interested in Contemporary Arts subjects.** In partnership with Lancaster University's Institute of Contemporary Arts, students were able to attend a virtual taster event—presented live by lecturers and student ambassadors from the university, featuring pre-recorded introductions to each subject and finishing in a very productive Q&A session. The event was a huge success and showed what can be done by adapting to new technologies quickly.

**Alison Mobbs**, Principal of **Lynn Grove**



# TEACHING

Before Covid-19, a myriad of domestic backgrounds and a multitude of learning aptitudes and behavioural needs were forced into architectural adjacency by the classroom. *Connected* asked five teachers what they loved, learned and lost by doing their job at a social distance.

Jodie Green, Director of Maths and Assistant Principal for Achievement at the Hart School



## Drawing out the quiet ones

The way we work and teach our students has dramatically changed and it's been a learning curve for us all – staff, students and parents. Teaching maths has moved on. Excellent online packages such as Hegarty Maths and Dr Frost have

enabled us to support students remotely; for example, with tutorials for students and quizzes to test their understanding.

From early on the need to give praise and positivity was apparent. The online platform provides the opportunity to offer praise with that personal touch, and we'll continue to do it post-lockdown. For students to see a familiar face and hear a familiar voice, we've started recording our own video tutorials (like the commercial models we'd been using) and we're now producing a video for every year group every week!

It's been a particular pleasure to witness how students who are typically quiet in class have thrived in the home setting. Students can pace their video tutorial – pause and rewind it – going over things again if they need to. They can challenge themselves if they want to, or get additional help without feeling shy or embarrassed. Remote working has been heart-warming in that way, and it will change the way we work forever.



# Remotely

Kevin Cromwell, Curriculum Team Leader for Geography, Caister

## Who'd Have Thought It?

The breakthrough moment came for me when I realised that for an unexpected few, lockdown has accelerated their learning. They've been producing more work than ever before and to a higher quality. But it's not been the high-achieving students from supportive, middle-class backgrounds; it was a small group of students that in a normal classroom disengage and struggle to resist the social distractions.

The lack of social interaction has made these students focus more, and their knowledge and understanding has accelerated at a pace I could have never predicted. The many benefits for most people of working in a group are well documented; but for some the converse is true – the capacity to study without distractions, ask questions without judgement, manage their own workload and learn at their pace has had astonishing results.

The education of the future cannot and should not be the same as the education of the past. I will use this experience to re-design learning, because while the destination for all learners is prescribed, the journey can be as unique as every individual. Let's stop putting sun-loving plants in the shade.



Nick Jones,  
Assistant Headteacher  
for Staff  
Development,  
Lynn Grove  
Academy



## Extreme CPD

The Internet has exploded with online CPD designed to support teachers' getting the most out of pupils while schools are closed. We decided it was important to engage in the latest research and share good practice to help staff produce innovative ideas. Cross-department Teams meetings in groups of six were set up to discuss the EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) distance learning report and Paul Kirschner's recent ResearchEd Webinar.

Colleagues agreed that remote learning should replicate pupils' experience in the classroom as much as possible. Practically, this should include recorded teacher audio on PowerPoints and feedback; 'live' lessons with small groups to talk through misconceptions; and work set in a consistent format for each lesson within departments. Maths have had good engagement by sticking with their three step model: pre-assessment, new content and an 'exit ticket' assessment that translated straight from the classroom to the online platform Mathswatch.

To improve engagement and understanding, peer-to-peer interaction needed to be promoted by hosting classes on Teams. Ideas included pupils setting each other quiz questions and 'shout outs' from teachers to pupils who make good effort. Teachers understand the importance of praise and communication. The most important thing is that students know we're there; leading their learning, encouraging them with praise and supporting their needs.

George Spencer, English teacher and  
ITT Coordinator at Wrenn School

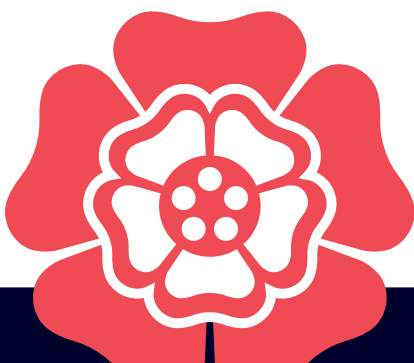
## The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Teacher

At some point during lockdown we've all felt like we're building futures on the shifting sands of education and technology. Some of you will recognise the fight between the laptop vs the kids, sanity vs madness and lockdown vs freedom - such is the fight in the parable of the wise and foolish teacher.

A foolish practitioner would tell you to keep building your teaching on this inconsistent and shifting sand, to deliver online learning the best you can and hope that, eventually, you'll have something purposeful, even if it is only temporary. A wise one would tell you to wait for the world to provide you with a solid ground of normality on which to rebuild our profession.



Maybe this lockdown can make us the wisest of the fools. I'd like to hope that from inconsistency comes innovation. Maybe the fight isn't between normality vs lockdown. Maybe the fight isn't between a physical or a virtual education. My own lockdown has been nappies, marking, live lessons, planning, naps, tantrums, WhatsApp videos, emails, housework and so, so much more. But my biggest takeaway is that we would be fools to not see the positives, the opportunities and the sense of being 'in it together'. We would be wise to be grateful and proud of what we have achieved so far; resilient on our shifting sands of education, and optimistic about the next phase of the building.



