



The Light

Community news from St Joseph CMAT

(Shining a spotlight on the news, views and latest developments across St Joseph Catholic MAT)



St Joseph

Catholic Multi Academy Trust

CEO Welcome

As we approach the end of our first full year together, it is important to take a moment to celebrate the significant improvements across the St Joseph family. These improvements are a result of a huge amount of hard work and commitment from all members of the team. This edition of The Light captures just a few of the successes in our academies.



Andrew Truby,
Chief Executive Officer

Instructional Coaching

Michael Gun-Why, Director of School Improvement for Secondary

We are delighted to launch our Instructional Coaching Community across all academies this term. Across four waves of 3 day training within two terms, we will have trained 44 colleagues from within the Trust on Instructional Coaching, which is a huge investment. This equates to 132 full days of staff training from the Trust to provide leaders with the skills to deliver high-quality professional development. On behalf of the Trust, I thank you for your commitment, engagement so far, and ambition to deliver this.

Our Instructional Coaching approach:

A Three-day In-Person Course with Coaching Expert Sarah Rockliff.

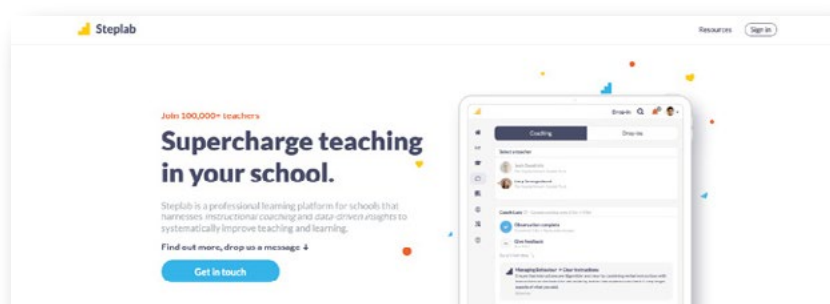
B Steplab On-line Training Course.

C Academy Delivery using the SJCMAT model on Steplab.

The ultimate aim is that Instructional Coaching becomes the primary vehicle for professional development within our academies and Trust as a whole. We are now at the stage of preparing the roll-out and implementation of Instructional Coaching across academies for 2023–2024. The implementation strategy will be led by the Academy Instructional Coaching Leads.

Steplab

Steplab is a professional learning platform for schools that harnesses instructional coaching and data-driven insights to systematically improve teaching and learning.



New websites



Chartered College Membership

69% of Trust staff have activated membership. Aim is 100% by the keynote speech from Dame Alison Peacock.

St Joseph CMAT has invested in a membership to the professional body, the Chartered College of Teaching, for all teachers and support staff. We are committed to improving the development opportunities for our dedicated support staff therefore Dame Alison Peacock is leading the keynote at our conference and is also running a workshop specifically for teaching assistants.

This membership supports colleagues to:

- Be appreciated for your high level of responsibility, autonomy and accountability
- Be equipped with the knowledge of the latest research in pedagogy
- Be empowered to decide what works
- Feel valued and trusted by the school community as an expert
- Contribute to shaping the future of your profession
- Access to our Early Career Hub and MyCollege, an indispensable resource packed with accessible articles, interactive content and over 50 videos of high-quality classroom footage
- Opportunity to enrol in one of our accredited online programmes and courses, including courses on education research, decolonising and diversifying the curriculum and wellbeing
- Access to one of the world's largest databases of education research journals

Here are some of the features of the membership:

- Access to our award-winning journal Impact from the moment you join
- Exclusive invites to over 40 webinars and events per year
- Member discounts to education organisations and major publishers, including SAGE, TES, Bloomsbury and Crown House
- The opportunity to gain recognition through our reputable Certificate in Evidence-Informed practice and Chartered Status pathway
- Research digests, guides and reviews giving you summaries of the latest research to develop your practice with the latest evidence
- Over 100 on-demand CPD videos, hear from leading experts at a time that suits you
- Consultations, surveys and opportunities to have your voice heard and shape your profession
- The opportunity to drive the strategic direction of your professional body



HOLY FAMILY

Catholic Academy

EYFS at Holy Family

We have always been incredibly proud of our Early Years offer here at Holy Family but, during recent years, our expansion to include 2-year-old children coupled with a very tight budget has restricted the investment that we have been able to make in high quality resources for our provision. We have often had to improvise and repurpose reclaimed items or things donated by other schools or interested parties. However, over the last few months, changes have been afoot and a significant investment from St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust has allowed us to improve our provision by purchasing new resources to inspire and engage our children.

