



July 2024, issue 7

# Trust newsletter

An update for parents and carers, from the First Federation Trust



## A note from our CEO & Trust Lead

As we approach the end of the summer term, we would like to take this opportunity to offer some advice and guidance for the holiday period and say thank you for your continued support.

In this July issue, we recommend some fun activities for the break and share some advice for those children who may experience anxiety in the run up to the return to school.

I'm delighted to share that our Chair of Trustees, Alex Walmsley, who has worked tirelessly for the Trust, has been awarded an MBE for Services to Education. Alex helps us to provide excellent education for all pupils.

We hope you all manage to take some time to relax before the start of the winter term and enjoy your summer.

Paul Walker



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## Recommended Summer Activities

We want your child to make the most of the summer holidays and it is very important for them to relax, however if they want to continue learning or you need some fun and engaging activities to help on those quieter days, here are some creative ideas which won't break the bank.

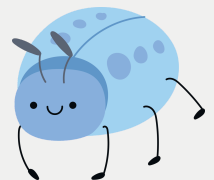


### Nature Scavenger Hunt

Create a list of plants, flowers, birds, wildlife and anything in nature which you can spend time spotting and ticking off throughout the holidays. Perhaps entice children with a small prize for when they get a full house!

### Build a Bug Hotel

Building a Bug Hotel inspires creativity and encourages children to get outdoors while learning about local insects - there are some easy to follow instructions on the Twinkl website. [www.twinkl.co.uk](http://www.twinkl.co.uk)



### Arts and Crafts

Arts and crafts activities are an easy win for those rainy days or when you just run out of ideas - create something from recycled materials or paint a picture, make a kite, a paper plate mask or an animal from old loo rolls!

### Yoga

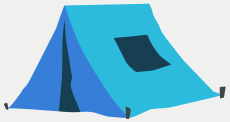
Yoga is a great activity which can take place inside or outdoors. It's good for strengthening body and mind and can help reduce anxiety before returning to school.



### Plant some Seeds

Plant some seeds in a pot or the garden - spend time watering it during the summer and enjoy watching it grow!

### Camp in the Garden



Camping is a great way to reduce screen time and if you don't want to go far, why not try the garden! If you have a camping stove, try some of the suggested recipes on Twinkl.

### Fruit Picking

Fruit picking is a lovely activity which can be combined with a walk and followed with some baking, jam making or maybe try creating a juice or smoothie.



### Paint Pebbles

If you live near the beach or a park, take a stroll and collect some pebbles which you can take home and decorate. Give them as gifts or hide them on popular paths for people to find.

### Visit the Library

The library is a great place for reading, relaxing and holiday activities. Visit your local library website for a list of events and take a trip there this summer to borrow some great books.

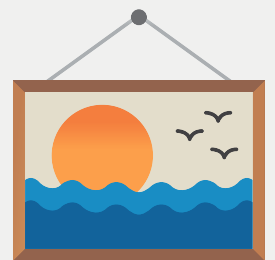


### Watch a Film and Write a Review

When you're feeling tired or for those summer evenings, snuggle up and watch a good movie or visit your local cinema. Perhaps suggest writing a film review or creating an advertising poster afterwards.

### Visit a Museum or Gallery

Most towns have a good museum or gallery or there may be visiting exhibitions somewhere - these are often free and include lots of summer activities. Great for widening culture and good on rainy days!



### Try a new sport

Visit the local park to play tennis or badminton, find a squash court and try any sport you haven't done before. This could be jogging, rounders or anything new offering a great way to stay active and have fun with friends.

### More ideas

Visit the Twinkl website for more information and ideas - enjoy!



[www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/top-twenty-summer-holiday-activities](http://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/top-twenty-summer-holiday-activities)

## Dealing with Anxiety

After the summer break, some children will experience certain levels of anxiety in the run up to the return to school in September. Elements such as having a new teacher, moving to a new Key Stage or classroom, and struggling in friendship groups can all make children feel apprehensive.

Here are some tips from the [Child Mind Institute](#) in how to help children navigate these feelings.

### Listen to concerns

It may sound obvious, but just listening to a child's concerns is very important - acknowledging their feelings will help them feel more secure. Sometimes they just want to talk about their worries and don't need immediate solutions.

Take some time to talk in the car, at bedtime or any time you're relaxed so there is less pressure.

### Prepare early

Get back into the school routine at least a week before returning to school, and if possible, do some test runs. Whether this is finding their new classroom before the holidays, introducing them to their new teacher, practising the drop off routine or anything to make them feel comfortable.

### Let someone know

Speak to someone at school and let them know how your child is feeling - staff are there to support you.

### Arrange for a hand-off

Perhaps arrange to have someone meet and engage with your child when you arrive back at school. The teacher may be too busy to pay special attention so perhaps a friend can help them settle. Engaging in an activity can also help take their mind off of their anxiety.

Check the Child Mind Institute website for more information and guidance: [www.childmind.org](http://www.childmind.org)

“

*Any opportunity for exposure, for repetition, for mastery is going to help them do what we call 'coping ahead'.*

”

*Dr. Busman*





## Alex Walmsley, Chair of Governors, awarded with MBE

We'd like to say a huge congratulations to Alex Walmsley, our Chair of Trustees, who has recently been awarded with an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for services to education.

