

Athelstan Argus

Trust Staff Newsletter

Caring, collaborative and excellent

February 2020



HEADTEACHER INTERVIEWS

This term, the Athelstan Trust Board of Trustees have been fulfilling one of the most important aspects of their role – recruiting new Headteachers for Malmesbury School and The Dean Academy. Both roles attracted a strong national field of candidates. The two-day process was rigorous with presentations to staff and student panels and interviews with Members of the Board, Trustees and Local Governors. In addition to involvement on the panels, several staff members were invited to lunch or tea with the candidates. The Trustees greatly value staff input and were keen to hear their thoughts about which of the candidates would be the right people to safeguard what is special and great about our wonderful schools and bring fresh eyes and help us to be better than we currently are.

Rupert Moreton has been appointed as Headteacher for Malmesbury when John Barrett retires. *“I am very honoured to have been appointed as Headteacher of Malmesbury school. The school’s reputation has always been one of excellence since I was working in Wiltshire schools over 12 years ago. I am really looking forward to getting to know the students, staff, parents/carers and the wider community.*

My first teaching post was in Wiltshire, and I called Malmesbury home for a year prior to

moving to Bath over 12 years ago. I have four children, so I certainly understand the joys and stresses of parenthood! Every parent wants their children to be happy and successful. My two eldest children have left school: my son is studying Forensics at university despite having some difficult SEN challenges and my daughter is studying as an apprentice chef. My interests outside of teaching and parenting include cooking, skiing, rugby and drinking huge amounts of coffee.

I am currently Headteacher of Cheney School in Oxford, a fantastically rich and diverse community of over 1500 students. Prior to this I was Deputy Head of the Bristol Cathedral Choir School which was identified as 1 of the top 100 comprehensive schools in the country. In my opinion, successful school leadership is not complicated and is founded upon strong relationships with staff, students, parents and carers. It requires a very strong value driven



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culture that permeates everything we do such as Malmesbury's 'Happy', 'Caring' and 'Excellent'. It requires extremely high expectations for all our students and a focus on excellent teaching and learning.

I believe decision making should, wherever possible, be informed by evidence-based research and as a result there are huge benefits from working closely with academic institutions. I am currently a Steering Committee member for Headteacher's Publications Board at the Farmington Institute, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. I am also engaged with this university's Department of Education researching the future of initial teacher trainee programmes as part of a team redesigning their PGCE and Leadership programmes. Collaboration between teachers and academics is a wonderful way to design best practice and help shape policy.

Education and social equality are a particular area of interest for me. I am on the Advisory Board of the Excluded Lives Project with the University of Oxford, looking at children who are excluded from the classroom. My area of interest is improving the outcomes of our most vulnerable children in society which was the focus of my M.Ed dissertation."

Richard Brand has been appointed as Headteacher at The Dean Academy. Tom Beveridge has been appointed as Headteacher at Alderbrook School in Solihull where he can be closer to his family.

"I am delighted to have been appointed as the new Headteacher of the Dean Academy. Having worked for Oasis as a Vice Principal in a school in Bristol for the last 5 years responsible mostly for raising outcomes for young people and improving



teaching and learning I was looking for the next challenge. I was drawn to the Dean Academy, and the Athelstan trust, because of the potential for rapid improvement and because of the clear values it stands for in the education for its young people. I am so excited to be joining The Dean Academy and the trust on the next step of its improvement journey and look forward to working closely with the staff, students and families of the Dean Academy in the near future"

MESSAGE FROM TIM GILSON, CEO

I have been delighted and impressed with the number of applications for both posts and the extremely high calibre of the applicants. At both Malmesbury School and The Dean Academy I am very grateful to all the students, staff governors and trustees who have taken part in the selection process. Appointing a new headteacher is a crucial moment for a school and it is right that a full cross section of the school community should be involved in the decision making. I would specifically like to thank Jo Cummings, Ruth MacQuaide and Theresa Whatley for all their hard work in making the arrangements run so smoothly in both schools.

