



LIFE Matters

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Spring 2019

Message from the CEO

For many of us Easter is a time of new life and new beginnings. Assemblies at many of our schools have focused on this theme.

It is particularly poignant for us given the sad passing away of Caprice Osas Maxwell, a Year 13 student at FBA, who was the epitome of joy and resilience throughout her struggle with cancer. Many students have realised that they now need to live with the awareness that life can be short and that we should live making the most of every day and valuing every opportunity we have. The Caprice Cup will remember a student every year who has shown the same courageous optimism as Caprice.

Plenty of time this term has been spent looking at the Trust ethos which is now almost 3 years old. We feel that a new vision that reflects the size and identity of our Trust will help people understand us. This vision with a set of core beliefs will be shared next term but includes the exciting line, “to dare to achieve the extraordinary” which we feel sums up what we want for all those in our community.

We have spent some time speaking to Roxwell Primary in Essex about them joining us. They are really near Margarettling and seem a great fit with plenty to offer so we hope to have more news in the next few weeks.

Our Trust Leadership Conference in March welcomed Frederica Roberts who encouraged us to adopt positive mindsets. Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive and with 50 directors, governors and senior leaders from Trust schools attending there was a real awareness of the journey that we have been on.

More recently we were pleased to see how Ofsted reacted when they visited Benhurst this term. We expect to be able to share the report with you in the next few weeks.

Already we provide Maths and English secondary support to schools in Barking and Dagenham as well as School Improvement support in three local authorities.

In the coming months, we would love to be able to develop an international presence where we can share the practice in our schools with students and staff in other countries. Links with Europe, Africa, America and Asia are already beginning to get underway. This week 15 Chinese teachers visited FBA. Last term, education ministers and leaders from Hungary and Morocco visited Benhurst and international dancers constantly visit Margarettling. The British Council have some great schemes and we would like pupils in all our schools to develop a global mindset to complement what we teach them about our vital British Values

Our schools have slightly different Easter holidays this year. Whenever you have yours we hope it is a time of peace, reflection and hope.

**Best Wishes
Julian Dutnall, CEO**

Message from the Chair

I am delighted to be able to share in the great successes of pupils and students, staff members, governors and leaders. We have much to celebrate as a Trust and it is always a pleasure to hear of individual, class and school achievements. For some, achievement is a tiny step in the right direction with much support and encouragement along the way. It may be trying a new activity, making a friend, getting into school or participating for the first time. Others may see achievement on a local, regional or national scale. For many, it has involved the sheer hard work and tenacity of parents and carers, often in the background. Whatever that achievement is, we want to recognise it, and the effort that has gone into getting there. I am also really pleased to see what belonging increasingly means to individuals and schools in the Trust. We celebrate the diversity we have in terms of the different types of schools, facilities and learning opportunities and recognise that we are in a fantastic position to be able to share what we have with each other. We have already seen the fruits of belonging in this way through conferences, celebrations and events, and we will see many more during the rest of the year. Watch this space. Finally, thank you for all that you do to support the education of our children and young people, whether you are a parent, carer, volunteer, governor, staff member, or indeed a pupil or student: I look forward to having the opportunity to share with you in more of our successes in the coming months.

**Chair,
Louise Douglas**



LIFE Ethos in Action

LIFE Ambassadors from all the Trust schools, meet together once a term. Their role is to draw together all the personal strengths and values of each school and show their peers what Ethos means in real terms by actions and activities. The Ambassadors have been keen to promote empathy and caring for others by supporting schemes such as the Samaritans 'The Big Talk', in December 2018, and the supermarkets gift cards for Christmas Dinners donated to a local foodbank. £330 was donated in December 2018.

Our wellbeing is often connected to our emotional resilience. Trials and difficult issues are experienced by most people but how they cope may vary. The LIFE Ambassadors are encouraging pupils to harness positive memories, experiences and interests, to focus on when times become tough. These become our seats of wellbeing and enable resilience. The Ambassadors will be hosting a series of afternoon tea parties across the Trust Schools to promote wellbeing, happiness and community. It shows we can work together on any challenge.

Another great example of the demonstration of LIFE ethos is the fantastic fundraising organised by our FBA students. Lambourne End Activity Centre has been the source of great wellbeing for many of our students over the years. The 52 acre site has inspired our students to attempt new challenges and to overcome personal trials. The therapeutic space has encouraged students to embrace nature and enjoy outdoor activities. Over the past year they have lost their entire stock of rabbits to a virus. In response to this, two students from the FBA Farm were compelled to show empathy and take action. They planned and organised a cake sale to raise funds to purchase two Netherland Dwarf bunnies to give back to Lambourne as a gift of appreciation for all they have done to support us. It is so encouraging to see how students have overcome a problem and gathered a team to make a difference ...ethos in action!

**Rachel Grimwood,
LIFE Ethos Development Manager**



Benhurst

In March, we celebrated Being British week where the children were given the opportunity to learn about many of the amazing historical, traditional, innovative and sometimes quirky ways that make Britain great! Throughout the week, we saw children cooking, drawing, painting, building, singing, holding elections, enjoying tea parties, designing and writing in ways which showcase the best of our country. We even had a wedding in Year 1!

During the week, we also celebrated World Book Day where the children and staff dressed as their favourite book characters. We were also joined by our Governors and members of the wider Trust who spent the day at Benhurst. After spending the morning in lessons and talking to the children, they enjoyed lunch in the dinner hall before watching a demonstration phonics lesson with Mrs Garratty then listening to representatives from the Pupil Parliament and six sub-committees about the amazing work they do. Finally, our guest met with children in KS2 to discuss their learning.

