

The magazine of Creative Education Trust schools Issue no.21 February 2021

# Connected

## Safety First!

### Shakespeare

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Adapted for socially  
distanced classrooms

### Learning Safely

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Remote learning update

### Academic Communities

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Apart, but still together

### Plus

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Wellbeing, Alumni  
and Training



# Where You From?



Inspirational Iris leads the way for Bulwell

*“It’s nice to be recognised, but the main reason is to help the people who most need it in the community where I live.”*

Iris Wallace and her family moved to Bulwell only a year ago, but she’s taken the place to her heart. When lockdown came, community-minded Iris wondered what she could do to help those in need around her. Now she has been named one of The Nottingham Building Society’s Innovative Young People of 2020.

Bulwell Forest Garden is a community food growing project with a regular timetable of events and workshops for local residents. It aims to support the health and wellbeing of people of all ages through education, environmental play and, of course, plenty of organically grown fruit and vegetables. Iris, who is 11, spends several hours a week at the garden, undertaking disparate tasks from fundraising to litter-picking and making bird feeders, alongside tending to the plots and the community orchard.

Iris also volunteers at Bestwood and Bulwell Food Bank putting together vital food parcels. Just before Christmas she supported her mums Kelly and Shelly in cooking more than 250 hot meals for families in need over a two-week period.

Set up as a mutual society in 1849 by a Quaker businessman, school founder and abolitionist named John Fox, The Nottingham is a prominent local building society. It established the Young People’s award to shine a light on young people who have found inspiring ways to further their education or boost their career aspirations. One of Iris’ fellow community gardeners, Adele Brooksbank – also a trustee of the food bank – saw an opportunity to reward Iris’ outstanding commitment to vulnerable community members. Ms Brooksbank said she nominated Iris “not just because she has helped us in the garden, but because she has overcome her own shyness and continues to look for new ways of learning and gathering information.” As it turned out, 19 other people from in and around Bulwell also nominated Iris for her extraordinary efforts!

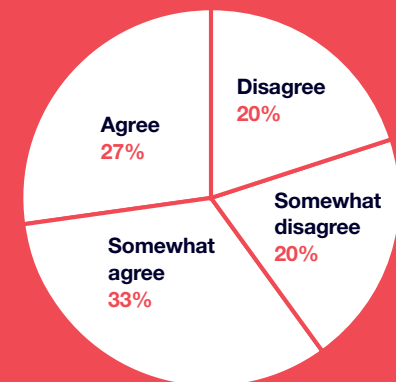
## Where You From? Extra!

Creative Education Trust pupils go to school across England in areas that are unique, historical, modern and different in ways that only the people who live there can know about.

They might live by the sea, in a town or in a city. They and their parents come from all over the world and they may have lived in more than one place. In order to develop new cross-Trust creative projects that celebrate these unique communities and places of belonging, the Programmes team issued a survey to establish a baseline of perceptions among secondary school pupils about where they’re from and how they feel about it.

As the survey closes, Connected can report that although 78% of respondents tend to agree that where they come from gives them advantages, and 60% feel more positive about where they come from than they did before Covid-19, the overwhelming majority – almost eighty percent – don’t think it actually matters where you’re from. We hope this is because they have such confidence that their education will serve them well!

*“I am more positive about the place I live now than I was before the Covid pandemic.”*



Iris won the 11-13 years category and took home a £250 tech voucher prize. Her dedication to helping those in need remains unclouded by this public recognition: “It is nice to be recognised in this way but the main reason I continue to do as much volunteering as I can in my spare time is to help people who most need it in the community where I live.”

Creative Education Trust joins Michelle Strong, Principal of Bulwell, and all of Iris’ schoolmates in congratulating her on the award.

# Academic Communities

The introduction of Academic Communities arises from Creative Education Trust's strategic goal of securing direct and positive impact on our children by developing people and their talents. This goal is reflected in both the Education and the Human Resources Action Plans, and is an enactment of the observation articulated by **Professor William Richardson**, Chair of the Education Standards Committee, in his 2019 discussion paper, *Academy Schools in England's Deprived and 'Left Behind' Communities*:

*"Although often taken for granted and consequently neglected, schooling is fundamentally a process of relationships and thus highly people intensive. Because the crucial people dynamic within a school is that of relationships between adults in authority and children under tutelage, the calibre of a school's staff goes most of the way to determining the calibre of the school as this is experienced by each child."*

Harvard professor Linda Hill, co-author of *Collective Genius*, has studied some of the world's most creative environments for approaches to keeping great ideas flowing, from everyone in an organisation: "Working closely together is one way to unlock our creativity and give every great idea a chance." As a Trust, we have used the past 6 months to turn ambitions like these into reality. By Christmas of 2020, our existing collaborative networking groups have been formalised, and a number of others have been created with a view to supporting colleagues with structured and regular opportunities to enhance their curriculum offers, share challenges, creatively design solutions, moderate and standardise.

*"In this issue, we can update readers that twenty Academic Communities are now up-and-running."*

We've written before about these aspirations and, in this issue, we can update readers that twenty Academic Communities are now up-and-running, each with a specialist Chairperson and a newly-designed electronic platform: from secondary and post-16 subject specialisms, to CEIAG, PSHCE, SEND and Initial Teacher Training. While the activity and impact of these groups is overseen by Gwayne Webb as Director of Learning and Teaching, they are further supported

by Wrenn Vice Principal Nimish Lad in his leadership capacity on curriculum development and research. Our newly-appointed School Improvement Coordinator will support the administrative requirements of these collaborative interactions.

