



# The Athelstan Trust

*Annual Report to Parents July 2019*

**Caring, Collaborative and Excellent**

Welcome to The Athelstan Trust's Annual Report to parents. The aim of this newsletter is to explain a little more about our Multi-Academy Trust which consists of three secondary schools in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire with ambitions to grow.

The Athelstan Trust is a family of schools in which children, staff and parents are part of a happy and caring environment and we believe in excellence. We learn from each other through collaboration and resource sharing to ensure we deliver an excellent comprehensive education to over three thousand children served by the schools within the Trust. We aim to enable each of our students to realise their full academic, creative and physical potential and to develop positive social and moral values.

This has been a very busy and exciting year and this report gives you a taste of all that is happening in our schools.



Julie Dickson  
Headteacher at  
Bradon Forest School



John Barrett  
Associate Headteacher  
at Malmesbury School



Tom Beveridge  
Headteacher at  
The Dean Academy

***We strongly  
believe that  
we are better  
together***



Tim Gilson  
CEO of The Athelstan Trust

*Tim has been Chief Executive Officer of the Trust since its formation in 2015, he has been Headteacher/Executive Head of Malmesbury School since 2008. Tim is a National Leader of Education and has been an Ofsted Inspector in the recent past. He has spent 29 years teaching geography, religious studies and politics in London, Kenya and Wiltshire. He is currently studying for a doctorate in education with the University of Reading.*

# We Are The Athelstan Trust

## Key Priorities

1. Raising educational standards for all schools within the Trust.
2. Delivering an excellent comprehensive education for all the children served by the schools within the Trust
3. Developing and valuing all the staff within the Trust.
4. Ensuring the financial security of the Trust and all the schools within it.

As a family of schools, we improve your child's education by sharing ideas and expertise with each other. Like all state schools, our schools are free to attend, we are inspected in the same way, and our children take the same tests and exams. We help our local communities thrive by giving children the best opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom. We believe that by working together and by sharing ideas, resources and the skills and talents of our people, we can all help each other.

- *Richard Boggis-Rolfe*  
*Chair of the Board of Trustees*

*Richard Boggis-Rolfe OBE has been the Chair of the Board of Trustees for just over a year. He is Chairman of Odgers Berndtson, an international company, which is the largest British executive search firm. Richard has lived and worked in Hong Kong. He went to Trinity College, Cambridge and served in the army before attending the London Business School as a Sloan Fellow.*



## We Are Better Together

The Trust is governed by a Board of trustees and there is a local governing body at each of the schools. Some of our staff have been employed specifically to work across all the schools. Although each of our schools has a different personal identity and local culture, there are many ways in which we can collaborate. We work within the Avon Teaching School Alliance which provides high quality professional development for staff.

We regularly take opportunities to bring together trustees, governors, Headteachers, senior leaders and on occasion the whole staff. Recent examples include a Strategic Planning Day, governor and staff training and joint curriculum planning.

Students have visited each of the other schools for events such as Science Ambassador days, Y11 English Revision and Maths Challenge days. There have also been joint international exchanges and trips.





## We Strive for Excellence

Since the Trust was formed in 2015, The Dean Academy has been on a journey of change and improvement and has moved out of 'Special Measures'. Ofsted rated the leadership and management of the school as 'Good' and the report said *"The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school. He is supported well by the chief executive officer of the trust. The headteacher has successfully communicated a message of high expectations and hope, which has renewed the confidence of pupils, parents and staff in the school. A culture of aspiration has now been established."*

Bradon Forest has also been inspected and moved from 'Requires improvement' to 'Good' in all areas. The report said *"The pupils at Bradon Forest are known as individuals and cared for by staff who value the relationships they share with pupils. These positive relationships reflect and nurture a warm, welcoming school where all are respected regardless of background or circumstance."*

In the last Ofsted inspection in May 2012, the inspectors found that in all areas of Malmesbury School were 'Outstanding'. One parental comment summarises what many others say; *"This is a wonderful school. It nurtures, cares and educates the children"*. The inspector reported that; *"Relationships are excellent and high levels of respect are apparent between students and staff"*. After observing many lessons they also found that *"The quality of teaching is remarkably high because of high expectations of leaders and teachers of themselves"*.

## We Learn From Each Other

Forty five students from the Trust's three schools came together for an action-packed, crime solving Forensic Science Day working together to solve a 'murder most terrible'. Students learned many Forensic techniques, including finger print and blood spatter analysis. With lots of practical experience the day gave students a view of their classroom science in a real world concept. The aim of the day was to solve the 'murder' using a range of tasks: *"I wish the day was longer!"*

The day was a success and enjoyed by all, with good communication and relationships between students from different schools. The teams all managed the challenge of the day exceptionally, with some excellent scientific understanding demonstrated.



## Maths Challenge

Budding mathematicians from schools across the Trust regularly come together at all three schools to solve complex mathematical puzzles and challenges. These Maths Trust events are designed to enthuse and engage students with the subject.