Our Twitter page (@BenhurstPrimary) was very busy as we shared our learning with our parents and wider community. We were delighted that our tweeting had a staggering 1.32 million retweet audience, our best so far!

David Denchfield, Headteacher



Frances Bardsley

FBA is Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!

Our founder, Frances Bardsley was a staunch supporter of rights for women and it is very fitting that in the academic year when we celebrated the 100 year anniversary of women being granted the vote in the UK that the school show was a wonderful production of Mary Poppins.

The production was directed by Miss Mond (Head of Drama), assisted by Miss Ford (Drama), Miss Johnson (Head of Music) and Miss Carr (Music). The wind from the east started blowing in September when the students auditioned for their parts and Aisling Hogan (Year 11) blew away the competition to become Mary Poppins. For 6 months the staff and a cast of 38 students from Years 7 – 11 showed true dedication rehearsing every Monday and Wednesday after school, learning the lines, songs and dance moves. Students from Year 10 helped to make props and marketing materials during a Big Activity Day.

Audiences from Margaretting Primary, Dame Tipping Primary and Hylands Schools enjoyed a special matinee performance before the cast stunned a packed hall on two nights with very professional and polished performances which were practically perfect in every way.

Miss Mond said, "Producing our 2019 school musical of Mary Poppins has been a huge honour. The story, songs and characters are so well known; and with the new film having been recently released it continues to be a family favourite. It has been so much fun producing the performance with the students, and we have enjoyed the songs, dances and scenes and are very pleased to be able to perform it to the FBA community. I have been extremely proud of the students' dedication to the rehearsal process and the students have worked tirelessly since September to ensure that the production is a success."

We look forward to the announcement of the show for next year and wonder how this outstanding performance can be topped.

**Emilie Darabasz & David Turrell,
Heads of School, FBA**

Margaretting

The Spring term has been a busy one at Margaretting C of E Primary School. We met with our local schools to discuss the Food Bank, which we set up last year, to try and encourage other schools to get involved. We also made contact with Nationwide Building Society, who are taking part in the scheme, to create a joint promotion to encourage other businesses to introduce Food Banks in their place of work.

We launched the 'Have you got the bottle?' appeal, in support of the Governments Single Use Plastics initiative, to encourage all of our children and staff to use a reusable bottle for their water in school.

Our Year 5 and 6 children have been enjoying a fantastic stress relief for their SATs by dancing with Dance East. Regi, a dancer who stars in the latest Beyoncé and Jay Z video, also flew in from Paris to teach a dance workshop.

The Baby Shower Bake Off we hosted was a great success! Unfortunately Prince Harry and Meghan were unable to make the event as they were very busy, but we had a fantastic time baking against the other MAT schools.

FBA Sixth Form students visited our school and helped the children with one of our values, perseverance. They really motivated all the children to keep trying.

To celebrate World Book Day we met the author Dennis Thompson, who spoke about how he comes up with ideas for his books. The children really enjoyed learning about being an author.

Some of our staff and Governors attended the LIFE Leadership conference. It was a great opportunity to meet with members of the LIFE Education Trust and other local head teachers and Governors. The speaker presentations and workshops were very interesting and provided us with an opportunity to hear new ideas and get to know the LIFE community better.

As it's nearly Easter we have been busy distributing Easter Eggs to our neighbours and friends. At the Easter church service in April we will be giving out 150 eggs! I wonder who will be lucky enough to get one? All the children will get one, of course!

Maire O'Regan, Headteacher



Dame Tipping

We've been celebrating the arts and literature at Dame Tipping this term. Our World Book Day celebration on the theme of 'Share a Story' was great fun. The children (and teachers!) enjoyed dressing up as their favourite book characters and sharing stories. We really believe in the importance of adults reading to children in developing their love of reading. To this end, we had a special assembly where each teacher read aloud from their favourite book.



The week beginning the 18th of March was Shakespeare Week. Not only did all the children learn about the life and works of our most celebrated playwright and poet, but Class 3 and 4 performed a version of 'Macbeth'. The children portrayed the characters very convincingly and used the original Shakespearean language, which was very impressive.

Kathryn Waters, Headteacher

The Bridge

Harry, a Year 11 student at The Bridge, recently completed an incredibly successful week's work experience working for MTR Crossrail at their headquarters, the Rail Operations Centre (ROC) in Romford. Harry is extremely keen to pursue a career in the railway industry via an apprenticeship that will help him develop his knowledge and skills. During his week with the Crossrail customer experience controllers, Harry learnt how to complete radio checks, hourly updates, Tyrell messages and the importance of Public Performance Measure. He was able to find out what a TRUST delay attribution is and why they are important. Harry said "I also learned how to use DOTE as a diagnostic tool to discover what is wrong with the train and if it can still run or not". Previous to this, Harry spent a day during half term riding a new 345 train on the new Elizabeth line between Shenfield and Liverpool Street. He was able to observe the driver on a full return journey and ask many questions regarding his job role and the structure of the new train.

Harry thoroughly enjoyed his work experience which has proved invaluable when applying for his apprenticeship. He has shown commitment to his end goal and has been proactive in seeking out opportunities to make this happen. He has recently applied for an apprenticeship with Crossrail and is awaiting a response – good luck Harry, we are so proud of you and what you have achieved in your short time here. We believe you will go far with the attitude you have shown towards your studies and your future career.

Toni Cox, Head of School

