

The magazine of Creative Education Trust schools

Issue no.3 July 2015

Connected

Sixth form prizes

Excerpts from the winning speech and essay

Councils and prefects

360° leadership in CET schools

Seeds of democracy

A new pupil-led SEF



The students' issue



From the fledgling community organisers of Harpfield, through the councillors, prefects and Head Girls and Boys of the secondaries, to the talented winners of our sixth-form competitions, the young people in our schools are

thoughtful, eloquent, ambitious and creative. In discussing their responsibilities and achievements, they reveal a powerful influence on the culture of each school, and it has been a special pleasure to make their acquaintance in the preparation of Issue 3 of *Connected*, which completes our first annual cycle of magazine publishing.

The launch of our animated film, *Knowledge Connected*, marks an important distillation of the CET vision of creativity, ingeniously explained in pictures by the graphic artist Paul Plowman. The six key concepts, originally invoked as the principles of the CET Key Stage 3 design programme, are now a framework for personal development, learning behaviour and cross-curricular learning, with large scope for interpretation and local inflection in schools.

Emily Campbell
Director of Programmes



& BTW

Watch *Knowledge Connected*,
our animated film at:

www.youtube.com/creedacad

Cross-Trust events

Governors' training and development day

11 September Abbeyfield School

Other 2015–16 events,
dates to be confirmed:

Principals' meetings

Primary Heads' meetings

Heads of Sixth Form meetings

Maths subject meetings

FML subject meetings

Music subject meetings

Design Faculties meetings

Day of Performance: Year 7

Day of Shakespeare East

Day of Shakespeare West

Day of Service

Day of Sports (primary)

Day of Sports (secondary)

Sixth-form prizes launch

Annual Staff Awayday

HOT-A-TWEET

140 characters from the Chief Executive

*A warm thank you to all staff
for your hard work this year
from the CET executive team.
We hope you enjoy the summer
break and come back refreshed
for the new school year.*



Democracy's Green Shoots

Clockwise from rear:
Jack Scragg,
Pawel Kozlowski,
Jaci Jiminez,
Emma Bowers,
Nathaniel Burgess
& Ellie Astles; below,
Harpfield student
council members

P rimary pupils from across the Trust met in June to develop a child-friendly Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF).

Richard Woollacott, Headteacher of Harpfield and host of the event, intended it to start a movement of CET children taking an active role in improving their learning. His verve comes from the impressively established democratic traditions of Harpfield, which boasts not only a child-led curriculum, but a groundbreaking pupil-led SEF of its own and a sports council of pupils who decide on the allocation of funding.

"The children choose the vehicle, the teachers the journey", he says, while Jemma Adlington, Deputy Headteacher, explains how she shows pupils the compulsory curriculum and asks them what else they want to learn, which is finally determined by vote. Of course it's not that simple, and the increased focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar complicates the proposition. But the reward for Harpfield is outstanding behaviour for learning, validated by Ofsted and vividly manifest at large in the school. Nor is it a settled proposition, but evolving, with the next step to work on pupils' deeper thinking, reasoning and linking of knowledge.

Readers might not be surprised by Harpfield's exemplary pupil leadership structures: a council of members voted



in by classmates from Years 2–6 under the leadership of a Head Girl and Boy. They might be surprised by the maturity of pupils' perspective on this. Nathaniel Burgess (Y4) explains how it helps to "set up the school in the child's eyes and improve it with new ideas" – such as the 'teacher of the week' award in assembly determined by pupil ballot. Alayah Swaby (Y4) recognises the privilege it represents: "Some people don't think we should be asked what we think and are surprised. We have lots of different rules to other schools." Pupils cite as an example the whistle and bell system that calls pupils in from break in a different order every day.

In anticipation of the other schools' visit, Emma Bowers (Y6) described how the SEF questions led to proper debate about things like safety and behaviour: and "gave you the chance to find out what everyone thinks". She and classmates thoughtfully remark how the insights will change every year with a new Year 3 and maturing pupils higher up.

