

# Evolution

Magazine  
Spring 2024

**New Trust  
mission  
and values  
revealed**

**Ambition - Collaboration - Responsibility**

# CEO welcome

## A very warm welcome to our spring 2024 Trust newsletter!

As always, there is lots to celebrate for all at Evolution Academy Trust. It was wonderful to have staff from across all of our 12 schools together on the 3rd January as we launched our Trust mission and values. I would like to thank staff, parents and carers for all contributions and already we are seeing the impact of our values across our schools.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the work from all of our Trustees, governors, staff and volunteers. EAT goes from

strength to strength both in Ofsted and educational outcomes, but equally important are all of the activities which enable children to develop personally within their own interests and passion.

From choir events, trips, adapted games and puppet performances, it is important that we value all the enriching experiences which children experience in our schools. This magazine captures just some of these and I hope you enjoy reading about the many positive events, which are only possible thanks to our fantastic staff teams.

I know this is a short half-term until



Easter, so a sincere thank you to all of you and wishing you a positive few weeks.

Warm regards,  
*C. Avieson*

Dr Craig Avieson  
Chief Executive Officer



## Children on song at Trust choir event

**Children from ten Evolution Academy Trust schools in Norfolk and Suffolk came together for a concert last term, performing songs with the theme of 'unity'.**

Twenty Year 5 and 6 pupils arrived at Costessey Primary School from Angel Road, Bignold, Coldfair, Dell, Eaton, Elm Tree, Filby, Poplars and Wensum to take part.

In the morning, the children were treated to a singing workshop with Krista from Norfolk Music Hub, who taught them two group songs that they would perform later.

After a quick lunch, all the pupils gathered together to sing the songs they had learnt in the morning, before each school choir performed a variety of songs they had been practising previously, including 'Seasons of Love' from Rent the Musical, 'We go together' from Grease and 'Lean on me' by Bill Withers.

It was a wonderful example of Trust schools collaborating for a project highlighting the joy music can bring to the educational environment. You can view all the performances now on YouTube @EvolutionAcademyTrust.

## Five minutes with... Jo Snelling

Headteacher, Filby Primary School



### What does a typical day in your role look like?

I arrive at school early to open up and check that all is well with the

school building and grounds. As a new headteacher at Filby, I am still getting to know the children, parents and community and I enjoy being outside to greet them all as they arrive in the mornings.

No two days tend to be the same in a primary school! I enjoy teaching my Read Write Inc group,

leading assemblies and visiting lessons. I am still learning about all the routines and procedures that are in place at the school, which the staff have been incredibly helpful with. I've been busy making plans for the future of Filby and have found it really beneficial visiting other schools within our Trust.

### What made you want to work in education?

I fell in love with the job on the very first day of my first teaching practice as an 18 year old student teacher. During my training I worked with some inspirational teachers and could not wait to

complete my degree and have my own class.

### What is the best part of your job?

This is an easy answer – the children! Spending time with them and learning from them is a privilege.

### What is your favourite children's book?

I was an avid reader as a child (in fact, I still am!) and particularly loved Enid Blyton story books. I worked my way through many of her collections and enjoyed reading modernised versions of the same books to my own children.

## Positive Ofsted judgements

**Students are "thriving" at Eaton Primary School according to inspectors after the school's latest Ofsted visit, where it was rated Good.**

They observed that "Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy being part of a warm, welcoming community. Pupils thrive in an environment where happiness permeates the school... (they) enjoy learning and want to share their achievements. They engage in activities with enthusiasm."

The report also recognised that staff at the school are skilled, have high expectations and firm subject knowledge: "Subject specialists have identified the important knowledge that



pupils need to know. They have then determined the best order to teach this information to ensure pupils learn well. This means teachers know exactly what to teach and when... Teachers have a secure subject knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use their expertise to break down complex ideas into small, easy-to-understand content."

