

# updATe



## Review of 2018/19

It's the time of year for looking back, celebrating the successes and achievements of the year just finished and reflecting on lessons learned to set priorities for the year ahead. Headteachers, their teams and our schools' local governors have all been doing that for their individual schools. The same process happens at Trust level, with discussions taking place between members of the Trust's central team, our Trustees, our headteachers and the chairs of local governing bodies. We want to share some of this with you, our Learn-AT community, so this newsletter is like an annual report, to tell you what Learn-AT has been doing, and what the focus of our work will be over the coming year.

### A reminder of our mission and values

We start the year, every year, with our Learn-AT Annual Conference, to which everyone who works in the trust, or serves as a trustee or a local governor, is invited. Over 300 people attended this wonderful event, held on 27th August this year at Leicester Grammar School. It is an opportunity to remind ourselves of our mission and our core values and to learn from inspirational visiting speakers and from our own teachers and leaders, who lead workshops to celebrate the work they have accomplished during the year. Sir John Jones, a former headteacher knighted for his services to education, gave a keynote speech in the afternoon where he described those who work in education, with children, as 'Magic Weavers'. This year, our conference theme was

the 'Golden Threads' of learning and fellowship; it was a fabulous start to the year.

Our mission remains to build a community in which colleagues thrive and pupils flourish, founded on '**Learning**' as our core purpose and '**Fellowship**' as our core value.

At Learn-AT **learning** is the main thing. We keep the **main thing**, the **main thing** and do the **right thing**, the **right way**. **Together**.

Also at the conference, we launched our 'commitments', which we have developed through discussion with all our staff, trustees and governors this year. Here they are:

- **We believe** in the power of education and learning to transform children's life chances and choices
- **We care** about the wellbeing of our pupils, colleagues, governors and school communities
- **We promise** to work together, with integrity and in the spirit of fellowship, to build a professional learning community in which colleagues thrive and pupils flourish

These commitments sum up the message we want people to hear about Learn-AT. You will see them beginning to appear on information about Learn-AT, for example, in brochures and on our website.



# Pupil achievement

This year has been a very positive one for pupil achievement across the trust with improvements at all stages of pupils' education. In Early Years Foundation Stage, the numbers of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development continues to be above the national average in Learn-AT schools:

## Percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development at the end of EYFS

Learn-AT	National
76%	72%

In the Year 1 Phonics Screen we achieved a second successive year of significant improvement in the numbers of pupils achieving the expected standard:

## Percentage of pupils achieving the standard expected in the Y1 phonics screen

Learn-AT	National
89%	82%

By the end of KS1, our pupils are also achieving very well:

Subject	Learn-AT		National	
	Expected Standard	Greater Depth Standard	Expected Standard	Greater Depth Standard
Reading	83%	33%	75%	26%
Writing	75%	17%	70%	16%
Maths	82%	28%	76%	22%

We are really pleased with improvements in maths and writing at the end of Key Stage 2:

Subject	Learn-AT		National	
	Expected Standard	Greater Depth Standard	Expected Standard	Greater Depth Standard
Reading/writing/maths combined	66%	14%	65%	10%
Reading	75%	28%	73%	28%
Writing	82%	22%	78%	20%
Maths	80%	29%	79%	24%

These outcomes represent steady, sustainable improvement over the last three years and are a testament not only to the hard work of Learn-AT pupils and the support of their parents and carers, but also to all our staff and their commitment to providing the best education possible for every child in Learn-AT schools.

# Highlights of 2018/19

## Learn-AT Teaching School

September 2018 saw the launch of the Learn-AT Teaching School. Church Langton and Great Bowden schools were awarded the National Teaching School designation, jointly, on behalf of Learn-AT. Teaching Schools work with colleagues across our local area and beyond to train new teachers and provide professional learning for serving teachers, leaders and support staff in many other aspects school work.

In its first year, Learn-AT Teaching School has developed a range of high-quality programmes which have been very well received. For example, a programme of seminars on word study and spelling for Key Stage 2 teachers, regular Phase and Subject Leader Network Meetings for teachers and teaching assistants which are attended by Learn AT schools as well as other schools locally. In the summer term, it launched the Curriculum Design Seminar Programme – a series of seven sessions over three terms. Thirty schools from as far afield as Rotherham and Wolverhampton, as well as local partners, are participating.

