



## Corvus Learning Trust

### Update

January 2020

Happy New Year to everyone within the Corvus Learning Trust! We had a busy 2019 and we thought it was time to update all of our community on some of the key developments and initiatives that have taken place over the past year.

#### 1. Whole Trust Meeting

In December, we held our 2<sup>nd</sup> Trust Leaders' Gathering with representatives from all our schools including Local Governing Bodies and Senior Leaders joining together with our Members and Trustees. This was a great opportunity for all the key parts of our Trust to meet, feedback, share ideas and to help shape the direction of the Trust.

Amy Chapman, our Primary School Improvement Lead, shared some very good news regarding our Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2 results from the Summer 2019 Government Assessments. This was followed by the Key Stage 4 and 5 School Improvement Leads Mark Burges and Gareth Croxon summarising the GCSE and A Level results. They also shared the areas of focus for Edgbarrow for 2020. Once again Edgbarrow were delighted with the student outcomes for both Year 11s and Year 13s. The Trust would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who played a role in achieving these results - the teaching staff, school leadership teams, parents and of course the pupils themselves. Well done to everyone involved.

Trust colleagues were interested to learn more about the New Build project at Edgbarrow School and Stuart Matthews (Headteacher) updated the group on the plans and progress to date, including a YouTube clip on how the building will look. The building work is due to commence in the Spring 2020; with the whole project due to take 18 months and should be completed by the end of 2021.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation given by Jo Sparrowhawk (Headteacher at Hatch Ride) who, having completed her second year in post, shared "A day in the life of a Primary Head Teacher" which was inspiring and thought-provoking (and made us laugh!).

Bob Elsey as CEO presented a piece entitled "What have the Romans ever done for us?" focussing on some of the new developments and achievements of the Trust in his usual impassioned way!

The final part of our meeting was given over to discussions around defining our Corvus Learning Trust Values. Although we are clear on our Strategy, our Vision and our Culture, it was important that we spent time teasing out our Trust Values. As a result, a working party has been formed from the gathering and they will be preparing a proposal for the Trustees, taking into account all the views expressed.

We would like to thank all the attendees for giving up their time to attend the gathering and for all their input.



## 2. School Pupil Numbers

This year, the number of pupils/students in our Trust has risen by 70 to 2,163. The main reason for this is the growth in the Edgbarrow Sixth Form and the additional 30 students in Year 7 making it 240 students (as in Year 10). Edgbarrow Sixth Form continues to be strong with 215 in Year 12 and 169 in Year 13, making a total of 384. Interestingly, the number of students joining Edgbarrow's Sixth Form in 2019 from other schools continues to grow with 55 external students joining.

At Primary level, our numbers continue to be stable.

Pupil numbers are important to us as they are an indication of how successful the schools are and the regard they are held in, within our community. High pupil numbers help to enable us to attract revenue to support all the children and staff across the Trust.

## 3. Chair's Update

- Department for Education (DfE) Meeting

Each year the Chair of Trustees (Steve James) and Bob Elsey (as CEO) attend a meeting with the DfE where the progress of the Trust is discussed. The DfE gave our Trust very positive feedback, being happy that our results are improving, our finances are sound and it is being well run.

- Growth

In our last update we talked about how important it is to grow the Trust in order to reach critical mass but that we wanted such growth to be manageable and not to the detriment of our founding schools. We discussed with the DfE our approach to growth and we are still investigating opportunities as they arise.

- Audit

We are pleased to report that we have just undergone our second Financial Audit and received a clean, unqualified report. As a Trust in its infancy we are delighted to have produced such a positive set of accounts for the second year in a row. Our thanks go to our Chief Business and Finance Officer, Rochelle Wilson and all the School Business Managers for their work in ensuring the financial integrity of the Trust. All of our school community play an important role in helping us to manage our finances effectively and our thanks go to everyone for their help and support.



#### 4. CEO Update

- Leadership and best practice

One of the purposes of establishing the Trust was to raise standards across all schools through the sharing of best practice and school improvement. An aspect of the job that I really enjoy is providing 1:1 support for Headteachers. Also, through raising standards meetings, I work with our School Improvement Team and Senior Leaders to help improve the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes to ensure all students and pupils achieve their very best.

