

OCTOBER 2023

LINES FROM OUR LANDSCAPE



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Our guiding principle of “belief in every child” will influence every decision we make as a trust.

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Lorraine Heath
CEO



Welcome to the very first newsletter of the Blackdown Education Partnership. I am so excited to have the privilege of introducing this newsletter which provides just a snapshot of the amazing things that our school communities have been getting up to this term. From new intakes, to new builds, to Ofsted inspections, it has been an incredibly busy start to the school year. Merging two separate organisations is a massive undertaking and there have been many people working tirelessly to make it happen.

I could not be more proud to work with such fantastic schools as we have in our partnership. We don't need Ofsted to tell us what we already know, but the fact that our inspections have already been so successful is testament to the great work of the two founding trusts and means that they leave quite a legacy to celebrate. I have taught in our schools, sent my children to our schools and I have also taught quite a few of the members of staff in our schools. I already know that we are lucky enough to have great people who are totally invested in making a difference to our children and their communities

Whilst we know that we live and work in a beautiful part of the country, we also know that our region has challenges in relation to poverty, poor infrastructure, low wage economies, systemic inequity and low social mobility.

Research tells us that the South West is the worst place to grow up if you are disadvantaged. Disadvantaged children here attend less well, achieve less highly and are less likely to go on to higher education than in any other regions. Our challenge is to work together to turn this around and ensure not just that the children in our schools buck this trend but that as a larger and therefore more influential organisation we are able not just to act in the system but also to act on it so that children who don't attend our schools also get a better deal.

We are, therefore absolutely rock solid in our purpose and fierce in our intent that our guiding principle of “belief in every child” will influence every decision we make as a trust. We know we still have work to do on the implementation of our vision to ensure that the Trust adds value to every school, but hope that if there are any teething problems, you will forgive us; and know that our mission is the right one.

Our Mission:

- To nurture and develop the ambition, talents and interests of every child
- To break down the barriers that inhibit the opportunities and achievements of disadvantaged pupils so that they can go on to lead lives of choice and opportunity
- To create a family of schools that are deeply and purposefully connected to their communities.



Congratulations to our Trustee, Julia Adamson and her family, pictured at Windsor Castle, collecting her very well deserved MBE for Services to Education.





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The school secured a 'Good' rating in every category... an important milestone on our journey to greatness.

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Rob Crocker
Headteacher

I'm proud to write this off the back of a very successful half term with lots to celebrate. Firstly, our 'Axe Makes Music' event saw nearly 150 students learning a piece of music altogether in a day which led to a rousing and technically skilled performance in the afternoon. Secondly, students have returned from the summer break feeling positive and enthused, with far more house points in a half term than ever before. Finally, we were pleased to welcome Ofsted to Axe Valley in the third week of term. In a somewhat strange way, I was looking forward to having the opportunity to show Axe Valley off at its finest and that's exactly what we did. I am exceptionally grateful for all of the hard work that staff put into the inspection process and indeed the 4 years' worth of school improvement that went in to getting the school to where it is now. I am able to share that the school secured a 'Good' rating in every category which is an important milestone on our journey to greatness.

We are also celebrating our busiest Open Day and Evening ever, which is a real testament to the positive reputation that Axe has in the local community and surrounding area. At every chance, students are excited to welcome visitors and confidently talk to them about the experiences that they have in school.

In order to strengthen our Personal Development provision, we have appointed Pav Sanghera to the position of Associate Assistant Head-Personal Development. I already know that Pav will make a significant impact in our drive to raise student aspiration and ensure that all students make the most of the range of opportunities on offer at Axe Valley.

Finally, I am delighted to see that the typically heartwarming community spirit here has resulted in us raising over £250 at our lunchtime cake sale for Young Minds. Students baked, sold and bought cakes. **#smallbutmighty!**





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As always, we couldn't be prouder of our students and staff.

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Polly Matthews
Headteacher

I am delighted to give our first contribution to the half-termly newsletter as part of the Blackdown Education Partnership. I am Polly Matthews, Headteacher of Court Fields School, and it is a privilege to share the exciting events and updates from this term.