# Moving

## The Michael Dickson Photography Prize

This year saw the relaunch of Creative Education Trust's much-loved photography competition, inspired by the late Michael Dickson who was a founding trustee. A small team of professional photographers launched this year's brief ("Moving") in eight of our schools and helped our secondary and sixth-form students generate and develop ideas in response to it. Subsequent one-to-one tutorials between our photographers and students revealed work that was funny, surprising, and touching, and we looked forward to more and more varied submissions than in previous years. Unfortunately lockdown, arriving just at the point of the submission deadline and shortlisting, had other ideas. But the work of 75 students who submitted photographs for consideration gave us plenty to consider!

This year four professional photographers acted as mentors to our students: [Leon Chew](#) visited Hart and Thistley Hough; [Marysa Dowling](#) partnered with Weavers and Wrenn; [Sam Ivin](#) worked with the students of Bulwell and Ellis Guilford; and [Mary Stephenson](#) travelled to Ash Green and Milton Keynes. In place of a final 'competition', we were lucky to welcome Leon and Sam onto a panel to decide on the images on these pages, presided over by [Steve Macleod](#). Steve is the photographer who helped us conceive the original prize, and is Creative Director of Metro Imaging. The eight candidates here were all selected for their mature and original response to the brief; and the judges offered special commendation to Shama Abdulla for her excellent light painting.

The comments are from our panellists.

*"Surreal and loaded with meaning"*

Callum Baravelli, Ellis Guilford (below left)







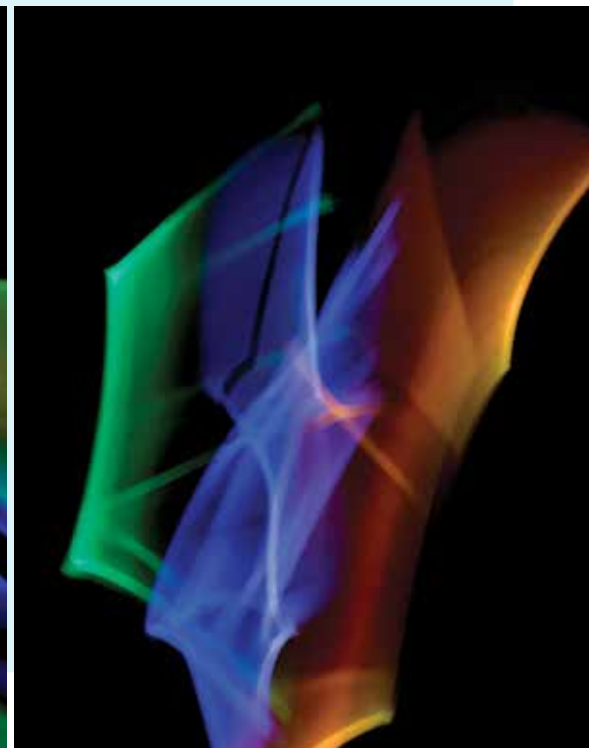
*“A well-lit shot,  
clearly coming from  
experimentation”*

Freya Yellop, Bulwell (right)

**Special  
Commendation**

*“Mature and well composed  
with great freedom. Just cool.”*

Shama Abdulla,  
Ellis Guilford (below)





*“Full of energy and well executed”*

Suha Kamran, Thistley Hough (above)



*“Fabulous composition and good subtle colours. An intriguing view”*

Lexie Daley, Hart (right)





*“A wonderful colour palette, with real mystery”*

**Karina Filip-Iliuta,  
Thistley Hough (left)**

*“A brave photo that’s full of personality and movement”*

**Grace Plant, Weavers (right)**



*“There’s energy in this. A sort of pre-Raphaelite freedom to it”*

**Mikayla Bella-Bonney,  
Milton Keynes (right)**



# Curriculum: More Than a Foot in the Door



**Nicole McCartney, Director of Secondary Education, set in motion a major cross-Trust project in 2020 to define the Creative Education Trust secondary curriculum: “The first driver was wanting to extract ourselves from the cycle of intervention at Key Stage 4 by shoring up the work at Key Stage 3. We had the advantage of all the resources of a multi-**

**academy trust to pool, and the chance to capitalise on the expertise of over 170 curriculum leaders. We didn’t want this to come from the top down. We wanted this to come from our middle leaders who are the experts in their subject areas.”**

*“We don’t just want their foot in the door. We want them at the head of the tables they find on the other side.”*

**“Beyond the Academic curriculum,” she explains “it was important that we articulate and raise the profiles of the unique aspects of our offer – Knowledge Connected and the Ambition curriculum. Both ensure that our children leave not just with examination results, but also with the agency and levels of independence that will serve them well in all of their future endeavours. We don’t just want their foot in the door. We want them at the head of the tables they find on the other side.”**

**In the secondary schools, 17 subject groups, chaired by the Curriculum Vice Principals, met for extended sessions in the last weeks of May to align their examination boards and write their KS3 Curriculum Maps. Three of the chairs reflected here on the why and how of curriculum alignment.**

## Victoria Hill

**Vice Principal of Lynn Grove, chaired the Music session**

On a rainy November morning I found myself heading out of Norfolk and up the A14 towards Milton Keynes, to join colleagues from our 11 secondary schools and begin our journey towards a shared curriculum. We defined our goal: to provide every pupil with the powerful knowledge, transferable skills and cultural capital to integrate into any social, academic or professional environment their future may present. The opportunity to be part of it was exciting, especially as we reached our first milestone: a visual representation of the curriculum in every Creative Education Trust school.

