

Learning Partners Parent/Carer Newsletter



Leading schools where children thrive

The end of term is upon us. The traditions of a school Christmas abound and remind us of the important things in our institutions. Our recent Headteachers meeting at George Abbot saw many of our number wearing Christmas jumpers, and even more colleagues looking forward to their school Christmas dinner. Others were talking of preparations for carol services, nativities (in many traditional and modern forms) and even planning the Christmas school quiz and the end of term assemblies. It is easy to regard these as add-ons to school life, or even worse irrelevant distractions. This is wrong. In the development of a child and a community these are the cornerstones of much of our work.

Much of the national conversation about schools is turning on the theme of belonging. Our children and staff need a sense of belonging. Belonging to a community and an ideal. Here at Learning Partners, we recognise that a sense of connection to our community our place of work and the children we serve is vital for effective and transformative education. The carol concerts, lunches and quizzes are methods through which we can build belonging.

Schools are more than just a knowledge transfer activity, which are assessed by foreboding national assessment frameworks. They are places of connection, belonging and purpose. It is through these annual events that we can foster in children a sense of themselves and their place in their community.

Thank you to all our staff, parents and children for their contributions to building this sense of belonging through community activities. Activities seen so readily at this time of year. It is when we turn our attention to others, give gifts of time, attention and consideration (otherwise known as gold, frankincense and myrrh) that we support others to thrive. Education changes lives. It also provides a sense of belonging and security which allows us all to grow, find ourselves and give at Christmas time.

Have a great Christmas one and all.

Jack Mayhew, CEO

Watch Jack's end of term message to all colleagues across the trust.

WATCH VIDEO

Contents

Welcome from Jack, our CEO

My reflection on school and system leadership by Amanda Pedder, Executive Headteacher, Loseley Fields Primary School and Farncombe Infants

Celebrating Creativity

Quick fire Q&As with Co-Headteachers of Boxgrove Primary School

Christmas Cooking with Mrs Hancock, Food Technology teacher at George Abbot School

Our values

Follow us





INSPIRE [verb]

“ to fill someone with an urge to do something or with a strong feeling about something. ”



My reflection on school and system leadership Amanda Pedder, Executive Headteacher Loseley Fields and Farncombe Infants

I was mentored into school leadership by the most inspirational of headteachers, who motivated me every day to make a difference and who taught me about the role of a headteacher in ways that only really became apparent to me when I took the driving seat for myself. She was my headteacher when I started out in my first teaching role as an Early Career Teacher (ECT), Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) back then and I was honoured that I was able to continue to work with her for many years as her Deputy when we opened a fresh start school together back in 2001.

Of her many talents, one of her greatest skills was the way she was able to see the abilities of others and how she was able to grow and nurture these talents through the responsibilities she entrusted us with. This is what created a school culture that was so universally shared by all, that the staff simply did not want to leave the organisation.

She was always an outward facing professional, who did much work for the National College supporting schools in difficult circumstances and leading the way in headteacher collaboration in our local group of Guildford schools. It was under her leadership that Guildford Grove joined the trust in 2016 and I believe this way of working defines Learning Partners Academy Trust as it is today.

It was because of her dedication to serving the most disadvantaged of pupils and because she taught me that maintaining an unwavering commitment to this work can drive school improvement, that I eventually found my place leading the wonderful Loseley community from uncertain times to the school that it is today; it has been the greatest honour.

Last summer term, I was approached by our CEO, Jack Mayhew, and Surrey Local Authority to ask if I was able to offer some leadership support to our closest local school, Farncombe Infants. Being a local authority church school, it took some imagination to see just quite how that would work.

Having set about creating a project, now known locally as The Farncombe Partnership of Schools, Loseley Fields has committed to offering Farncombe two years of leadership support with the view that in this time we will collaborate on areas of professional development and develop a financially sustainable staffing structure which secures Farncombe's future firmly in the heart of the shared community we serve.