The last 6 weeks have been a whirlwind of activities, highlighting our dedication to providing an outstanding learning experience. We began by welcoming our largest ever Year 7 intake, a testament to the trust parents and students place in us. We're excited to see them flourish in our supportive and enriching environment. In October, we celebrated World Mental Health Day, emphasizing the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing as part of Young Minds' "Hello Yellow" campaign. Our Year 7 students embarked on an adventurous residential trip to North Devon, where they formed friendships, developed resilience, and created memories that will last a lifetime: surfing, coasteering,

high ropes, kayaking and the 'Ultimate Wipeout' course were just some of the highlights of a remarkable experience for all involved.

Sports enthusiasts at Court Fields School have been actively engaged in various fixtures, including hockey, rugby and football, competing with determination and sportsmanship. These activities allow our students to learn the importance of teamwork, discipline, and healthy competition. Alongside these, we have offered a range of clubs and activities from Bug Club to Glee Club, Amnesty Club to Origami Club, supporting our aim for all our students to participate in a full enrichment programme.

Year 8 students had the unique opportunity to explore science in a captivating way during their trip to Paignton Zoo. Learning beyond the classroom is an essential component of our educational approach, and this theme was continued by our Year 9 students in Art, who developed their sketching





skills through the opportunity to draw aspects of our local Wellington community. Our dedication to the arts is showcased through auditions for our upcoming production of 'The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe'. This production will bring out the creative talents of our students, whether that be centre-stage, or backstage, front of house or creating resources behind the scenes. One of the highlights of this term was welcoming Year 6 students and their families during our Open Days. Through our Open Evening and Open Morning Tours, we provided a fantastic opportunity for them to get a glimpse of our school and the vibrant learning community we have created.

As we look ahead, we are focused on preparing our Year 11 students for their Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) in November.

These exams are pivotal in their academic journey, and we're committed to providing the support they need to excel, working with students, and their families to ensure that they achieve the ambitious academic outcomes of which they are capable next summer. Moreover, we are actively assisting Year 11 students with college and apprenticeship applications and interviews, guiding them towards the next chapter of their educational journey.

As always, we couldn't be prouder of our students and staff. We look forward to the upcoming term, filled with even more opportunities to Achieve, Belong, and Participate. I would like to thank our students, staff, families, and wider community for their continued support which make our school such a vibrant, happy, welcoming and ambitious place to be.





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The range of academic and extra-curricular achievements... is so humbling and reminds me of why we do what we do.

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Dave McCormick
Headteacher

It has been a great start to the year at Holyrood and there is lots to report upon as well as to celebrate!

I have previously written about our pride in our Duke of Edinburgh Award offer here, particularly as we teach the Bronze Award within curriculum time to over 200 students in Year 9 and fund it for them too. This has resulted in us being awarded the 'Spirit of DofE Award' in recognition of the large numbers of students who are taking part in Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards here. I would like to say a huge thank you to our entire team of staff and volunteers who make this possible.

We are also proud to report that we have been awarded the Gold Artsmark Award for the broad range of activities and experiences we have offered our students across the Creative Arts over the past two years. I am reminded of our most recent success in having a cast of 135 students working hard

to rehearse for our upcoming performance of 'Shrek the Musical'. I hope that colleagues from other Trust schools will be able to come and watch when showtime comes. Our entire Creative Arts Team, led by Jenny Lowe, Shevaughn Munro-Dennison, Sam Davison, Karen Seib and Nat Spiller deserve a huge 'well done' for what is a special achievement.

As we approach the early UCAS deadline for applications to Oxbridge and Medicine courses, it has been an honour to read this year's Year13 applications and to offer feedback on their personal statements. The range of academic and extra-curricular achievements our students can describe is always so humbling and really reminds me of why we do what we do. Good luck to all of our Oxbridge and Medicine applicants this year and well done to all of the staff who have supported them thus far.





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It has been a joy to see all children, families and staff coming together to enhance our learning community.