Having established a common framework, each of us was entrusted with facilitating a subject group - transmitting our belief that a good curriculum, planned and tangible, shapes not only the school but also the life of each pupil. If all went well, we would see a common subject curriculum being delivered in all the secondary schools from September and the opportunities to share, collaborate and learn from one another would be endless. If we failed, the collective advantages of belonging to a multi-academy trust would not be realised. We would continue to work in relative isolation, growing little and achieving less.

So in the midst of a pandemic and on an IT platform recently mastered, our subject leaders, the driving force of curriculum change, used their passion, expertise and experience to collaboratively write our new curriculum.



Did everyone get their own way? No. Was there compromise? Yes. But we all agree that the finished plan provides the best sequence of learning, while allowing enough scope for the unique characteristics of different schools and the communities they serve to shine through.

What next? Well, the Quality Assurance process has just begun and there is work still to do on standardised assessment, but in the face of a very uncertain educational future, the work we completed on the Academic curriculum brings stability and strong foundation upon which to build and strengthen its counterparts: the Ambition curriculum and Knowledge Connected.

## Daulton Redmond

**Vice Principal of the Hart School,  
chaired the Art & Design subject group**

Our goal was to design a rich, engaging curriculum in a collaborative way, disseminating best practice while retaining a local flavour that recognises the skills and resources within the school and local area. The Art and Design session was a prime opportunity to revisit the core principles of the Design Programme, Ambition Curriculum and Knowledge Connected, and bring these elements together so that we enhance the learning experience, support the CPDL of staff and reduce work load.

I worked with a keen and dedicated group of professionals – there was healthy discourse and disagreement but a real eagerness to get the best for the students. Since I wasn't a subject specialist myself, listening to the variety of expert views on delivery was fascinating. I think giving teachers the headspace to design their own curriculum – within parameters – is always energising. Clearly, Creative Education Trust has worked hard to put industry-level thinking into the

Design Programme that Art and D&T share, so learning how it manifests in lessons was incredibly interesting.

That aside, I honestly think the greatest gain here is the vehicle for collaboration and networking that the curriculum work provided. Teachers love teaching but don't often get time to talk or work with others in their profession or related industries. And of course, we all have a richer curriculum to look forward to.

## Nimish Lad

Vice Principal, Wrenn, chaired the session for the social science and vocational subjects: Health and Social Care, Psychology, Sociology, Travel and Tourism and Child Development.

As part of continuous cycle of curriculum development, subject leaders across the secondary schools embarked on an exciting challenge of aligning GCSE specifications and sequencing the knowledge and skills in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. We want pupils not only to get the qualifications, but to develop the ability to question, instigate change or lead within the environments they enter as adults. The process exemplified the 'middle-up' values of Creative Education Trust, with Vice Principals like me listening to the experts at a different level in the hierarchy. I teach science, but my group comprised five sub-groups of either GCSE or BTEC subject leaders – some subjects very practical, others with significant portions of cognitive heavy-lifting! The Chairs of the curriculum groups had spent several months drip-feeding ideas from contemporary pedagogical theory to the subject leaders and are excited to see where these newly formed subject groups will take outcomes in years to come. In the meantime all staff across the Trust will understand why we teach, what we teach, and why we teach it at that specific time.

# KNOWLEDGE Connected

**Twenty secondary Knowledge Connected Leads from the eleven schools met on Teams on June 26, the day originally scheduled as our Showcase in the presence of external guests. One of these guests was the influential academic educationalist, Professor Mick Waters, held in high esteem for his work on raising attainment and teachers' professional development, who privileged us with an appearance at our virtual event. Four teachers presented their experience and insights, having run Knowledge Connected for the 18 months before Covid-19.**

## Lauren Taylor, science teacher, Bulwell

Knowledge Connected has been a great addition to our school. Too often our students associate change with the negative things – a drop-down day may have caused anxiety for our year 7s. However, Knowledge Connected enabled our students to change the way they look at the curriculum, even if it is just for 'one' drop-down day. I know they've now taken this experience as positive, and used it to question lots of learning they've done throughout the year with questioning structure and pattern that they see in a range of subjects.

Our Knowledge Connected days had previously been delivered mainly by art and D&T, and we decided to switch it up by having the pattern day delivered by math teachers. This was great, as it put both teachers and students out of their comfort zone. It allowed the students to witness their teachers addressing different subject areas, and really helped build some excellent relationships. We analysed patterns in Martin Luther King Junior's "I Have A Dream" speech. The students were empowered by breaking down this speech into its parts and noticing the powerful way in which Dr King used repetition.