Finally, Richard Woollacott discloses a special regard for the pupils' mature attitude to helping each other when they have difficulties with work in the classroom. "They're adamant it's not cheating. They really believe in it as a right, they're natural collaborators."

Some people don't think we should be asked what we think and are surprised.

Alayah Swaby, Year 4



Learning to Lead

Below: the Rugeley Academy's student council; **Sam Santos, Julian Jollivet and Ella Wakeley**



What does it do for a school to have student leaders? Some students' answers are virtually existential. Paige Watkins, a sixth-former at Rugeley, declares flatly, "without students, there wouldn't be a school", while Joshua Bastow at Abbeyfield asks "What's the point of being here if we don't have a voice?" Jake Annison at Lynn Grove insists that student leadership "opens up the school to what you want it to be, not what other people think", while Jo Wong at Caister links the purpose rigorously to teaching and learning, saying "We're the only people who would know because we're the ones being taught."

Students are vocal about the intelligence they are able to gather on behalf of staff and students. Morgan Breen, Head Boy at Thistley Hough describes the council and prefects as "the ears to the ground", without which there would be a "broken connection"; while Ellie Davies, experienced Head of the student council, has acquired a subtle understanding of her peers' behaviour: "Sometimes they take time to come out with their reaction to things mentioned in assemblies." Phoebe Buchan at Lynn Grove reflects that "teachers can't see what friends can see", and on the particular issue of bullying, Joshua Bastow and Brendan Maloney at Abbeyfield press the point: "We're the eyes, we see how it starts and how it happens; how bullies see a weakness in someone and go for it."

More simply, student councils represent the "voice of the people", as a few put it. A voice, that is particularly valuable regarding issues about which a student may not be comfortable going to a teacher. Ella Wakeley at Lynn Grove explains the methodical process by which "friends put forward an issue they want you to put forward", while Caitlin Whittington at Caister puts it in rawer terms as a way to "get stuff off your chest" – whether they are her own or others' anxieties.

So is there tension between the student voice and the voice of authority; are politics at work here? If there is tension, Paige Watkins would describe it as a good and necessary one, "a combination in which teachers have authority, and students have opinions". Bethany Savage at Abbeyfield is candid in her view: "We know it's scary giving students power, but give it to them. They do have ideas, they just need a way to get them



out." Jo Wong at Caister sees the student council as very directly mirroring local and national politics, while Vikram Kumar Khosla at Weavers would definitely argue for the value of the council as a counterpoint to senior leadership. For him and others interviewed here – Tristram Symonds at Caister for example, and Alec Lovell at Hagley Park, student leadership directly prefigures ambitions for a career in politics. Rather less explicitly, Jasmine Hemmings, Head Girl at Thistley Hough expects to be involved in leadership in sixth form, university and beyond. She smiles enigmatically when asked if she would run for office.

Even those without political ambitions find appreciable personal benefits in student leadership. More than just looking good on your CV, Taylor Naysmith at Ash Green reflects on how it expands your academic learning into more real-world roles. Fellow-prefect Emma Harrison illustrates the point: it's useful in interviews to have been on the "other side of the table", for example, interviewing new staff. Nearly everyone declares unprompted that a student leadership role gives confidence, even to shyer students, especially the experience of talking to "higher-up people". Prefects have occasional need to say 'no' to their peers, and regular need to expel loiterers from the toilets at break. You have to be organised to take a leading role, and you have to keep a level head, says Bobby McVey, Head Girl at Weavers: "It looks bad if you're scatty."

A small number expressed the benefit in almost vocational terms. For Amy Coles, Head Girl at Abbeyfield, it's been an opportunity to care about the community in a practical way. A keen actress, she continues, "I like performing. I'd like to give talks; to try and make things that I think are important, important to other people



Clockwise from right:
Joshua Bastow;
Ash Green Junior
Leadership Team members;
Paige Watkins;
Caister student council;
Jasmine Hemmings
and **Morgan Breen**



as well." Hollie Jancic at Fair Oak and Phoebe Buchan at Lynn Grove both described the satisfaction of seeing changes made, "knowing you've been part of the solution".