As headteacher of Loseley, this has not been without challenge. It has required a clear plan and an agility of my leadership team to step into new roles quickly and appoint backfilled roles as needed. This has only been possible because of the opportunities provided to us by the trust to invest in and develop the next generation through networks, lead practitioner roles and NPQ qualifications, along with having a school culture that can flex with these changes and still allow for growth and development of Loseley.

This experience has allowed me to reflect on the support schools receive from the trust. From policy writing, school improvement visits, collaborative networks and operational support which are not available to me at Farncombe as an LA school. Additionally the trust safeguarding and SEND experts have provided us with so much reassurance over the years when undertaking the enormous responsibility we assume as headteachers.

Despite these challenges, our Farncombe project brings with it so many opportunities for all and helps to cement the moral purpose of doing the right thing by all children in our communities, something that underpins our trust values and the local networks which unite us.

In a recently attended Guildford and Godalming Headteachers' meeting we had a talk from Will Ryan who wrote the book 'Leading with a moral purpose.' In this talk he left us to reflect upon our journeys through education and in particular to remember that we all 'walk in the footsteps of giants.'

This article is my tribute to my giant, Elizabeth Corlett, who sadly lost her battle with cancer a few years past. The legacy she leaves behind across many of our trust schools is phenomenal and if I can make even a small amount of the impact she had on the world of education then I know that it is a job well done. Be the inspiration, be someone else's giant.



Celebrating creativity - Trust-wide Christmas card competition

This year's Christmas card competition across the trust was an absolute highlight for all of us. With categories for EYFS & Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, and Key Stage 4 & 5, we received an fabulous array of entries from children and young people aged 4 to 17. Most schools took part, making it a true celebration of creativity and festive cheer across our community.

Reviewing and judging the entries has to be one of the Executive Team's favourite jobs. The talent, imagination, and sense of humour that was evident in the designs amazed us all, and choosing winners was no easy task. and each design told its own story of Christmas joy.

In the end, we had four winners—one from each category—from a beautifully photographed knitted santa to a skillful watercolour depiction of festive lighting. We were particularly charmed by Rylee from Boxgrove's reindeer and its bucket of carrots, and absolutely adored Aakashya from Guildford Grove's cat with a pencil shaving hat wishing us a Meowy Christmas! Jack was thrilled to be able to meet and present each winner with a well-deserved prize.

These designs became the official Trust digital Christmas card, spreading festive spirit far and wide.

To everyone who took part, a massive well done. Your creativity and dedication have truly brightened this season for us all. For those who didn't win, remember there's always next year, and we can't wait to see what you'll create. Until then, wishing you all a magical Christmas and a wonderfully creative New Year!

Click on the envelope to view the card



Rylee, KS1



Aakashya, KS2



Althea, KS3



Zoe, KS4&5



Quick fire Q&A with Mrs Fitch and Mrs Stacey Co-Headteachers, Boxgrove Primary School



? But who replied to which question?
Can you work it out?

What did you want to do when you were 8?

At 8 years old I wanted to be a nanny as I knew I wanted to work with children and the Wendy Craig series 'Nanny' was on TV. By the age of 12 I had realised that there would be a requirement to do housework if I chose that path so I decided to become a teacher.

Which primary teacher do you remember the most and why?

I attended a primary school in West Sussex and my favorite teacher was Mr Hard. I really liked him because he played the guitar and sang with us every day. I also loved the way he read stories aloud, using lots of intonation and making books interesting.

What subjects did you find particularly difficult at school and what did you do to manage them?

PE was not one of my strengths at school, although I did try very hard. As I got older I tried to find sports that I liked e.g., aerobics and running - which I have to say, I learnt that I was actually quite good at!

What was your route into teaching - A levels and degree or alternative?

My route to teaching in the 1990s was pretty "of the moment" - A levels and then a 4 year degree in Teaching studies and Linguistics with QTS.

When did you first consider teaching as a career and what/who inspired you?