The inaugural meetings held in December and January revealed real appetite for closer-working opportunities of this kind. Teams are devising agenda items that will accelerate the pace of their planning and increase the rate at which their efforts directly and positively impact on the educational experiences of our students – and their outcomes. *Connected* caught up with some of the specialists who are chairing Communities, who had this to say:



When Marc Jordan first addressed the staff of Weavers in 2013, my thoughts were immediately drawn to the possibilities of our collected expertise and contacts. We've navigated the present challenges as teams with a military precision and shown that when we work collaboratively anything is possible: blended learning and virtual live lessons, secure IT provision

released to thousands of young people, critical support for our vulnerable students, the administration of lateral flow testing, devising and reviewing risk assessment after risk assessment. Years of work within the Trust have brought us to this point and I'm the proud Chair of the Academic Community for Post-16 Provision. The platform to really achieve something exciting for thousands of young people is now established.

**Magnus Wallace, Weavers**



In the current pandemic, it is even more important that we share innovative ideas for growing our students into well-rounded young thinkers through our teaching. The Academic Community for maths is building enthusiasm and a passion for mathematics across the Trust, enabling students to enjoy the subject so that they become confident mathematicians.

**Jodie Green, Hart School**



Working alongside an inspirational group of science leaders has been amazing and I was thrilled to be offered the Chair of our Academic Community. I envisage it as a centralised catalyst for relationships as result of different needs and interests, and as a showcase for developments. It's a superb platform for all the schools in the Trust to have a voice, to face challenges together and have greater impact on the progress of our students.

**Sarah Golley, Wrenn**



The Mentoring Community I chair will support mentors to provide a positive induction into their trainee teachers' chosen career, building their resilience from the start. Collaboration feels more powerful than ever now that we're so isolated in our teaching and our schools. Each of us is in the same role with the same priorities, but the Community is one step removed from the inner workings of our schools. It gives us an important opportunity to think critically about our professional practice, and to think beyond the immediate pragmatics about how to apply the Creative Education Trust vision in our own settings.

**Georgina Spencer, Wrenn**

I want to share my vision for the future as Chair of the English Academic Community. Now more than ever, we need to utilise the relationships we've formed to guarantee the same level of teaching and learning for students across our Trust. The Community will support teachers with resources and materials and will ensure the assessments and data are robust, fair, and trustworthy through careful monitoring and moderation. Additionally, we'll keep an eye on training and recent research from external bodies on behalf of all the schools as we align and embed the new English curriculum.

**Heidi Crawley, Wrenn**

There's more to come! Over the course of this new Spring term, the Education Team has been working closely with leaders across the schools to add Communities, not only for the remaining subjects but also for complex but crucial areas of focus such as

behaviour, learning and teaching, attendance and pupil premium. The ambition is to create an additional ten Communities by Easter. The editorial team will make sure we keep readers abreast of the impact of this important initiative for the Creative Education workforce.

# Sitting Safely

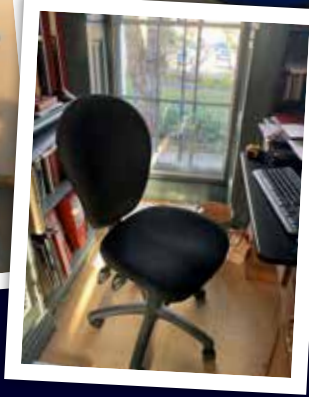
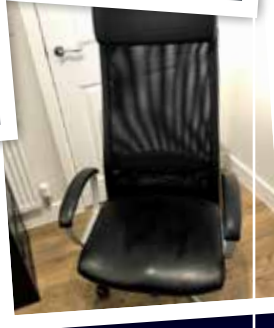
Now that the progress of Covid-19 has locked many colleagues down again as home-workers, the HR team would like to remind everyone of the importance of a healthy workstation. Creative Education Trust's guidance and risk assessment for homeworking is available [here](#), and this is the list of ingredients for a healthy set-up to work from home:

- A suitable table or desk
- A suitable chair with a well supported back
- A desk set-up that reduces the need to twist, turn and lean
- Adequate lighting
- Suitable temperature and humidity levels
- A separate mouse, keyboard and screen



## HEALTH WARNING

Please note that although all the illustrations are authentic, not all of them are exemplary!



# Safe Screens

## NEW!

### Rental Deposit Loan Scheme

We're pleased to announce the introduction of a new benefit to assist staff in rented accommodation. We know how difficult it can be to find the deposit for your first rental, or to move from an existing property when the landlord will not return the deposit until after you leave.

This new policy is designed to help.

It enables you to have a salary advance for the deposit and repay the loan over an agreed period. Certain criteria that need to be met are contained in the full policy, available here:

[cetcloud.org.uk/policies](http://cetcloud.org.uk/policies)

In addition, advice is [available here](#) on minimising the risk of strain from the prolonged use of Display Screen Equipment

- Taking frequent short breaks
- Changing your posture as frequently as possible
- Assuming a more comfortable position
- Adjusting your keyboard to get a good keying in position
- Positioning your mouse within easy reach
- Adjusting the brightness and contrast on your screen

## NEW!

### The Creative Education Trust Staff Handbook [here](#)

# NLP.

In the current climate, many external, 'feel-good' solutions we depend on aren't easy to come by. **Dena Smart**, Director of HR, dusts off her old NeuroLinguistic Programming course to share some cheering principles with Creative Education Trust colleagues.

