



Vanguard Learning Trust Newsletter

Edition 6: December 2020

Trust-wide initiative

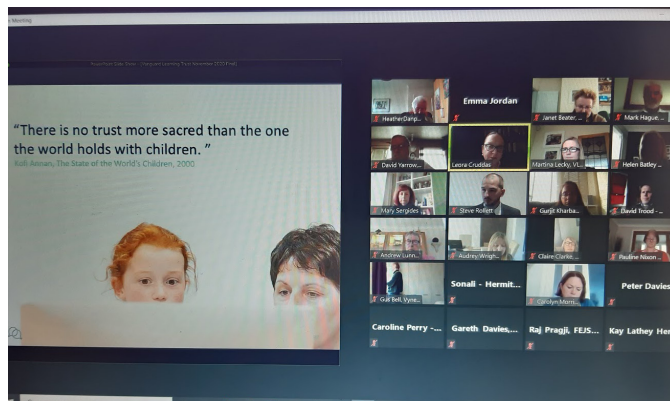
A Trust-wide fundraising initiative, led by Ruislip High School in the summer term 2020, was launched to raise money for a local hospice, Michael Sobell, with a target of £1000. The total amount was raised by September 2020. A letter was recently sent to the Trust from Cath Cole, Interim Director of Fundraising and Communication, acknowledging her gratitude regarding the money raised for the hospice.

'I can't tell you how wonderful it is to receive a donation of this size, particularly at this incredibly difficult time for fundraising. It always amazes me that, despite all the challenges people are facing, they still take the time and effort to support charity as you have all done.'

Governance Day

The first inaugural Trust-wide governance day was held on Wednesday 18th November 2020. There were 34 participants, including governors from all Trust schools as well as Vanguard Learning Trust members and trustees. The theme for the day was outstanding, inclusive education and it involved two keynote speakers from the Confederation of School Trusts, Leora Cruddas and Steve Rollett, CEO and deputy CEO respectively. The afternoon was a school-based session for governors reflecting on their school's development plan.

Feedback received by participants was exceedingly positive, in particular the time to reflect collectively on the core purpose of all schools in terms of



Governance day Zoom session



Letter of thanks from Michael Sobell Hospice

the advancement of education for the public purpose.

'Such a useful day, a real eye-opener, and a great choice of speakers. Thank you to the team for pulling this together. If I take anything away it will be our role as governors to be the pillars of education advancement and the insurgent mission!! Thank you again and Kasserian Ingera!'
Gurjit Kharbanda, Governor, Ryefield

'The governance day was a triumph for all those involved. The presentations were powerful, thought provoking and very informative. Governors and trustees were certainly reminded about their responsibilities, particularly in terms of strategic direction and providing support and challenge to staff and schools. It was useful in the afternoon to meet as a LGB to discuss various aspects of the SDP. Credit must be given to the Trust team for organising and facilitating the day which is not always easy on Zoom! Thank you.'
Andy Lunnon, Governor, Ruislip High

Student activities

Student awards

Each school in the Trust selected students, one from each key stage, except for Field End's who are both in KS2, to be a recipient based on their support for one of the Trust's values:

1. Life-long learning
2. Pride
3. Belonging
4. Respect, responsibility and relationships
5. Tolerance and humility

The recipients received a certificate and a Trust pin badge, and a postcard was sent home to their parents. Each school's recipients for the autumn term are as follows:

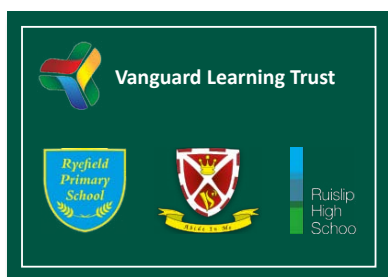
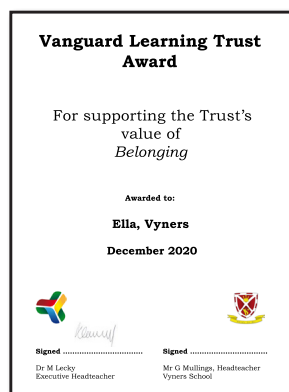
Field End: Isaac and Arsh, KS2

Hermitage: Dolly, EYFS, Ruby, KS1, Nawal, KS2

Ruislip High: Tommy, KS3, Sophie, KS4, Louisa, KS5

Ryefield: Leonardo, EYFS, Rayan, KS1, Lexie, KS2

Vyners: Ella, KS3, Wemi, KS4, Kathryn, KS5



Travel plan transforms Vyners student's life

A new service introduced by the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH), in partnership with transport experts, has meant that students who were previously unable to do so can now travel to and from school independently. Sean, Year 8 at Vyners, was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the age of four and has scoliosis, which requires regular surgical interventions. LBH identified the need for one-to-one travel training which involved learning how to make a journey from home to school independently.