The day I left primary school was a very sad day for me and after that I decided that I would do everything I could to get back to primary school! So, I studied hard for my GCSEs, A-Levels and my Degree to enable me to become a qualified teacher and now I am living my dream of being back at primary school.

What makes a great school?

Children who love coming to school and get excited about learning! At Boxgrove we have so many engaged children and the staff team is really dedicated to ensure that learning is stimulating and memorable. What a great job to have.



What makes a great school?

A great teacher is someone who wants to make a positive difference to the life chances of every child in their care. They are someone who ensures that every child feels they belong and that they make a contribution; they are someone who sees potential and who has the ability to develop knowledge, skills and qualities that children need to get them further than they ever thought they could go.

What makes a great headteacher?

Someone who is caring, passionate and dedicated. What a privilege it is to lead Boxgrove every day.

What advice do you give to your final year pupils/students moving on?

My advice, in the words of Shakira as children leave us for secondary school is to 'Try Everything': to grasp new opportunities and give it a go as you may just find something you love and excel at.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Spending time with my children and having fun. I also love reading and watching musicals.

What is one of your favourite books?

Oh, Places You'll Go! by Dr Seuss. I love some of the messages that come across in this book and I love reading it aloud to children.

What is your favourite Christmas film?

"Nativity" - Mr Poppy is the best and I love watching the children preparing for their nativity.

How are you spending Christmas?

Spending time with my family playing games, eating (no turkey for me as I'm vegetarian) and being merry!



Christmas cooking!

We spoke to Mrs Hancock, Food Technology teacher at George Abbot School who loves baking and cooking with her students and with her own children. She has given us some fabulous recipes to try at home over the holidays. She recently attended a sausage making workshop at The Guildford Butchers and has a great recipe for Christmas sausage rolls. Why not try some of the recipes below.



Christmas Pudding Krispie Cakes

You just need to look at the picture to see how delicious these are. Easy and fun to make. A real treat for young and old alike!

Ingredients

- 100 g Butter
- 200 g Mars bars chopped up
- 2 tbsps Golden syrup
- 140 g Rice krispies
- 180 g White chocolate
- Christmas sprinkles

Method

- Grease and line the holes of a 12 hole muffin tin with baking paper.
- Chop the Mars bars into smaller pieces, then add them to saucepan along with the butter and the golden syrup.
- Place the pan over a low heat and stir until it has all melted together.
- Place the rice krispies into a large mixing bowl, then pour the melted chocolate mixture over. Mix well until the rice krispies are completely coated.
- Spoon the mixture into the lined muffin tin holes and press it down firmly.
- Leave in the fridge for an hour to set.
- Once set, turn them out so you have xmas pudding shapes.
- Melt the white chocolate in a heat proof bowl over a pan of simmering water.
- Once fully melted spoon it over the top of the Xmas Krispie cakes, then decorate with Christmas sprinkles.
- Put them in the fridge for an hour or so until the chocolate has set.



Cranberry Sausage Rolls

If you like a sausage roll, then you will love these. The addition of cranberry sauce takes them to the next level! They are easy to make and the perfect Boxing Day snack or Christmas party food.

Ingredients

- 500g Shop bought Puff pastry block
- Flour for dusting.
- 500g Pork sausage meat – if you can't find sausage meat you can take sausages and remove the skin or use your favourite vegetarian alternative.
- 300g Cranberry sauce – from a jar or homemade both work perfectly.
- Egg to glaze the pastry before baking.

Method

- Take the puff pastry out of the fridge 20 minutes before you start.
- Heat the oven to 200°C fan / 400°F / Gas Mark 7.
- Line the baking trays.
- Flour up your work surface and rolling pin and roll out the pastry.
- Cut the sheet into 3 equal rectangles
- Spoon the cranberry sauce in a line, down the centre of the rectangle.
- Place the sausage meat in a bowl and with your hands, divide the meat into 3 and make 3 long sausages. Place each one on top of the cranberry sauce.
- Beat the egg and brush a little down one long side of the pastry.
- Roll up from the non-egg side and place the long roll seam side down.
- With a knife score the top.
- Cut the rolls into smaller pieces and place them, well-spaced, onto the baking trays.
- Brush with a little more egg wash and bake for 20 minutes. Cut one just to check they are thoroughly cooked.





