



Bushey St James Trust Newsletter

February 2015

Chair of the Trust Sam Russell Writes

It has been another busy period for the Bushey St James Trust.

In November, Little Reddings Primary School was visited by Ofsted for an inspection, with the result that the school was rated as Requiring Improvement. The report was extremely encouraging about the improvements made under Carly Simmonds' leadership.

Since the inspection, a renewed focus has been placed on the Governing Body of the school, with Governors from across the Trust helping to develop and support a substantially new team of Governors at Little Reddings.

Sharing knowledge and experience like this demonstrates how well two schools working as a Trust can benefit everyone. A key focus of the Trust is to facilitate opportunities for cross-school working wherever we can. For example, a number of staff now work across both schools, to the benefit of children around the transitional years in particular.

As ever, the Trust is grateful for your continued support.

Sam Russell
Chair of Bushey St James Trust

Guaranteed Secondary School Places at Bushey Meads School!

Over the last few months Bushey Meads School has been taking part in the Hertfordshire Admissions Consultation Process with regard to their admissions criteria to the school for 2016.

Parents of pupils at Little Reddings will know how stressful secondary transfer time can be – particularly when you live in the South West Herts region.

Most secondary school places in the local area can only be secured by sitting the local SW Herts Consortium Test before parents apply to any school. Even when your children have sat the test, places at the secondary schools are not guaranteed.

With this in mind the Trustees of the Bushey St James Trust and Governors of Bushey Meads School have worked hard to ensure that the proposed admissions criteria for 2016 strongly favours the pupils within our Trust – currently pupils at Little Reddings Primary School.

This means that *any current pupil in Year 5* at Little Reddings who wants to come to Bushey Meads School in 2016 can gain a place without having the need to take the SW Herts Consortium Test. As long as you are not applying to any other school within our Consortium you do not need to sit the test.

We hope that this will benefit many pupils and parents and perhaps alleviate the stress of secondary transfer. Assuming the consultation process is successful you will soon have a way of guaranteeing a place at Bushey Meads School simply by being a pupil within the Bushey St James Trust!

The exact wording within the Consultation Document is as follows: Children who currently attend a primary school within the Bushey St James Trust (Little Reddings Primary School) will be

offered a place at the school. As long as they are *not applying to any other school within our Consortium* they will *not be required* to take the SW Herts Consortium Test (a verbal reasoning test and mathematics test) before applying to Bushey Meads School.

Executive Principal of the Trust Jeremy Turner Writes

Since our last published newsletter much has happened across the two schools within the Trust. Last November Little Reddings was visited by Ofsted and their report reaffirmed and recognised the strong leadership of Carly Simmonds and the superb work that she has begun, since her appointment in April 2014, to address some of the key areas in the school that clearly needed improving.

Ofsted noted that pupil attendance had improved significantly and the school was described by the



inspectors as being a *much safer school since her appointment*. They recognised that she knows the school extremely well and is very clear about the vision and direction of improvement.

There were also many other really positive strengths of the school mentioned in the report including; pupils' enjoyment and feeling safe, the rich curriculum and extended learning opportunities, the high staff morale and their active support for the Headteacher, the use of new technologies, the polite well-mannered behaviour of pupils and the varied responsibilities they take on, as well as the excellent work of teaching assistants to support the progress agenda - to name but a few.

Since the inspection collaborative work across the Trust has already seen significant improvement in a number of key areas.

A full review of Governance has helped to really strengthen the work of the Governing Body at Little Reddings and exemplary Committee Chairs from Bushey Meads are now working closely with the committed core of LRS Governors to shape a clear structure for Governance which will support the ongoing school improvement journey and build further capacity, moving forward.

In recent committee meetings at LRS there has been a renewed focus on strengthening teaching and learning and improving pupil progress.

A number of key staff have presented excellent reports and outlined the work they are doing at all levels of the school to secure sustained improvement.

As the Executive Principal I am very confident that the school will build on the recent success we have seen and become the outstanding school in the local community that we all want and deserve.

Lauren Wright Visits the BSJT

On Tuesday 3rd February it was a real privilege to welcome Lauren Wright to the BSJT. Lauren has worked in education for many years and is a trained Life Coach and motivational speaker. Besides leading the Key Stage 4 Assembly at BMS and launching the 'Reach 4 the Stars' programme for 50 high performing Year 11 students, she toured both schools and was really impressed by what she saw.



James and Fade in Year 6 were two superb tour guides at LRS and outstanding ambassadors for the Trust. They explained about the strong focus on achievement as well as highlighting the many changes that have recently taken place at LRS, enjoying demonstrating the innovative way that ICT supports learning both in and outside of the classroom.