We began by auditing our resources and having a frank discussion about what our children needed and what this meant for our provision. Due to the needs of our children, we decided that a focus needed to be placed on resourcing our outdoor areas, one of which is exclusively for our 2-year-olds whilst the other is shared by our 3-4 year olds and our Reception children. We felt that we needed to be able to widen the range of learning experience we could offer our children through creating defined and purposeful areas in which children can engage in both child-initiated and adult-led activities. We also wanted to promote independent writing across the different zones.

Thanks to the investment from St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust, we were able to purchase a range of new outdoor equipment for our children including stages for performing, a nature station for us to explore and discuss, our children particularly love our den building area and our writing belts.

The children in Early Years have also benefited from the implementation of Read Write Inc. In Reception we are seeing great progress and the staff and parents are seeing the great impact it is having. We have been particularly impressed with some of our Nursery children who have enjoyed starting the programme in the summer term! Their enthusiasm and determination has been amazing to see. Because of this we have seen a significant increase in the number of children choosing to engage in writing activities during Continuous Provision sessions, including an increasing number of boys. When they are writing we can see them independently applying the strategies and skills that they are taught during Read Write Inc and even those who find written work a challenge can write words and phrases using their skills with support from an adult.





Our Challenge:

For a variety of reasons, there had been a high turnover of teaching staff and leadership since 2019 which had resulted in a large number of short-term supply staff in teaching and support roles. The curriculum had been planned for quality literature but children were reading photocopies of extracts and some staff had changed or swapped texts around. This impacted on the quality of teaching and learning across school, led to inconsistency of approach and the loss of a clear vision for English.

As a result of this, standards were affected with the majority of children being below expectations in all areas. However, English was our main priority as we know that being a confident reader opens up the rest of the curriculum to our children.

Solution:

- Introduction of Ark English Mastery to our school from Y3–5 with training
- Reviewed and updated our EYFS and KS1 English curriculum
- Retrained all EYFS and KS1 staff in RWInc
- Purchased class sets of quality texts so that each child had an individual copy to read from

Rationale:

Mastery learning adds up to 8 months progress in primary schools (EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit) and the Ark English Mastery combines direct instruction with collaborative learning which is identified as having high impact.

With 68% of our pupils identified as being disadvantaged, a mastery learning approach also gives us the best opportunity to ensure gaps in knowledge are addressed.

The Ark English Mastery and RWInc programmes are both fully resourced with planning, support and professional development included, making more impactful use of teacher time as well as providing a consistent approach and expectations for all staff, including those who may be new to the school.

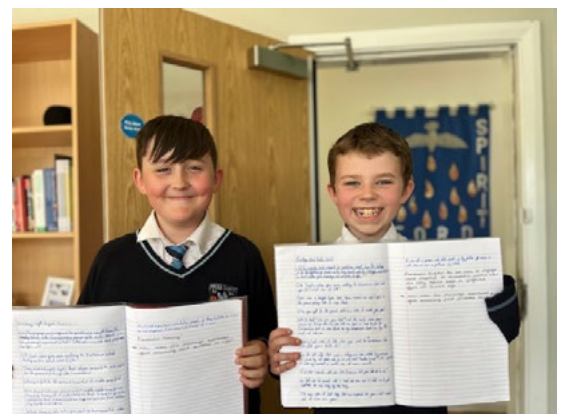
Impact:

- ✓ There has been a clear impact on confidence in teaching and in children's engagement in lessons. This has led to standards improving across the school
- ✓ A consistent and clear approach to English is established with new or returning members of staff provided with resources to enable them to transition into the year group quickly and smoothly
- ✓ Greater collaboration between teachers, opening their classrooms for others to observe and learn from and supporting each other

St Joseph CMAT:

The initial sourcing by the Central Team of the different mastery curriculums on offer was of great benefit to us as a school as it gave us an opportunity to work with them to evaluate what would be best for our Trust family.

Striving for Excellence and ambition for all children and schools is at the heart of the Trust Vision, and this means that we are determined to deliver the highest quality curriculum, delivered by staff who want every child to achieve their potential.





St Ambrose
Catholic Academy

Raising Expectations

As we continue to embed our Multi Academy Trust core expectations, one challenge for us as a staff team to overcome, was providing high quality feedback to each other in order to drive rapid school improvement.