Sean now enjoys independent travel to school

As a result of this training, Sean is now able to travel unaccompanied to school.

Sustainability project

Vanguard Learning Trust has launched a Trust-wide initiative, inviting students to take part in a unique opportunity to secure funds for a sustainability project.

The project will be composed of two stages. The first stage will be a school-level competition in order to select the team of students that will represent them at the Trust-wide stage.

The second stage will be a Trust-wide dragons' den experience for students to present their ideas to a panel in order to secure funds for their projects. Teams will need to demonstrate how their projects will reduce the school's and/or local community's carbon footprint in the long term; how the project will be sustainable; and what the funds will specifically be used for. The dragons' den experience will take place in spring term 2021. The Trust would like to thank Lord Randall of Uxbridge for his support with this project.

A Trust-wide poetry competition will also be launched in the spring term 2021.

We can make a difference!



Vanguard Learning Trust invites students across the Trust to take part in a unique opportunity to secure funds for a project that reduces the carbon footprint of their school and/or local community.



Internal school competition

Schools will decide how to run the competition in order to select the team of students that will represent them at the Trust-wide stage.

Trust-wide sustainability project

Each school in the Trust will have a team of up to six students to take part in a dragons' den experience to present their idea in order to be awarded funds to ensure their project is able to progress. The team will need to present to the 'dragons' how their project will reduce the school's and/or local community's carbon footprint in the long term; how the project will be sustainable; and what the funds will specifically be used for. The amount of money each team can bid for is £500, £1000, £1500 and £2000.

Project ideas can include:

- Reduction in waste in particular food and single-use plastic
- Recycling and the use of compost
- Using renewable energy
- Growing organic food and sustainable gardening
- Transportation: more students walking and cycling to school



Flyer for the sustainability project

School improvement work

NQT and NQT+1

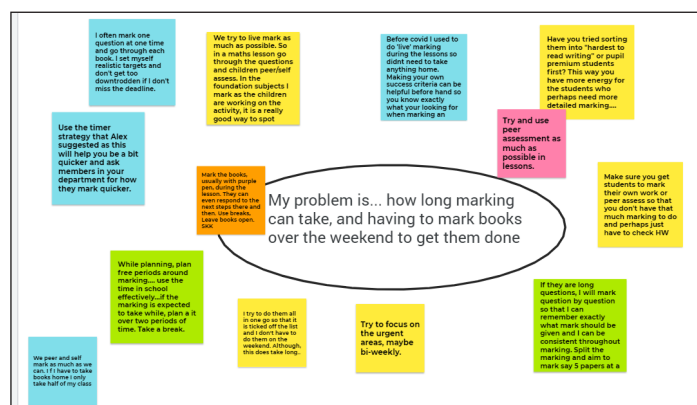
Across the Trust there are 26 teachers who are either newly qualified teachers (NQT) or in their second year of teaching (NQT+1). Due to the pandemic and lockdown period in the last academic year, the NQTs missed a substantial part of their training in school, with many of them not being able to complete the majority of their second teaching placements. The NQT+1 teachers had to adapt to online teaching and learning during their probationary year, which affected an important period of development as part of their new teaching career.

Whilst schools have their own development programmes for NQTs and recently qualified teachers, it was seen as vital that these teachers were given the opportunity to join a wider network of support across the Trust. Four professional development sessions during the year have been planned to help the teachers to cope with the extra demands of this year and to discuss issues and strategies that would develop their professional practice. All sessions are to be led by either the Executive Headteacher, Martina Lecky, or one of the Trust's School Improvement Leads.

Session one took place on Wednesday 11th November 2020 on life-work balance and wellbeing, led by Alex Pape, School Improvement Lead from Vyners School. The session explored the subject of balancing life and work as a teacher at the start of their career, and Alex provided strategies to help manage time and stress. The group also made use of the interactive tool 'Jamboard' which was new to many of the group; this was a useful tool for collaboration during the session which many of the participants enjoyed using.

'It was really good for the different schools to work together and share problems and ideas. The session was interactive and there were plenty of opportunities to ask questions and collaborate.'

