

Northern Lights

End of summer term magazine
for parents and carers
2023-24

SHINE

OUR TRUST PARLIAMENT ...IN PARLIAMENT!



Opportunities for everyone



Dear parents/carers

I hope you enjoy finding time this summer to sit down with a cup of tea or coffee and have a look through this edition of *Shine*. In here you will see some examples of the many opportunities and activities that have taken place this academic year. Some of these are Trust wide opportunities, reflecting our Trust vision that we 'Shine Stronger Together'. The opportunities also give examples of our Trust mission 'To ensure everyone flourishes with children and young people at the heart of all we do.'

I hope that your child or young person has been able to experience opportunities this year that support them to flourish in their schools.

Next year we will be shining a light on one of our Trust Values 'Community'. We believe our schools are here to serve our local communities.

We would like to develop this even further in the coming year.

If you have any connections with businesses, organisations or charities who work prominently in your community that would be interested in partnering with us to support our schools in ensuring our children and young people achieve all opportunities and achievements in the best way possible, then please speak to the headteacher of your child's school.

I would like to wish all of our families a wonderful summer break, and look forward to seeing many of you in the upcoming year.

Best Wishes
Mrs J. Heaton OBE

OUR SCHOOLS

JULY 2024



- Benedict Biscop Church of England Academy, Sunderland
- Grange Primary School, Hartlepool
- Hart Community Primary School, Hartlepool
- Holley Park Academy, Washington
- Ian Ramsey Church of England Academy, Stockton-on-Tees
- St Aidan's Church of England Academy, Darlington
- St Helen's Primary School, Hartlepool
- St Peter's Elwick Church of England Primary School, Hartlepool
- Venerable Bede Church of England Academy, Sunderland



Northern Lights' values tell our story. This is us:

We place the **voice of the child** at the heart of decision-making, recognising that our work is ultimately to guide the next generation.

Our schools are embedded in their communities and sense of **community** is a responsibility as well as a value, embracing belonging, kindness, compassion, respect and the opportunities that brings.

Support is the rock upon which we choose to lean, to thrive, and the scaffolding we can give with humility to others, accepting that all of us need support at one time or another.

Integrity is central to our actions and means doing what we say we will do to stay authentic and encourage trust.

We always do the best we can to be genuine, non-judgmental and instil **pride** and we are proud of what we achieve and the difference we make.

COVER PICTURE: Trust Parliament representatives by Big Ben in London

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Trust Parliament walks the corridors of power



"It was great to actually stand in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons."

"My favourite part was going into Henry VIII's bedroom!"

"I enjoyed being able to explore the rooms that you see on television."

Through our "Trust Parliament" all our schools have been working on projects linked to environmental awareness and ensuring best value for money in school.

They have also undertaken training on presentation skills to help them develop into proficient public speakers. We have met online throughout the year as a group and have visited a windfarm to look at greener energy solutions. All of our Trust Parliament representatives have thrown themselves into their role.

To continue their development, we wanted to give them the experience of visiting the Palace of Westminster - the Houses of Parliament - to see and learn about democracy in action.

Our visit took place on June 14. We took in the sights including Big Ben - a great photo opportunity.

We spent two and a half hours inside the Houses of Parliament. We had a fully guided tour of the main areas and were fortunate enough to view all areas including House of Commons, House of Lords, Great Hall and Black Rod's Garden.

Our Trust Parliament took part in a workshop looking at how laws

are made. All pupils fully involved themselves. What was fabulous to see, was the pupils all mixing in with one another and developing a genuine working relationship and friendship.

Our train was not leaving from Kings Cross until 17:30, so we went to see Buckingham Palace.

Whilst there, police outriders on motorcycles stopped all traffic - we then saw King Charles being driven up to the main gates and enter the grounds - we were only feet away from our monarch! The pupils were really excited - they could not believe that they had seen him in person and were able to wave and cheer!