Many emphasise the pastoral duty of care to younger students, a prominent agenda item for the sixth forms at Rugeley and Weavers, where James Jeffreys describes a range of activities for his classmates to help them become motivational role models: peer mentoring; leading sports clubs and running period 7 sessions to help with academic work. Sam Santos has been a councillor at Lynn Grove since Y7. Recalling his own discomfort on entering secondary school, he wanted Lynn Grove to be better at accommodating new students. Now, he says, Y7s are getting more involved; there's a buddy system with older students, a reading programme, and maths leader programme. Ellie Davies, Head of Thistley Hough's student council, is above all conscious of the need for a layer of representation between younger students and the Y10s and 11s. "Sometimes they don't know what to do about something, and we have experience", she says.

In more and less direct ways, leadership gives students ideas for their future. Joshua Bastow knows he wants – via medicine or teaching – to "give my information to people, rather than sitting at a desk and keeping it to myself" while his classmate Olivia Taylor wants to be a therapist in mental health, an idea which took shape through listening to people during her year as a councillor. Bobby McVey begins to see how she herself might be a role model, because "it's given me insight into the human side of successful people – the ways in which they're not so different". Sugan Hothy made an interesting point about learning not just

how to lead, but how to take direction from people above you, while Paige Watkins and Julyan Jollivet at Lynn Grove, observe how they now distinguish between a leadership and a team role, and with that, assess their own strengths in each. One technical skill prominently acquired by student leaders appears to be user research – there are impressive examples of councils "gathering opinion and drawing it out of people", as Morgan Breen put it.

In addition to the virtually universal litany of material issues taken up by student councils (toilets, lockers, planners, food, homework and reward systems), curricular and timetable issues occasionally pop up. At Ash Green, students describe how a change from six 50-minute to five 60-minute lessons was partially influenced

We know it's scary giving students power, but give it to them. They do have ideas, they just need a way to get them out.

Bethany Savage, Abbeyfield



Clockwise from right: **Emma Harrison; James Jeffrey**s and **Bobby McVey; Vikram Kumar Khosla**; Thistley Hough council members; **Amy Coles** and **Charlie Hynam**



by student feeling. And Jack Casey, a Year 7 member of the new Junior Leadership Team, describes a new push for a greater variety of lessons in Key Stage 3 so that option choices in Y8 are better-informed. Student leaders at Thistley Hough have directly experienced the necessary trade-off between free time and learning time. Having got lessons extended by 15 minutes to accommodate accelerated reading, they are now offering to add lesson time to the day in order to claw back an extra ten minutes of lunch break. They recognise the reality that both can be resolved by progressive trial and compromise.

The structures of student leadership are common but evolving: usually a Year 7–11 council, sometimes with additional Year councils, a team of Year 11 or sixth-form prefects and a Head Girl and Boy. Appointments are either elective (by peers) or selective (by staff) or a combination of both. While aware of the danger of “people just electing their friends”, students lean somewhat towards election as the optimal vehicle. Hollie Jancic at Hagley

Park explains: “It’s better to put yourself forward by choice than to be appointed; you’d be doing it because you want to. Plus it would feel rude to turn it down if were by appointment.”

There are other wrinkles to iron out. While Abbeyfield’s and Thistley Hough’s councils meet often and with impressive regularity, others are aware of the need to ramp it up. Some Head Girls and Boys would like to be appointed earlier in good time to hit the ground running in September. The distinction between councillors as ‘student voice’ and prefects as ‘peacekeepers’, or agents of authority, causes less tension that might be imagined, although some students expressed a view that prefects’ privileges, such as jumping the lunch queue and cutting through reception, needed to be re-examined. Morgan Breen explains how earlier, Thistley Hough prefects and council would clash – the former charged with maintaining traditions and the latter interested in change; and how this year the two bodies got together and agreed to merge the systems. In practice there is an “unwritten rule” that Year 11s relinquish council membership to the lower years and accept the alternative, complementary responsibility of being a prefect. Jasmine Hemmings calls this “the older students’ way of showing respect to the younger”. Emma Harrison’s view is that ‘vertically’ mixed tutor groups at Ash Green have an inestimable value in dissolving such tensions and are the principle reason why her school feels close and “not cliquey”.