Ever heard of Neuro Linguistic Programming? Most people will answer 'no', but might be surprised to find that they've learned a lot of NLP things in coaching, personal development and even weight loss programmes.

Developed in the 1970s by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the USA, NLP is a theory of communication that brings together neurological processes, language and behavioural patterns. Its effectiveness has mixed scientific reviews – Wikipedia classifies it as 'pseudoscientific' – but having studied it in the 1990s, I definitely think it has something to offer us now.

My back story is that I am an only child from a low-income family and my father was a fairly volatile alcoholic. This meant that as a child I became watchful of human behaviour and proficient in 'reading the mood'. No surprise that my first degree was psychology. NLP interested me because it brought together brain and behaviour and, while some of the things I was taught were borderline cultish, other ideas were really helpful and I've come across them packaged in many different ways and fields since.

My 30-year old daughter recently told me she'd started 'manifesting'. Apparently this is very current – Vogue.co.uk defines manifestation as "the materialisation of a thought or belief into physical form, based on the idea that our mind is a powerful tool for creation". I brushed off my old NLP manual and, together, we found many similarities. You might recognise some of these, and with practice and thought they can really make a difference to how you feel:

## 01 Positive outcomes

Don't focus on what you don't want; instead, really try to imagine what you do want.

## 02 Be aware of beliefs that limit you

'I could never....', for example – and question whether they're true.

## 03 It's easier to change the map than to change the outside world

We create maps, or diagrammatic representations, of reality from our sensory experiences, then operate and communicate from the maps we have created. Everyone's map is different, and many human problems are caused by the maps in our heads, but you can change the map.

## 04 If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you've always got

If what you're doing isn't working, do anything else! It is easier to change your own behaviour than other people's.

## 05 Every experience is an unprecedented opportunity to learn

There is no failure, only feedback; no mistakes, only results; no errors, only learning.

## 06 The person with the greatest flexibility of thought and behaviour can control the outcome of any interaction

Excellence comes from having many choices; and wisdom from multiple perspectives.

## 07 It is not what happens to you that makes the difference; it's what you do with what happens to you.

## 08 You cannot not communicate

Even if you say nothing, 93% of communication is nonverbal; so be conscious of your impact.

## 09 There's a positive intention behind all human behaviour

Identify the positive intention behind each of your interactions with others, and be aware that the way you behave may not represent your positive intention successfully.

Many avenues of support for positive mental health are available online and through the webinars on the [Health Assured EAP portal](#) (username; creative password: education) to which all Creative Education Trust employees have access.

*Dena recommends The Art of Possibility by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander for a real shift in thinking.*

Wellbeing



Creative Education Trust's annual Shakespeare project moves online

# Safe Shakespeare

If music be the food of love play on.

The annual Days of Shakespeare have become treasured in the Trust calendar since their launch in 2014. But with last year's challenges, and more anticipated this year, the Programmes team were cautious about proposing Shakespeare 2020. We discovered that you cannot stop our teachers' or students' appetites for performance!

Schools were issued with guidelines, masterminded by our partners **HMDT Music**, for a project modified for classroom (rather than stage) and remote delivery, and a set of brand-new resources to work with. The result? An astonishing 375 students participating across seven secondary schools: performing dramatic scenes, writing their own drama and making artwork inspired by the Bard.

## Experts online

In previous years, students have had a wonderful encounter with two visiting professionals: a voice coach, and a theatre designer. This year students and their teachers have had a choice of nine virtual masterclasses from five creative professionals.

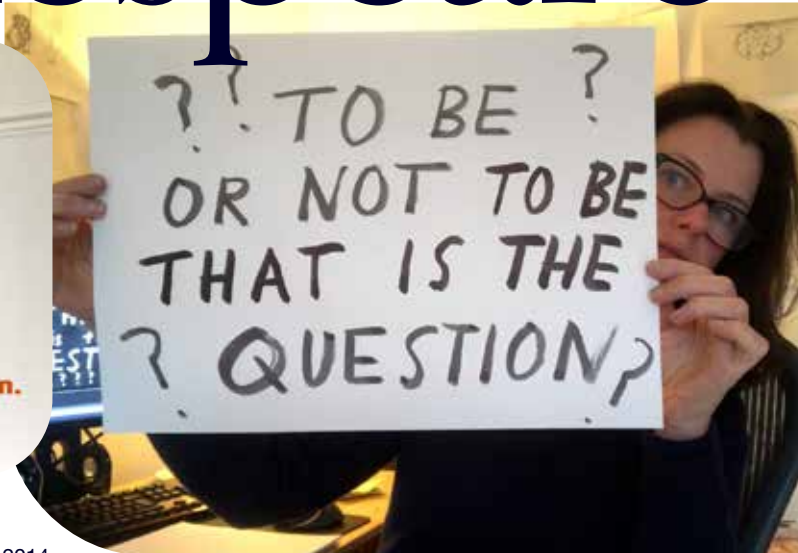
Theatre Director Katie Lewis, who learned her skills at the Royal Shakespeare Company, presented films on five core rehearsal skills: exploring Shakespeare's language; performing verse; 'actioning' feelings or ideas; characterisation; and improvisation. To expand the creative ways for students to engage with Shakespeare's texts, four additional films were issued: designing for the theatre; illustration; photography; and typography for film. In each, a creative professional gives an insight into their career and working processes, and set activities for the students to try

**Above:** Two of the video masterclasses: Theatre Director **Katie Lewis** reveals the secret of verse; and a crash course in experimenting with typography from graphic designer and illustrator **Seonaid Mackay**.

out for themselves. Students submitted their artwork along with their original scripts and filmed performances, to share with other schools.