## Sharing the good work of Learn AT

An article about our work on teachers' professional learning in Lesson Study was published in the Chatererd College of Teaching's journal 'Impact' in the Autumn 2018 edition. Lesson Study involves teachers working together



*Sir John Jones addresses the Learn-AT conference*

in small groups of 3 or 4, often with specialist support, to learn more about an aspect of teaching they want to improve. They plan and teach lessons together, publish reports and lead staff meetings for colleagues about their learning. Sometimes they invite colleagues to come and watch the lessons they design in this way.

## Confederation of School Trusts' journal 'Trust'

CST is a national organisation supporting academies and school trusts. In the Spring of 2019, CST published an article about Learn-AT's school improvement framework.

## TES

In May 2019, the TES (formerly Times Education Supplement) published an article about our work on curriculum design.

## East Midlands newsletter for chairs of academy trusts

In September the East Midlands Regional Schools Commissioner's office published an article about the work on governance in Learn-AT.

## Learn-AT Associate Research School

In May 2019, Learn-AT's work in leading research-informed approaches to teaching and learning was recognised at national level with our designation as an Education Endowment Foundation 'Associate Research School', in partnership with Kyra Research School, based in Lincolnshire. Learn-AT will work with Kyra, to lead the Leicestershire, Leicester city and Rutland Research Hub. Research Schools lead training programmes and work with schools to develop research-informed classroom practices. They also support schools to take part in national trials to learn more about effective approaches in education. You can find out more about Research Schools at: <https://researchschool.org.uk/>

## WALS International Conference

In September 2019, Stef Edwards (Trust Leader, Learn-AT) and Alan Eathorne (Headteacher,

Husbands Bosworth CE Primary School) attended the World Association of Lesson Studies Annual International Conference in Amsterdam. Forty different countries were represented at the conference, which was held in the Johann Cruyff Stadium. Stef and Alan led a workshop for colleagues from schools and universities interested in the leadership of lesson study and Stef presented a paper on the topic. You can get a flavour of what the conference was like at: <https://www.wals2019.com/>



*Rt Hon Gavin Williamson and Neil O'Brien MP with (l to r) Stef Edwards, Sir John Dunford, Wayne Burbidge, Dave Turner and Angela Dewes*

## School Partnerships Programme (SPP)

This year we start the second of a two year research programme to develop Peer Review. Peer Review is a process of evidence-led, school evaluation led by headteachers and senior leaders working collaboratively to improve their schools. The SPP programme is coordinated by the Education Development Trust, which this term published details of Learn-AT's contribution to the project in a series of case studies.

<https://www.schoolspartnershipprogramme.com/getmedia/be79cec7-15be-45cf-b1c3-40abd9829740/Collaborative-practice-insight-four-Evidence-at-the-heart.pdf?ext=.pdf>

## Visitors

We have been delighted to welcome local and national politicians to Learn-AT schools this year. Neil O'Brien, MP for Market Harborough has visited Ridgeway Primary Academy and St Andrew's, North Kilworth, and Alberto Costa, MP for South Leicestershire, visited Blaby Stokes CE and Red Hill Field Primary Schools. Both MPs were very interested in the work of our schools and spent time talking to children and answering their questions about the work of parliament. Alberto Costa even mentioned Red Hill Field in the House of Commons!

On the very first Friday of this term, the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson, chose Ridgeway Primary Academy as the venue from which to record his announcement of new education initiatives. Accompanied by Neil O'Brien MP, he spent time with school and trust leaders, toured the school - meeting staff and pupils, spending some time answering their very astute questions. Of course, the school took the arrival of a senior government minister, his aides, a BBC camera crew and a team of journalists before the end of the first week of term in its stride!

## Finance and Operations

Over the last two years, Learn-AT has succeeded in accessing £700K in funding to support significant capital investment in our schools, from a new roof at Lubenham, to new windows, boilers, perimeter fencing and toilets in other Learn-AT schools. This year we are involved in a major project to bring super-fast broadband to rural communities and we have upgraded trust IT systems for management information, payroll, safeguarding and internal communication.

All this work has generated around £400K of savings which has helped our schools to prioritise teaching and learning in difficult economic times.