I am very excited to have been able to appoint two exceptional school leaders in Rupert and Richard. They both bring considerable leadership experience and very clear values that align with those of the schools and the Trust. I know they are looking forward to taking up their posts and joining our excellent staff team.





The Athelstan Trust is committed to motivating and retaining staff by investing in their training and development. The Avon Teaching School Alliance (Avon TSA) based at Malmesbury School offers a wide range of high-quality courses and training from a variety of providers. The Trust's teachers can benefit by either participating in or even facilitating these courses.

Avon TSA believes that the best foundation for school to school support is forming effective partnerships. Set up in 2015, it includes several secondaries, primaries and other educational institutions across Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. The aim is to develop, improve and invest in current practitioners and leaders, aspiring leaders and even future recruits to the profession.

Avon TSA has strong links with OLEVI (leaders in teacher development and school leadership training programmes) and currently facilitates the OTP (outstanding teacher programme), CTP (creative teacher programme) and OTAP (outstanding teaching assistant programme). Teachers and leaders from

Malmesbury School, Bradon Forest, The Dean Academy and Sir William Romney's School have all attended courses.

The Alliance runs fully funded Teacher Subject Specialism Training (TSST) in Maths, Physics, Spanish and French. These courses give non specialists and former teachers who are returning to the profession an opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and confidence to teach up to GCSE. Again, lots of Trust teachers have benefitted from these courses.

Avon TSA has also become the key venue in the South West for CLEAPSS courses for science technicians and teachers with a focus on Health and Safety statutory requirements.

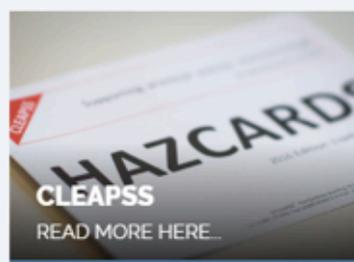
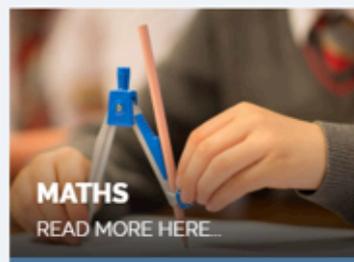
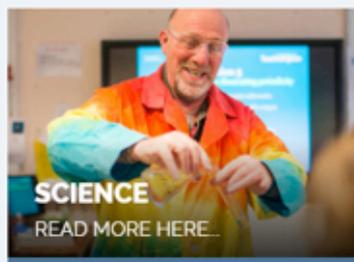
Course participants have come from as far as Bahrain, Switzerland and Spain. This is some of their feedback:

"Superb course delivered at the right level and with the right approach (not patronising). Facilitator was excellent – an enjoyable and engaging experience."

(continued)

CPD

Our courses are designed and delivered by outstanding teachers and specialist leaders across our alliance. These programmes have been developed to ensure teachers have access to relevant and exciting opportunities to improve their practice throughout every stage of their career.



“Facilitators have inspired us and given us confidence to learn and express our feelings and ideas – very welcoming and inclusive environment.”

“Thank you so much for such a helpful, enjoyable course. I’ve learnt LOADS and feel more confident.”

“Such a great and useful course. So many good ideas and practical tips. Every time I come to this school, I go back home with a bunch of new ideas.”



Sarah Haines, currently working as Deputy Head at the Dean Academy and Assistant Head at Malmesbury School, is Avon TSA’s Director. Sarah has over 20 years of teaching experience across 5 comprehensive schools. She has held various roles in senior

leadership in 3 schools such as Teaching and Learning, CPD, Safeguarding and NQT development. Sarah is motivated by the belief that schools working collaboratively and supporting each other is the key to school

improvement and teacher development. In all schools that she has worked in, Sarah has remained passionate about teaching English and delivering high quality CPD.

Sian Jones is Avon TSA’s Manager responsible for arranging and marketing courses, organising bookings and coordinating arrangements on the day. Having been promoted from the role of Avon TSA Administrator, she is a



perfect example of support staff career progression within the Trust. Previously, Sian worked in the hotel industry focussing mainly on sales and marketing and conference management. Sian feels schools both in the alliance and within the Athelstan Trust benefit hugely from the courses on offer. She finds it satisfying seeing courses through from the beginning to end by identifying areas of need, developing, managing and finally evaluating programmes. If any member of staff within the Trust has specific development needs that the Alliance can support, Sian is happy to receive suggestions so she can investigate if suitable courses are available.