Laura Marriott, Head of Drama at Weavers, said her students were "brilliant participating in the online activities and they especially loved Katie Lewis's Iambic Pentameter course. They produced some wonderful work and practised with independence and enthusiasm."

Year 9 **Lynn Grove**, performing a reimagined scene: the doctors treating Lady Macbeth's madness now discussing the Covid-19 pandemic



## Lockdown themes

For the 2020 edition of our Shakespeare project, we issued a set of excerpts for one, two or a small group of performers, each responding to a key theme of lockdown experiences: familial tension, loneliness, constrained liberty, and so on.

Olivia, a Year 10 student at Abbeyfield, observed analogies for Romeo and Juliet among people in new relationships, likening the government lockdown to the patriarchal impositions of the Montague and Capulet families. "People who've fallen in love during lockdown have been forbidden to meet, only able to meet up outside", she pointed out.

Some students reflected on Shakespeare through their own creative writing. This led to some wonderful inventions, including Lynn Grove students Ashleigh Barby's and Hannah Didman's reimagining of the scene in which the doctor gives support to Lady Macbeth as a comment on the 2020 pandemic. Ashleigh commented on the unforeseen benefit of editing Shakespeare's text to modernise it: "I've learnt to appreciate still-acting more – how to let the words and mannerisms portray the character without physically doing a large amount." A group of Year 8 Hart students penned a letter from The Taming of the Shrew's Baptista to an agony aunt. Seeking advice on how to tame his rebellious daughter Katherine and calm her younger sister Bianca, he pleads: "What can you do to help me? I'm really struggling with these silly girls. I love them very much, but they really need to give it a rest."

A costume for Juliet, made by **Loredana**, Year 10 **Weavers**

Lady Macbeth costume design, **Lily**, Year 10 **Weavers**



## Sharing the work

A film featuring work from all participating schools has been put together so that everyone can enjoy each other's performances: online and available to watch here:

[knowledgeconnected.org.uk/Shakespeare2020](https://knowledgeconnected.org.uk/Shakespeare2020)



Tyrone, Year 10 **Ellis Guilford**, as Hamlet

Year 8 **Ash Green** students show their Shakespeare set designs



**James** as King Lear and **Michael** as The Fool, Year 9 **Caister**



Set designs and models for **Romeo and Juliet**, Year 10 **Abbeyfield**

# ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT



In September 2011, Creative Education Trust began operation as the sponsor of its first schools in Rugeley. To mark the tenth anniversary this year, *Connected* will interview an alumnus or alumna in every issue. We begin with **Liam Tiesteel**, who starred as Macbeth in the first Day of Shakespeare in 2014. Now in his final year at Laine Theatre Arts college in London, Liam fills us in on the five years since he left **Thistley Hough**.

Liam felt he had two main options after completing GCSEs; either to study A levels or to go straight into acting. With a passion for drama and encouragement from his teachers, Liam chose to join a specialist Performing Arts college in Bradwell for a Level 3 BTEC. He describes the experience as a "huge change", as it was such a physical course and he was suddenly with "all the best performing arts students across Stoke", many of whom already had lots of experience of dancing and singing. However, Liam's commitment clearly paid off as he went on to interview at all the big London institutions for acting, securing places everywhere he auditioned before selecting Laines.

Getting into Laines has been Liam's highlight since leaving school. "It was amazing to go where so many well-known actresses and actors had trained...It felt like my whole life had led up to this, pursuing my dream". Liam named Charlie Stemp as one of his biggest inspirations; a Laines graduate who has gone on to work on Broadway and in the West End. A few



Liam in the title role of **Thistley Hough's** Macbeth in 2014

Liam performing in Academy Christmas, 2017

days before leaving for Laines, Liam received even more good news. He discovered that he was one of four students selected each year to be awarded a full scholarship for his course, which "changed my life forever".

Liam has now secured his first professional acting roles, including a recent performance in the pantomime Rapunzel. Liam talks about how Thistley Hough provided "such a good foundation for where I am now". Whilst at Thistley Hough, Liam's teachers said that he had a natural ability for drama, and that he "was born to be on stage". Liam took part in Creative Education Trust's Shakespeare project in 2014, playing the lead as Macbeth. In addition to this role, he was involved in a range of showcases, variety shows, and events. Liam describes his time since year 11 as a "massive journey", working towards his professional career.

Liam shared how he received excellent support from Thistley Hough staff; "The teachers all made time for us. We were all individuals to them, not just a student in their class. I had great connections with my teachers; they really understood me and what I wanted to do". Liam credits his History teacher Mr Bate in particular, as Mr Bate encouraged him to take part in workshops and explore his interest further by auditioning with an amateur group.

Liam's advice for current students considering their options after school is to "go for what you feel you want to do, not what you think you 'should' do. If you are passionate about something, it will make you work harder until you get that course or job you wanted. There are opportunities in every industry, it's just about finding them".



# Successes and special commendations Students...

To **Oskar Niewiem**, year 9 at **Bulwell**, who's been offered a contract with Nottingham Forest Football Club.



To **Paul Knighton** and the **Ellis Guilford** team, for launching a cooking show with brilliant recipes using ingredients from Free School Meal hampers.