Poplars Primary School was also visited by Ofsted last term. It was noted in the report that the new leadership team has made a significant difference to the school – a strong curriculum is being implemented, pupils with SEND are well supported and there is a clear and consistent approach to behaviour.

The school was rated Good in four out of five areas, with a Requires Improvement for quality of education. Trust leaders will continue to support the team at Poplars to further enhance the overwhelmingly positive offering at the school, and there is no doubt that the encouraging changes recently implemented will enhance the learning of all children going forward.

# Trusting together

Staff from all 12 schools gathered on 3<sup>rd</sup> January for a whole-Trust inset day.

Over 400 members of staff were present at the event, where the Trust's new mission and values were unveiled. The day began with an introduction by Chair of Trustees Drew Whitehead, before CEO Dr Craig Avieson presented the mission and values, explaining how everyone's roles feed into helping the Trust achieve these goals.

This was followed by a keynote speech by Alex Bedford, Curriculum Development Director for Unity Education. He inspired the audience with his talk, beginning the journey in EYFS and looking at how classroom practice could be improved using specific techniques.

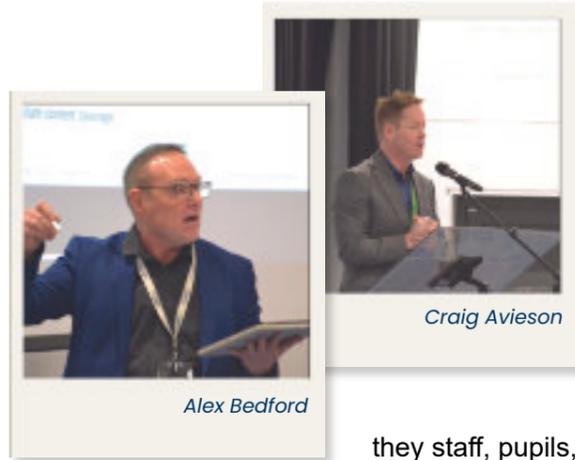
After lunch all attendees were put into groups based on their roles, and given the opportunity to discuss how the new mission and values could be applied in their areas. This provided staff with a valuable chance to interact with

colleagues outside of their normal setting, and to forge new opportunities for collaboration going forward.

Since the inset day, staff across the Trust have been working to include the mission and values in their work in schools and the central Trust team.

*"I LOVED Alex's talk and was so thrilled that it focused so heavily on EYFS as a starting point. It was really useful to refresh my memory on the key steps for successful teaching and learning backed by neuroscience."*

When speaking about the inset day and mission and values process, Craig Avieson said: "I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to every member of our community - be



Alex Bedford

Craig Avieson

they staff, pupils, local governing boards or parents and carers - for their input during the development process for our new Trust mission and values.

**95%**

Agreed they feel more informed about how the Trust mission and values relate to their job

"We hope you will join us in ensuring that as we move forward as an organisation, we are all working toward this shared purpose through everything we do."

For more information about the mission and values, visit [www.evolutionacademytrust.org.uk/mission-and-values](http://www.evolutionacademytrust.org.uk/mission-and-values).



# Our mission



To ensure all children leave our academies as well-educated, confident and responsible citizens, enabling them to be fully prepared for their next stage of education.

# Our values



## Ambition:

We always aim high

We are ambitious and have high expectations for all. We focus on effort, hard-work and provide the right support at the right time, enabling everyone to achieve their very best.



## Collaboration:

We achieve more working together

We value honesty and positive relationships. We embrace new ideas and change through purposeful collaboration.



## Responsibility:

We take responsibility for our own actions

We are kind, respectful to others and value differences within and beyond our local communities.



# Collaboration

# Adapted for fun



catching games. A range of different equipment was used to help the children engage and succeed in all sports, including balls with bells, softer balls and ball launchers.

During the event, there were many times the children had to support each other and work together as team. The children who represented Angel Road Schools demonstrated a positive attitude to the activities, showed excellent teamwork skills and lots of ambition to achieve their best.