## Stephen Darby, music teacher, Milton Keynes

I've enjoyed being part of the year 8 Knowledge Connected development process. Geoff Barton regularly refers to the 10%-90% ratio of actioning things and justifying those actions, and I found that the most challenging part of the process was rationalising the programme with teachers, before, during and after the Knowledge Connected days, and rallying them to engage with the programme.

The personal rewards for me have all been about the collaboration and challenge of working with strong practitioners from across the Trust: it's been thought-provoking and developmental to be academically challenged by each other. My own practice has improved as a consequence of the process and I am grateful for the opportunity. As Mick so eloquently said, through this project we were not only all 'purveyors of learning', but also 'traders of learning', and that has been the most rewarding part.



# Oriente



**Kelly Giles, art teacher, Abbeyfield**

When presenting the concept of Knowledge Connected to staff at Abbeyfield, it was really important to me that ALL staff were made aware of what it involved, even if they were not included in the actual delivery of lessons. I wanted all staff to understand the philosophy of connecting knowledge and recognise just how beneficial this is to us, our teaching, and most importantly, our students.

I began by presenting an overview, including the Knowledge Connected animation, with a brief introduction to the common learning objectives and to the Curriculum Leads who had written the lessons. After selecting the staff to be involved in the delivery of the 'golden lessons' I did a more in-depth CPD session where we talked through the lesson plans and resources along with the more practical, logistical running of the day.

Knowledge Connected days are always very successful – the staff enjoy delivering different lessons whilst working towards a common objective with their fellow teachers. The students get a better understanding of the connections between their subjects, their education and their lives than most of them had before. There's always a great buzz of enthusiasm, intrigue and achievement. It hugely benefits us all and I love being involved.

**Having reviewed documentary material sent to him in advance, and heard these reports live from four of our practitioners, Professor Waters's comments were a massive vote of confidence for the Knowledge Connected team, whom he commended in the aftermath of the event as "professionals with a real feeling of energy, rooted in philosophical belief and set alongside practical determination". These are his words, abridged:**

Too long in this country we've kept curriculum and teaching as separate entities, when actually, pedagogy exists in curriculum and curriculum cannot exist without pedagogy. Why I like your key concepts is that they bring pedagogy and curriculum close together. They're helping you as a group to raise really significant questions about how we approach pedagogy.

It's a fallacy to think of all learning as a ladder, acquired in steps. Some learning does need other learning that went on before; but there's also learning that's a sort of orienteering experience, an attitude that recognises, 'while I'm doing this, I can learn these other things at the same time'. I think Knowledge Connected is helping children with that orienteering around all subjects. The important thing is for people to have a big picture about the curriculum and to understand where a single discipline like maths or history fits and where it matches up with other disciplines, so that children start to understand how learning branches in different directions.

*"Your Knowledge Connected programme is good because it's big picture stuff"*

But at the same time you have big ideas, and this is where what we call 'cross curricular' things start to come in – sustainable development, relationships education, financial literacy. If we dare do it, that is, and most schools don't because of the tramlines they're on. That's why your Knowledge Connected programme is really good; because it's big picture stuff that will engage children so they'll go with all the subjects in the picture.

These 'key concept' and 'drop-down' days spur us on. I think the ambition ought to be, in two years' time, instead of being isolated days, to make inroads into the way children learn more widely.



# eerling

# After- hours

**Jay Birmingham**, Year 5 teacher at Three Peaks, is an award-winning landscape photographer. Photography was originally a way of recording his outdoor interests of kayaking, climbing, and walking; and Jay bought his first DSLR (digital single-lens reflex camera) to document a safari. Gradually his interest in photography became more serious, as he began to visit locations with the specific intention of photographing them.

Jay's confidence took a leap forward when he was persuaded to enter the Landscape Photographer of the Year prize by his wife and friends. Much to his surprise, he was commended for an image of Fairy Glen, an area of exceptional beauty in Snowdonia, which made the cover of the Times Literary Supplement.

Since then Jay has used weekends and holidays to further his photography. In 2020 alone, Jay has been shortlisted for the British Photography Awards and Landscape Photographer of the Year, and took 4th place in the Wex Photographer of the Year.

In school, Jay uses his hobby to support the growth mindset approach Three Peaks have adopted, using it to discuss perseverance and the importance of not letting other people's negative comments discourage you. The children have even set briefs for Jay, requesting that he took photos of a storm. The resulting image of lightning above Tamworth made it into multiple national papers. "I shared it with them the next day to show them that even as teachers, we are learning new skills all the time too".

*Buttermere Dawn by Jay Birmingham. Jay's photograph of Three Peaks in the mist features on the cover of this issue of Still Connected*

We know that Creative Education Trust staff are an able and resourceful group, many of whom participate in activities at a professional level away from the classroom. Working from home under lockdown revealed more than the usual insight into many of our lives beyond the day job, and Connected discovered a rich seam of accomplishment, creativity and service.





**Chris Imber**, known to many of us as a Year 6 teacher at Three Peaks, sustains an energetic career as comic book artist and writer.