To **Katelen Lacey**, year 9 at **Caister**, commended by Hama Beads UK on their official Facebook page after spending 3 months and 80,000 Hama Beads creating a piece of artwork of her family.

To **Sanjita Kurasala**, year 10, (submission left) and **Matilda Wright**, year 8 (submission right) at **Abbeyfield**, winners respectively in the Modern Life and Light thematic categories of the University of Northampton's photography project.



To **Lewis Ashdown**, **Caister** year 11, awarded the school's first Beauchamp award for courage of character in recognition of his tireless study and for his support to the community of students and staff.



To **Ethan Bucknall**, year 11 at **Bulwell**, for being named a Nottingham Clean Champion and keeping his community clean, and inspiring others to help out.



To **Aran Dharmaraj** at **Harpfield**, for completing his grade 2 drums with 85% just before Christmas.



To **Anya Tregay**, year 13, who received an offer to study Law at Hertford College, Oxford from September 2021 and made history as the first **Hart** student to receive an Oxbridge offer. School, community and town are proud!

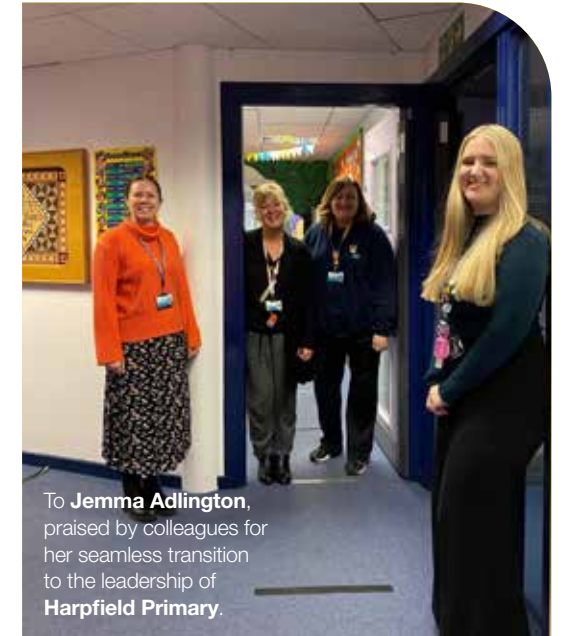
To **Kitty Allsopp**, year 11 at **Bulwell**, who loves to write and shared the poem *Shower* online.

## Shower.

As the water pummels unforgivably down your head,  
Down your face, down the mindless body.  
It races to the drain,  
like a race to win before the tears win themselves,  
Or is it the fact that even the pure water that cleans your soul  
Cannot clean your thoughts? so it tries to escape from the  
thought of even trying to.  
Now you've lost.  
Steam. It fogs the curtain, it fogs your eyes just like the end is  
just not quite clear in sight. Like it always had been not;  
getting clearer when you want it to.  
You pray that the water will wash away the pain or at least;  
warm your body like that feeling you once had.  
You thought that at least a shower was going to make some  
sort of sense,  
Or help with the flood of thoughts, with the fog in your mind,  
with the slight odour of your skin or tumbling head.  
But it doesn't.

**Kitty Allsopp, Year 11**

# ...and staff



To **Jemma Adlington**, praised by colleagues for her seamless transition to the leadership of **Harpfield Primary**.



To **Ms McAdam** at **Caister**, 'highly commended' in the Gratnells (technical suppliers) award for Science Technician of the Year.

To **Jess Delf**, English teacher, who coordinated the donations of **Caister** parents, staff and students to the Great Yarmouth Salvation Army food bank, so substantial that it required several trips to deliver!



# Becoming a Teacher in the 2020s

It is fair to say that like everything else, the Initial Teacher Training landscape has not gone unaffected by the pandemic. While national providers and the Department for Education continue to respond and adapt to the uncertain times, Creative Education Trust has not been standing still in our determination to attract early-career professionals. For the general interest of Connected readers – and for any who might be thinking of becoming a teacher – **Gwayne Webb**, Director of Learning and Teaching, expounds the options.

Prospective teachers need to be working towards a degree with GCSE grade C/4 in English and maths – plus, for primary trainees, a science subject. There are degrees with automatic Qualified Teacher status and others with opt-in Qualified Teacher status. There are also ways for people who already have an unrelated degree, but studied the subject they want to teach to A level, to build or refresh their knowledge before starting primary or secondary teacher training.

Traditionally, and still today, there are 5 main routes to consider:

## 01 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

PGCE programmes combine academic study with a minimum of 24 weeks on school placements. The qualification costs up to £9250, and you will not receive a salary while studying. Training takes one year and there is public and private funding available.

## 02 School Direct (fee-funded)

Also costing up to £9250 and also not paying a salary, funding is available for the one-year School Direct (fee-funded) training programmes in which you learn on the job while you work towards your Qualified Teacher Status. You'll be based in a school, but you won't be employed by them. Alongside your practical teaching you'll be taught by the university, college, or school-centred initial teacher training provider (SCITT) that your training school partners with.

## 03 School Direct (salaried)

You won't pay tuition fees for this one-year course, and you'll earn a salary. On a School Direct (salaried) programme, you'll be employed by a school as an unqualified teacher while you work towards your Qualified Teacher Status. This route typically requires three years of transferable work history.

## 04 Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship

In this scheme, you'll be employed by a school and learn to teach while you're working. You'll split your time between school and university study, with at least 20% of your time studying. You won't pay tuition fees and you will receive a salary.