A great day was had by all pupils and staff.

■ Each year Trust Parliament representatives set the focus for the work that the Trust Parliament will do. At the end of the year, the representatives give formal feedback to the board on their achievements. Katie Hammond, chair of the Trust Board, has attended Trust Parliament meetings and explained how the Trust Board works. Pupils know that she is our direct link with the Trust Board.



Understanding wind farms

One of the areas of focus for our Trust Parliament this year was sustainability and cost of living.

Pupils across our Trust looked at how this might be implemented in each of their schools.

We visited Red Gap Windfarm to look at the contribution made to the energy market by sustainable

wind generation. Pupils learned about responsible ownership and how each wind farm has an ethical duty to develop their site to ensure that any impact on the environment by building the turbines is offset with sustainable developments to improve the biodiversity of the farm.





Welcome aboard: above, from left, Grange Primary School headteacher Leanne Yates, Northern Lights chief executive Jo Heaton, children from the school and co-chairs of governors James Sinclair and Anthony Degnan

Academic year when two more schools joined Northern Lights

Northern Lights grew to nine schools comprising over 4,000 children and young people this school year, in an area stretching from Teesside through to Wearside.

The trust welcomed Grange Primary School in Hartlepool and St Aidan's CE Academy, a secondary in Darlington, to its family of schools.

Grange Primary School converted to academy status on Friday 1 March.

Headteacher Leanne Yates said: "An exciting new chapter in Grange Primary School's history has begun!"

Northern Lights chief executive, Jo Heaton, said: "We are delighted to welcome Grange Primary School, a great school which further strengthens Northern Lights and we look forward to working alongside them."

St Aidan's Church of England Academy joined on Sunday 1 June.

Headteacher Dean Lythgoe said:



Pictured celebrating St Aidan's CE Academy joining Northern Lights Learning Trust are, from left, Dean Lythgoe, headteacher; Jon Tait, director of secondary education, Northern Lights; student, Josh; St Aidan's chair of governors Meirion Baker; and student, Pearl

"Over the years, trustees have considered a range of potential options, focusing on compatibility of ethos, visions, and values. After long consideration and with the support of our Diocese, trustees believe that Northern Lights Learning Trust is the best fit for St Aidan's."

"We believe that joining Northern Lights will strengthen both the NLLT group of schools and St Aidan's."

Jo Heaton, said: "St Aidan's is our third secondary, alongside Venerable Bede CE Academy in Sunderland and

Discussing the many benefits of St Aidan's joining Northern Lights are, from left, Dean Lythgoe, headteacher, with Year 11 student leadership team Jamie and Lucy

Ian Ramsey CE Academy in Stockton-on-Tees."

Year 11 school captains at St Aidan's, Jamie and Lucy, who chair the student leadership team, spoke of the benefits to students of their school being part of Northern Lights. Lucy said: "This will broaden everyone's mindset and increase collaboration, sharing ideas for the benefit of all school communities."

Jamie added: "Students can work across schools for the benefit of all concerned. We saw this with recent trips to Durham Cathedral and Holy Island, allowing people of faith to develop themselves further with the energy that different schools can bring."

A 'dough disco' along with parents

As part of St Helen's Primary School family week, EYFS invited parents and carers to join in with a 'Dough disco' workshop, where the focus was developing fine motor skills and teamwork. First, the children and adults made the dough following a recipe and then participated in a fine motor movement activity to music. It

was wonderful to see so many adults coming along and joining in. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to the next workshop!

■ Class 4 invited parents into school for family week to help make fruit salad as part of Design Technology. We had so much fun - and thank you to all the parents that attended.



On the ball at Hart Primary

Footballers from Hart Primary School scooped an historic victory in the Y6 boys Championship Cup Final at Hartlepool United.

"We had such a fast start to the game scoring after three minutes," said Marie Crowe, head of school. "St Teresa's equalised just after half time. Pushing into the final five minutes, some brilliant passing and moving created a quick attack which we scored from outside the box to make it 2-1.