BMS Language Leaders at LRS



This term four Year 10 Language Leaders from Bushey Meads School organised a Spanish lesson for Year 5 pupils at Little Reddings. They did this independently as part of their Language Leaders Award requirements.



Nadia delivered the lesson, ably supported by Hannah, Josh and Jodie. All the Year 5 pupils loved the lesson and really enjoyed being taught by fellow students from the BSJT.



By Marie-Claire Dawson, Head of Modern Foreign Languages Faculty at Bushey Meads School



New Appointments Across the Bushey St James Trust

Since the last newsletter the Bushey St James Trust has recruited a number of staff whose responsibilities span across the Trust. This is of course key in developing our links across the two schools and is only the start of many areas where we can collaborate to achieve economies of scale. We would like to introduce these staff to you:



New BSJT Part-Time Caretaker

We would like to introduce you to Mr Matthew Yull who has joined the Site Team as part-time Caretaker at Little Reddings as well as Site Assistant across the two schools. A qualified plumber, Mr Yull is really making a difference at Little Reddings already, turning around general DIY jobs so much more quickly than the staff have experienced in the past.



New BSJT Music Coordinator

We are delighted that Miss Sarah Brown has been appointed as the new Music Teacher at Bushey Meads School and Music

Coordinator across the Bushey St James Trust. This means that she will be working with pupils from both schools to develop lots of exciting musical opportunities for all students within the Trust.

Miss Brown's passion is singing and she loves working with choirs and vocal groups of all ages. She also plays the piano, clarinet, guitar and bass guitar which means that she enjoys classical music and leading orchestras, as well as rock and pop music and working with bands.

She is a very experienced professional and this will be her seventh year of teaching. Previous to her current role, she spent six years at Friern Barnet School in North London and during her time there she developed a keen interest in travel and how it could benefit students' cultural capital.

In fact from 2012 to 2014 she led a European Union funded Comenius project entitled "In The Footsteps of Mozart".

This gave students the opportunity to travel throughout Europe and musically collaborate with peers across nine EU countries. It was a wonderful experience that enabled students to develop their awareness of citizenship, modern foreign languages, their shared European culture and of course their shared language of music.

She is delighted to have joined the Bushey St James Trust and is looking forward to getting to know all the singers and musicians in both schools over the next few months. If music is your passion and you want to excel in some of the activities being planned then make sure you introduce yourself!



New BSJT Clerk to the Governors and Trust

A new post of Clerk to the Governors of both Local Governing Bodies and the Trust Board has been established and Miss Marshall joined the Trust in November to take on this role. She attends all committee and full governing body meetings, which is in the order of nearly 40 per year across the two schools, to take the minutes of these, as well as providing a general clerking service to both Governing Bodies.



New BSJT HR Assistant

Mrs Walsh joins us as Human Resources Assistant, expanding the HR function so that it now provides a service across the two schools, assisting with recruitment, payroll, etc. Mrs Walsh joins us with an HR background and has also been a Governor of another school for some years which gives her the experience of working 'behind the scenes' in a school.

"The Trust provides a platform for increased collaboration and the chance to build greater capacity across the two unique learning communities."

Corporate Services Collaborate Across the Two Schools

Two services which are key parts to the backbone of any organisation are Site and IT Services. Both these teams are adapting their way of working in order to provide an integrated service across both school sites.

The IT department, as well as continuing to develop and upgrade its existing IT services at Bushey Meads, is looking at areas within Little Reddings where it can enhance and build upon its existing IT infrastructure. Projects and activities over the last term have included:

- assisting with the setup of an online payment system
- assisting with the installation and configuration of several numeracy packages
- enabling easy access to the learning platform from iPads
- deployment of new classroom computers for students
- setting up a Governors website to mirror that already in place for BMS Governors and Trustees

Meanwhile, back at Bushey Meads the IT team has been busy with projects such as installing additional computers in the Media Suite, setting up a new MFL e-learning package, deploying visualisers throughout the school, and creating a staff directory on the learning gateway to assist parents in identifying who's who at BMS.

Of course, on a day to day basis this team, headed up by Mike Eastaugh, provides troubleshooting and help desk facility to all staff. They never know from one hour to the next what staff may be demanding of them!

Meanwhile, the Site team has recruited an additional part-time member of staff in order to provide an ongoing daily

Caretaker service at Little Reddings. Now, small but all important DIY-type jobs are being turned around the same day – light bulbs are replaced as soon as they are needed, coat hooks are fixed if they break, clocks that needed mounting on walls are now there - to give just a few examples.

Larger, longer term projects for Little Reddings include the refurbishment of the Reception play area, re-design of the car park, enhanced external site lighting, installation of a canopy to provide shelter in the infants' playground.