A skilled illustrator, Chris founded Reckless Hero with two friends eight years ago to sell t-shirts bearing their original illustrations. The team now write, illustrate and publish their own comics, and have built a following through crowdfunding campaigns in which fans pre-order new titles. Comic book conventions across the UK, some of which might attract over 100,000 enthusiasts are not only a chance to meet with comics fanatics and potential supporters of Reckless Hero, but to talk to heroes of the genre. Chris is always ready for a portfolio review when it's offered!

Chris sees his future in both worlds. He plans to keep his comics independent rather than courting larger publishers, feeling that it allows him freedom. But it's time-consuming work: Chris may spend six hours drawing a page that might take two minutes to read. "It can be fraught and stressful when I'm near a deadline, either with school or drawing. But I like to be busy! And it's worth every effort it takes to send your passion out into the world."

Although the published work of Reckless Hero is not for a primary school age audience, Chris brings his skills as a comic book artist into the classroom. He has taught comics drawing as part of art classes, included comics art in the school's art curriculum and broadened students' understanding of illustration by teaching the work of comic book artists alongside the work of William Blake.



**Georgia Haynes** is a Reception teacher and the EYFS Lead at Woodlands Primary but, since the age of nine, she has twirled a baton. Trained as part of Great Yarmouth's Tri-Star Twirlers, she has competed in regional and national competitions in baton, pom, flag and military routines. She also coaches a team of youngsters between the ages of four and twelve.

Although the age of the pupils she is responsible for in school may not exactly understand what twirling is, Georgia is keen to share her outside interests with her class to encourage them to enjoy a hobby that they love as much as she does: "we like to celebrate all of the children's successes along with mine".

Georgia also credits twirling for giving her the confidence and the skills to be able to contain any nerves when having to present to parents and colleagues.

*Miss Haynes performing to judges for the National Baton Twirling Association in 2020.*

As a teacher of English at Abbeyfield, **Jessica Couper** has found a way to help her students engage with characters and text, supported by her work with Looking Glass Theatre: a professional touring theatre group which often works on arts and heritage projects. Having volunteered with the group for nine years, she now finds herself helping out at the Saturday stage schools, backstage during productions and at different events around Northampton and the wider county.

*“They can definitely tell you Macduff and Macbeth’s lines as they re-enact their final battle”*

Incorporating drama-based activities in her teaching has become a way to bring stories, plays and texts to life for her students. Allowing students to role-play, complete with costumes and props creates enjoyable and memorable lessons for the students which support their learning: “they may not remember the exact details from Hecate’s speech in Macbeth, but they can definitely tell you Macduff and Macbeth’s lines as they re-enact their final battle with inflatable swords!”

Acting, which Jessica also enjoys, builds skills in character analysis, helping students to figure out why a character may behave a certain way in the play, novel or text they are studying.



*Jessica Couper participating in one of Looking Glass Theatre’s Arts and Heritage ghost walks, a re-enactment of the witch trials of Northampton, and her marked up script for prompt duty.*

Another teacher taking their art skills into the classroom is **Alison Cremona**, textiles teacher at Wrenn. Alison’s craft specialism is needle felting: the art of working wool fibre with a barbed needle to make three-dimensional models.

Alison found herself being asked to lead workshops to teach others a skill that began for her as a personal hobby. Now the workshops take up most of her time outside school and, in a complete surprise to Alison, her husband Nick has also caught the felting bug. Working together from a room filled with boxes of wool, haberdashery and interesting finds, Nick books and organises the workshops that Alison leads. In addition to her teaching, Alison makes artworks to commission and others to sell through the Fenwick Gallery in Northumberland.

In school Alison has taught needle felting in clubs and during enrichment days. She observes that the absorbing, repetitive process, the satisfying outcome and the calming nature of the craft was a particular success with students in the Internal Exclusion Unit.

*A pair of Alison Cremona’s needle felted hares, and teaching a workshop*





*“Working with young people keeps me young!”*

**Jackie Brocklehurst** is a Teaching Assistant at Harpfield, but is known to many as a County Commissioner for the Scouts. With a responsibility to around 11,000 young people and adults, Jackie ensures that Staffordshire's 12 districts are working together to provide excellent opportunities for each local Scout group. It's hard work; long hours in a management role with many reports, and an acute safeguarding brief. Jackie's evenings and weekends are often taken up with Scouting activities, either with live groups or working on her managerial responsibilities at home.

Moving Scout activities online with the Covid-19 crisis has, for Jackie, meant more opportunities to see the young people she supports. Since lockdown there have been virtual campfires, camps and sleepovers and last St George's Day saw 1,300 people logging in to watch the service. A regular programme of home activities, to be completed by parent and child together, have widened the scouting community, and Jackie hopes that a greater number of parents will step up to volunteer once lockdown is over as a result.

It's undoubtedly a lifetime's passion: Jackie has been a Scout leader for 40 years. Much has evolved in scouting and, although the core outdoor activities remain, camping and knots have been joined by badges in electronics and IT. Jackie has found that this has kept her in good stead for updating the school curriculum. And, as she says, "working with young people keeps me young!"

*Jackie Brocklehurst, Harpfield TA and County Commissioner for the Scouts*



# electronic

Kate Ward interviewed four Creative Education Trust staff members extending their love of science, reading, maths and games development to thousands of students within, and internet subscribers beyond, the school walls.