*"We played lots of games, using lots of different and adapted equipment. Our teamwork was fantastic and we scored lots of points. I loved the event because it showed everyone was unique and special in their own way." (Year 4)*

They proved that with support and high expectations of themselves and others, whatever barriers they face, they can achieve great things. The children were fantastic role models and the whole school community is proud of their successes. All children received a medal at the end of the event and a certificate for their achievement.

*"It was like normal games with a twist. My favourite game was the curling, where we had to work as team to score as many points as possible. It was a fun morning, and we all enjoyed ourselves." (Year 5)*

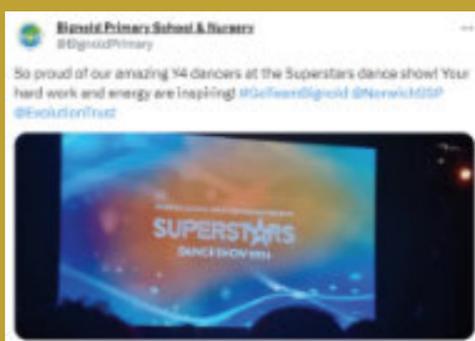
**This January a group of children from Angel Road Schools represented their school at the Adapted Games.**

The event was organised by the Norwich East School Sports Partnership for the purpose of introducing new sports and skills to children, whilst promoting an active lifestyle and developing social interactions. The sessions were run by Secondary PGCE students who provided ambitious and adapted physical education activities for children with additional needs.

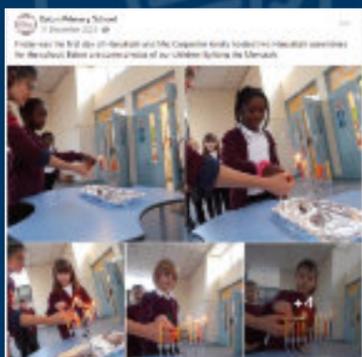
The Angel Road team was made up of pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 who have a mix of additional needs including physical, hearing, visual and emotional challenges. The children participated in a carousel of different activities including parachute games, curling, bowling, cricket, basketball, throwing and



# Ambition



# Responsibility





# BETTING on the future

Fostering digital ambitions at Coldfair Green has become a crucial part of preparing pupils for the future. As technology continues to shape our world, introducing children to digital tools and skills at an early age can ignite their curiosity and set them on a path towards success.

Two of the staff team from Coldfair Green attended BETT UK 24 in January. BETT is an education and technology show held at the ExCeL in London. They met with delegates from across the world to talk about their digital strategy for the school. They want the children of Coldfair Green to be forward thinking and digitally literate by the time they leave.



Digital literacy is more than just knowing how to use a computer; it encompasses understanding digital content, evaluating online information and practicing responsible online behaviour. BETT UK's main focus was Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it can be used successfully and safely in school. AI is revolutionising the world and especially education; it has the power to enrich learning experiences and nurture critical thinking as well as lessening teacher workload.

The digital ambition at Coldfair Green is to provide children with individual iPads to support their learning. By providing access to devices like tablets or laptops, children can explore interactive learning experiences that engage their creativity and critical thinking. At BETT UK, the team took part in an Apple lesson using headphones

to prevent distractions, where they learnt how iPads can "bring your lessons to life".

BETT UK showcased a huge variety of new tech, as well as highlighting the fabulous charity Tech She Can, dedicated to closing the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) workplaces. Coldfair Green is looking forward to working closely with Tech She Can to support children to make wider career choices.

Nurturing digital ambitions at Coldfair Green is not just about incorporating tech into the classroom; it's about preparing children for a future where digital literacy skills are essential. By embracing these principles, they can become pioneers in shaping the next generation of thinkers, innovators and leaders in the digital era.



# Children unite for choir event

This term, Poplars Young Voices choir, fuelled by ambition and a passion for music, recently took centre stage at the O2 Arena in London during the Young Voices event.