Olivia Taylor is fearless and resolute about the evolution of student leadership at Abbeyfield: “We’ve seen it get better every year. We try things and if they don’t work we stop doing them – it’s self-correcting. Everyone runs themselves and works together: we’re interlinked with independent responsibility.”

We try things and if they don’t work we stop doing them – it’s self-correcting.

Olivia Taylor, Abbeyfield

Design Programme



Daniel Smith, Queen Eleanor

of Hagley Park reflected on the wider learning: "Benchmark demonstrates how what students learn in the classroom applies to a bigger commercial area; the connection gives them scope to try and push their boundaries – achieve, aim a bit higher."

We were especially delighted to welcome three of our technicians to Benchmark: Les Butterworth, Bob Roke and Clinton Franks. Experts themselves, they supported less-experienced teachers in a day that put their skills and knowledge at centre stage.



Skilling up at Benchmark

The CET Year 9 Manufacturing Craft projects focus squarely on the skills of making. With generous support from the Conran Foundation, three existing challenges in wood, metal and textiles will soon be expanded to include ceramics, leather and arts of the book. In April, a dozen CET teachers and technicians were privileged to join a workshop at Sir Terence Conran's exciting furniture factory, Benchmark, to manufacture their own prototype for the wood project: a cubic, hardwood box with a hinged lid, based on the classical 'hand'

Sean Sutcliffe and **Peter Griffith** with **Tracey Warrener** and **Mark Mills**, Thistley Hough

measurement of four inches – roughly ten centimetres. Leading us through the stages of manufacture were Sean Sutcliffe, Director of Benchmark, and his team, with Peter Griffith, Head of Phones Design at Nokia Microsoft and designer of the scheme, in vigilant attendance. In the words of Daniel Smith from Queen Eleanor, "It's about skill and accuracy in the processes that take us to a final product: that's what we want the children to experience." Gareth Townshend



Abbeyfield technician **Bob Roke** with **Kelvin Dennis** of Benchmark

Successes and special commendations

Students

To the **Ash Green Y11 Football squad** for their victory over Southam College in the U16 Warwickshire County Football Cup finals.



To **Adam Worwood** (Ash Green Y11) for getting a place on the Mercedes-Benz apprenticeship scheme.



To **Georgia Thomasson** for winning the Stoke City Ken Lowe Award for trampolining.



To **Alfie Kingston** (Queen Eleanor) for winning the school 'Bananagrams' championship.

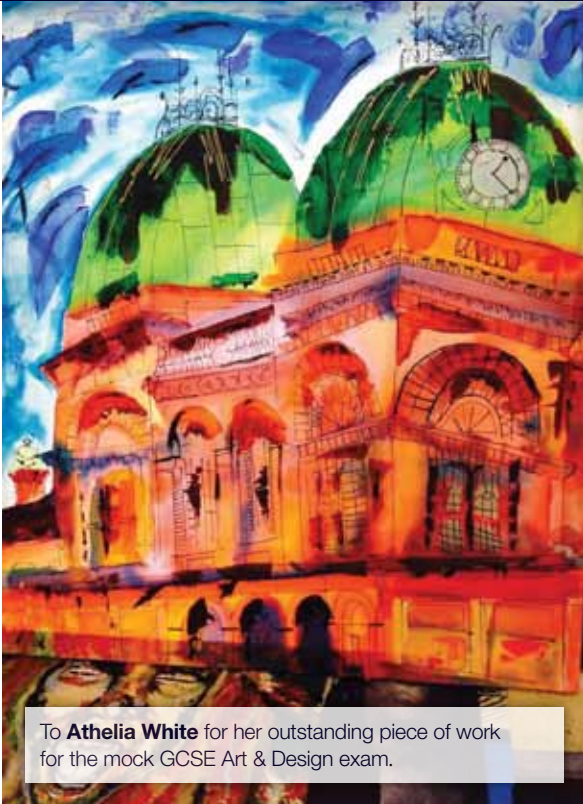


To Delta College at Ash Green, especially **Scarlet Robertson** and **Joseph Forsyth**, for raising £100 in the immediate aftermath of the Nepal earthquake and then continuing to fundraise.