"The boys' attitude, teamwork and determination was outstanding from start to finish!"

In the summer, while Harry Kane and the England squad were battling it out in Germany, Hart had their very own Hart Primary Euros Football Tournament. This was a great opportunity for students to showcase their skills and work together in their teams. Everyone

gave their all on the field.

Overall, the tournament was a resounding success, with all teams showing great sportsmanship and respect. It was a true celebration of the beautiful game of football and the power of teamwork.

■ We made the short trip up to Newcastle for a stadium tour of St James's Park.

It was an amazing experience to see where the players prepare for their matches and to feel the excitement of walking down the tunnel stepping out onto the field where so many memorable moments have taken place.

The tour gave us a behind-the-scenes look at the media suite, home and away changing rooms, experiencing sitting in the dugouts and even taking a seat at the highest point of the stadium at level 7.

This opportunity of being



able to see the workings of a professional football club has left us all feeling very inspired.

It was definitely a trip we will never forget.

Winners: Hart's Y6 boys won the Championship Cup Final at Hartlepool United's ground

Platinum standard

Mr Kesterton gave Y7 Harriet his Shining Star award - she is the first pupil to reach platinum level for positive points. Not only has Harriet achieved over 800 positive points, she has no negatives. Well done Harriet a great first year at Ian Ramsey!



■ Year 5/6 at St Peter's Elwick had a great afternoon at Nasir Mosque Hartlepool. Our children learned so much about the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and the excellent work they do to promote peace in Hartlepool and Teesside. They enjoyed trying on the hats and headscarves, listening to the call to prayer and exploring the mosque.

Trust-wide choir concert showcases working together



One of our big successes of the year was the second One Voice choir concert, which brought together all schools from across Northern Lights at the time for a memorable evening of entertainment.

Nearly 200 young performers, supported by a live band, showcased their talent along with two staff bands from the trust's two secondary schools, Venerable Bede and Ian Ramsey CE academies.

Additionally, accomplished pianists from Venerable Bede performed and Jess Dale (below), a teaching assistant from Benedict Biscop, wowed the audience with her rendition of Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You."



The concert, organised by Marie Crowe, head of school at Hart Primary, and Ruth Bonner, head of music at Venerable Bede, which hosted the event, concluded with a well-deserved standing ovation from the 400-strong audience.

Chief executive Jo Heaton expressed her immense pride in the talent displayed from across the trust. She said: "What a special event that showed our unity, our strength together across all our schools and how we provide opportunities for our children and young people to be part of and experience."

"I'm so proud and so thankful to everyone who was there or worked towards this event - 'shining stronger together' and one wonderful voice."

Writing after the performance, one parent contacted the trust to say how much the concert had boosted their child's confidence. "She came out of the event on cloud nine, full of inspiration and can't wait for next year's already. We can't thank staff enough - you are amazing!" said the parent.

With the success of this year's One Voice, plans are already underway for next year's performance, promising an even bigger and better show.





Islamic ways are explored

Benedict Biscop's Year 3s have been busy exploring the fascinating world of Islamic architecture, inspired by the renowned contemporary artist Suad Al-Attar.



For Father's Day

Hart's Early Years class had their very own "Special Person" assembly in celebration of Father's Day.



Bridging generation gap at St Aidan's

Year 10 pupils from St Aidan's visited Hundens Park Care Home to wish resident Eve a happy 100th birthday.

The care home enjoys a special relationship with the school: residents often come in to see the school's acts of worship and enjoy tea and cake.

Best start to sports week at St Peter's Elwick

St Peter's Elwick had a fantastic start to school sports week with a visit from GB Paralympic club thrower Stephen Miller.

Stephen told the children all about his amazing career, winning three gold, one silver and one bronze medal. Stephen has featured in many Paralympic Games including Rio, Sydney, Athens and his personal favourite, London 2012.