## 05 Teach First

The Teach First Leadership Development Programme is a two-year salaried programme that combines leadership development with teacher training, and focuses on training university graduates to teach in challenging schools. There are no tuition fees. You'll earn and learn on the job while you work towards Qualified Teacher Status and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). A PGDE is similar to a PGCE, but contains up to 120 credits at masters degree level.



## Schools Direct and Warwick University

Meanwhile, here at Creative Education Trust, we recognise that attracting good trainee teachers needs secure relationships with top-quality training providers.

Our exciting Initial Teacher Training (ITT) partnership with University of Warwick was ratified in the summer and we're now able to offer Schools Direct placements from September 2021 at Ash Green (our Lead School), Abbeyfield, Weavers, Wrenn and Milton Keynes. We're recruiting for eight secondary subjects and the provisional number of trainee teacher placements has been accepted. Our adverts are live on the DfE website.

The HR and Education teams have had training from Warwick and we're working closely with our contacts there on marketing the courses, recruitment, mentor training and development. The Warwick School Direct Alliance expects that specific events are scheduled throughout the course of the year; 'alliance days', for example, hosted within our group of schools.

We've established an Academic Community (see the feature in this issue) to enhance the tutoring and mentoring of our early-career colleagues under the leadership of George Spencer, Wrenn's ITT Coordinator.

Readers who are interested in getting into teaching can receive support and advice from the Department for Education. By registering with them, prospective teachers will get tailored advice, help preparing their applications and assistance with securing school experience.

You can register for the service by calling **0800 389 2500**.

# Lockdown Lessons

Ofsted has shared its suggested definitions of blended and remote learning, while the Department for Education strives to define best practice against the clock of young people's school years. As schools in the frontline embarked rather suddenly on a second period of school closure, **Alison Mobbs**, Chair of the Edutech Academic Community, reported on the steep and fast learning curve for remote delivery.

We have a lot to be proud of. The experiences we all gathered in meeting the needs of self-isolating children during the autumn term have strengthened our practice and benefit staff and students now. Complete 'remote education for all' still demands a significant gear shift and some marked innovation, so it's early days, but this article samples the ideas that are going well.



At **Caister**, Emma Ingham explains the aim of giving teachers, teaching-assistants and all 'student-facing' staff access to bespoke remote learning training; not 'one size fits all', but an approach that began with an evaluation of each individual's proficiency in the use of Microsoft Teams. With the self-audit of skills in place, colleagues identified their personal training needs, ranging from the basics - such as using the right meeting settings - to the more advanced skill of building assessment rubrics into student assignments. A series of 'how to' videos was tailored to guide each person through the technical expertise they would need in each element of live lesson delivery.

"Collaborative planning has also been a real driving force in the success of our provision" Miss Ingham adds; "it's been especially purposeful in adapting lesson resources for live delivery". The Caister team identified a list of key determinants of student engagement - visual cues, specific time reminders, numbered verb-driven instructions, clear success criteria and 'chunked' content - and embedded these in resources that support each lesson. Colleagues across all curriculum areas shared best practice to galvanise more of the same: "the most innovative and purposeful examples are replicated and boost everyone's competency in the process! Our students now have consistent access to high-quality resources that are strategically designed to support them".

At **Thistley Hough**, Jacob Axton reported on colleagues' experiments to find the best way of delivering prolonged, pre-recorded lessons. "One ingenious idea has been to invite students to stop and immediately restart the video recording at important points in the lesson; that way pupils can easily skip straight to sections they want to recap. Other teachers have just been time-stamping their videos so the pupils know at what time certain parts of the lesson took place." The science department are trialling the use of graphics tablets while teaching online to improve the quality of annotating diagrams, concepts or models they are trying to explain. This has been a big success for the teachers and pupils alike. Others have found the breakout rooms function useful in facilitating group work and discussion.

More widely, there's no doubt that teachers have stepped up resourcefully to the challenge of adapting Teams (which, after all, was not developed with education in mind) to create an online classroom experience. In contrast to the last period of closure schools are now live streaming lessons more regularly, and certainly **Lynn Grove** pupils are able to follow their normal timetable of lessons with their usual teachers.

As schools have adopted a more consistent approach to live lessons, engagement has improved considerably. One of the challenges we now face is how to provide more variety and sustain that engagement. **Weavers** has been experimenting with break out rooms for group work, as Sally Birkby reports. "Initially we timetabled two staff for each live lesson; one to teach the lesson and the other to support by answering questions using the chat function. While this had some success, student feedback showed that some students needed more examples, or just a little more time, while others were ready to move on. Acutely aware of the need to support, but not slow the pace for the whole class, the breakout rooms are proving useful. Some

classes are set up to allow a teacher with a visualiser to model a few more examples, or to catch-up students identified as behind, and any student can re-join the class when they're confident with the topic. The breakout rooms can be closed at any point in the lesson or opened up again to get those focussed groups back. Student feedback tells us engagement is increased, so has confidence, and that the experience is more personalised".

The administrative burden of remote teaching and learning can be intense, as the normal systems are not well adapted. Hats off to **Abbeyfield**, where Joanna Grant explains that staff there have developed a Teams app that takes care of registration. "It saves hours of admin time, so staff can expend less effort on collecting the information and more on dealing with pupils who - for whatever reason - are not managing to engage with remote learning. It's great to see that other schools have adopted the app and will also be able to streamline their attendance reporting".