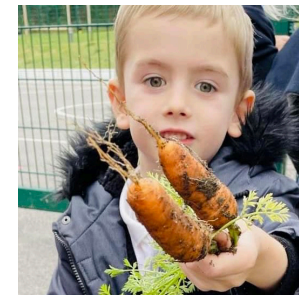
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Richard Healey
Headteacher

It has been an action packed first half term at IKB with the unique addition of having the privilege of hosting Orchard Grove Primary School on site whilst awaiting the completion of their school building. It has been a joy to see all the children, families and staff coming together to enhance our learning community even further and demonstrate the true meaning of a Trust partnership. Pictured are children from both settings celebrating International Dot Day on 15th September, a global celebration of creativity, courage and collaboration – exactly what BEP is all about! A huge thank you to our IKB Friends and Community group for providing copies of the featured book for every class across both schools.

Sustainability is a big priority for both IKB and Orchard Grove and both schools think about environmental impact in all of their decision making. Down in the school vegetable patch Year 1 children have been getting green fingered and celebrating the achievements of their planting coming to fruition this harvest. From carrots and onions to pumpkins and marrows, there is nothing these horticulturists cannot turn their hands to. The taste testing went down a treat too!

We look forward to sharing even more examples of our children belonging, participating and achieving in everything they do over the coming months.





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Staff at Neroche have already really valued the joint working of the Primary schools across BEP

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Ali Collins
Headteacher

It has been a busy start to the new academic year at Neroche with the finishing touches to our new building improvements.

Due to significant investment from the Trust, we have been excitedly watching the improvements as they have taken shape. Kings Builders, carefully project managed by Danny at Coreus have done a fantastic job and we are looking forward to sharing the results with the wider school community. The finished works will provide us with much needed intervention space, calmer classroom spaces, an attractive library area and accessible path area to our SEMH provision, and all perfectly timed to mark the 50th birthday of Neroche Primary School which first opened in 1973.

We have welcomed new staff to Neroche: Mrs Holden, Miss Dunn, Mrs Hyslop and our 2 apprentices Miss Hurley and Miss Ives who we are proud to have on our staff team being past pupils of Neroche and Holyrood Academy. All our new staff have settled quickly and are welcome additions to the team.

Brodie our school dog has loved meeting the new reception intake and new families who have joined Neroche and has quickly added to his fan base. He wasn't short of friends to help him celebrate his 3rd birthday this week and loved his birthday gifts and wishes from the children. He really is loved by all at Neroche and helps so many of our students.

Our relatively new PFA team are busy fundraising and for such a small team have already raised an impressive sum which they are hoping will support whole school enrichment activities. Their dedication to the school and their fundraising efforts are commendable even organising events in half term for the children and families to attend.

Staff at Neroche have already really valued the joint working of the Primary schools across BEP and getting to know new colleagues from IKB, Orchard Grove and Wellesley Park. We are looking forward to further joint working and sharing ideas and expertise.





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German exchange students
and their teachers were able
to see the delights of the
Southwest and life in a
UK school. ”

James Lamb
Headteacher

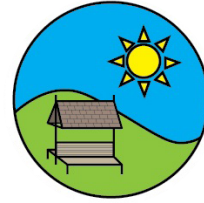
It's been a positive and busy first month or so to the start of term. The Year 7s have settled in well, enjoyed meeting their new teachers and being exposed to new knowledge in their lessons. They also has their Enrichment Fayre where they could sign up to a variety of activities. There are plenty to choose from – 389 activities were offered last year! Year 7 parents were also able to come into school at the end of September for an introduction evening to meet their child's tutor and Head of House.

Some other events during this first half term were the Friday House events which saw all Year 7s spending the weekend at Pinkery on Exmoor as part of their bonding process as a House and Tutor group. House Sport is underway. Work on

Black History month with assemblies and in form time are all linked to British Values. Year 10s also had their GCSE Launch evening focusing on the knowledge content, homework and revision needed to achieve the hightargets we know they are capable of. We also welcomed 20 German exchange students and their teachers to the school in September, where they were able to see the delights of the Southwest and life in a UK school.

We also welcomed OFSTED to the school at the start of October. We look forward to sharing the report when it is published in November. The students conducted themselves superbly throughout the two days and I am incredibly proud of our whole community at The Castle School.





UFFCULME PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Our youngest children in Reception Class have settled into school life and class routines incredibly well.

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Fraser Wallace
Headteacher

It has been so lovely to see everyone back after the summer break and to welcome new staff and children to Uffculme Primary School. We have had a very busy but productive first half term, and I would like to begin by thanking our hardworking staff who have helped to ensure the children have had a smooth transition into their new year groups.