- Day as a Teaching Assistant

As part of learning more about the primary education sector, I had a very enjoyable day being a Teaching Assistant to Stuart Lee's class 4L at Oaklands Junior School. This included helping children with their reading, writing and maths. I joined the "real" TA Lisa Smith (who was far better than me) and the whole experience was immensely enjoyable and informative. I would like to extend my thanks to Stuart Lee – what a great teacher, and to the whole team and pupils for making me feel so welcome.

- Performances

I have also been very privileged to attend the various Christmas plays and drama performances at all 4 of our Trust schools over the past few weeks. I have been so impressed with the enthusiasm, talent and aptitude of our pupils and students in everything I have watched. Again, a huge thank you to the staff and everyone involved in putting together such amazing productions.

#### 5. Other events

- Cucina

Cucina are now in their 3<sup>rd</sup> contract at Edgbarrow School, and in September, Cucina took over the catering contracts at Oaklands Infant, Oaklands Junior and Hatch Ride Schools. This is an example of how we can improve services across the Trust. The feedback from the pupils and staff at the schools has been very encouraging and positive and there has been an increased take-up of school meals as a result.

- Appointments

This academic year we have made two new appointments to the Trust Central Team. Katherine Wilson has been appointed as our Maths Primary Improvement Subject Lead and works with the team one day a week. Katherine also works in an outstanding primary school in Marlow. In December she held her first Maths Mastery Training for all primary class teachers within the Trust. It was both very well attended and very well received. Katherine is offering great support to teachers within the schools. We are also delighted to welcome Celeste Moruzzi to our Trust Central Team. Celeste is helping the Trust to formalise and integrate all the policies across the Trust for the benefit of all our schools. Celeste has worked for Edgbarrow's Local Governing Body for over 7 years so comes with a wealth of experience. We would like to welcome both to Corvus Learning Trust.

- Building Improvement Grants

We are pleased to report that Oaklands Junior School now have a new school roof and this work was completed in the autumn term. We are delighted that the Infant School has already had new fencing for the playground and will see work start shortly on a new reception area and security gates. This should be completed before the end of the Spring term.



## 6. Focus for 2020

- Primary Improvement Team

The focus of the primary team this academic year has been sharing good practice within and between schools and improving collaboration in order to improve outcomes for all our pupils. As a result, we have delivered two primary trust-wide training sessions with teachers from all three schools attending: one for writing progression and one for maths mastery. We have planned training for subject leadership and generic teaching and learning strategies later this year.

In addition to this we are supporting subject leaders in their delivery of the curriculum which includes review days, undertaking 'book looks', moderation of planning and assessments and learning walks. This is followed up with activities linked to identified areas of support and development to ensure consistency and high-quality teaching. Subject Leader Network meetings are now embedded and take place on a half termly basis. These meetings help to identify shared key areas for all schools and provide opportunities for pooling ideas, support and good practice.

All of these activities will continue throughout this academic year.

- Trust

One area that will always be a major focus is to help our schools achieve excellent outcomes for all of our children. We do this through supporting staff to deliver high quality teaching in our schools. We also focus on a number of key activities behind the scenes, such as regular Raising Standards meetings and collaboration with each other and local schools. Presently all schools are working hard to ensure their curriculum meets the needs of all their pupils and that it clearly identifies and delivers the 3i's – Intent, Implementation and Impact. Each school now has more robust school improvement plans to identify the priorities for the year. All of the above helps us to offer the best education for our children and to prepare for any Ofsted visit.

We are also working on ways to improve and grow as a Trust. This includes investigating thoroughly any opportunities to work with other schools with a view to them joining our Trust. Although we have yet to find an appropriate school to date, work is ongoing, and we will share any progress whenever we can. There is also work continuing on formalising and agreeing Trust-wide policies and procedures to ensure consistency of approach across our schools. We remain a small Trust, very dependent upon the volunteer work provided by our Local Governing Bodies, Trustees and Members and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone within the Trust for their dedication and support.

We hope that you have found this newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any queries or feedback on any aspect of the Trust please do not hesitate to contact us at [robertelsey@corvuslearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:robertelsey@corvuslearningtrust.co.uk). For more information about our Trustees and Members, please see our Website - [corvuslearningtrust.co.uk](http://corvuslearningtrust.co.uk).

Warmest regards.

Bob Elsey  
CEO

Steve James  
Chair of Trustees



