



Birmingham Special Schools'
Co-Operative Trust
bhamcooptrust.org.uk

SPRING TERM 2024

NEWSLETTER

Welcome

Welcome back after what we hope was a happy Christmas break for you all. This Spring Term is very short, however as a Trust we have lots of activities planned. In this newsletter we will be looking back at what was achieved last term and will include any updates on this term's shared work.

One of the most impressive achievements last term was the way in which BSSCT rallied around Baskerville School, to support them with finding long term placements for pupils when the school was managing RAAC. The Trust was the first 'port of call' for Baskerville leaders needing immediate help and teaching spaces and Hamilton School have provided 2 classrooms daily for 14/15 pupils along with hall space, lunchtime space with playground facilities, with a further 2 days a week offered by The Pines. As a result pupils have received long term daily full teaching provision with appropriate facilities thus ensuring continuity to their education.

We have also started working on a new improved Trust website, which is not yet complete, but is aiming to ensure that more people outside the Trust are aware of our work. This is being led by Sinead Davies Headteacher at Fox Hollies. [BSSCT new web site](#)

Longwill are also ensuring that the work of the Trust is not going un-noticed and just before Christmas the school appeared on Midlands Today showcasing the success of their Common Ground Arts project last year.

Longwill pupils won a Royal Television Society Award in November in the category of 'Creative Community Film' for the film pupils created as part of the Common Ground Arts Project in our Trust of schools. As a result there was some really positive publicity and a Midlands Today film crew and reporter interviewed staff and pupils and also the fabulous film maker who worked with them on the project, Bhulla Beghal. It was also great that Grace from Fox Hollies who leads Common Ground was there too. <https://www.longwill.bham.sch.uk/post/midlands-today-18-12-2023>. They also received some positive publicity from Limping Chicken (a podcast which is well known in the Deaf community). Here's the link to that as well: [Award for deaf children's filmmaking project \(BSL\) | The Limping Chicken](#).

BSSCT "Improving Trust internal partnership working and communication so that more individual staff know and value the work of the trust"



SHARED LEARNER ACTIVITIES



This project is now up and running again ready for the Summer Term exhibition. After a lengthy application process, we have **successfully bid for £64,000** in charitable grants for Common Ground Arts 2024. The grant is awarded with the condition that it is match-funded with £17,000 from the Cooperative Trust.

Seven artists have now been recruited for school residencies:

- Fox Hollies: Breakmission - inclusive breakdancing Exhibition idea: a dance battle performance and SEN interactive dance sessions supported by portrait photographs of SEN students. [Break Mission] (<https://breakmissioncommunity.com>)

- Dame Ellen: Hipkiss and Graney - visual arts Exhibition ideas: fabric and sculpture display with an environmental focus. [Hipkiss & Graney](<https://www.hipkissandgraney.com>)

- Wilson Stuart: Sharonjit Sutton - South Asian arts/Multimedia exhibition ideas: South Asian celebrations/rangoli/music/stories. [Designs Loading](<https://www.designsloading.com>)

- The Pines: Samantha Krankpod - sensory clay work exhibition ideas: installation of community clay work. [Samantha Krankpod on Instagram] (<https://www.instagram.com/krankpodworkshops>)

- Baskerville: Roots0121 - street art exhibition idea: 3D piece with graffiti. [ROOTS0121 on Instagram] (https://www.instagram.com/roots_0121)

- Hamilton: Bethany/Henry/Jack? Sound Exploration exhibition ideas: sound piece and installation. [Bethany Kay] (<https://bethanykay.com>)

- Longwill: Bluebell Films - Deaf performance in film? Exhibition ideas: professional film in cinema? (continuation of the film project that received a National Television Society award in Creative Communities, 2023). [Bluebell Films](<https://www.bluebellfilms.co.uk>)

Lead Teacher Training day on 9th February: FULL DAY AT THE MAC

This will be the only in-person training for the project this year, lead teachers will be working methodically to plan their artist residency using a digital book. Once completed, teachers will share this within their school and SLT to give greater ownership to each school on their arts residency and exhibition piece. These planning books would also be strong evidence for curriculum development/SIP for possible Ofsted visits.

CPD training films: new addition for 2024

In order to gain such a large grant, we are required to incorporate a CPD training element into the project that reaches a wider audience than our Cooperative schools. Therefore, around £20,000 of the grant will be used to develop new CPD films 'SEN arts ideas.' We will be utilizing last year's artists to demonstrate practical activities teachers can facilitate in the classroom to support creativity and arts curriculums. These will have the cooperative logo and individual school logos to illustrate the origin of the residency. This will also be a great opportunity to promote the cooperative to a wider audience. These will be sent to schools once they are complete before publishing (due to be complete at the end of March).

