

Market Drayton Learning Partnership Newsletter July 2016



Stakeholder forum hears from community and students



At this term's stakeholder forum meeting, Davina Bridge from Market Drayton Community Partnership, Mandy Firth from Festival Drayton, and Catherine Westwood from Market Drayton Library outlined ways in which community organisations and schools can work with each other to our mutual advantage. There is huge scope for developing these links further, as we will hear at future forum meetings.

Our pupils and students also have a wealth of excellent ideas for extending inter-school links and activities. These were reported to the forum by the leader of the newly appointed team of Grove student ambassadors following workshop sessions with Grove ambassadors and the Junior and Infant School Councils.

- The forum will next meet at **6pm on Tues 22 November** at the Junior School. All parents, staff and others with an interest in education are welcome.
- The partnership's trust board also meets each term, and following their last meeting held their first AGM. The trustees' report to the AGM is posted on the schools' websites.

Structural change seemingly inevitable

The White Paper Education Excellence Everywhere makes clear that the government wants all maintained schools to convert, in groups, to form multi-academy trusts (MATs) by 2020. The element of compulsion has been slightly diluted, but our local authority considers that legislation the government is currently planning to implement the white paper is likely to mean that all schools in Shropshire will have to convert. Although the government's plans and timetable may be modified, MDLP trustees are keen to be in the driving seat when it comes to manoeuvring through such significant structural change. Decisions will be made ultimately by the governing bodies of our individual schools but in the meantime trustees are looking at a number of models and options, with the aim of maximising opportunities for furthering the vision of the trust while minimising threats to it.



The partnership's stakeholder forum unanimously elected Sarah Kynaston (centre) as forum chair, Kerry Simmons as secretary, and Tom Kinnersley to represent the forum as a trustee on the board.

And a tiny taste of recent activities, from nursery to sixth form:



- Nursery children experimented with vinegar and bicarbonate of soda to make the best rocket fuel, while infants and juniors investigated whether seeds that had been up in a rocket with astronaut Tim Peake grew better than those that stayed back in Market Drayton.



- Year 2 at the Infant School went beachcombing in Rhyl and collected natural objects to make 'beach art' based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy.



- While Year 3 at the Junior School played host to their parents at a French café experience, Year 4 went on a residential visit to the Conway Centre on Anglesey and made a set of superb sculptures linked to the Olympics and their own school games.

- Grove student team 'Kanga Books' wrote and illustrated a children's book which won them the 'Best Quality concept' award in the Shropshire Young Enterprise competition. "The students showed fantastic team work, resilience during times of difficulty, and creativity in overcoming challenges."



School Places

While bucking the Shropshire trend, but in line with the national urban one, we are facing a shortage of primary school places in Market Drayton. The local authority has projected that four new classrooms will be needed across the three primary-phase schools in town by 2026. It has also made clear that no funding is currently available to build extra accommodation, which means there is likely to be pressure on existing space within our schools. Trustees are working collaboratively with the LA to find short and medium term solutions that ensure sufficient high-quality provision for all our children within their own community.

The vision of the Market Drayton Learning Partnership is "to work as a community to support our children and young people in their enjoyment of learning, raising their aspirations and their achievements as learners now and for the future."