Joined by 8,000 other children, the choir members found themselves immersed in a musical extravaganza led by talented musicians and a skilled conductor; the sheer collective harmony created an unforgettable atmosphere, showcasing the power of young voices uniting in song.



This event not only provided a platform for the Poplars choir to showcase their talent but also allowed them to be part of an

amazing and inspiring musical community that celebrated the joy of music on a grand scale.

# Puppet performances for parents



As part of National Storytelling Week, Year 3 and 4 pupils from Dell Primary worked with staff from the Marina Theatre in Lowestoft on storytelling using puppets.

They started using puppets that were provided for them, followed by designing their own puppets and writing a script to tell a story. The children practised and edited their stories to make them the best they could be, ready for performances to parents at the end of the day.

The children's ambition really shone through in their determination to put on the best show that they could!



## PAWS for thought

**Bignold Primary has recently launched a new pastoral base – PAWS (Pastoral and Wellbeing Support).**

The school now has a dedicated space and team to support children, making sure staff can provide the right support at the right time, encouraging positive friendships and collaborative working between children and helping everyone be the best they can be.

The new pastoral team includes Mrs Blackman, who has a visual impairment, so the school community has been very excited to also welcome her guide dog, Parker.

Parker has his own space within PAWS and the children have really enjoyed getting to know him. They have learned why Mrs Blackman needs Parker to find her way around and how he helps her. Mrs Blackman and Parker have also visited every classroom to introduce themselves and explained that as Parker is a working dog, pupils and staff need to ask permission before saying hello to him or distract him, in case he is working for Mrs Blackman at the time.

These changes are already having a really positive impact at Bignold, with the whole school community coming together to support and learn from each other.

## Book fundraising

**Nelson Infant School's local community has a wealth of resources at its disposal, and the children are taking responsibility to ensure these vital services are not lost by ensuring they make them a key factor in their day to day lives.**

This term pupils will be visiting local libraries and The Children's Book Centre as part of the 'Reading for Pleasure' initiative. In the Autumn term children took part in in-house fundraising by washing staff cars and hosting bake sales. With the money raised the children will be given the responsibility to spend those funds effectively when purchasing books from The Children's Book Centre for the whole school to enjoy.



## CPR lessons

**Year 6 pupils at Poplars have actively engaged in a comprehensive first aid course - equipping themselves with vital life-saving skills.**

Through hands-on learning they gained knowledge in CPR, wound care and emergency response, empowering each child with the confidence to act in critical situations. It was a valuable experience fostering safety awareness and preparedness.

The Poplars junior leadership teams are growing, and value representatives are currently being recruited to add to the team of Value Ambassadors who have made a flying start to their role this term. One of their first initiatives was a value postcard competition - children across the school are designing postcards which will become the school praise cards.

## Ambassadors for all



**This year marked the introduction of School Ambassadors at Costessey Primary.**

Replacing the traditional School Council, the School Ambassadors have the huge responsibility of being a key link between the pupils and the staff at school. Each class, from Year 1 to Year 6, democratically elected two individuals who they felt were excellent and responsible role models to represent them as School Ambassadors. Their key mission is to be a voice for every child at Costessey!

School Ambassadors meet on a bi-weekly basis with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss issues that may have been brought to them by students of their class. Furthermore, each half term they are given a 'Key Discussion Topic' where they take responses from their classmates before feeding this back to adults. Topics have

included how to improve the lunch offering at school - the new caterers were astounded at the vociferous response to everyone's favourite topic of school dinners!

Improving the mental and physical wellbeing was a further discussion point - children provided some fantastic ideas, particularly in Key Stage One, as to how provision for children at Costessey could be improved, and these were shared by School Ambassadors.

These included providing a wider variety of sports during PE lessons, and the PE team will now be trialling cycling in PE lessons for EYFS and Key Stage One children, with the view to rolling this out higher up the school. Netball will also be introduced into the PE curriculum across the school for the first time.