As Robin Sharma once said – ‘Real leadership is less about seeking applause and rewards and more about doing the best work you’ve ever done and having an impact you’ve never imagined.’

Together, we explored how our academy and Trust priorities align so that we are all working towards a common goal. To embed leadership at all levels, responsibility for monitoring was shared with all leaders across our academy, using our Trust ‘Monitoring for Excellence’ (MfE) document. Confidence of leaders has improved as a result of a renewed ownership in the MfE document. A culture of high challenge, high rapport is growing with staff providing their colleagues with feedback that is meaningful and purposeful so that gaps are being narrowed rapidly.

In order to continue to create a culture for success, strategically planned partnerships between staff were established. These were purposefully chosen to maximise impact and were a real highlight in the success of our work.

Together, these partners utilised their Instructional Coaching training that has been provided by SJCMAT, in order to facilitate conversations to drive small step improvements within the classroom. We worked alongside Mark Burns, a leading figure in learning and development initiatives, to identify the challenges in developing the quality of our teaching, and on how to overcome these challenges with practical strategies.

Over the last term, staff have spent time observing one another, coaching and responding to feedback. This culminated in time given to celebrating the improvements made. Staff presented to their peers and SLT on a ‘Plus One’ area that they have worked on to drive rapid school improvement. The presentations were impressive and staff have clearly benefited from working together to enable long term sustainable change for the benefit of our children.

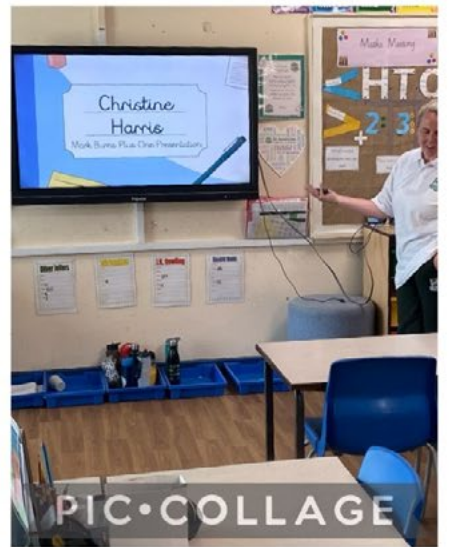
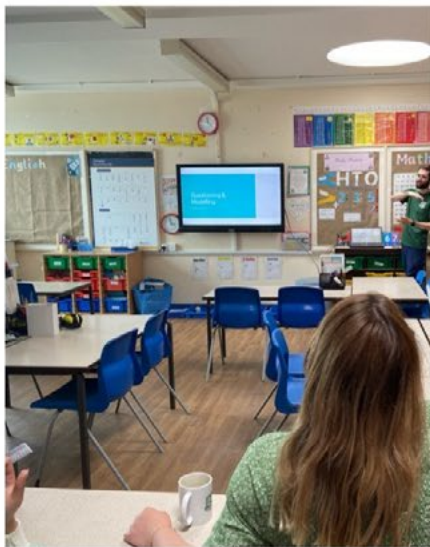
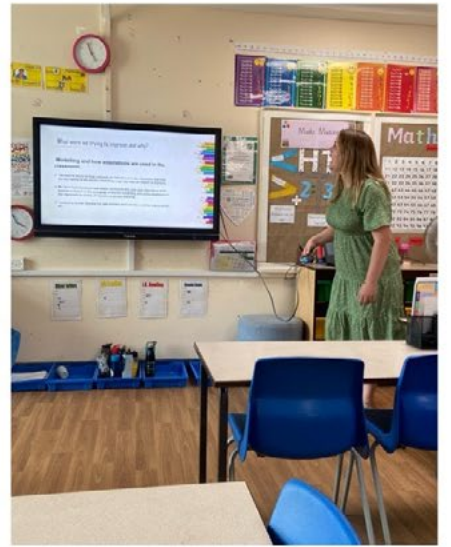
Mark Burns made the following Twitter comment,

“

Thank you to the teachers at St Ambrose for their ‘plus one’ presentations. An inspiring mix of deep self-reflection, the further development of a common language for teaching as well as the belief ‘we’re never the finished article; we can continue to learn and grow.’

”

As an academy, we strive to keep getting better at getting better!