For more information visit the Avon Teaching School website <https://avontsa.com/>

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY AT BRADON FOREST SCHOOL

Session led by Trish Paisey, Head of English

Helen Wilkinson reports: The first TD Day of 2020 saw staff launch Disciplinary Literacy across the curriculum. The focus of the day was to explore ways we as teachers could improve the vocabulary of our students so that they can excel at school and beyond, and identify literacy skills which are relevant to different subject areas.

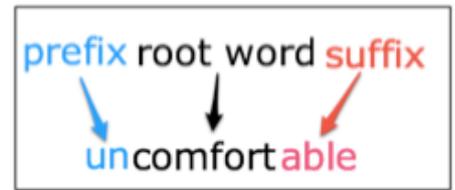
Importance of literacy

Using Alex Quigley’s book ‘Closing the Vocabulary Gap’, *“being in a word poor context at a young age can have far reaching negative consequence. A restricted vocabulary as a young child goes on to correlate with factors in later life such as employment as an adult.”*

Areas of Focus

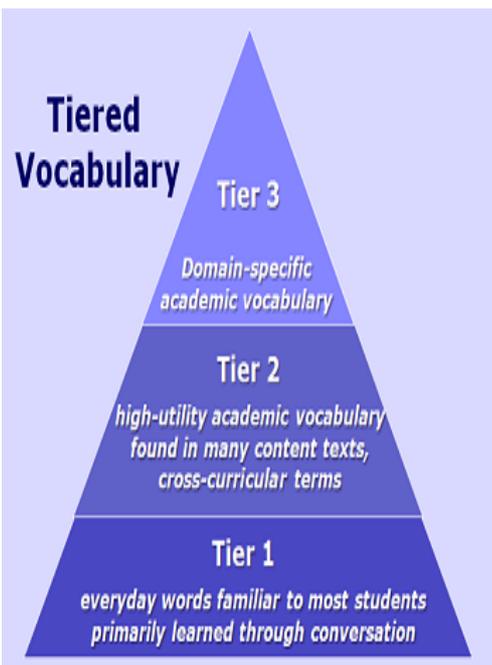
- Understanding students need different vocabulary for every lesson they visit
- Ensure students become word conscious. Teachers should look at and explore etymology and morphology of words in the classroom.
- Students to understand the importance and use of tier 2: academic words that appear across the school (describe, analyse and explain) and tier 3 words: subject specific
- Use of the Frayer model (see below) in the classroom to help students to further understand words, their etymology, their meaning and how they should and should not be used.

Morphology- the study of word parts:
roots, prefixes and suffixes



Departments then had time to look at subject specific language in terms of reading & writing and speaking & listening and complete literacy overviews for their areas. We also looked at academic talk in the classroom. Instead of the errs like and other words we hate hearing, we focussed on what makes a good academically oral answer and academic talk. It was called *academic code*

• A student needs to have 50 000 words in order to thrive in school and beyond

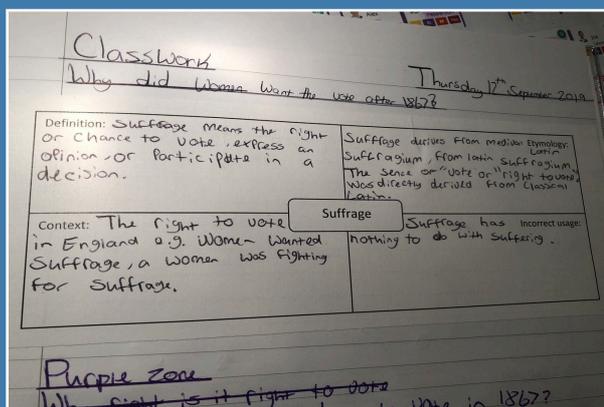


switching. From everyday talk (tier 1 language) to academic talk (tier 2 and 3 words). Students will need to think carefully about their verbal responses and may be asked to re think and re phrase.