# Agents



Kit Betts-Masters in his  
Gorilla Physics studio

also published two books for this audience: Prepare for the C challenge of A Level Physics and Memorise Equations for GCSE Physics.

Kit has also filmed more general guides such as one to give [advice on anxiety during exams](#) and, recently, [how to stay motivated during lockdown](#).

Towards exams recorded videos sometimes make way for live feeds, giving viewers the chance to tune in, ask questions directly to Kit and chat to each other. 20,000 tuned in to the live video the night before last year's [AQA GCSE Physics exam](#). The comments Kit receives at the end of exam season from students are the reward for the work he puts in. Knowing that his videos and his teaching has this level of reach is worth the additional hours of work.

**Kit Betts-Masters** is the Director of Learning for science at Abbeyfield. Over the last five years he has also developed **Gorilla Physics**, a Youtube channel with 10.2k subscribers and over 1 million views.

Many of Kit's viewers are enthusiastic, high-achieving GCSE and A-level students looking for ways to assure they get those grade 9 and A\* results. These are the students who are independently looking for advice on [how best to prepare, learn and revise](#). There are also students searching for support with specific exam questions and topics. With those students in mind, Kit produces tutorials on specific topics, offering clear, calm explanations. He has





Alex's home Zoom set up.

To his 20.2k followers on Twitter **Alex Barton**, teacher at Three Peak, is known as **@MrB\_Y3**.

Only in his first year of teaching, Alex has built up a loyal following with his enthusiasm for encouraging reading for pleasure. Likewise, the teaching community on Twitter have been supportive of Alex, readily sharing book recommendations and activities to keep the classroom happy and learning.

During lockdown Alex has also been putting his own resources out there, running CPD for teachers and trainee teachers over Zoom. His popular 'Relish teaching reading' webinar, with its practical suggestions for guided reading activities, has become a hot ticket with 100 people tuning into each session. Although free, Alex has cunningly offered to send the training resources to attendees at a price... one new book for the school library, bought from an Amazon wish list. So far he has furnished the Three Peaks library with around 100 new books.

And soon Alex may have his own book on library shelves. He was approached by Bloomsbury to write a guided reading guide for teachers, which is scheduled to go into print next year. Watch this space!



**David Chilver** has a BAFTA .

Before coming to teaching, David was working in the game design industry, but he quickly found that mainstream game design wasn't for him. Starting out in teaching as a way to support his work in independent games, David gradually found that the teaching became the greater passion.

For a previous school, David wrote a games curriculum pathway with the express intention of inducing more girls to the subject. He worked with art, English, maths and business studies to show all sides of the gaming industry and prove that it's not just coders. Running games lessons, he set students the expectation of writing a game by the end of the year. The University of Suffolk was recruited to critique and judge the students' work.



David with his BAFTA Young Game Designers Mentor Award. David's gaming set up, complete with green screen for motion capture

**Klatt Apps – Times Tables and Spelling**



**Anita Koller-Levai**, Finance Officer at Queen Eleanor, was looking for innovative ways to support her daughter's learning of the times tables. She found plenty of apps, but none which really did what she wanted: "I was looking for something effective, but with not too much extra screen time". Always interested in IT and Software development, Anita's solution was to design and build her own app.

Now there are a range of apps produced by Anita under the name **Klatt Applications**. The times tables revision game came first – a way of supporting children to learn from 2x2 to 12x12 with just a little work every day. Then came spelling revision apps for years 3–4 and 5–6 and, crucially, the option of adding tailored word lists for the student.

Anita spends a few hours at weekends fixing any bugs in the apps, preparing them for operating system updates or developing new applications. Now planning a move to Hungary for her family, Anita is working on adapting her literacy apps for revision of the Hungarian language. A way to ensure that her children have a good grasp of the language they will soon be using full time.

# BOOK TO THE FUTURE

Though they may have a reputation for stuffiness, libraries have always been at the forefront of reading innovation and social change, and this was demonstrated in lockdown. Jessica Douthwaite asked Creative Education Trust librarians to share their experiences of libraries and education and reflect on the past, present and future of reading in schools.

Over at **Abbeyfield** library, Claire Massey says that even though young people use digital media to an ever-increasing extent (learners are most likely to revise using online resources), the library's

13,500 physical books remain popular with readers who like the sense of smell, touch and sight evoked by paper. Claire is joined by a team of eight student librarians from years 7, 8 and 10, who submit a written application and are interviewed for the role. They are hugely committed to their jobs - issuing books, helping peers, and tidying shelves. The library is home to

many events, including World Book Day (a week at Abbeyfield) when Claire says there is always lots of excitement and hubbub, especially from new library

During World Book Week, amongst many other events and competitions, the Abbeyfield library hosted a book tree on which students hung bookmarks with the names of the author's and their favourite books.

The Thistley Hough library is a bright, glass space that greets visitors as soon as they enter the school.



Velina has been re-reading books from her youth during lockdown, her favourite has been *Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger.

users. This year, Claire also helped set-up the 'word millionaires' challenge with the English Department, through which students compete in reading high-word-count book series. In the 'Chapter and Chatter' club, students share the books they are reading and talk about new authors. Claire hopes for an uptake in reading and an increase in library users once school returns to normal; but she also thinks that students will be keener than ever to access educational tools online.