PIC•COLLAGE



**ST AUGUSTINE
OF CANTERBURY**
CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Ark Curriculum

Ark curriculum has been a real success, here at St Augustine. Did we think that was possible this time last year? Absolutely not!

We faced many challenges 12 months ago, firstly the Trust decision to implement a curriculum that both senior leaders and staff had little knowledge of. The time constraints also added to the challenge. How was it even possible to implement a new curriculum in 3 core subjects at KS3 with limited time? We accepted the challenge and started our Ark journey.

Research was our initial strategy, our Deputy Headteacher and Heads of Department went on a fact-finding mission. They searched Twitter, the internet and found lots of schools in London that teach Ark, this along with positive praise from Ofsted started a change in thinking.

The Team were introduced to the Ark platform, packed with resources as well as a meeting with development leads to plan the learning journey for St Augustine. The Maths team had been teaching a mastery style curriculum prior to Ark so were happy for the journey to continue but with additional support and resources. GCSE Science results were below national average in 2022, a change was needed at KS3, and Ark allowed St Augustine to focus on a fresh style of teaching to allow pupils to fall in love with science again. English was tricky, a stable department with results at national average, we were asking the same question, why fix what is not broken? English debated with SLT, and Trust Leaders and a hybrid approach was agreed. As a school we worked hard over the summer term, with the Trust, Ark, and our pupils to be ready for September.

Our first year has been tough but wow what a turnaround! Our English Department have been the most vocal. It did not take long for them to become Ark ambassadors, soon we had moved from a hybrid approach to a full Ark curriculum for KS3.

The Head of Department made this comment:

“

“Students' enthusiastic engagement with works such as 'Small Island', 'Oliver Twist' and 'Animal Farm' has been surprising and rewarding. As a result of ARK, the department found students assessments are more thorough, detailed and well developed this year”

”

We had the opportunity to pilot Ark Geography and given the success we had been seeing in Core, we had no reservations Our Head of Humanities said this:

“

“Ark has revitalised our geography curriculum. The topics that the students study are up to date and are relevant to the world we live in today. Students are enthusiastic about the topics that they are studying and the engagement in geography has increased dramatically. The sequencing of the ARK curriculum has led to our geographers becoming more confident in their own abilities due to the knowledge rich approach from the lessons.”

”

We are thankful for the support of the Trust in allowing time, high quality professional development which has enabled our staff to deliver a life changing curriculum to our young people at St Augustine. We look forward to Year 2 as we start to see our green shoots blossom.

Bad Habits and Good Habits

Bad Habits... This was my first observation when I arrived at St Chad's. The problem was, students were not aware they had bad habits or what they should have been doing. Not all of them of course, we know that in all our schools 95 – 98% of our students do the right thing when no-one is looking. Yet, the other 3-5% take up 98% of our time and mental capacity. This is how I started my introduction to students – Bad Habits and Good Habits. Behaviour changes Culture and Behaviour is simply a series of bad habits.

The first half term, we went back to basics. We created a behaviour blue print – one page – keep it simple. All staff underwent CPD every week on different elements of this blue print. Students had assemblies on the changes and expectations, parents were informed of what was happening. This form of communication has been key to every step of the changing habits journey – all stakeholders have been informed prior to the change, this immediately takes away excuses of 'we didn't know'.

From the blueprint and setting the foundations, we banned mobile phones, made the internal isolation room somewhere students didn't want to go, all staff placed on a rota for corrections, tackled hard internal truancy and simplified the report system to list a few.

Getting the basics right allowed us to move, at Easter, to the real change in culture we want to see and introduced line-ups in the morning. This now sets the tone and creates a calming environment for the start of the school day. Student voice tells us they prefer the starts, staff recognition has praised senior staff for implementing it. We know we are on the right track.

This has led us nicely into working with the Behaviour Hub, Nicola, our link at Kings Leadership Warrington has carried out an audit which triangulated everything we have done and still need to work on. With the added expertise from the Hub, we know we will be starting September in a greatly improved place – the future is exciting!





St Nicholas
Catholic Academy

Maths Mastery

Since our Good OFSTED report in January 2022, we have been striving for further progress and improvement in the teaching and learning of maths at St Nicholas. We identified a need to review our current maths planning and move to a Mastery approach for all children.