Chloe Hykin, the Assistant Director of Maths at The Dean Academy who organised a recent Year 8 event at The Dean Academy commented: “The day

*included numerous fun activities such as a 24 number challenge, a cross number puzzle and a problem solving relay which involved some very ‘quick walking’ from our students to ensure that as many questions as possible were answered within the time limit!”* The whole day was a great success and it was a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their Maths problem solving skills and for building cross Trust friendships.

## School Councils Meet

The leadership teams and local governors in each school are always looking for ways to hear feedback from students and to allow them “a voice.” Each school has a school council consisting of representatives from each year group who are elected by their peers. All three school councils met at Malmesbury School recently to discuss ideas, to talk about how their councils operate and to share the key concerns of students at their schools.

## We Are Practical

In addition to traditional academic GCSE courses, each school offers vocational options which tend to be more practical with more emphasis on coursework than exams. The Dean Academy has a history of achieving consistently high results in Engineering, Construction and Product Design and a new Hospitality and Catering course has been introduced this year.

Malmesbury School teaches Bricklaying and Construction in a purpose built, covered construction area and students go to a nearby organic farm (Aunt Addie’s Farm) for Land Based Studies. Students also go to a local riding school to learn Horse Care. Students at both Malmesbury and The Dean Academy can study Hair and Beauty and Health and Social Care is taught at Malmesbury School and Bradon Forest School.

# We Bring Learning to Life

Science teachers at The Dean Academy recently dressed up as their favourite female scientists to inspire students as part of *Ada Lovelace Day* promoting women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).



The Director of Faculty for Science, Mrs Hannah Rowlands, explained: *"This is a day where we celebrate all female scientists and the contribution that they have made. It is about breaking down barriers and gender stereotypes and opening up the wonderful world of STEM to everyone."*

With women currently representing just under 13% of all the STEM workforce the Science Faculty felt it was important to address these issues head on and throughout the day there were lessons and discussions based around women in STEM. Mrs Rowlands added:

*"It was a fantastic day where some really insightful conversations were had by students about gender equality and the importance of being able to pursue your ambitions, regardless of gender. Staff fully embraced the ethos of the day and the profile and importance of STEM subjects, in particular Science, has been raised."*





## We Value The Arts

Even at a time when Education funding is decreasing, the Trust is committed to a broad and balanced curriculum and places great importance on participation in Music, Dance and Drama.

This Year there have been music concerts and drama performances at all 3 schools:



- \* Grease at Bradon Forest
- \* Schools Will Rock You at Malmesbury School
- \* Beauty and the Beast at the Dean Academy



# We Are International



We are fortunate to have highly qualified language teachers offering German, French and Spanish across the Trust and we believe that visiting schools in other countries is an invaluable way of improving language speaking. Family home stays with students at partner schools offer our students a chance to immerse themselves in another culture.

Students from Bradon Forest and Malmesbury Schools recently went on a joint trip to Niebüll in Northern Germany. Students enjoyed taking part in school lessons and there were several days out including a visit to the Wadden Sea ecosystem, a pizza making afternoon, a town trail and photo competition and a whole group BBQ. Whilst staying with their host families, the students experienced a wide range of outdoor pursuits such as kayaking, sailing, hiking and camping whilst others visited towns such as Kiel and Hamburg for the all important day of shopping.

The trip was an enriching experience for the students and an example of collaboration between the two Trust schools to make such a worthwhile trip viable.



Colleagues joined together for a Trust Training Day to share ideas and establish contact with people who do the same job in a different school. There was a presentation on the new Ofsted framework and training on Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Teachers collaborated on curriculum planning and non-teaching staff discussed how to work more effectively together.

# Sixth Form Collaboration



Malmesbury School's A Level results are consistently some of the best in the country. There is a dedicated common room and study rooms, award winning career support and links with local companies such as Dyson. In addition to studying 3 A Levels, students can choose from a wide range of additional courses in our Excellence Programme and the Advocacy Programme encourages engagement with the local community. Specialist staff provide personalised support to those applying to University. There are also opportunities to be involved in drama and music performances and sports clubs.

From September, we are launching a joint sixth form between Malmesbury and Bradon Forest Schools and students have been enjoying taster sessions this term.

## ***Successful Trusts rely on strong governance.***

*Our schools all have Local Governing Bodies responsible for holding the leadership teams to account for the quality of teaching and learning. We are always interested in welcoming new governors. If you would like to be considered, please send your CV and an explanation of why you want to be a governor to [admin@theathelstantrust.org](mailto:admin@theathelstantrust.org)*

*The Board of trustees would also like to recruit a qualified accountant who is willing to sit on the Finance and Audit committee as well as joining the Board. If you are interested, please contact [admin@theathelstantrust.org](mailto:admin@theathelstantrust.org) for further information.*