**Ellis Guilford** wanted a set of extra-curricular activities that were creative and fun and that also take students away from their screens. Gemma Johnson, Ellis's lead for Remote Learning, explains: "Remote Extra aims to encourage students to participate in activities that will increase their cultural capital, problem solving skills, intellectual engagement and

*"Teachers have stepped up resourcefully to the challenge of adapting Teams which, after all, was not developed with education in mind."*

higher order thinking skills; and we're also encouraging students to take responsibility for their wellbeing." The team that originally came together to discuss initial ideas now meets on a weekly basis to turn the latest suggestions into a Remote Extra Bundle for the week. Virtual tours of historic landmarks, animal trackers, a recipe for invisible ink and the manufacture of games for younger siblings are on the menu so far. Teachers themselves complete the tasks in prototype and will publish their own solutions to encourage wide uptake among students. Asked about the challenges, Gemma says, "it's a real team effort to collect the resources in time, and to quality assure them in terms of the curriculum intent before they get branded and distributed. They need to be easy for everyone to access so they don't get lost within the everyday classwork, and it's crucial to communicate the new bundles to everyone, every week, so they get properly embedded".

Finally, Ash Mudaliar, Head of IT, reported the happy news for digital inclusion that 1600 devices have been distributed to pupils since the December break - a combination of Trust-purchased devices as well as those provided by the Department for Education.

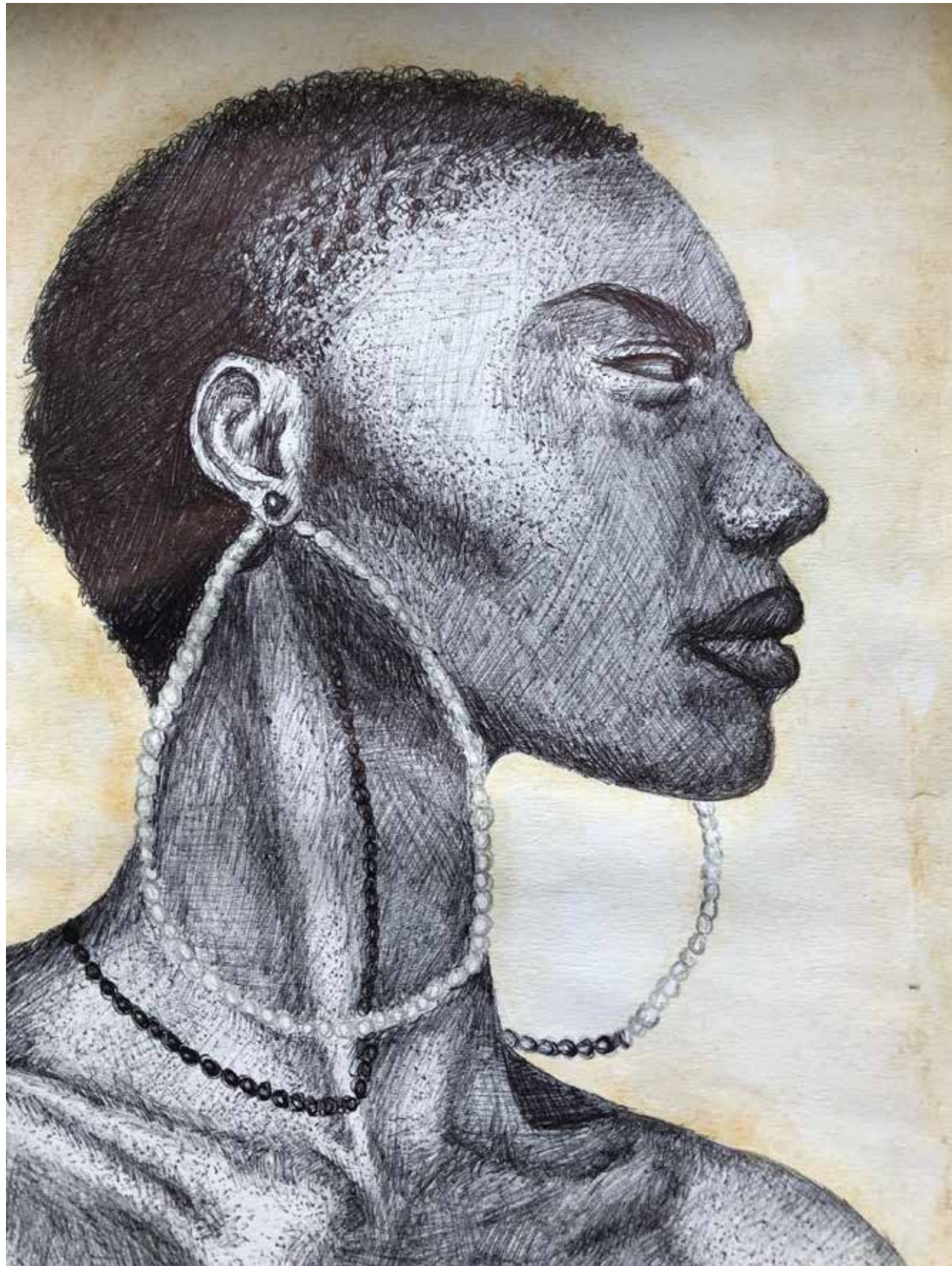
Art education continues out of school. Drawing and painting techniques continue to be practised, but students are also learning to represent meaning in their work: using portraiture to express personality and therefore, being a potential outlet for students' emotions too. One of the main challenges in setting art exercises is a lack of suitable equipment and materials at home. **Bryony Walker**, Ash Green Head of Art, notes that planning is key: "prior to the lesson we let students know what they will need, so they can try and source equipment".