Also, one exciting project being considered at present is the addition of a conservatory on the front of the main building to enhance the Reception area. All these projects are now co-ordinated with the assistance of the Site Team.



And finally, both BMS and LRS now have automated main gates with the school name designed as a feature on each set of gates. An example of a joint project across the two sites.



"The support that the IT Team and Site Staff provide across the two schools is outstanding – they make our lives easier and enable us to focus on teaching and learning!"

BSJT Teacher

Collaboration and Excellence



On Monday 9th February over 200 pupils from a number of local primary schools including Little Reddings visited Bushey Meads School and enjoyed a superb performance of the School Production 'Les Misérables'.



The students were enthralled by the standard of the performances and really enjoyed their morning at the school – many of them inspired to further develop their own musical and dramatic talents in their own schools.

Year 11 Ex Little Reddings Student writes.....

My name is Max and I am currently a Year 11 student preparing for my GCSE exams this summer.

I have many fond memories of my time at Little Reddings school. I particularly remember the really fun and interactive Maths lessons that we used to have and the feeling of satisfaction that I got whenever I managed to answer the questions correctly. I remember all the teachers being



so friendly and caring about my learning. I also had lots of friends and we used to help each other so much with our homework.

I must admit that when I was in Year 6 I was a little bit worried about moving up to Bushey Meads School and for a little while I felt quite daunted, like being a little fish in a big pond. But this feeling didn't last long because all the Bushey Meads teachers and students were so friendly they helped me settle in really quickly making my transition easy. I liked all my subjects throughout the whole of Key Stage 3 and when I joined Key Stage 4 I really became interested in Psychology.

Miss Brewer is such an excellent Psychology teacher and Mr Patel has kept my love of Maths alive.

The GCSEs are just around the corner now and, although I'm not looking forward to sitting all those exams, I do feel like I am getting lots of support and help with preparation from all my teachers. I am on the "Reach 4 the Stars" programme and already this has helped me to rearrange my study area at home so I can revise more effectively. I am really looking forward to the trip to Oxford University later next

term. I hope I can stay on at Bushey Meads in the Sixth Form and if I do I really want to study Maths, Physics, Psychology and History. I'll probably end up studying a Psychology degree at university as I think being a Psychologist would be a very interesting career to have.

Keeping it in BSJT the Family!

Year 8 students, Sam and Marie, transferred from Little Reddings in 2013, having spent six very happy years there. They brought with them their talents and enthusiasm for the performing arts, along with their beaming smiles.



Of course they had the usual, natural concerns about transferring to 'big school', but for them the best way was to jump straight in at the deep end and get involved from the word go. That is certainly how they played it, and it has paid off.

Both students have taken part in our major music and drama productions each year; 'Little Shop of Horrors' when only in Year 7 and recently 'Les Miserables'.

They have both taken part in our Christmas entertainment each year, and Marie has featured in our Christmas concerts and our Springtime showcase, too. When Sam is not putting on the greasepaint he is busy with his librarian duties, attending table

tennis club or our e-club for computer programmers.

Next year they will get to choose two arts subjects to pursue in Year 9. For Marie it is an easy choice; Drama and Art. Sam will definitely choose Art, but is considering either Music or Dance for his second choice. Both are delighted to know that for GCSE they will be able, if they still wish it, to choose up to three arts subjects, including Drama, Art, Music or Dance.

Sam and Marie are following in the shining footsteps of their successful Year 11 siblings, Isabel and Emily (respectively), who also first met each other back in Year 1 at Little Reddings. Isabel's top talents are in art and textiles, while Emily thinks a Spanish A* is 'in the bag', since all her assessments have been A*.



Isabel and Emily wisely plan to keep to their winning formula and stay on at Bushey Meads for the Sixth Form, which will make thirteen years in the same school family. That's a lot of happy memories!

"I am on the 'Reach 4 the Stars' programme andam really looking forward to the trip to Oxford University later next term. I hope I can stay on at Bushey Meads in the Sixth Form and...really want to study Maths, Physics, Psychology and History."

Max – Ex LRS and Current BMS Student

**Headteacher of Little Reddings Primary School
Carly Simmonds Writes**



We continue to combine working hard with lots of fun here at Little Reddings! Two whole school writing days have been enjoyed this term - an alien landing followed by a circus fun day. Both have produced some fantastic writing which is not only rich in content, but also looks consistently good as we follow our new Presentation Policy. A whole school Smartie maths day saw the children working (and eating!) very hard. Across the school, the children used Smarties for using and applying, number, shape and handling data work. As a staff, we are committed to school improvement and have already seen success in many areas throughout the school. The dedication of our families and our team has enabled us to move further along our journey towards being an outstanding school.