Children requested greater access to the pastoral team, something which staff put into place straight away, with a designated lunch time area which they have called the Glade. Work is also underway to include a daily mindfulness session and the RSHE subject lead is further reviewing the curriculum to ensure that more mental and physical health awareness is built into lessons.

This half term, children at Costessey have had the opportunity to share ideas with their Ambassadors about after school clubs that they would want to attend if they were available. The varied suggestions have led to new clubs, and children will now have the opportunity to attend a STEM club for the first time. A drawing and colouring club is now on offer, as well as hockey on a Monday afternoon.

Possibly the biggest success of the School Ambassadors is that they have also had the responsibility of touring prospective parents around the school. They were simply outstanding at the last open day where they showed future parents around. As ambassadors, they showed incredible responsibility, huge levels of confidence and were an absolute credit to everyone at Costessey Primary. Visitors commented how polite and courteous they were to all.



# Safer Internet Day

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February, children and staff at Eaton Primary marked Safer Internet Day across the whole school and thought about how to be kind, respectful and value differences while online.

The day was launched in assemblies, where everyone discussed the value of responsibility and how it can be modelled while using the internet. The key messaging focused on the children taking responsibility for their behaviour online and knowing how to keep themselves safe on the internet. They learnt about:

... people who they could trust and talk to if they were worried

... how there are certain people in school who have a special responsibility for looking after them

... why we would not go up to a stranger in the street and that this is the same online

...all the wonderful things that the internet has done for modern society, how it is a great tool for keeping people in touch and together while living through times like COVID lockdowns

... 'stranger danger' and how this is particularly important on the internet, as you cannot see the person you are talking to

... how the internet widens people's experiences and understanding of the world and



Key Stage 1 designed posters to warn others to be safe and responsible online

how this can then lead to tolerance, understanding and respect

Across the school the children took part in activities which helped them to practice or develop the ideas which were discussed in assembly. Upper Key Stage classes held debates about whether children should be allowed to use the internet unsupervised. Their knowledge of balanced arguments from their literacy lessons enabled them to engage in a lively discussion about the pros and cons of the two sides, with the outcome focusing on the ability of the children to take responsibility for their actions and keep themselves safe while online.

Lower Key Stage 2 focused on being kind and behaving in the same way that you would if you were talking to someone in the real world. This included very important messages about 'stranger danger',

not sharing personal information and how their behaviour and their words online have real world impacts. The children learnt that they have the same responsibilities to other people online and the importance of valuing differences.

Here is some of their advice:

*"You might be jealous of someone in a video but you shouldn't leave a bad comment just to make yourself feel better. They are a real person with real feelings."*  
(Year 4)

*"Just because you can't see them doesn't give you the right to be mean to them. The digital world is the same as the real world."*  
(Year 3)

# Valuing differences

At Elm Tree, PSHE lessons are a significant part of the curriculum. They recognise the role that PSHE plays in the personal development of young people and the opportunities it provides for children to explore crucial topics such as relationships, mental wellbeing and change.

Elm Tree children know that PSHE is always taught by their class teacher and it never 'drops off the timetable'. This ensures there is a weekly, designated session when the children know they can discuss and share their views and questions. In their lessons, the children are always given time to reflect on their thoughts and the opinions of others.

The Elm Tree PSHE curriculum is planned using the SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience, Friendship) thematic approach for the whole school. They love the revisiting of core units: Me and My Relationships, Valuing Difference, Keeping Safe, Rights and Respect, Being My Best and Growing and Changing. Building on these important concepts as the children mature and develop their sense of self, ensures pupils are equipped with the skills to understand, develop and maintain healthy relationships with their peers and positive behaviours and attitudes.

This year staff designated one of the share afternoons with parents to PSHE. A range of tasks were planned



for the children and their parents based on the theme of 'Valuing Difference'. The parents were able to experience the level of questioning and rich discussion the children are involved in when considering PSHE topics and that it can be an excellent vehicle for teaching acceptance, tolerance and empathy.