Throughout the morning each class took part in a fitness circuit.

"We would like to thank Stephen for finding the time to come into school and deliver, what was a truly inspirational assembly to the children, said head of school, Vikki Wilson.



Rising to the challenge of DoE award

St Aidan's CE Academy's Year 9 and 10 pupils had a fantastic two days on their Duke of Edinburgh residential. The pupils' behaviour was exceptional and they threw

themselves into every activity. Lots of new skills were learned and a great time had by everyone. Well done to all the pupils, we look forward to the next one!

First inter-trust girls football off to a flying start



This year marked the first Northern Lights inter-trust primary girls football competition.

It is an event to promote girls' football and offer the opportunity to compete with other trust primaries.

The 2024 competition was a huge success and saw over 30 girls from across our primary schools taking part.

The teams were mixed, so the girls also got an opportunity to make new friends and play alongside different teammates, whilst aiming to win trophies and medals.

"The attitude, determination and resilience displayed by all of the girls was fantastic and we already can't wait for next year's event!" said Mark Holt, PE Lead at Benedict Biscop, who organised the competition.



Words of wisdom from our Heads!



Marcus Newing



Leanne Yates



Tracey Burgess



Dean Lythgoe



Sarah Armstrong



Lisa Curtis



Marie Crowe



Donna Park



Vikki Wilson

All nine schools in Northern Lights are rated good or outstanding by school inspectors – not surprising when you consider the positive outlook and optimism shared by our headteachers and heads of school. We asked our school leaders for their favourite phrases or what they live by – and received a variety of results.

"Generally, I live by "Life isn't a rehearsal – enjoy it and laugh," says Marcus Newing, head of school, St Helen's Primary School.

"Always shine a light on the positive" says Leanne Yates,

headteacher, Grange Primary School. Tracey Burgess, head of school, Venerable Bede CE Academy, says: "Always try to be the very best version of yourself you can be."

According to Dean Lythgoe, headteacher, St Aidan's CE Academy: "We cannot all do great things, but we can all do small things with great love. I'd like to claim I thought of that all by myself, but Mother Teresa beat me to it!"

"I always say to my boys, always try your best," says Sarah

Armstrong, headteacher, Benedict Biscop CE Academy.

Lisa Curtis, headteacher at Holley Park Academy says: "Always do the next right thing!" while Marie Crowe, head of school, Hart Primary School, believes: "Life is short, book the holiday!"

Donna Park, headteacher, Ian Ramsey CE Academy says: "You didn't come this far, only to get this far. Keep going!"

Vikki Wilson, head of school at St Peter's Elwick adds: "Let all that you do be done in love," from 1 Corinthians 16:14



Music, music, music

Venerable Bede held its annual community concert towards the end of the summer term, which featured vocal performances from Benedict Biscop, a feeder primary school and another Northern Lights school. Events such as this help smooth the secondary transition.



Space Day at Holley Park was out of this world

Holley Park pupils in EYFS enjoyed a Space Day.



Ian Ramsey cakes are scrumptious!

Year 7 at Ian Ramsey CE Academy have made amazing fairy cakes with Mrs Brunton.

Happy to enjoy a pizza the action

Class 3 at St Helen's had an excellent day at Pizza Express.

We created our own pizza and then ate them. They were delicious!

Class 4 have had a great morning at Pizza Express too, working out which of our favourite toppings should go where on our creations.

Many thanks to the staff for their help and for showing us how some of our most favourite food comes together!



Benedict Biscop's Year 6 children enjoyed their leavers' service at Durham Cathedral where they were exceptional ambassadors for the school.



Therapy dog Ronnie and his owner Val came into Hart Primary into school to work with our children. Ronnie visited Year 6 students to help them relax and de-stress before their SATs. Ronnie will be working with children who need wellbeing support but also listening to reluctant readers.