In the six years that Velina Screen has been working at **Thistley Hough**, the library has become a focal point of student activity and sociability. Velina made sure that the library is open throughout the day, not just during lessons, and started introducing library events to the calendar. Her proudest achievement is the sense of respect amongst students for the resources, equipment and atmosphere in the library, which she declares makes a huge difference to their positive experiences of the space. Her favourite programme is *Able Writers*, which supplies authors and poets to schools for creative workshops, and she even agreed to be the regional host for six other schools in Stoke-on-Trent. Passionate about classical literature, Velina supplied the library with several sets of classic books – not on the English curriculum – in abridged and full texts, so that different readers have options for exploring these stories. During lockdown, Velina has noticed that some students who are normally reluctant to read are becoming more interested, and this has motivated her to





ensure that these readers are not lost when school starts again. One strategy, she says, is to boost the number of non-fiction books because students who least like reading are often intrigued by this genre. She also intends to conduct a student survey about reading preferences so that she can keep library stock refreshed and stay one step ahead of new trends and popular sources.



Nettie Bowles is in a unique position at **Lynn Grove**, where she has worked for 20 years and had a hand in the design of the library which can accommodate up

to 160 students at a time. The library is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 5.30pm, hosting not only timetabled lessons but clubs from origami to chess, which explains why Nettie is supported by two members of staff and a team of 34 student helpers. The library is so popular that at lunchtime it operates a ticketing system. It's remained open in lockdown so that students attending school have access to a regular work station, with desk and computer, that is easily socially-distanced from others. Meanwhile, Nettie and her colleagues respond to emails about books and reading challenges from students at home. When borrowed books began to be returned, the team installed a quarantine library post box to ensure decontamination. Nettie's priority is her pastoral responsibilities to students, and she knows that the best thing about the library is its sociable and relaxed atmosphere. Nettie is confident that students will soon be able to make the most of the warm and friendly support, even if social distancing makes it look a little different to its pre-lockdown days.

*“Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation.”*

Daniel Smith's favourite quote about libraries by journalist Walter Cronkite.

Since 2016, **Queen Eleanor** Headteacher, Daniel Smith, has steadily improved the primary school library, which, when he took up his position, consisted of some large bookcases stocked with out-of-date reading in a corridor. Daniel says that ‘in a school that had historically struggled with reading, and in a climate where local libraries were at threat of closing, I believed that we must set about the process of developing a school library.’ After successfully bidding for £15,000 from the School Condition Allocation, Daniel prepared to transform a spare classroom with furniture, computers, library software and a large selection of high-quality books. The new library boasts seating areas, engaging displays and small-group working area. Four years on, Daniel reflects that ‘the library is well established and enjoyed by children from foundation stage right through the school. It’s a port of call on tours of the school, and prospective pupils waste no time finding their way into the ‘reading hideaway’. Because it opens onto the playground, it provides a haven at lunchtime for avid readers seeking the tranquillity of losing oneself in a good book.’ Although the impact of the new library is hard to measure, reading levels at Queen Eleanor have significantly improved. In 2016, 47% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, with an average progress score of -2.2. Three years later, 76% of pupils met the expected standard with a progress score of +0.1.

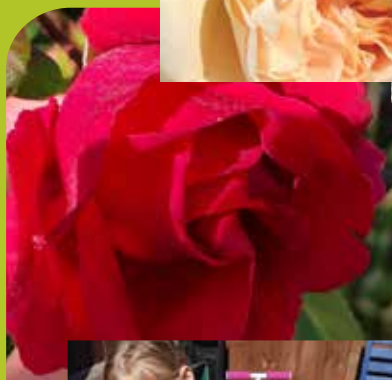


# It takes a village

With many of us missing the events that would usually bring our communities together, what better way to celebrate Spring than with our own Creative Education Trust Virtual Village Fete. It was heartening to see all the different ways that people were keeping themselves busy in lockdown and we received many entries. Here are just some of the highlights.

*Sprucing up lawns, planting out the veg and even fixing up ponds, Creative Education Trust staff and students kept their green fingers busy.*

## GREEN FINGERS



**Lucy Clancy**, PE Teacher at **Ash Green**, impressed us with her blooming roses and beautiful alliums, her garden bed a fabulous display of circular and spherical forms in nature.



Student star awards to **Ana** and **Charlotte McGhee**, Reception and Year 1 of **Wroughton**, who have been planting and tending fairy gardens.

**Marita Deeley** of **Hart** is getting ready for a healthy crop of fruit and vegetables, starting off potatoes, raspberries and strawberries. And it looks like the first crop of radishes are ready too!





# CRAFT TENT

*Teachers of all subjects and staff from every corner of school picked up paintbrushes, sewing needles and cement trowels during lockdown. Here are some of the ones which caught our eye.*

**Jayson Dickson**, maths teacher at **Hart**, made this beautiful poured resin house number for his front door. He made his own mould for the number seven, and a cake tin for the surround. The beautiful swirled patterns were created with alcohol-based inks.



**Georgina Broomfield-Gull** of **Ash Green** has picked up her pencils to create a series of animal portraits. In this one you can almost feel the fur!