Alex said, "I am absolutely delighted to receive this honour on behalf of everyone within our First Federation Trust family. Education is all about collaboration which is key for the Trust as well. This is a great acknowledgement of all that we have achieved together and I am thrilled that our success has been recognised in this way".



Alex Walmsley, Chair of Governors

Joining the First Federation Trust Board of Directors in January 2015 and becoming Chair in 2016, Alex has brought his audit, business advice and accountancy background, plus many years' experience as a chair to the Trust.

As Principal Finance Officer of Ted Wragg, a MAT in Exeter; the chair of Devon Association of Governors (DAG), and representing academies at the Devon Education Forum, Alex has worked with many schools, all contributing towards his dedication to education.

Paul Walker, Chief Executive Officer, said, 'I'm delighted to hear that Alex's contribution to education has been recognised in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours list.

He has supported our Trust for over 9 years, chairing the board and holding us to account. His wide experience of trust structures and governance has been invaluable, helping us with strategy, business planning, recruitment and financial management.

This MBE is well-deserved – together we will continue with our mission to improve schools and provide the best education for all pupils.'

Well done Alex!



Paul Walker, Chief Executive Officer

# Interview with Kath Powell, Director of Inclusion

At the Trust, we take care to consider every aspect of education and it is our mission to become as inclusive as possible, to ensure we are providing excellent education for all abilities, backgrounds and needs.

Earlier this year, we employed a new Director of Inclusion, Kath Powell, who is passionate about inclusive education and equality of opportunity for all pupils.

We sat down with Kath to discuss her role. You can read the full conversation below.



Kath Powell, Director of Inclusion

## Hi Kath! Shall we start with an introduction of yourself?

Hi, I'm Kath Powell - I am very excited to have joined the Senior Leadership team at the Trust having joined in January this year. I feel privileged to have taken on the role of Director of Inclusion at such an exciting time as we continue to grow.

I bring to the team a background in school leadership and a plethora of experience working with schools and their leaders across all phases, with a focus on school improvement, inspection, school effectiveness and ultimately leadership.

## Can you explain what is Inclusive Education and why is it so important?

I passionately believe that Inclusion is the golden thread for school improvement.

We are all in education with the same moral purpose and that is to make a difference - inclusive education is just that. Ensuring that we do everything we can to give children and young people the best start in life, and the gift of a high-quality education.

This starts with the vision and culture set by leaders within their settings. Creating a sense of belonging and a relentless drive to ensure all pupils, regardless of their background or challenges, are supported and encouraged to get the best educational experience possible.

“ I am passionately committed to ensure that all children and young people across the Trust get an equality of opportunity both inside and out of the classroom. ”





### **Can you explain the meaning of Equality of Opportunity and how it's important for our pupils?**

I am passionately committed to ensure all children and young people across the Trust get an equality of opportunity both inside and out of the classroom. Everyone should get access to high quality teaching and learning that supports them to make strong levels of progress from their relative starting points, and more importantly equip them as a whole person to be best prepared for life after primary school as a well-rounded individual.

I also think it is vital to acknowledge the context of the south-west and ensure children and young people maximise the opportunities of living in a great place but also have a clear awareness of opportunities beyond our region. I feel this is vital if we are to raise aspiration for all.

### **How have you supported our schools in both of these areas so far?**

I have spent the first part of my tenure getting to know the schools and staff, building an understanding of the context in which they serve and their current successes and challenges. I felt it was important to get to know how the Trust works, discovering the benefits of collaboration across schools and identifying opportunities for us to be even more effective in raising the profile and impact of inclusion.

Whilst the work has begun on a number of longer term strategic aims, I have begun building a collaborative focus on raising the quality of leadership around special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across all of our settings.

The first part of the journey includes engaging in a national project with Whole Education called WE SEND. The aim of this programme is to raise the quality of SEND leadership across the whole Trust by accessing best practice and experts in the field, and placing inclusion at the heart the improvement journey of all our schools.

### **How do you plan to continue this important work in the future?**

The key focus over the coming months will be to ensure we have a clear view of the provision for SEND learners across all of our settings.

I want to ensure all teachers and the support staff are supported with the most effective training and support to consistently raise the quality of provision in their settings as we collectively work to navigate the ongoing system challenges within education.

**EVERYONE  
MATTERS**

## Governance

We'd like to say a **big thank you** to all our **governance volunteers** who give their time for free to support our schools.

We'd also like to introduce the following **new parent council member** who has joined us this term. Welcome to:



Simone O'Neill  
Hawkchurch CE Primary

## Goodbye

We would like to say good bye to Alan Smith, the Exeter Diocese representative from our Members board, and to Kat Brimacombe, who has held various governance roles for the Trust, lastly as chair to our West Hub board.

We are sad to see them both go and would like to thank them for their time and contribution over the years.



Westcliff Primary School

# Keep in touch

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firstfederation.org