# Portrait of the Artist in Lockdown



**Natalia Cyrankowska**,  
Year 13 Wrenn

Abigail Tite, Year 11 Hart



Many schools have been putting together art packs. Hannah Jones, Assistant Principal at Wrenn, has been sending out paper, paint, pencils, colour pencils and pastels to support her creative students at home. In live lessons they also use visualisers “so we can still demonstrate practical skills.”

Stella Madden, Year 11 Hart



Amelia Whyte, Year 12 Weavers

Mia Beesley-Earp,  
Year 10 Ash Green



## Where You From?

will run as a theme in every issue of *Connected* magazine for the remainder of the year.

Creative Education Trust schools are spread across England in places that are unique, historical, modern and different in ways that only the people who live there can know about.

We want to know what our readers and pupils think about where you live and where you're from. We'll publish voices and views that answer this question in ways that are interesting and relevant to the whole network.

Please submit your ideas via the Headteacher or Principal.

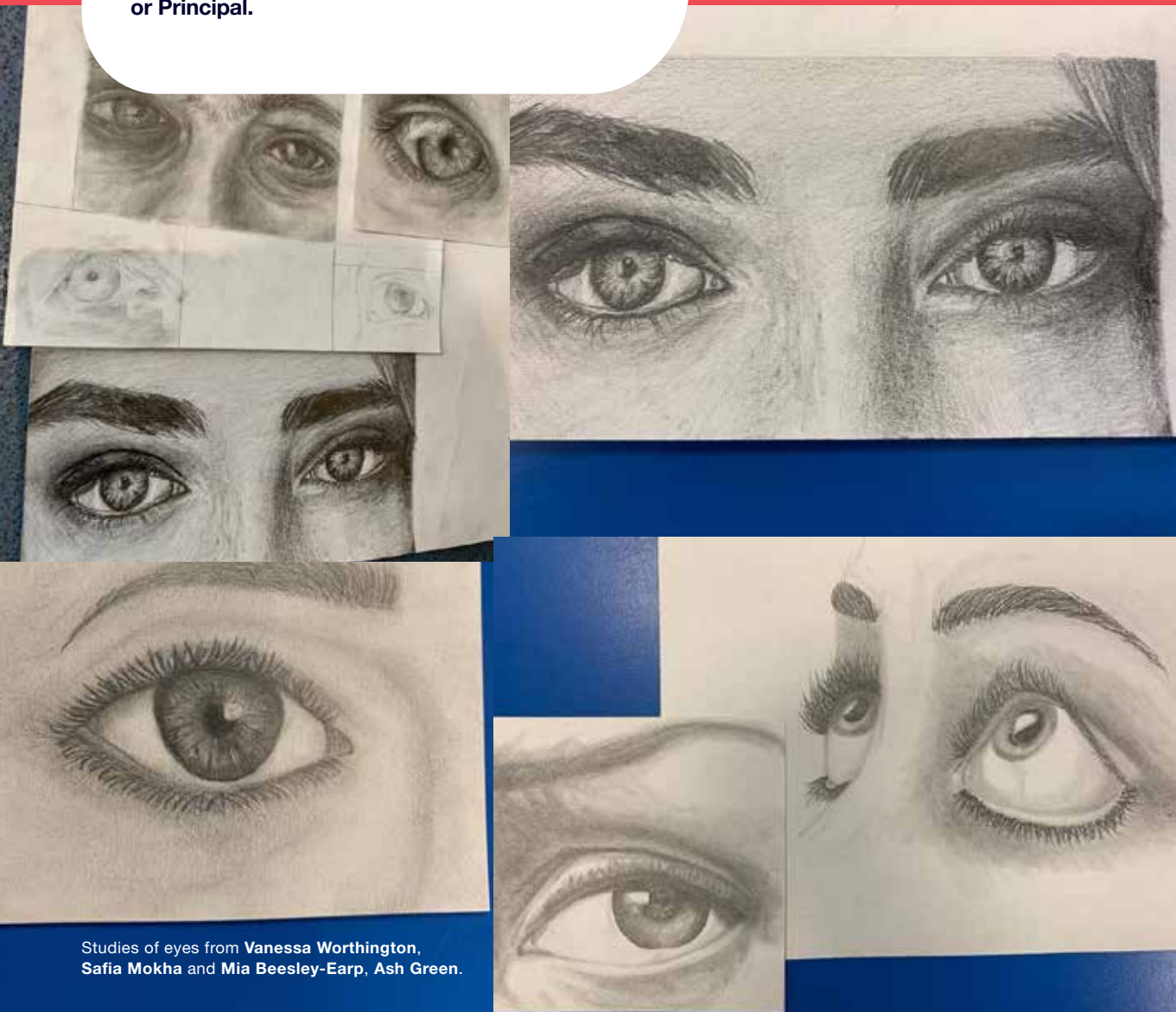
**Creative Education Trust**

Sicilian House  
7 Sicilian Avenue  
London WC1A 2QR

Telephone 020 3910 9200  
info@creativeeducationtrust.org.uk

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**@VincentDesignUK**

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Studies of eyes from **Vanessa Worthington, Safia Mokha and Mia Beesley-Earp, Ash Green.**