I would like to share how wonderfully proud we all are of our youngest children in Reception Class. They have settled into school life and class routines incredibly well. The children have already made strong progress with not only their academic work, but also their independence. We feel privileged that they have joined us on their educational journey, and we cannot wait to see them flourish further.

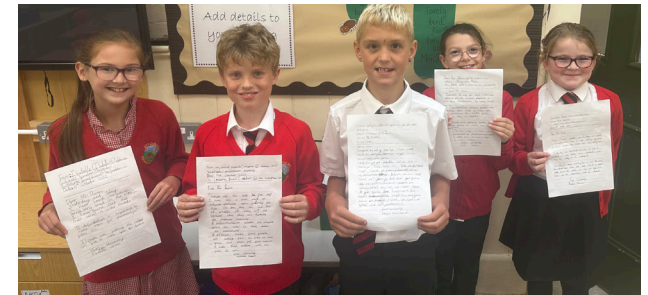
Open Classroom sessions were held in September and were very popular. It was lovely to see so many children showing their parents their new classrooms and meeting their new

teachers informally. We are already looking forward to welcoming parents back in the Spring Term.

We ended the first half of the Autumn Term by celebrating Harvest Festival. Year 2 and Year 4 led us in our service at the church, involving plenty of singing and discussing the meaning of harvest. We were blown away with how many items were brought in for the local food bank that CHAT (the Churches Housing Action Team) coordinate and shows what a strong sense of community we have at UPS.

Continuing our strong musical tradition, we welcomed 'Back Chat Brass' in for an assembly which really inspired the children and fed into their love of music appreciation. The group are hoping to establish a club, along with our choir and percussion club, offering a real range of extra-curricular musical experiences for our children.

All in all, a great start to the academic year!





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It is hard to pinpoint my one highlight however the Uffculme Challenge was definitely one!

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Laura Jenkins
Headteacher

Uffculme School has had a vibrant and busy start to the new academic year. Being new to the school it has been a pleasure to be welcomed so warmly and immediately immersed and included in the culture at US. One thing that has struck me has been the way that a culture of participation and effort runs through this school and we already have had a number of highlights to start term.

Open Evening is always a highlight in any school calendar and like all things Uffculme this was big, loud and proud putting our incredible students and departments front and centre. A record number of parents and prospective students were treated to welcome music from the Soul Band in The Venue before they were able to explore the school where they may have also bumped into the Samba Band procession. Several hundred current students were in attendance, either as tour guides or as departmental helpers, and the Senior Council represented us with maturity. Head boy and Head girl, Ollie and Mia, spoke confidently to a packed theatre and represented what being part of US really means.

The staff at US are celebrating excellent results this year, with

approximately 90% 4+, 70% 5+ basics and a P8 score of +0.91. Especially pleasing was the disadvantaged progress score of +0.64 I wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate US staff on these really impressive results and highlight the continued exceptional hard work and strong relationships it takes to achieve this. Sometimes people think that this is easy in 'a school like US' but I have had the pleasure of seeing first hand the hours and dedication that go into every single student to make these results possible. US staff support the ethos that if students are engaged fully in a vibrant wider curricular offer then the results follow. Those results are testament to that.

Lessons have been calm, purposeful and full of challenge since day one. Staff are focusing on our Teaching & Learning approaches to accelerate learning for all. We have seen excellent adaptive teaching, high levels of challenge, embedded retrieval practice and 'no hands up' consistently across our classrooms and students are thriving in this challenging but supportive environment. Coaching for all has launched and I have been delighted with how staff have responded so positively to the time dedicated to detailed discussion about their own teaching.





Reading runs through everything we do and Year 7 students have all had the opportunity to choose a brand new free book from a selection provided by the national literacy trust, funded by the PTFA, to support their reading journey.