Proofreading Code

This is part of our marking and feedback procedures. Students are now to check their work before submitting, This supports David Didau who states “*proofreading forces pupils to meta cognitively engage with their work. If we do the proofreading, we improve, and they don’t.*”

• A student needs to know 95% of the words in a text in order to ensure they make sense of that text



Frayer Model – Graphic Organiser

The Frayer Model is a graphic organiser for building student vocabulary. This technique requires students to define target vocabulary and apply their knowledge by generating examples and non-examples, giving characteristics, and/or drawing a picture to illustrate the meaning of the word.

BEING THE BEST TUTOR



Tutor Time can become a daily chore; trying to stay on top of student admin, giving out notices and delivering short lessons, to name just a few of your tasks! But having a tutor group can be one of the best ways to start your school day. Create a positive culture with your class so that tutees see themselves as a cohesive unit in which they can all achieve, regardless of their performance in other lessons. This underlines the idea that tutor time is a purposeful, positive place where success is recognised.

“Mr Vines starts every tutor session by asking if we are all ok.”

Take a look at these top tips from staff and students across the trust and ensure you're starting the school day in the best way possible:



• Establish routines

Like any class, a form group needs consistency. Create a weekly timetable so your tutees know what to expect. Be consistent. You are probably one of the few fixed points in many of their lives and as a result you have to be a role model for them and teach them how to be a good member of the school community. (*Dean Academy Year 8 Tutor*) Be organised and plan for tutor time just as you would any other lesson or assembly!

“our tutor is kind, understanding and can be firm when needed” *Dean Academy student*

• Manage administration

It's worth setting aside a time slot each day – it needn't be more than 15 minutes or so – to follow up on tutor group issues. It will pay off in the long run. Avoid students cliques and divisions early on!

• Get to know your tutees

Appreciate each student as the individual they are. Form tutors are in a good place to spot when there is a problem. If a student appears to be going through a difficult time or begins behaving unusually, speak to them privately.

‘Things to try’ from Malmesbury School tutor, Jacqueline Powell:

- Scan a double page of the planner to copy onto a Smartboard. Project this every morning for students to add homework to and copy down any key dates/events/clubs etc.
- Put notices up on the board too so they can read them as they're coming in or while the register is being taken.
- Birthday celebrations and charts.
- ‘Tuesday News Day’ – discuss that week's news, using pictures as prompts or a quiz
- ‘Thursday Think’ – use an ‘impossible question’ to prompt debate and discussion
- ‘Monday Mindfulness’ – focus on a motivational quotation and/or a mindfulness exercise for the week
- ‘Funny Friday’ – Funny videos or a music video
- Team games e.g. Tutee Bingo (find a different person to fit each fact on your sheet)
- ‘Show and Tell’ – get tutees to take it in turns to host a tutor time e.g. with a presentation on a hobby, a skills class or whatever they want!
- A suggestion box – available for comments, feedback or messages
- Regular seating plan changes to ensure students mix

• CELEBRATE SUCCESS: “Each Friday is a ‘rewards day’. Each student can win up to 3 sweets based upon their consequence points, homework marks and uniform marks. For each ‘mark’ they get, they are deducted a sweet e.g. C1 = 2 sweet, U2 = 1 sweet. Although I personally pay for these sweets, it's a great motivator for students to behave across the school and be rewarded individually for their continued efforts.” Jack Thurlow, BFS

- BE THEIR ADVOCATE AND ALWAYS LISTEN TO THEIR SIDE:

“Miss Clapham helps me by smiling and being generally happy when I feel down, as well as helping me when I am struggling in lessons with the work. Miss Clapham has an excellent temperament, she is really friendly and listens to me without judging.”

At Bradon Forest School, tutors have termly meetings where tutors receive training and information. They also normally meet with HoY to discuss key priorities. The following is taken from the Staff Handbook:

- Care about tutees
- Regularly check and monitor uniform, behaviour, equipment
- Regular contact with guardians
- at least once a full term
- Academic mentoring sessions with tutees 3 times a year
- Plan and teach engaging activities that follow the tutors weekly timetable

MUTUAL APPRECIATION

Carly Probert, a Malmesbury Year 8 tutor, asked her tutor group to share their idea of a teacher’s typical day.