Christmas Tree Brownies

Not just chocolatey but three times chocolatey brownies in the shape of Christmas trees - perfect for the festive season.

Ingredients

- 200 g unsalted butter
- 200 g dark chocolate
- 4 medium eggs (or 3 large)
- 275 g caster sugar
- 100 g plain flour
- 50 g cocoa powder
- 100 g milk chocolate chips
- 100 g white chocolate chips

Decorations

- 10 candy canes
- 100 g unsalted butter
- 200 g icing sugar
- Green food colouring
- Sprinkles
- Sweets

Method

- Preheat your oven to 180C/160C Fan and line a 9" Square baking tray with parchment paper.
- Melt together the butter, and dark chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Leave to cool.
- Whisk together the eggs & caster sugar until pale and thick and leaves a trail for a couple of seconds before disappearing!
- Pour the cooled chocolate mixture over the eggs and fold together carefully.
- Sift the cocoa powder and plain flour on top of the chocolate mix and then fold together again.
- Fold through the chocolate chips and pour into the prepared tin – bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes! Once baked, leave to cool in the tin completely.
- Cut the brownies into the triangles to form the tree shapes, insert the candy canes into the base for the trunk
- Cream together the butter and icing sugar to create a delicious buttercream
- Add some green food colouring until you get to your desired decoration colour
- Transfer to a large piping bag and pipe some zigzag lines on to your brownies
- Add some bauble sprinkles and sweets whilst the icing is still soft.



Yule Log

Something for the slightly more advanced baker.

Ingredients

- 4 Large eggs
- 100 g Golden caster sugar
- 65 g Self raising flour
- 40 g Cocoa powder
- 50 g Icing sugar

Cream Filling

- 300 ml Double cream
- 2 tps Vanilla bean paste

Chocolate Ganache

- 300 g 70% Dark chocolate
- 300 ml Double cream

Method

- Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- Grease and line a 33x22 cm baking tin.
- In a large mixing bowl whisk the eggs and golden caster sugar until it is pale and thick and has doubled in size.
- Sift the self raising flour and the cocoa powder into the bowl, then fold it gently until it is well combined.
- Pour it into the baking tin and ensure it is even.
- Bake it for ten minutes.
- Sprinkle icing sugar over a large piece of baking paper, then carefully tip the hot sponge onto it.
- Cut two score marks across the sponge lengthways 2.5 cm and 5 cm up from the bottom.
- Tightly roll up the sponge using the baking paper. Roll with the paper inside. Then set it aside to cool.
- For the ganache, chop the chocolate into very small pieces. Heat the cream until it is almost boiling, then pour the hot cream over the chopped chocolate. Beat with a whisk until it is smooth and glossy.
- Set the ganache aside, as it cools it will thicken.
- Whip the double cream with the vanilla bean paste until it reaches stiff peaks.
- Once the sponge is cooled, unravel it, then spread the whipped cream evenly over. Roll it up tightly.
- Cut a diagonal piece off the end. Then place the large piece on a serving plate and position the diagonal piece to the side to give the look of a branch.
- Spread the chocolate ganache all over the log. Then use a fork to make a pattern that resembles wood.
- Sprinkle icing sugar over the top to give the effect of snow. Then decorate with any other decorations you like.
- Store in the fridge.



OUR



Ambition For All

We are proud of our staff who strive for excellence and instil ambition



Better Together

We work in partnership with others, so that outcomes are improved for all - pupils and staff



Learning That Inspires

We provide learning that inspires and develops a lifelong love of learning



Brave Innovators

Young people deserve an enriched education, one that is born from creativity and innovation



Guided By Integrity

We know that we must act with integrity, because as a body of staff we are role models





Learning Partners

academy trust

Leading schools where children thrive