The extensive wider curricular offer was celebrated at the Clubs fair last week which was heaving with stalls and students looking at what they want to sign up for this year. This is in line with the packed activities calendar available to our student body. Activities already undertaken this half term include; a kayak course; rugby, basketball, hockey, netball and hockey fixtures; a golf driving range experience, an Art trip to St Ives, the Three Moors Challenge Bodmin Walk, the English 'Women in Black' Cardiff trip, a Year 11 Geography Bristol trip, the Ten Tours Abbots Way walk, a visit from Mr Somerfield WWI expert and much more. In addition our equestrian teams have seen success in the NSEA show including Uffculme Blue team qualifying for nationals in one category. Alongside this we have seen the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh assessed expedition and the Silver DofE assessed expedition group succeed on their expeditions.

Excitingly the Performing Arts department have the rehearsals for Beauty and The Beast well under way and we are very much looking forward to the release of the tickets.

It is hard to pinpoint my one highlight however the Uffculme Challenge was definitely one! Our Year 8 and Year 9 students all completed the 12 mile walk between Hemyock and Uffculme over a varied terrain including open moorland. They came back tired and muddy but excited to collect their badges for completing the challenge.

With such a fast pace of life and a busy return to school it was a delight to celebrate World Mental Health day by staff and students celebrating Hello Yellow, accessorising in yellow and Taking Ten at Ten to read extracts from the wellbeing genre. During House Assemblies all students got to meet the trained student mental health champions who are able to provide a different avenue for our students to communicate how they are feeling.

I am looking forward to another stellar year for the wonderful staff and students at Uffculme School! **#it'sallaboutUS.**





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Our new EYFS pupils are already making fantastic progress.

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Carly Wilkins
Headteacher

What a superb start to our new academic year! As always, our Wellesley Park pupils have returned to school ready for the year ahead showing our Wellesley Park values: Respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, tolerance and excellence. This half term, our values curriculum focus has been on how we can build our own resilience and get back up following knock-backs!

We welcome new staff members to the team, who have all settled well into Wellesley Park and are making a great difference to our pupils already. Our new EYFS pupils have also settled quickly into class routines and are already making fantastic progress.

At the end of last term, we secured £6000 of funding from the English Hub and purchased new decodable phonic books that match our Little Wandle scheme. We invited parents into school for a phonics workshop to explain how we teach phonics and the importance of reading at home to support their child to become a fluent reader.

We have enjoyed lots of enrichment opportunities this half term, including: Watching Matilda the Musical, Harvest Festival at our local church, after-school clubs, Yr3 Sports festival, etc. Year 5 are about to work towards achieving the Civic Award: a portfolio folder that the children fill in with activities they have completed both inside and outside of school. Year 6 are look to perform Matilda the Musical as their end of year show – we can't wait!

On Tuesday 10th October the whole school celebrated WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY by wearing yellow, focusing on wellbeing in our learning, and emphasizing that is ok to ask for help and support. We have raised a staggering £243!

At the end of a busy first half-term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff team at Wellesley Park for their continual drive to secure the very best for all of our children.

On behalf of everyone at Wellesley Park, I wish you a restful and enjoyable half-term break.





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WELLBEING

AT BLACKDOWN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP



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BELIEF IN EVERY CHILD

BLACKDOWN EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP WELLBEING SERVICES

Amanda Woodward, the Director of Wellbeing delivers a variety of bespoke wellbeing services across the Trust.

With over 25 years' experience in wellbeing delivery in private practice, commercial and educational settings Amanda offers a comprehensive range of services including:

- confidential counselling,
- cognitive behavioural therapy,
- physical fitness support,
- nutrition advice,
- injury rehabilitation,
- menopause support,
- reflexology.

Amanda is known for her warm and welcoming approach and with her positive and proactive attitude to mental and physical wellbeing the free facilities that she can offer to all staff across the Trust are considered invaluable.

Working for the Trust three days a week and available in both person and remotely via Teams, having the flexibility to book an appointment with Amanda is a true luxury. To book an appointment that suits you, please visit

www.bep.ac/wellbeing



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I have an ongoing battle with depression which can make life and work a real struggle. Seeing Amanda helps me to navigate a path through these times.

I felt stuck and demotivated at work. My sessions with Amanda have allowed me to re-evaluate my strengths and succeed in achieving the promotion I thought I'd never get.

Having struggled for years with health and weight issues, I feel like a new person. Amanda has gently and carefully helped me to lose weight, start exercising and feel well!

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