

Welcome back and review from the Chair of Governors on behalf of the Fox Federation Board

A warm welcome back – particularly to those joining one of our Fox Federation schools for the first time in September 2022. Our schools have so much planned for this year, and the Board is very proud to be able to support the amazing teachers and staff who will be working hard to make it all happen.

Last year was incredibly challenging, with staffing pressures due to Covid and a difficult time for children (and families) as they attempted to recover after so much upheaval. Getting children back to school and into the routines and good habits that help their learning, has been the number one focus across the Federation. Huge credit must go to parents and carers who have been under enormous pressure from all sides and have continued to support their children's learning.

Despite pandemic pressures, the Federation continued to pursue an ambitious School Improvement Plan (SIP). Below is a summary of those priorities last year:

- 1. Federation wide staff development.** We know how essential outstanding teaching is for learning. As well as developing experienced teachers our leadership works hard on supporting teachers who are at the early stages of their career (ECTs). Our Board has a designated Governor who reports back on policy and practice regarding ECT support across all schools. All our teachers attend extensive staff development, many have key specialisms, and some are leaders in their field. The Federation Leadership Programme was strengthened and offered to more teachers. The schools further developed their Support Staff training and robust performance management for Teaching Assistants. The Federation recognises that every single staff member plays a crucial part in the success of our schools.
- 2. Develop and improve the CPD provision.** Leaders implemented rigorous evaluation of this provision and a system to monitor take up and evaluation of courses. Mailouts and tweets now include videos, and the website and other marketing channels were improved. There were 576 attendees overall and 99% of evaluations were good or excellent.
- 3. Development of pupil wellbeing, self-regulation, and support for good behaviour for learning.** Extensive training was delivered across the Federation, new classroom displays created, pupil and staff surveys conducted, and part of the timetable was devoted to mindfulness. Governors visited Ashburnham for a presentation on how the new trauma sensitive policy was being developed and put into practice. Excellent work was put into developing the PSHE curriculum for the whole year and partnerships were put in place with both Place to Be and West London Zone to support mental health across the schools. This priority will extend into 2023 and there will be parent workshops in the Autumn.
- 4. Focus on ensuring thorough curriculum coverage and adaptation to ensure pupils' needs are met.** Our Governing board reviews data and progress termly, as well as the action points around identifying and closing gaps. Subject leads across the Federation work together very effectively and meet regularly to discuss the curriculum. Extensive strengthening of the curriculum was completed over the year, particularly in the core

subjects. Government funded tutoring was put in place where relevant and is being overseen and monitored by experienced staff.

5. **Embedding the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework.** In September 2021 this framework changed, as well as the early learning goals and the structure of the curriculum. The Early Years team introduced a new phonics scheme and maths curriculum and conducted intensive training. There was regular reviewing and monitoring of the new curriculum to ensure its consistency with guidelines and this will continue. This priority will carry over into 2023 as they continue to work on ensuring the assessment milestones are useful and appropriate.
6. **Fully embed an inclusive and anti-racist culture across the Federation.** Leaders have been reviewing all aspects of school provision to ensure they're actively anti-racist. They reviewed and updated all recruitment processes, drawing on best practice and researched what steps other institutions are taking to increase diversity. Working groups across the Federation looked at ways to increase community engagement, raise pupil voice, and celebrate different cultures. All schools conducted training around anti-racism and the staff library was expanded with relevant reading.

On top of all this amazing work, the Federation also supported Bousfield Primary as it searched for a long term Headteacher, provided nearly 60 CPD courses, set up a café, was part of the English hub, lead the Central and South West London Maths hub, achieved an amazing Ofsted result at Avonmore, worked on the Avonmore rebuild, was the ITT lead training partner for the West London Teaching School Alliance and implemented a new Premises and Health & Safety system.

Staff in the Federation attended a staggering number of courses on everything from 'Teaching Humanities' to 'Whole Class Approaches to Dyslexia and Autism', from 'Developing Communication and Language' to 'Early years Trauma and Repair'.

Across the Federation more than 50 clubs were offered to children and there were over 60 trips, plus residential for years 5 and 6. There were cooking projects and poetry projects, drama workshops, squash lessons and beat box workshops. There were summer fairs, productions, arts weeks and coffee mornings.

Staff and parents also managed to find time to cycle a grand total of 800 kilometres to raise money for our schools.

Wow. You might have thought it was time to take a break? Certainly not.

This year's SIP will be signed off in the coming weeks, but we know there will be some areas from last year that the schools will want to keep working on, such as embedding the new behaviour policy, the work on anti-racism and strengthening the curriculum. To these are added new priorities, such as taking a fresh look at assessment and feedback, new and early year teacher development and the implementation of the Essential Letters and Sounds system of learning (ELS) in yr1. There will also be some new items specific to each school – Implementing Place2Be at Fox, Increasing PE and developing Maths at Ashburnham, and at Avonmore working on Ofsted feedback, and on social and emotional needs with West London Zone.

We're also incredibly excited to be working with a school (actually a Federation) that has long been close to the hearts of Fox leadership: Avondale Park Primary and Avondale Park & St Anne's Nursery. Mr McMullen is now installed as the Interim Head and Mr Cotter is the Executive Head. Both spent part of their early careers at Avondale Park and are very happy to be back working with the staff and community. During this first term, as everyone gets used to working together, our Governing Board, and theirs, will be looking at whether it would make sense to include Avondale and the Nursery in our Federation. If both Boards think it does, then we will commence consultation with families, carers, staff, and the wider community after Christmas. If anyone has any questions about that process, they are very welcome to email me.

Our schools are a strong community encompassing staff, families, governors and our neighbours, working together as a team to enable children to 'reach their full potential, to make a difference and to create positive experiences'. We want our children to learn and make excellent progress, but we also want them to be happy while they're doing it.

Wishing everyone a happy and successful start to the new academic year.

Kind regards,
Jodie Terry
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