

NEW VISION TRUST NEWSLETTER

Issue 8 Autumn 2023



SHAHED AHMED CEO AND EXECUTIVE HEAD AT ELMHURST

Foreword from Shahed Ahmed CEO - Going further together

I am delighted to share our biannual New Vision Trust newsletter and proud to share the many successes of our five individual schools and the trust as a whole.

It is now official - three out of five of our trust schools have been judged Outstanding by Ofsted under the current stringent framework. Elmhurst, Vicarage and more recently Gallions all impressed the inspection teams. Please read the recent reports [here](#) for Gallions and [here](#) for Vicarage.

Our new English Hub Lead, Fahima Khankara, has made an excellent start in her new role. There is a short pen portrait of Fahima further on in the newsletter.

As you are aware, we are not only focussing on improving the curriculum and teaching in our schools, but also the fabric of our buildings and site overall. Children are enjoying playtimes a lot more at Nelson & Gallions, partly due to participation in a strategic play programme called OPAL (<https://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/>), but also due to the massive improvement in the playgrounds; Gallions has invested over £600,000 and incidences of misbehaviour at lunchtimes have dramatically reduced. Elmhurst staff were so impressed during a recent visit to Gallions that they will also be following up with playground improvements and OPAL.

All schools are meeting the challenges of increased levels of pupils with special needs during a time of reduced national funding with creative and thoughtful leadership decisions, including at Nelson Primary School where there is excellent provision for pupils with ASD through establishing communication groups. Vicarage and Elmhurst's new bespoke support buildings are almost complete and will increase capacity and overall effectiveness.

David Herbert, school improvement partner, led a peer review process across the trust with senior leaders from all five schools and strategies have been shared to further improve inclusion, especially supporting pupils attaining in the lowest 20% of their cohort and looking at how to improve pupil voice in all schools. It was also pleasing to embed the Maths No Problem scheme at Downshall - all New Vision Trust schools now teach maths in a similar way and all schools will be hosting MNP open mornings in the new year to disseminate good practice.

Children from each school gratefully received another £1000 from the Brian Peppiatt Book Fund and eagerly selected books to enjoy in their libraries and book corners.

It remains a privilege to be the CEO of the New Vision Trust. Thank you to everyone for your continued commitment to making New Vision Trust a leading Academy Trust where we really are going further together! I wish everyone a restful and happy Christmas break and look forward to working with you all in 2024.



QUINTIN PEPPIAT CHAIR, NEW VISION TRUST

Foreword by Chair of Trustees, Revd Quintin Peppiatt:

Since our last newsletter in July, there have been some exciting developments around the schools. Great SAT results, the completion of the building projects but I must start with the wonderful news that two more of our schools have achieved an 'Outstanding' grade from the OFSTED inspectors.

Under the new OFSTED framework it is much more difficult to be awarded an 'Outstanding' grade. Yet in the past few months both Vicarage and Gallions Primary Schools have managed to achieve this distinction putting them within the top 15% of primary schools in the country. It is a great credit to all the school staff, parents, carers and children of those schools. I know how much work is involved in gaining this distinction. It also means that three of our five schools are now outstanding. Almost six years ago, we set up the New Vision Trust on the understanding that working together as an academy trust would raise the standards in all of our schools. It is good to know that we made the right decision.

The SAT results continue to improve across the schools with some of the schools in the top 5% of SATs results in the country.

You will also have seen new buildings going up in Vicarage and Elmhurst Schools. They should be completed by the end of term and they will significantly add to the resources available for some of our most vulnerable children. There are also playground works continuing to be worked on across our schools.

An exciting and productive term and many thanks to the Chief Executive Officer, the headteachers, staff and governors who do all the hard work to make these achievements possible.



SPOTLIGHT ON FAHIMA KHANKHARA – ENGLISH HUB LEAD



Hello everyone, I'm Fahima and I've had the pleasure of being part of the Elmhurst family for over 10 wonderful years. I studied English Literature at University and have always had a passion for reading.

