



NEWSLETTER

Autumn Term 2023



Welcome to our Trust newsletter

As always, we are working together on the areas that will make the biggest difference to more of our pupils.

In the past year the examination results for pupils in our academies were well above national figures, and, despite the widely reported challenges faced by schools around attendance and behaviour, all of our academies compared very well to national averages.

This is because it is our mission to ensure that there is a great teacher for every pupil in every classroom. To ensure this, our focus is on supporting our staff to be the best at what they do, whatever their role, by providing training, support and development for them.

To achieve this, all of our academies share a common focus on the development of

- Teaching great lessons and effective professional development
- Great teaching and support for vulnerable pupils and pupils with additional needs
- Ensuring that we work together across our academies so that the best practice is shared and delivered in all of them

Our academies also have a shared focus on ensuring that attendance and behaviour remain at the core of our work and are a consistent focus for all of our academies. It is well-known that the better pupils' attendance at school, the better their results and that, where pupils behave well, they learn better. Our academies all work to the same system of expectations regarding both areas and there is a focus on regular communication with our parents to ensure that we can work together. The challenges we face will remain and we ask for your support in sharing our messages with your children at home.

In this issue you will find lots of information about how to support your children and about the successes and good news stories relating to each of our academies. As we progress, our aim is to link more and more to the communities we serve, bringing value to all of our pupils and families as part of Greater Manchester Education Trust.

We hope that you enjoy this issue!

Very best wishes
Damian Owen
Chief Executive Officer



Cost of living Information

The dark evenings and cold winter months are challenging for everyone, especially those struggling with the cost of living. Manchester City Council have provided the following information for residents to be able to access support and advice if needed.

- Manchester's FREE Cost of Living Advice Line: Support with benefits, help and advice about rent, debt, bills, food support and help to get online (support to access the internet, laptops, phones and data). The advice line is open Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm on 0800 023 2692. You can also text on 07860 022 876 or visit manchester. [gov.uk/coladvice](https://www.gov.uk/coladvice).
- Manchester's web page for help with the cost-of-living crisis: A comprehensive guide to the financial help and practical support available to Manchester residents.
- Manchester's web page for those in financial difficulty: Providing information on housing/ council tax, Free School Meals, fuel, travel and cash grants, furniture and white goods.
- Warm Welcome: You can find out more about Warm Welcome spaces near you by accessing the web pages and map at <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>
- Food Banks and Community Grocers: There are both referral and non-referral foodbanks across Manchester. You can find your nearest online at www.trusselltrust.org or www.greatertogethermanchester.org
- Local help and support: Information about support and advice in your local area.
- Free SIMS/internet data for those eligible
- Help with internet use, digital inclusion and use of computers in our libraries
- Governments Help for Households campaign and web pages <https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living> for information and support with benefits, income, rent and bills, pension, subsidised travel, childcare and maternity costs.
- Social Tariffs: Low-cost broadband and phone service packages, for those on low incomes. Check the Ofcom website to see if you can switch to a social tariff.



Artificial Intelligence – What does this mean for schools?

There hardly seems to be a day goes by without Artificial Intelligence (AI) hitting the news. From positive stories about the technology being used to support people and build a better world, to concerns about the effect it will have on jobs, the potential for criminal use and fears about data privacy, AI always grabs the headlines. Whatever the story might be, clearly AI is here to stay, and we need to consider what this means for schools.



AI has the potential to support teachers in a variety of tasks including planning lessons that will adapt to pupil needs, generate questions that diagnose learning and help with analysis of exam results. The DfE have established a working group to look at 'best practice' and make recommendations to teachers. However, teachers will have to become skilled at the way they write prompts in order to get useful results and need to 'sense-check' the results carefully to make sure they fit the scheme of work accurately.

Students will benefit from proofing work, getting bespoke explanations or quick feedback on tasks. However, JCQ (who are responsible for all the examinations across the UK) have already issued warnings that students who use try to use AI to cheat in exams will be disqualified. Discussions around using AI to help with homework are split depending how much you try to hand is as your own work. The biggest concerns remain that students will be exposed to false information leading to poor decision making or be tempted to create malicious posts and images to share with friends which could end up with them facing legal charges.

Whatever the future holds, we have already started to reference AI in the curriculum and begun to deliver training that educates all users about the benefits of using AI sensibly as well as recognising the pitfalls.

Let's leave the final word to ChatGPT



You

Explain why it is important to use AI wisely in schools

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ChatGPT

Using AI wisely in schools ensures personalized learning, efficient administration, and improved teaching. However, careful implementation is crucial to address privacy, equity, and ethical concerns.