LRS French Cuisine at BMS!

Earlier this term, Year 5 students from LRS came to use the fabulous Catering Suite at BMS to make pain au chocolat with some of the brilliant BMS Year 10 Language Leaders. Vital health and safety instructions before using the ovens and then it



was straight on to the cooking!



The final result with spares for friends!



Many thanks to Mrs Woodhouse for bringing up her class.

Supporting Transition from KS2 to KS3

This half term Bushey Meads and Little Reddings have been working together to consider how best to support and improve the transition experience for Year 6 students.

The process began with an invitation to Sebastian Gray, Literacy Co-Ordinator at Little Reddings, to observe a Year 7 lesson, followed by an invitation for Lauren Sibuns, Year 6 teacher, to also observe a Year 7 lesson. Both Sebastian and Lauren enjoyed their time at Bushey Meads and left brimming with ideas and enthusiasm.

Subsequent to these observations, Carla da Silva, Head of KS3 English at Bushey Meads, met with Sebastian to discuss the way forward. It was agreed that reading would be a key focus area. Both Lauren and Sebastian are keen to devote time to honing these essential skills in the Year 6 students after their SATs are completed.

Carla and Sebastian are also discussing and planning a 'master class' for the Year 6 students, to

take place during the summer term, where they will get the opportunity to study Shakespeare. Carla is also due to visit Little Reddings next half term to observe the teaching of literacy in Year 6.

Both schools are looking forward to further collaboration and the potential benefits for our students.

Sharing Good Practice is a Wonderful Thing

By Ms Morawska, Deputy Headteacher at Bushey Meads School



Since January, I have had the great pleasure of working with three brilliant new teachers at Little Reddings School. As part of our 'sharing good practice' agenda, for two mornings each week, I meet with the new staff and discuss their scheme of work and short-term plans.

It is always an inspiring experience to be working with our primary colleagues, for their in-depth knowledge of their students and accurate assessment of their strengths and weaknesses ensures accuracy of planning and delivery. In turn, they too benefit from ideas gained and improved upon through discussion and reflections post observing their classroom practice.

It is a privilege to gain access to our primary classrooms and to evidence the dedication and commitment our primary colleagues exhibit to their charges, which I am certain, ensures their successful transition to secondary school.

BSJT Governors Working Together to Share Best Practice

As part of the Ofsted inspection of Little Reddings Primary School in November the Lead Inspector recommended that a review of governance at the primary school was required. Drawing on the expertise of the Executive Principal, the Chair of the Trust, the long standing and experienced Governors at Bushey Meads School and the knowledge and experience of the Primary School Headteacher, this has now been completed.

The thorough review process involved:

- interviewing the Headteacher and key governors to identify areas for improvement
- undertaking a skills audit across the existing governing body
- engaging the wider Governing Body in a review meeting and training session to explore what's working well and areas for improvement
- using the Ofsted evaluation criteria to enable the governing body to better understand its strengths and weaknesses and the basis upon which it will be judged in subsequent monitoring visits and inspections
- considering all documentation related to governing body and committee minutes, Headteacher's reports, all school policies and internal control frameworks to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the requirements of the funding agreement
- identifying what support was needed to improve and develop better governance, helping the governing body to address the issues raised in the inspection report
- agreeing and implementing a

detailed action plan to ensure governance at the school is fit for purpose and future proofed with elements of succession planning built in over time.

Since the review a number of well-structured, focussed committee and full governing body meetings have taken place and the governing body as a whole is now able to bring much greater challenge through their roles as critical friends to support further rapid school improvement.

The excellent core of committed governors is being strengthened by new governors recruited from within the Trust and also through the SGOSS Governors for Schools organisation. Experienced Committee Chairs from the BSJT are modelling best practice and effectively supporting the work of the LRS Governor Body, along with our superb Clerk to the Governors Debbie Marshall – appointed to the role in November 2014.

Do take a look at the new Governors area of the website for more information: <http://littlereddings.org.uk/about-us/governors/>

Jamie and Sophia - Head Boy and Head Girl at Bushey Meads School, presenting their report at the recent Full Governors Meeting



Their outstanding presentation epitomised the vision across the Trust that ensures that Student Voice is a major element in the school improvement agenda.

Future Plans across the Trust

Future plans to build further capacity and facilitate a more streamlined operation across the BSJT include:

- recruiting a Finance Manager to oversee and lead the finance team across the Trust
- streamlining and centralising the finance team across both schools to share best practice, improve efficiencies and achieve even better value
- appointing two Lead Practitioners in both English and Maths to support the teaching and learning, as well as the progress and achievement agendas in these key areas