



Outer West Learning Trust



The Outer West Learning Trust is Two Years Old!



As we approach Easter our Trust is two years old. This is the end of our second year of operation and we would like to communicate some of our successes as well as how we plan to develop further. As you know our work together is aimed at building a shared learning community across our group of schools. All of our work together

can be viewed on the Owl Trust website. This demonstrates the collaborative activity with pupils, staff and school leaders. During our first year we identified six key areas through which our schools agreed to work – each school contributed to these key priority areas. Our most successful work has been as follows:



Pursuit of Excellence in Teaching and Learning



As a group of schools we have agreed to offer support and guidance for our partners across the Trust. We have outlined an ‘OWL School to School Support Program’ that offers school leaders the opportunity to look closely at how their school is working in comparison to others. For example, all of our leadership teams have scrutinised whole school results and development plans. As part of this process teachers have also met to compare books across the age ranges. Headteachers and senior staff have visited other schools

to assist on school improvement issues.

Another significant development this year is the way in which our teachers have met regularly within network groups. These networks have been set up to explore the best practice in curriculum subjects but also in particular areas such as SEND and Early Years. We have also increased the shared professional development opportunities for school staff. Sometimes these have been shared across our schools. Our teaching assistants have all worked together on phonics for example and many of our teachers have gained DfE mastery of mathematics accreditation lately.



Support for and Pastoral Care of All Pupils

We continue to embed the principles of our Thrive initiative that aims to support pupils experiencing emotional difficulties. Our capacity is very good now with forty practitioners trained across our schools. Similarly, we have continued to work as a group of schools ensuring that our staff have the best safeguarding training and support.

Community Projects and Development

Our pupils across the Trust have taken part in the OWL Premier Sports League. We have held competitions in fencing, dodgeball, basketball, fitness, curling and gymnastics. These events have been well attended by parents and by the end of the summer we will have a Trust champion. Throckley are currently top of the league. This is the first time that our schools have participated across a whole school year on this scale. We have also instigated sports events across the school year – the OWL Trust Cross Country Championship held at Newburn Leisure Centre was a huge success with all of our schools sending teams. We continue to work together to give opportunity in other areas and the OWL Careers Fair for year 6 will take place shortly for the second time at St James' Park.



Harnessing Technology Through Innovation

Our teachers concerned with developing the computing curriculum have made some positive strides this year. All of our schools now utilise the same computing scheme of work and are now working together to deliver this curriculum effectively. The group has utilised support from an experienced consultant to work alongside our coordinators and guide curriculum development.

Engaging partners who will bring energy and experience to enhance our learning community

Our relations with Tyne and Wear Museums has been firmed up with a course designed to develop the skills of our newly qualified teachers. We are keen that these teachers are well supported and one way we have done this has been to get them together for the 'Dare to Enquire' program. Our teachers worked at the Great North Museum to look at the ways in which historical sites and artefacts could be used effectively with pupils. Our links with Northumbria University continue with the CT4T initial teacher training program moving forward into its second year. Our second cohort of students will be soon looking for their first jobs and hopefully some will stay within



the Trust. Similarly, we have extended opportunities through our Alliance of schools beyond the OWL Trust - our recently qualified teachers have been linked up with more experienced mentors and are working on a project together in order to improve their experiences beyond their own classrooms. Newcastle LA continues to support and celebrate the successes of our pupils - this was apparent recently at the Newcastle Achievement Awards. Our schools were represented and pupils from across the Trust were presented awards by local MP Catherine Mckinnell.

Robust Governance and Business Management

Our Trust has formally filed financial returns to Companies House for the first time and the Trust Board is now a well-established body that is able to support our schools and learning across the outer west. Our Trust governors have met as group for the first time in order to discuss issues that are common across our schools. Our SBM group also continues to work productively on business matters and is currently undertaking a long term procurement activity that aims to look closely at what we are spending on particular areas and how we can work together to achieve value for money.

The Next Steps – 2016/17

We are planning to further develop our school support mechanisms and network groups for teachers so that they can see the best work in action. We also aim to give pupils across the Trust cultural as well as sporting opportunities to work together. Our Thrive work will continue as will the ability of our schools to support those in need. We aim to continue to train our staff together and offer them the opportunities to work with teachers who have similar experience and expertise. Our governors will have opportunities to get into other schools and we envisage better deals on services so that budgets can be aimed at teaching and learning as much as possible.



Thanks to everyone who has supported the Trust during this time around - a smashing first two years and prodigious effort across the outer west. **Happy Birthday the OWL Trust!**



We say a special thanks to Jo Warner – who is leaving her post as Headteacher at Westerhope. Jo was instrumental in setting up the OWL Trust two years ago and will be greatly missed by all of our schools. Her work across in support of pupils experiencing emotional difficulties will be one of her great legacies – she was an instigator of the Thrive program and our pupils are better supported as a result of her great contribution. We will see her still in her new role supporting diocese schools across the region. Thanks Jo and good luck for the future.



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