To **Queen Eleanor's team** for making it to the country finals of Inclusion Tag Rugby.



To **Fraia and brother Harlee Wicks** (Woodlands Years 3 and 4) for their figure-skating triumphs in Great Yarmouth.



To **Athelia White** for her outstanding piece of work for the mock GCSE Art & Design exam.

and staff

To **Carla Boyd, Katie Pointon** and **Chris Dillon**, new Teaching Leaders at Thistley Hough.



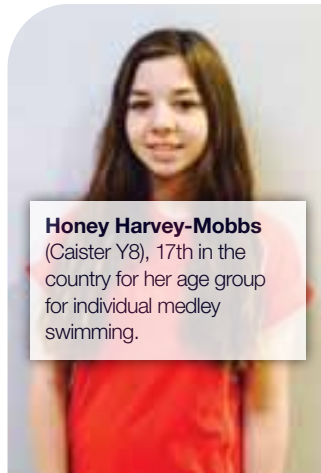
To **Jose de Barros**, Year 6 teacher at Queen Eleanor for completing his NPQML.



To **Lieze Compston**, teaching assistant at Queen Eleanor and her Year 4 choir for writing, composing and performing a song about friendship.



To Caister's Norfolk county champions in cricket **Alex Quinton** (Y9) and in football, **Will George** (Y9) and **Charlie Orchard** (Y10)



Honey Harvey-Mobbs (Caister Y8), 17th in the country for her age group for individual medley swimming.



To **Fahris Bhatti** (Queen Eleanor Y5) for his tonal pencil portrait of a classmate.

PRIZE GUYS

Sixth-form public-speaking prize

Six fledgling orators competed for the first Creative Education Trust sixth-form public-speaking prize in the gracious surroundings of St Michael's House, the former Deanery of Coventry Cathedral. Each gave a ten-minute speech addressing the motion 'Young People Have Never Had It So Good' and answered questions from the panel and floor.

Our panellists, the writer and broadcaster Miranda Sawyer, lawyer and CET Trustee Mary Groom and Chief Executive Marc Jordan, were hugely impressed with the range of perspectives and frames of reference which the speakers brought to bear on their arguments, and the sheer volume of work each had clearly put into developing and rehearsing the speech. **Emily Grey, Greg Pickering, Maisie Scoins,**

Tony Berzghal, Ehsan Raza and Scott Poole deliberated the vices and virtues of technology, credit, higher education, employment, global mobility and relative wealth. An audience of teachers, Principals, classmates and other supporters contributed to an intense event which affirmed the engagement and eloquence of a generation on the edge of adulthood.

A fleeting lunchtime visit to Coventry Cathedral, one of Britain's great landmarks of post-war design, and words of wisdom on life and work from Miranda Sawyer were among highlights of a day washed in spring sunshine. Our prizewinner, **Maisie Scoins** of the Rugeley Sixth Form Academy, was commended very highly for her artless delivery, her thoughtful response to questioning, and a mature perspective that integrated past and present, and the local with the global.



Then and now; here and there

The concluding words of Maisie Scoins' winning speech

I've compared my life and experiences so far to those of my parents and grandparents. There are clear and extreme differences, but all the points I have made are westernised. They cannot be applied to young people everywhere.

Last July I went on a two-week charity trip to South Africa. The main purpose was to meet some of the people living in the poorest communities. For me, going there as a white, 16-year-old, middle-class female, who moans every time I have to put the dishwasher on, the reality shock was huge. A lot of people in this and other third-world countries have no access to good health care, food or education, the three things that young people in the UK take for granted. Teenage girls within these communities are in charge of looking after their entire families. Some of these families have five or six children. The responsibility is huge.