Prior to this, in September 2021 we had already engaged with the North West 3 Maths Hub and completed the Mastery Readiness programme. This enabled us to create a clear vision for where we were as a school with regard to maths mastery. The second year of the programme, which our maths lead began in September 2022, entitled 'Teaching for Mastery Development' helped us to further build on this success. We decided that this was the perfect opportunity to liaise with a school that was further ahead in their mastery journey and bring their invaluable knowledge and experience back to the staff and children at St Nicholas. The programme has also given the maths lead a great opportunity to meet with other teachers in a similar position each half term, dissect mastery lessons, discuss approaches to maths mastery teaching and consider the best way forward for our children.

Our maths lead now has a clear vision on what successful mastery teaching looks like. The best part of the experience has been seeing the 'end point'. We faced some challenges during the early stages of our mastery journey and as a staff found it difficult to adjust to at times. By taking part in the teacher research group as part of the 'Teaching for Mastery Development' programme, our maths lead has been able to bring a vision for the future back to school which has empowered the staff and built up their confidence.

Since joining the St Joseph CMAT we have been fortunate to bring the Ark Curriculum into school. The support this year from Ark has been instrumental in moving St Nicholas forward. The training and half-termly meetings with Ark professionals have fully supported our school and helped us to overcome the many challenges we faced in the beginning. Ark have tailored their advice and support specifically to meet the needs of our children.

Staff are now able to see the real benefits of Talk Tasks in partners using stem sentences. As a school with a significant proportion of EAL children it has been wonderful to see children with limited English speaking in maths lessons with confidence. Another benefit has been the use of manipulatives for all children. We invested in a new, complete set of maths resources at the start of the year and the children are used to using them in lessons in a variety of different ways to support their learning. There is a noticeable improvement in their reasoning skills as a result.

We look forward to continuing with the embedding stage of the programme next year.





The Trinity
Catholic Academy

Early Reading: Accuracy and Fluency



Rationale:

Our fundamental aim is to teach every child to read as quickly as possible and foster a genuine enthusiasm for reading. By prioritising accuracy and fluency, we aimed to empower our children to become confident, independent readers who could meaningfully engage with a wide range of texts.

Our Challenge:

The challenge I aimed to address was ensuring that our children develop strong early reading skills, particularly in terms of accuracy and fluency. We recognised that these foundational skills are essential for their overall reading comprehension and long-term academic success. Our strategy to tackle this challenge was for staff to receive specialised training and interventions focused on promoting accuracy and fluency in early reading. This included professional development sessions with support from Ruth Miskin experts and the Reading Lead from the Trust who each provided CPD and workshops that equipped our teachers with effective instructional strategies and resources.

Additionally, we introduced a Fast Track Tutoring program, targeting children who needed additional support. This program provided intensive, one-on-one or small group instruction to accelerate their progress in developing accurate and fluent reading skills. The implementation of homogenous grouping, has ensured that children were grouped together based on their reading levels. This allowed for more targeted instruction and personalised support tailored to each child's needs.

Improvements and Impact

The implementation of these strategies has resulted in significant improvements in early reading accuracy and fluency among our children. Pupils who initially struggled have made notable progress, demonstrating increased word recognition, decoding skills, and reading fluency. This has translated into improved comprehension, as children can focus more on the meaning and context of the text rather than decoding individual words.

Additionally, the impact of our class reading areas extends beyond academic outcomes. Children have developed a greater love for reading, finding joy in exploring various genres and engaging with literature. The improved accuracy and fluency have enhanced their overall confidence and self-esteem, empowering them to tackle more challenging texts and expand their knowledge.

Early Reading Case Study

We were delighted to announce that our school was chosen from the academies within the Trust to be filmed due to the remarkable success of the Read Write Inc programme. The outstanding implementation of this phonics program has resulted in significant improvements for our children's reading and writing skills, leading to their overall development. This recognition not only highlights the dedication and hard work of our teachers and staff in implementing the Read Write Inc programme effectively, but also serves as a testament to the positive impact it has had on our children's literacy abilities. We are honoured for our Trust to showcase our school as a model of excellence in phonics instruction and are excited to share our journey with others, hoping to inspire and empower educators around the UK.

Being part of St Joseph Multi Academy Trust has been instrumental in supporting our improvement efforts in early reading. The collaborative network has provided access to a wealth of expertise, resources, and best practices. The reading leaders across the trust have come together to share ideas, experiences, and professional development opportunities. It has been an honour to serve as reading lead for The Trinity this year and I look forward to developing further as a leader with the team.





St Joseph

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