**Janet Ball** from **Wrenn** has been working on the intricate art of Pergamano, a craft which involves perforating, embossing and colouring parchment in a way that makes it look like lace.



# bake stall

*The trestle tables in the cake tent heaved under the strain of breads, cakes and other treats. Here are a few that made us hungry.*



**Edwina Teipoarii** of **Ellis Guilford** shared her Charlotte aux Fraises, the strawberries so luscious looking we thought we could taste summer through our laptop screens.



**Julie Grocott**, **Hart**, made an impressive 6-layer rainbow themed birthday cake. We are sure that the birthday girl was thrilled!

**Anamaria Nistor** of **Queen Eleanor** was determined to fill the bake stall with her own creations! Look at these fabulous sweet treats: donuts, gingerbread, chocolate truffles and, of course, fruit salad for balance.





# Acts of Kindness

Many parents and carers expressed their gratitude to schools and individual members of staff for the effort they made to keep things going for students.

Here a parent of a pupil at **Harpfield Primary** writes in to say thank you to staff for their hard work and dedication:

*'As a keyworker working in a school teaching other children, I felt guilty and sad to be sending my own child back to school. Harpfield (especially Reception teaching staff) have done a fantastic job ensuring that my child feels safe and happy on her return to school. You have gone above and beyond ensuring that she has been provided with enough work whilst she has been home-schooled. I just wanted to let you know that it is very much appreciated.'*

Over at **Weavers**, staff received a heartfelt email from the auntie of a Year 10 student who battled through this period of isolation with resilience. She wanted to emphasise how special the role of teachers is to young people, saying:

*'The lessons she learns I honestly believe will stay with her for the rest of her life. While students may not always remember the fundamentals of trigonometry as adults, they will always be able to remember the kind-hearted teachers who took time out of their personal lives to show them all how they can make a difference in this world and that is more than any parent or guardian could ever ask for. The emotional support, the coaching they give, all shape our children to the adults they will later become. And I can honestly say that we couldn't appreciate anything more.'*

Students were also appreciative of the hard work that school staff put in to keep the school community together. Here's one **Abbeyfield** student expressing their gratitude for school assemblies:

*'I just wanted to say how much I appreciate the assemblies. It is so nice to be able to see our teacher and hear a friendly voice. It was exactly what I needed and was just so lovely and reassuring.'*

**Ellis Guilford** released photos of key workers who are ex-students on social media in tribute to the amazing part they played during the turbulent times of the Covid-19 pandemic. The initiative asked alumni who are key workers to get in touch with the school and share their stories. By mid-June, the school has celebrated nearly fifty students.

In addition, there was a huge increase in the numbers joining the school alumni programme which will impact current students' careers knowledge and ambition. The posts have been well-received by the social media community, gaining around 5000 views and even retweets from the local MP!



Staff at Weavers received a set of gift hampers from one grateful parent.





Visors made by **Abbeyfield** school staff for local key workers



In many **Creative Education Trust** schools, as lockdown conditions were prolonged, staff continued to make vital PPE for key workers.

The science department at **Wrenn** went out of their way to support health workers at **Northampton General Hospital** through a donation of 400 goggles, 400 aprons and 70 boxes of gloves. Sarah Golley, Head of Science, gave an interview on **BBC Radio Northampton** about the initiative, and the social media post about their efforts accumulated over 35,000 views! A spokesperson from the hospital wrote to thank the science department saying:

*'the therapies team are very grateful for this at this challenging time and it highlights how as a community we are all in this together.'*



At **Abbeyfield**, **Laura Biddis** and team made visors for community key workers, including those working behind the counters of pharmacies and newsagents, helping to make sure that no one was left unprotected.

Staff at **Three Peaks Primary** have been equally busy, with **Ange Pickering** and **Katy Bassett** both volunteering for vulnerable members of the community and **Richard Penn-Bourton**, Principal, making 300 face shields as part of a project to provide shields for local hospitals, care homes, pharmacies and GP surgeries. So far, the school has also collected 1000 bags of food and toiletries for the **Tamworth Self-Isolation Food Bank**, with another 2 weeks' collecting still planned. Meanwhile, staff took **Santa** on his sleigh for a summer tour of **Tamworth**! In a change from his winter duties, **Summer Santa** collected food and toiletries for **Tamworth Self-Isolation Food Bank**.

Pupils at **Three Peaks** joined in with their teachers to support keyworkers by creating a colourful mural for display in a local business.



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**Lynn Grove staff, socially distanced in  
the first weeks of lockdown, left to right:**

**Paul Tidman**, Senior Caretaker  
**Ricky Slater**, Caretaker  
**Michael Wright**, Catering Manager Aspens  
**Diane Banyard**, Housekeeper  
**Tom Pease**, Teacher of Spanish  
**Claire Small**, Science Technician  
**Lee Haywood**, Teacher of Geography  
**Rachel Cramer**, School Business Manager  
**Gavin Green**, Assistant Principal  
**Harry German**, Teacher of History  
**Ariane Nicholls**, Head of Humanities  
**Chrissie Harper**, Higher Level Teaching Assistant  
**Liam Lonergan**, Behaviour Support Worker