Grange artists' work is voted best in North East

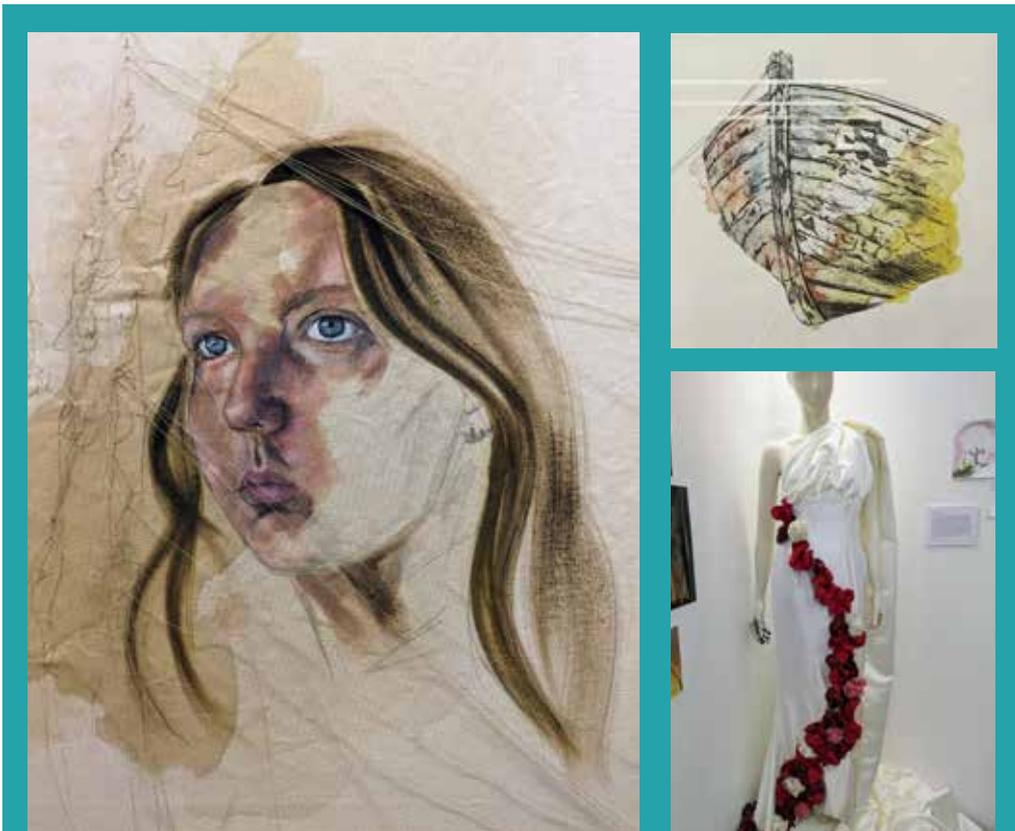
Not only did these girls from Grange win the North East regional Art Bytes competition – they went on to be third nationally, out of 97 participants.

The three talented children made a maquette – a scene in a box, from a page of a book called

'October, October' by Katya Balen. This is one of our Y5 texts, so they knew the context well.

Headteacher Leanne Yates said: "Well done girls - brilliant achievement!"

The girls' work is on display in The Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead.



Amazing art to take your breath away

Is it wonderful to see former Ian Ramsey CE Academy and Venerable Bede CE Academy art students flourishing at The Northern School of Art at

their fabulous summer show. Many of the young people have secured university places or apprenticeships within the creative economy sector.

Careers café looks to future



Year 8 pupils at Venerable Bede CE Academy have been taking part in a Careers Café, where they had the opportunity to speak to a range of post-16 providers including colleges, sixth forms and apprenticeships.

This enabled pupils to see what our local providers have to offer, ask any questions and think about their future.

Pupils were also provided with a 'loyalty card' and providers had stamps, pupils received a stamp after engaging with a provider and a prize draw was held for pupils with four or more stamps - a £25 amazon voucher.