News from our Schools



Celebrating Black History month

In October students organised and took part in a range of events to celebrate Black History month. At TEMA we value diversity and equality is one of our core values. This year students were excited to work with a range of partners within and beyond the academy to learn more about the rich history of the black community within and beyond Manchester. Events included; careers



Q&As, performances, a visit to the University and welcoming a very special visitor to the academy! As part of our continued partnership with The Royal Exchange Theatre, students were also invited to perform at the historic venue prior to a production of Great Expectations. Students relished the opportunity, performing a variety of improvised pieces on the theme of equality watched by the general public. The cast were fantastic and their audience were blown away as students showcased their talents. ■



Judges Visit

On 1st November, our Year 10 and 11 GCSE Sociology students had a visit from judges and barristers from both the criminal and family court. HHJ Leona Harrison, HHJ Judge Afzal OBE, Tribunal Judge Alex Durrance and Barrister Sally Penni MBE attended for the morning and shared their career journeys. The aim of the session was to inspire the students to consider a legal route in the future,



as well as making links to their GCSE Sociology course. They spoke about a number of routes into law, bringing a wealth of other experiences and stories which kept everyone engaged and eager to know more. They wanted to show how law can be an accessible career and one that is achievable for those from diverse backgrounds and academic abilities; something which they did brilliantly, and it really opened everyone's eyes to different opportunities.

The students listened to the judges presentations and were given the opportunity to have a Q&A session with each visitor. This was valuable to our students as it helped them to connect the theoretical concepts from their GCSE course to real-life scenarios. It also created a huge amount of curiosity and enthusiasm for the subject.

The judges attended in their court robes and the students even got to try on their wigs which was exciting! Following the visit, the students have been invited to the Manchester Tribunal Court in December to be part of the 'National Schools Week'. The visit includes taking part in workshops, designed to bring the law to life through hands-on, authentic experiences. They will also explore a case to prepare and present a trial, taking on all the courtroom roles, to reach a verdict and explore sentencing options.



Overall, the session was a great addition to the GCSE course and one that will be remembered for a long time, by both the students and the staff involved.

"I found the visit from the judges very inspiring, as well as entertaining. It gave us a great insight into the world of law"

"I am really grateful for the opportunity we were given. The judges answered a lot of questions about the justice system and how courts work" ■



Developing German Links



To enhance German language learning and student motivation at Parrs Wood School, we initiated a partnership with Otto-Hahn-Gymnasium in Germany through the British-German Association. Originally conceived as a digital exchange, both schools quickly embraced the idea of a comprehensive, in-person exchange to foster friendships and global perspectives.

With support from the UK German Connection, we conducted an exploratory visit and secured funding for 75% of the German school's UK exchange costs. The first visit, with 8 German pupils and 3 staff members, included immersive experiences at Parrs Wood, such as wearing uniforms, attending classes, and participating in team-building activities.

Educational trips to places like the National Football Museum, the International Slavery Museum and Quarry Bank Mill emphasized shared

values, promoting unity. The exchange has been a resounding success, boosting motivation (and grades) among participants. Ongoing connections include a German teacher at Parrs Wood and plans for further development and securing funding opportunities from the UK-German Connection, which provide assistance up to 75% of the total cost of running an exchange with a school in Germany.



Our Head of German, will be attending a training seminar in Bonn to explore additional avenues for exchange enhancement in December. This initiative addresses the rising costs of traditional tours, providing a more inclusive opportunity for students, including those from lower-income families, so it is of real potential benefit to all pupils in a comprehensive setting. ■



Shakespeare Schools Festival

This Autumn, Whalley Range students have had the exciting opportunity to perform *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare, at The Contact Theatre, in Manchester City Centre. Since September, the students have worked tirelessly in rehearsals to develop their characters, memorise dialogue, remember blocking and take on board



rehearsal feedback to develop the performance. In preparation for the final performance, a professional actor and director visited Whalley Range to deliver an in-school cast workshop, to offer some techniques and tips. Here's what one of the students thought about it the experience...

“When we were working with the director from the Shakespeare Festival company, it helped us to improve our performance work and make the opportunity even more memorable. The facilitator gave us tips on how to use our body and voice to make our characters more realistic and to connect with our roles better. The advice that I found most helpful was when she said “Land your lines” as it made me realise that I wasn’t putting enough effort and emotion into my lines and that helped me to improve those parts which I wasn’t doing properly. Working with someone from the Shakespeare Festival company made the cast more excited to perform and made me feel less anxious about performing for the first time on a stage in-front of people.

My favourite activity was when we were doing the voice exercises to make sure everyone in the audience could hear us and understand what we were saying. She helped us to adapt our opening scene into something better than we had thought of and added a new perspective on our performance. Overall, it was a very interactive experience and has really helped us to get the best out of our rehearsals and to put our best work forward for when we do the final play. I can’t wait to turn all the hard work we have put in for our characters into something people will enjoy and remember.” (Diya Year 10) ■