MFL teacher/NQT, Ruislip High



Group discussion using Jamboard

Let's Think Hub

Vanguard Learning Trust and Let's Think Forum are working in partnership to offer a renowned professional development programme. The aim is to establish the Trust as a hub for the Let's Think programmes and a centre of good practice.

Let's Think is a teaching approach based on exemplar classroom activities in English, mathematics and science. The activities address the progression and students' reasoning in the subject. Teachers receive pre-planned lessons but require ongoing professional development, facilitated by experienced practitioners, to ensure the programme is implemented effectively. Although Let's Think is subject-based, it enhances general intelligence and increases students' attainment beyond the particular subject context; this means that it can be used as part of schemes of work and can lead to raised attainment across the curriculum.

Sixteen teachers from across the Trust are taking part in this exciting project. The courses consist of five twilight sessions spread across the academic year. The subject courses are led by experienced Let's Think tutors: English by Michael Walsh, mathematics by Lynda Maple and science by Martina Lecky. Feedback gathered from the first two sessions has been overwhelmingly positive.

'I feel my understanding is growing and now in preparation for further teaching, I need to focus on the questioning that will help facilitate the children's ability to dig deeper and increase their stamina to explore further.'

Let's Think delegate

'I really enjoyed the session, particularly the insights into how to help students challenge their peers in group discussions and how this can in turn aid their own critical evaluation.'

Let's Think delegate



Let's Think activity

School improvement work

SSAT (schools, students and teachers network) leadership courses

SSAT is a national organisation that supports schools, students and teachers through their membership networks and professional development programmes. They help schools to stay informed and connected as well as recognising and celebrating the successes of students, teachers, and schools, sharing practice across the SSAT network.

Schools within the Trust have signed up to three leadership courses this year: Leaders for the Future, Middle Leadership and Stepping Up to Senior Leadership. The programmes cater for teachers and leaders at all levels and are facilitated and led by experienced senior leaders within the Trust who have all undertaken the necessary training to deliver these courses as part of the Trust's professional development provision. The aim in exploring these opportunities for staff in the Trust is to provide the forum for all to grow and develop, not just as classroom practitioners, but also as leaders within

their individual schools. Over time sharing expertise across the Trust will only serve to improve all of the schools and benefit students as much as possible.

Delegates have already identified aspects of the course that they are particularly looking forward to and the facilitators are looking forward to working with them.

'I am looking forward to improving my knowledge of areas I am less experienced in and getting advice on implementing change over time and measuring impact in schools.'

Stepping Up to Senior Leadership delegate, Ruislip High School

ssat the schools, students and teachers network

Liz Strong School Improvement Lead, Ryefield Primary School



Why did you decide you wanted to be one of the Trust's School Improvement Leads for this academic year?

In my current role as Deputy Headteacher at Ryefield and in previous roles, I have always been passionate about improving teaching and learning. By effectively leading teams of people, we can achieve the best for

our students; this can be realised by fulfilling the potential of teachers as outstanding practitioners as well as identifying whole-school priorities and making plans to accomplish them.

The school improvement role provides me with the opportunity to diversify and work across the Trust with colleagues from different key stages and subjects, gaining and sharing expertise with others in different settings. I think it is a fantastic experience that might not be so readily available to staff in schools working alone.

You are currently leading on the arrangement for the Let's Think hub. What does this entail and what has been the impact of the first two sessions?

Building on the work done last year, the Let's Think Hub aims to raise students' ability to think, reason

and process information in English, mathematics and science. Over the course of the year, teachers from across the Trust will have the opportunity to deliver lessons to put the methodology into practice. My role is to oversee the administration, so that the three facilitators can focus on the content and delivery of the course. So far, teachers have been able to engage with the research and they will now transfer this knowledge by experimenting with lessons in their classrooms and, in future, measure the impact this approach has on deepening learners' thinking skills.

You will be leading and co-facilitating the SSAT future leaders' course. What has this involved and how will the three leadership courses benefit all schools in the Trust?

I am excited about being trained to deliver the Leaders for the Future course by SSAT. The materials and content are really engaging and informative and I think the course is going to be enjoyable for the delegates. Obviously, this year delivering the course virtually is far from ideal, but we have some ideas on how to make it interactive. In preparation for the launch on Wednesday 9th December 2020, I spent some time reading research into leadership theories and approaches and have particularly enjoyed Steve Munby's book: *Imperfect Leadership*. The ability to be able to offer these SSAT courses within the Trust, delivered by colleagues, is beneficial to staff and I am certain it will provide quality professional development for teachers throughout their careers.