Elm Tree uses a whole class floor book approach to recording children's thoughts and reflections. These books are available for the children to look at and discuss outside of their learning. Recording in this way shows all children that their contributions are valued and form part of a bigger picture in the class community.

# Finance and safety skills

At Dell Primary, staff work to provide opportunities to support children in skills for their futures.

In January, children from Reception to Year 6 were visited by Hope from HSBC. Hope led workshops throughout the day

which focused on financial education. The children learnt about a range of topics which included UK money, the role of banks, types of bank account, and saving.

Children from Year 2 at Dell Primary have also been working

with George from Bonanza Creative in conjunction with Cadent to learn about safety around Carbon Monoxide. The character 'Safety Seymour' delivered this important message in a fun way and all children were given a free Carbon Monoxide alarm to take home.

## Stories and bowling at Poplars



For National Storytelling Week Poplars Primary were lucky enough to welcome theatrical storyteller Abbie Lawrence, who worked with KS1 pupils to harness the power of drama and oracy to weave a captivating tale about a dragon residing beneath a library.

Throughout National Storytelling Week each class got creative, working in pairs or small groups across the school to create a diorama to retell a chosen story.

Also this term, children in KS2 united with other schools in Lowestoft to compete in a variety of sporting events, such as bowling and boccia, which brought together young competitors, fostering teamwork and friendly competition as they aimed for pins and balls!

## Dress up and drama

Time-travelling author Julia Edwards visited Wensum Junior in November for National Storytelling Week.

She began by giving the whole school a whistle-stop tour through history, introducing *The Scar Gatherer* series. Julia gave an insight into what inspired her to write books, before summarising a few of her stories as well as reading extracts direct from her books.

It was such a treat to hear the author of a book reading it aloud! The children particularly enjoyed the quirky and fascinating facts from history – the tales about Henry VIII's wives really captured their imagination.



Following on from the assembly, Year 4 and 5 children participated in 'Dramatic Tension' workshops with Julia. They learnt that dramatic tension was about keeping the audience engaged to want to read or watch more. Julia linked this to well-known fairy tales and the children dressed-up and acted out some of the scenes, focusing on the dramatic tension elements of the stories. The workshops finished with a

question-and-answer session about being an author.

Back in the classrooms, the children will take what they have learned about the importance of having a strong character in their stories as they explore how tension can be created through heroes/heroines, as well as antagonists. It will help them to get all the elements correct to create a cliff hanger in the narratives they are currently working on.

## Raising money together

In February children at Nelson Infant took part in the 'Number Themed' non-uniform day to raise money for NSPCC, a wonderful charity whose work is greatly admired and appreciated by everyone at the school.

The children enjoyed an exciting carousel of maths activities within their classrooms before being given a snapshot into some of the work that the NSPCC undertakes, including Pantosaurus who the children are familiar with in school.

Nelson Infant is currently working with local Tesco stores in Norwich



to campaign for their Breakfast Club and Food Bank. The mission is to raise vital funds so they can continue to offer a free healthy

breakfast to all children and to more regularly open their 'Honesty Shed' food bank to help support local families.

## Matball winners!



At Dell Primary School, Key Stage 1 children have been learning about the local area in geography while lower Key Stage 2 have been competing with other schools.

KS1 pupils looked at aerial view photographs of the school environment and the local area and mapped the features that they saw on a map. The children worked collaboratively and realised that when you work together you achieve more!

Dell were represented by a team of Year 3 and 4 pupils at the Suffolk Schools Partnership Matball competition. They were a new team put together for the event and their collaborative skills shone throughout the competition. The team achieved first place!



**Evolution Academy Trust**  
Progress through Partnership

[www.evolutionacademytrust.org.uk](http://www.evolutionacademytrust.org.uk)