We are utterly delighted with the plans and recognise that the addition of a 'future proof' Arts CPD training package for all teachers across the Trust has created a school Improvement model for Arts CPD especially the use of Artists in residence for the Trust.

Other Staff and Learner shared activities

January 2024

26th-28th January Big School's Birdwatch <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch>

How to take part:

1. Get your free guide and stock up on supplies, with 15% off and free delivery on food and feeders at the [RSPB shop](#).
2. Spend an hour watching the birds in your patch, between 26 and 28 January, and record the birds who land. *(Be sure to only count the highest number of each bird species you see at any one time.)*
3. Tell us what you saw *(even if that's nothing at all)!* You can submit your results [online or by post](#).

Check out the [Big Garden Birdwatch](#) site to sign up and get all the tips, tricks and instructions about attracting birds, even if you haven't got a school garden. You can also check out the most [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

We could share our findings across the Trust and need some volunteers from each school to lead on this. Please let your Headteacher know if you are interested.

February 2024

LGBT+ History month. The theme is Medicine – #UnderTheScope. [LGBT+ History Month 2024 - LGBT+ History Month \(lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk\)](#)

5th-11th Feb -**Children's Mental Health Week.** The theme this year is 'My Voice Matters'. [Schools - Children's Mental Health Week \(childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk\)](#)

Tues 6th Feb- **Safer Internet Day** [Education Resources - UK Safer Internet Centre](#) [Education Resources - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

March 2024

7th March **World Book Day.** [Celebrate World Book Day - World Book Day](#) Led by the Trust English network. There is scope for some pairing up of schools to be take part in a shared reading event, looking at reading in our different schools in terms of different approaches (BSL, Makaton, signing, symbols, sensory stories) and celebrating the different ways and non-traditional ways our students 'read'.

Fri 17th March- **Red Nose Day** [Comic Relief](#)

Tuesday 19th March 2024. **Forest School Day.** This year it will be led by Wilson Stuart

Fri 22nd March **World Water Day**- link to Forest school event? [World Water Day | UN-Water \(unwater.org\)](#)

BSSCT "Providing safe opportunities for independent interaction for learners to improve communication and confidence and enabling them to flourish outside of their own school"

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT and CPD :

THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Day 1 of the Leadership Programme on Values Led Leadership was completed on December 13th, and was led by Tracy Ruddle (Trust Development Leader) and Denise Fountain (Headteacher of Dame Ellen Pinsent School). Evaluations of day 1 were very strong and the added contribution of industry leaders and past alumni are a really strong addition. Our thanks go to Paula Digby (Partner at Ernst & Young) and Katy Guest (Assistant SENCO, Dame Ellen Pinsent) which really helped to deepen participants understanding. Day 2 on 31st January 2024 of the programme will focus on Leading and Improving Performance through Coaching and/or Mentoring.

PEER TO PEER REVIEWS

A peer to peer whole school review was carried out at Fox Hollies on 24th November. Simon Harris (Headteacher at Wilson Stuart) and Alison Carter (Headteacher at Longwill) led the review, facilitated by Tracy Ruddle. All 3 of the reviewers had visited the school previously and recognised the transformation in the school and the benefits that hard working staff are providing for the children in their care. The next peer review is on 1st February at Wilson Stuart.

SUBJECT REVIEWS LED by Subject Network Leaders

Following on from the success of Trust peer-peer reviews, an additional programme has been drawn up to provide schools in the Trust with subject-led reviews. Clear paperwork and principles have been provided and leaders across all 3 of the subject networks have received training in how to carry out subject led reviews. The first of these reviews is planned for Dame Ellen Pinsent on 30th January and will focus on Maths. Fingers crossed that schools will find this development just as useful in recognising strengths, as well as supporting ideas for further development.

MATHS, ENGLISH AND PSHE LEADERSHIP NETWORKS

These networks continue to meet at least termly. As well as developing subject reviews they continue to lead on shared activities (see page 2) as well as developing their individual subjects across the Trust. The chairs of the 3 networks now regularly meet together to ensure that the networks continue to develop their effectiveness in impacting on school improvement in all 7 schools.

Teaching Assistant School Swaps

We are looking to provide CPD opportunities for Teaching Assistants to swap roles for a day with a colleague from another of our schools. This clearly will take some planning which will include giving time to meeting each other and sharing practice. If you are interested in taking part in such project, please let your Headteacher know and also be clear about what you would like to focus on so enable us to do some successful matching .

BSSCT "Developing Trust, Leadership and Staff Professional Development"

For Further Information please contact Tracy Ruddle Trust Development Leader

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