For these children the chance of doing what they want to do, or being where they want to be, is slim, even in this modern age. Despite this, they all have huge dreams and hopes for the future. I remember one young boy who told me that one day he'd see me in the city when he was a doctor in England. Now obviously, this dream has a seriously small chance of happening, but he still dreamt it.

I came back from Africa completely humbled by the experience, knowing how lucky I was to be born into the culture which I have. Overall, different generations bring new challenges for young people all around the world. In the opinion of my grandparents, yes, they did have it tough growing up in the 40s and 50s, but they're better for it.

Do I think that I have it good? Yes I do. I know I'm lucky and I would like to think that I am the type of young person who can overcome the challenges which I'm going to face as I grow up. For me, living in the UK in the 21st century means that I have access to everything I need, even if some of the new technology may end up being a hindrance.

The same, however, may not be said for everyone. To say that young people today have never had it so good would be unfair. I know this from first-hand experience. A more fitting statement would be 'Young people in western cultures have never had it so good'.

Sixth-form essay prize

A panel of expert judges set four themes for the inaugural CET sixth-form essay prize: 'Fiction and Reality', 'The World is Shrinking', 'Leave Morals Out of Science' and 'Design Should Change Lives'.

Our judges, the science writer Hugh Aldersey Williams, the professor of Classics Jonathan Katz and CET Chief Executive Marc Jordan awarded the prize to Keeley Mack, Year 13 student at Weavers. They commended her essay on Disney, 'When Fiction Becomes Reality', for deploying the material in a fresh style and in pursuit of an argument that she commanded well. The essay showed awareness of the commercial context of Disney's fictions and made good use of humour and quotes. Whether intentionally or otherwise, it inverted the theme by suggesting that Disney films model themselves on the historical reality of the world and the progress of womankind, rather than the other way around which might more conventionally be expected.



When Fiction Becomes Reality

An excerpt from the winning essay by Keeley Mack

Love is a fundamental theme in these classic Disney films, and this could be exposing young children to unrealistic concepts of love. Many of the protagonists fall in love after just one glance at their suitor: all that matters is a person's appearance. This idea is reinforced in "The Little Mermaid" as Ariel contemplates trading her voice for a chance at true love. Ursula reassures her it will be fine because "you'll have your looks, your pretty face; and don't underestimate the power of body language!" By sacrificing her voice and her family for a rich prince whom she believes she is in love with, Ariel potentially reinforces the notion that it is acceptable – even expected – to sacrifice your loved ones and change who you are, all for the love of a man. Young children should not be subjected to this vision of love. Sure enough, although older Disney films present love in this manner, more modern ones such as "Tangled" and "The Princess and the Frog" teach a more appropriate interpretation: that love can be found most unexpectedly when you get to know a person.

It is worth considering whether Disney films could have the same effect on males as they do on females. Young men might learn from Disney that to win the love of a female you must be rich, famous and good-looking. They also learn that to win a woman's heart, you need to be her saviour. The notion that a female might not need the assistance of a man has no place in classic Disney.

On the other hand Disney films do encourage and reinforce morals of a positive nature. The newer releases offer lessons that suggest a changed philosophy, and the earlier films could be considered to represent a bygone zeitgeist. In films such as "Mulan" the female character is strong and brave, although only by virtue of incorporating stereotypically masculine characteristics. Mulan does not wait for her Prince Charming to save her; she, in fact, saves him – and the whole of China. Furthermore, romantic love is not her motivation – it is the love of her family. Similarly, in the recent release, "Frozen", Anna rejects the expectation that she should prioritise earning the approval and love of a prince, and sacrifices herself for the love of her sister instead. Other movies, "The Princess and the Frog" and "Tangled", both feature women ambitious for a different type of true love. Tiana's desire is to have her own restaurant, and Rapunzel's is to break free from the walls that surround her to witness a sight she yearns to see. "The Princess and the Frog" teaches that "that old star can only take you part of the way. You've got to help it with some hard work of your own and then you can do anything you set your mind to." Inspiringly, this teaches that to be successful and get what we want, we have to work hard for it. Merida from "Brave" is also a strong female princess adamant that she doesn't need a man. She demonstrates the strength to fight for what she wants, and she succeeds. These characters are alternative role models to the princess as a 'life goal' for young girls.