- 7.30–9.00am tea and biscuits in the staffroom
- 12.35pm more tea and gossip
- 3.30–6.30 pm planning for the next day/pack up/more tea and biscuits



Hilarious, right? She then showed them an example of a teacher’s typical day with all their different roles. The class were shocked that she put 7:30am as her arrival time and 10pm as the end of marking books in the evening. She then showed them a youtube video featuring interviews with celebrities talking about teachers who inspired them. The celebrities emphasised how important it is to thank teachers. Carly then gave out little notecards. These are some of the things Carly’s tutees wrote to their other teachers:

- Thank you for always encouraging me to keep trying until I get it right. I really appreciate it.
- Thank you for always planning excellent lessons for us. We really enjoy them!
- I know that our tutor group can be a pain sometimes but we really appreciate everything that you do for us
- Thank you for teaching me art – I always look forward to your lessons

Carly was pleased that her tutor group took the task so seriously and produced such sincere notes. She also received email responses from some of the teachers who had received the notes which she didn’t expect at all...they definitely made more of an impact than she imagined they would:

- What a fab way to start the weekend! Thank you
- Lovely idea Carly. Well chuffed with my notes. Thanks very much. Really set me up for a good weekend.
- That is so nice – you’ve/they’ve made my day.
- Aww Carly this is lovely! Thank you for bringing a smile to my day

The following Monday Carly told her tutees that they had really made some teachers’ days which they loved. So as well as being the best tutor, Carly may well have some of the best tutees thanks to her thoughtful example.



BRADON FOREST SCHOOL RESEARCH GROUP

Head of MFL at Bradon Forest, Alex Collingridge, heads up an informal teachers research group...

What is a 'research group'?

It's an informal chat about a particular research paper. The conversation inevitably ends up going a bit off topic and talking pedagogy, policies and procedures more generally: what does the research say we should do vs what we actually do? Which approach is better?

What have you studied?

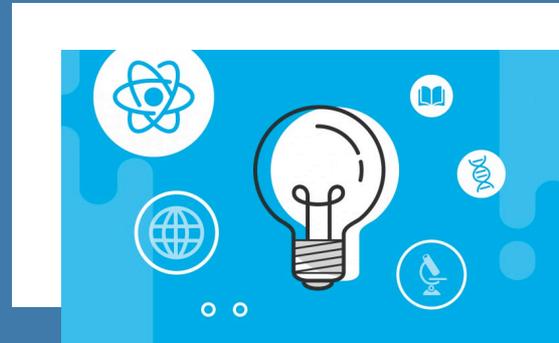
We've looked at cognitive load theory; Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, Dunlosky's Student Toolbox and marking and feedback. We'll look at 'why boys underachieve' and Metacognition in the future.

When do you meet?

We meet once a term to talk about a topic of the group's choice. The emphasis is on sharing ideas and knowledge for fun and personal progression, so it's not necessarily linked to school priorities, but often ends up that way.

Why should other staff try it out?

It's more interesting than perhaps it sounds, and certainly not hard work. It's got me reading more about pedagogy in my subject and more generally and given me insights into how other subjects do things, and why, and how that can be adapted to mine. It's always interesting to hear how other subjects approach aspects of teaching and learning, often giving fresh perspective. Conversations with colleagues from different subject areas about approaches to teaching and learning are really fascinating!



RTÉ RADIO 1

ESSENTIAL LISTEN

Kendra Houseman, a.k.a. "Blondy," joined a London gang at the tender age of eleven. Her life took violent, and dangerous, twists and turns before she managed to turn things around. She now works with youths at risk. She told RTÉ Radio her story:

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer/html5/#/radio1/21426066>

Please take time to listen even if you are not a tutor. It is a good insight into Gang Culture and points out some things we should be looking for in school.



Remember, just because our schools are set in rural villages doesn't mean it doesn't happen.