Having started my teaching career with Elmhurst Primary School, I've had many incredible opportunities over the years teaching in KS1 and leading the year 1 team as Head of Year. I have had the privilege of working as a Literacy Specialist for the English Hub, supporting schools with teaching phonics effectively and developing early language skills. This year, I've stepped into the role of Hub Lead, and I'm thoroughly enjoying the chance to be at the forefront of nurturing a love for reading. While my role has evolved, my passion for education and dedication to supporting schools remain unwavering. As Hub Lead, I am deeply committed to ensuring schools we work with are able to support children with the invaluable skill of reading fluently.

On a personal note, I am an avid reader myself. With two young girls at home, I take great joy in reading to them each day. I firmly believe that every child should have the opportunity to experience the magic of someone reading to them.

NELSON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Nelson school has been looking for sometime at ways of enhancing children's play to continue the good work that has been started in the EYFS. We recognised that a large number of pupils didn't have the opportunity to experience high quality play. We know play improves the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and young people and that through play, children learn about the world and themselves. They also learn skills they need for study, work and relationships such as: confidence.

After some research we decided that OPAL (Outdoor play and learning) could be the answer. The reason we chose this was because of the detailed strategy of support and the organisation is run by highly qualified professionals who support schools to set up a safe and varied environment for children to play in, and to put in place all policy and health and safety measures that are required. We have a play working party including members of SLT, the PE coach, the senior midday supervisor and a parent governor. The group meets regularly to ensure the risk benefit documents are in place for every new activity and ensure the smooth running of gathering the resources. Parents have really invested in this project and are supporting the school by supplying small world toys, scooter, bikes, tyres etc. We were lucky enough to have our sand pit built by volunteers from Asset Finance, Professional Services EMEA and mud kitchen provided by one of our governors.

We have transformed play at the school through this project. There are now a myriad of activities for the children to get involved with. All the children are active and involved EVERY playtime. We have noticed that there are fewer incidents of arguments and children talk excitedly about what they have been doing.



VICARAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Vicarage Judged 'Outstanding' by OFSTED

In June this year, Vicarage primary school were graded 'Outstanding' in all areas by OFSTED, just fifteen months after receiving an ungraded inspection.

Four inspectors, including two HMIs, conducted the inspection over two days. The lead inspector Rebecca Iles-Smith (HMI) held a lengthy telephone meeting on the morning of June 20th with the Head Teacher and senior leadership team to discuss the context of the school as well as agree which subjects would have a deep dive. For Vicarage, it was early reading (which is mandatory), Maths, History, Science, and Music.

True to Vicarage's collaborative spirit, the staff went above and beyond, making all necessary preparations before the inspectors even set foot in the school. Day one of the inspection included meetings with subject leaders, lesson visits, work scrutiny and discussions with senior leaders on behaviour, personal development and safeguarding. Surveys from parents, staff, and pupils were scrutinized.

Despite no indications regarding the final grading, staff felt confident as they went into day two. However, the inspection's agenda evolved, leading to deep dives in Art, MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) and Geography. The inspectors also focused on attendance, Early Years, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the wider opportunities for pupils at the school. Parents were spoken to in the playground at the start of the school day and there were conversations with pupils in Key Stage 2.

Meetings continued until 3 pm on the second day, highlighting the thoroughness of the inspection team. The meticulous approach ensured that no aspect of the school was overlooked before the final grading decision was reached.

Receiving the Outstanding grade was a monumental moment as it was the first time in the school's 113 year history.

It has been the result of years of unwavering dedication, hard work, and a steadfast commitment to providing exceptional learning experiences, care and support to pupils, parents and staff at the school. The pride felt by the school community has been palpable.

Looking forward to the future, the team at Vicarage continues to focus on school improvement and maintain the exceptional high standards achieved.



GALLIONS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Gallions was judged outstanding by Ofsted in all areas!