Do the messages in Disney films reflect or shape gender roles in society? In the Disney of the 30s women seem to want nothing more than to cook, clean and sing happily while cleaning up after a group of men. In the 1950s, marrying into a better family was most women's best option. There followed Belle, a woman who enjoyed learning more than pursuing love; Pocahontas, who chose her family over her boyfriend; and Mulan, the greatest warrior in fictional Chinese history. In 1991, the same year "Beauty and the Beast" was released, the number of women in the United States enrolled in college exceeded the number of males for the first time in history.



Governance spotlight

Tony Oliver, Chair of Governors at Lynn Grove Academy reflects on education, skills and the future of Great Yarmouth.

Tony, please tell *Connected* about your career

Fifty years ago, grammar school pupils were expected to go to university, or at least train for a career such as banking. Not me. I followed the apprenticeship route at a local manufacturer of electronic components. By the 1970s, Erie Electronics – originally American-owned – was the largest employer in Great Yarmouth with around 4,000 employees. Its policy was to be self-sufficient; it had a huge number of engineers. The company put me through every department – electronics, machine building, drawing office, quality control and even chemical engineering. After four years of training I joined a department overseeing a new miniature electronic component. There is hardly a device now in existence that doesn't contain at least half a dozen of these – multilayer ceramic capacitors are in mobile phones, military equipment and communication satellites. The company was and (although smaller) remains the world leader in the special versions. I spent my remaining 44 working years at the company, never bored.

What about your education?

A very mixed affair. Early years were at St Joseph's RC primary school in Handsworth, a suburb of Sheffield that had originally been a small coal-mining village. After my eleven-plus, we moved to Cornwall, where I attended the grammar school without being particularly studious. The warm climate, the beach, the local fishing village and beautiful rocky coves were an easy bike ride and always a temptation away from homework. However, I had the same English and Drama teacher as John Nettles of *Midsomer Murders* fame; such an inspiration that he spurred Nettles to take up acting, as well as making my own use of language much more effective. Dad's search for the right job soon took us to Great Yarmouth. It was disruptive for my GCEs and I was predicted to do badly, but the situation focused my determination and I passed seven of the eight. Except for my National Certificate in engineering, my general education stopped here.

What other influences shaped your life?

Although my father was a quiet and unassuming man, he influenced how I deal with things. His calm approach in important meetings commanded great respect, as did his words of wisdom. I try to be similar and hope that I approach his standard. I've had my fair share of life-changing experiences but the greatest of them are very personal.

What can your professional experience bring to school governance?

Firstly, my engineering career ensured attention to detail: our machines manufacture components in life support devices such as cardiac pacemakers. The responsibility was serious, and I apply this philosophy to all that I do including my role as Chair. By coincidence, the Lynn Grove Academy motto is 'Fidelitas in Parvis' – care over little things; it's very fitting. Secondly, the electronics industry is probably the fastest moving of all: I became used to the 'do-it-now' mindset. Working with all levels of people from shop floor operators to the managing director made it necessary to have good communication skills, and the wisdom to treat everyone with the same respect and courtesy. Being a school governor is my way of paying back. I consider it a privilege.

What would you like Great Yarmouth to be in ten years' time?

Great Yarmouth was the place to be in the 60s and 70s – the peak of North Sea gas and oil production. But the boom time waned, or moved to Aberdeen, and now we often get a bad press. Great Yarmouth has a wealth of heritage and much to offer besides. I would like to see the town become less isolated: better road and rail links together with better quality places for young people to spend their leisure time. Despite having some of the best beaches and holiday facilities in the country we need year-round amenities that will encourage the right people to live here: trying to fill teacher vacancies from local sources is always a problem. Norfolk is a beautiful county and the Norfolk Broads are close by, but Great Yarmouth has been marginalised for too long.