Our winning pupil said: "I was really excited to hear that I had won the gift voucher. I enjoyed the Careers Café because the providers were giving me lots of information about jobs that I might have in the future."



Shakespeare brings toil and trouble

Year 6 at St Helen's immersed themselves in all things Shakespeare and vocabulary.

We considered adjectives to describe the battle scene in Macbeth and took to the hall with a word bank of ideas.

In pairs, we guided our partner around the hall and recalled our best adjectives whilst listening to battle sounds. Afterwards, we reimagined the scene in slow motion and had a go at acting it ourselves.

School flourishes since joining

Pupils at Holley Park Academy in Washington are happy, polite and considerate, have exemplary manners and live out the school's vision of "Work together, achieve more".

So say school inspectors Ofsted as they confirmed that the primary school, part of Northern Lights Learning Trust, continues to be a "good" school.

"Staff encourage pupils to become thoughtful and compassionate members of the school community," school inspectors note, "Pupils learn about the importance of equality, respect and tolerance."

Headteacher Lisa Curtis said: "We are delighted with the report – it recognises and celebrates our wonderful school. It is testament to the hard work, dedication and commitment of our pupils, staff and community."

Ofsted inspectors saw that since joining Northern Lights, the curriculum has been reviewed and crafted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff make skilful adaptations to the curriculum to enable all pupils to succeed and has firm foundations in the school's early years provision.

"The youngest children enjoy a vibrant learning environment," says the report. "They quickly settle into established routines. Pupils develop resilience and



independence. In mathematics, the very youngest children confidently use vocabulary and phonics is effective and purposeful.

According to the report, school leaders have high expectations of pupils and they rise to these expectations. "Pupils work hard in lessons and listen carefully. They achieve well as a result," says the report.

Pupils feel safe, behaviour in lessons and unstructured times is positive. Pupils know there are lots of trusted adults around.

Jo Heaton, chief executive of Northern Lights, which now comprises nine schools, both primary and secondary phase, said she was thrilled with the Ofsted report: "It is wonderful to see how Holley Park has flourished since joining Northern Lights. The Trust and school team have worked really well together and it's great to see the impact of this partnership working. We are all really proud of the work of everyone involved and the opportunities for a fantastic education our children at Holley Park receive."

Holley Park headteacher Lisa Curtis and deputy headteacher Lee Garrett celebrate their Ofsted report success with pupils at the school



The second 'Grange Art Exhibition' took place in the summer term, showcasing the work of Grange Primary School children from Reception, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4 and Y6. A special guest, Nigel Clifton, joined us. He is a talented artist who hopefully inspired the children with his fantastical paintings.



Year 2 at Holley Park went on a flower/plant hunt as part of the school's science curriculum.



KS2 children at St Peter's Elwick played wheelchair basketball as part of Sports Week. This was a great way to experience what it is like to play a sport this way. The children had to work together to pass the ball and score points, and it was a challenge but they learnt a lot and had a great time. They can't wait to do it again!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST IS TASTY REWARD FOR EFFORT



St Aidan's CE Academy celebrated the pupils in Year 7 with the highest merits at the end of term. Pupils and their tutors were able to enjoy a pancake breakfast in celebration of their achievement.

Marine life brought to life with art

Year 8 at St Aidan's have been producing some marine life-inspired collages in the style of artist Rex Ray. This has really helped to develop their understanding of abstract art and collage.



St Helen's girls' football team played in a tournament at Brierton Sports Centre. They showed great determination and skill on the field. Keep up the amazing work girls!



KS1 children at Benedict Biscop have been studying contemporary artist and sculptor Rachel Whiteread and the interesting things that she creates.

It has inspired us to look closer at spaces and details in the world around us. In Class Three we have been developing our clay skills and thinking about how we could use these to create shapes and details just like Rachel!