# Learning and Fellowship

Our schools work and learn increasingly collaboratively together, in Fellowship. Our teachers and leaders work on behalf of all the pupils in the trust, not just in their own schools. They share roles: our Executive Headteachers lead teams across two schools; small schools share SENCos and subject leaders, relieving workload and building collaborative working cultures, coming together for staff meetings and even residential trips! Specialists from one school support colleagues in another. Groups of teachers and leaders work together on curriculum planning and assessment. Our Office Managers and Premises Managers meet together regularly to share practice and expertise.

This work has been recognised by Ofsted in three inspections this year:

## **15th March 2019 - St Andrew's CE Primary School**

*"The school continues to be good"*

*"You have found being part of the Learn Academies Trust (the trust) a wholly positive experience. You and the head of school have embraced the trust's commitment to using the evidence from educational research to make teaching and learning more effective."*

*"Your school's partnerships with others in the trust are also improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers regularly meet and share ideas with colleagues in the trust. They also benefit from access to high-quality external expertise from subject specialists."*

## **2nd and 3rd July - Market Harborough CE Academy**

*"This is a good school"*

*"Staff value the frequent opportunities for professional development, especially those offered through the Learn At multi-academy*

*trust group of schools, saying that the trust has 'a learning culture' for its staff."*

*"The trust has provided effective support and challenge for the school, together with increased opportunities for leaders and staff to receive training and share good practice across the group of schools."*

## **10th July - Husbands Bosworth CE Primary School**

*"The school continues to be good"*

*"...leaders prioritised the quality of mathematics teaching across the school, utilising the expertise of a specialist from the trust to provide staff development."*

*"The trust provides strategic guidance and support to address the school's main priorities. Members of the local governing body understand their roles, and challenge and support leaders to achieve school priorities, such as improving outcomes in mathematics."*

In inspections of Church of England Schools, (SIAMS) too, the work of Learn-AT in supporting its schools was recognised:

## **SIAMS 12th March 2019 – Husbands Bosworth CE Primary School**

*"Over the last three years the school has undergone a period of change with new leadership and membership of the Learn Academies Trust (Learn-AT). This has prompted leaders to review the school's vision and purpose.*

*Thus, leaders and governors have established a Christian vision which reflects the context of their small school, its place at the centre of the community, and their desire to work with others. Consequently, leaders talk about how the biblical roots of the school's Christian vision, rooted in John 10:10*

*and Matthew 22:39, promote the value of partnerships and learning together in order to flourish."*

*It is a vision that connects with the Christian vision of Learn-AT. It creates an ethos "to nurture the wellbeing of every child, to allow each child to love learning and to be able to enjoy life in its fullness". Leaders*

*articulate how this informs development work and decision making. They describe how the fellowship of shared professional development across the trust leads to improvements in teaching and learning, enriches the curriculum and develops staff as Church school leaders. As a result, initiatives are meeting the needs of all pupils."*

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## Priorities for 2019/20

This year we will be working hard to sustain the improvements we have achieved so far – keeping some very important plates spinning, such as phonics, writing and problem-solving in maths, continuing with exciting curriculum development work and providing innovative professional learning opportunities for all our staff. Reducing the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others is always a priority. This year we will be shining a spotlight on reading in particular. Reading is the key that unlocks all other learning. We want to make sure that every child in every Learn-AT school moves onto secondary school a fluent and enthusiastic reader – able to access challenging text in every secondary school subject. In today's busy world it is often difficult to make the time children need to develop as readers. Books are competing with 21st century technology and often losing the battle. If you need any persuading to support us in this challenge, here are some good reasons: <http://tiny.cc/w8lsdz>

We will also be completing the final phase of our Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum design project.

Curriculum and Subject Leaders from across the trust will be working together to finalise the precise detail of programmes of study for all subjects.

Our Early Years leaders will be starting the process of 'deep thinking' about the curriculum we provide for our youngest children. They will be meeting every half term, doing a lot of reading to understand current thinking about child development and cognitive science, considering the implications for children's early learning and how we can put this into practice in the classroom to give our children a flying start in school.

All in all, 2018/19 was a very successful year for Learn-AT. One of the most pleasing aspects of the trust's development is the growing sense of 'family', of a community of professionals and colleagues increasingly working together, in fellowship, to support children's learning. We are so grateful, also, for the unstinting support of our trustees and local governors, our children's parents and carers and the wider communities around our schools. 2019/20 is going to be another busy year of magic-weaving.



**Learn Academies Trust**

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