Please continue over ...

What risks can education help to mitigate for Great Yarmouth?

It takes a concerted effort to reach the East coast; it's 'out on a limb' or worse, 'in the sticks'. This has bred a parochial culture which tends to forget the world beyond the Norfolk boundary. We risk sacrificing the energy of young people and failing to integrate them into the bigger picture. Things are slowly changing. Whatever point of view we have about social media, it is bringing the bigger world to East Norfolk. Education can also strive to make young people more aware of the world. Lynn Grove's inclusion in the Creative Education Trust will link it with other schools closer to the heart of the country.

If you could give the young people of Great Yarmouth three pieces of advice, what would you tell them?

1

Learn how to think for yourself: ask lots of questions and work at being independent. You'll cope better with what life throws at you if you can stand on your own two feet.

2

Your schooldays are the beginning of the rest of your life: don't waste them, and make use of the opportunities that come your way. Young people today have more temptations than ever: keep a sensible balance of work and play.

3

When you make a decision or take an action, be aware of the consequences for others as well as yourself.

Round-up

World Book Day at Thistley Hough

From the Mad Hatter to Harry Potter, from the Wicked Witch of the West to the Queen of Hearts, teachers, office staff and caretakers – including Principal Holly Hartley, alias Willy Wonka – could be seen roaming the corridors and halls. Students won prizes for knowing the names of each character and the book in which their exploits could be discovered.

English Teacher and Literacy Coordinator Rebecca Jones explained: "World Book Day is a key element of our drive to raise literacy. The accelerated reading programme has prompted a dramatic increase in the amount our children read – a love of the printed word and constant page turning." Librarian Susan Betton agrees that culture has changed: "Two years ago we didn't even have a school library; now over 1,000 books are on loan at any one time. Children come at every opportunity in the day to change their books. The very busy library shows just how far this school has come."

Top of the Thistley Hough lending list are *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Fault in Our Stars*.





Queen Eleanor to St Omer

23 Year 5 pupils from Queen Eleanor went on a residential trip to the Opal Coast in France and spent three nights in Le Chateau d'Ebbingham, an NST accommodation centre not far from St Omer. The Channel crossing by ferry was a first-time experience for many of the children. Opportunities to experience French language and culture included a visit to a traditional boulangerie, where the children learnt (in French, with translation), how bread was traditionally made, and in this boulangerie, still is. At the seaside at Boulogne-sur-Mer some even went swimming in the (tres froide!) sea.

National Finalists at Weavers

Weavers U16 Basketball team were National Finalists at Wembley, a remarkable achievement after only three years in existence. Steady training and focus paid off, as well as the "really intense team chemistry" said Trei St-Vie Hutchinson (pictured). His teammates explained how they learned to improvise; to understand each other's trends, ability and style. "If you can't communicate on a court," says Hayden Alcindor, "it just doesn't work."

Duke of Edinburgh Award at Ash Green

The Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award scheme at Ash Green goes from strength to strength in its third year, with a record number of 89 students participating across the Silver and Bronze awards.

On May bank holiday weekend, accompanied by 14 members of staff, they all completed the expedition section of the award in the Peak District National Park. After three days of walking for the Silver groups and two for the Bronze groups, and after navigation, team work, perseverance and better weather than predicted, success was total.

DofE Award participants have been completing their other sections by volunteering, learning a new skill and improving in a physical activity. Students support local cub and beaver groups, work in charity shops and run extra-curricular clubs. They learn how to cook or play a musical instrument; they push themselves through the ranks at their martial arts clubs. Principal David Powell said: "the brilliance of DofE is to create opportunities that many do not have and would never think about. Ash Green's participation numbers are remarkable by any standards."



Creativity is the ability to recognise or make new connections between the things we know. Connecting knowledge is at the heart of an effective education. It is vital to improving standards, and it will make young people resourceful and employable in the world of tomorrow.

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**Sixth-form public-speaking
prize contenders with guest
panellist Miranda Sawyer
outside Coventry Cathedral.**
See full story on page 10 inside.