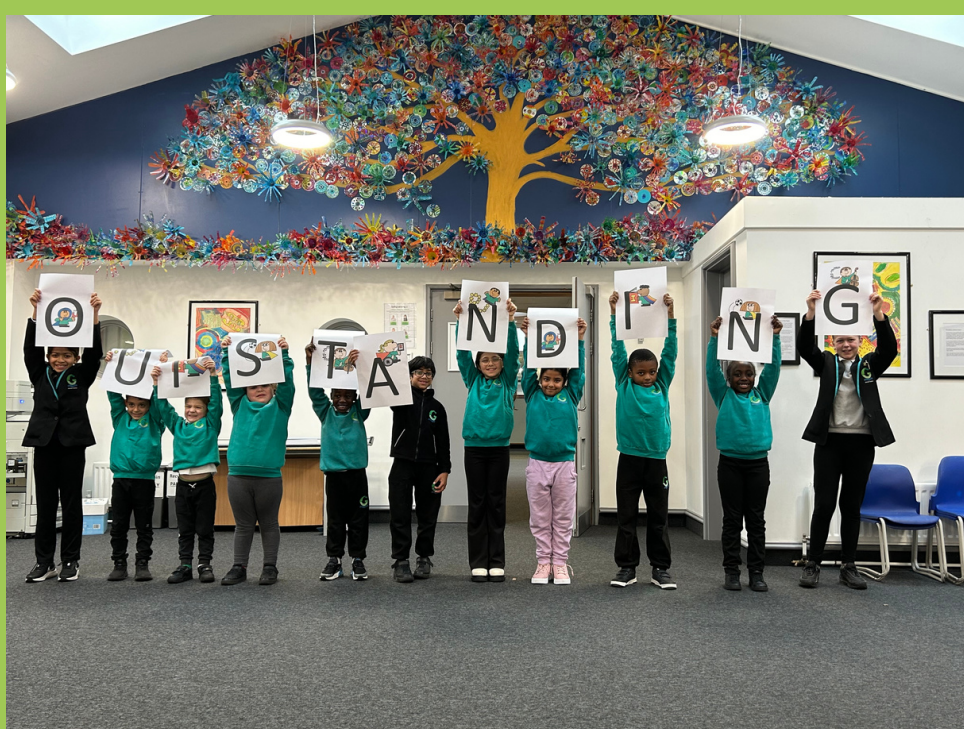
I am very proud to share that since the last NVT newsletter in July, Gallions has been awarded an outstanding judgement by Ofsted.

The inspection took place on the 17th and 18th of October and was led by a team of four inspectors, one of whom was present to quality check the process. On the first day, the ofsted team completed deep dives into reading, physical education, history and science. As part of their deep dives, they conducted lesson observations, delved into pupil books and had numerous conversations with pupils and curriculum leaders. These intense scrutinies of the curriculum were led expertly by our curriculum leads and showcased our rich, progressive and considered curriculum. In fact, Ofsted commented on our highly ambitious curriculum, where pupils routinely study content that is above what might be expected of them.

In reflection, what we appreciate the most about our recent Ofsted visit was the opportunity we were given to highlight what makes Gallions unique and special. The ofsted team spent time in performing arts lessons, philosophy for children sessions, chess lessons, latin lessons and of course music lessons. Through these lesson observations and conversations with staff and pupils Ofsted were able to get a better understanding of Gallions and what makes it an exceptional school. As a school we invest heavily in creating and providing outstanding opportunities for all of our students - this might be the opportunity to perform in one of our orchestras, take part in a debating competition or be part of a winning cheerleading squad. Gallions makes sure it offers something that will excite and engage all pupils.

Following our outstanding judgement, Gallions was visited in November by Amanda Spielman, the Chief Inspector. We were proud to yet again showcase our outstanding school with a particular focus on our music curriculum. She was able to spend time in the music department, listening to our children in year two practising their string instruments. She was accompanied by ITV and excitingly Gallions was part of a news bulletin.

None of these achievements would be possible without our amazing staff - I personally have to thank everyone for their commitment, enthusiasm and belief in our school.



DOWNSHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Reading for Pleasure

At Downshall Primary School, our pupils are delighted that the funds received from the Brian Peppiatt Book Fund have been used to enhance the offerings of the library bus. By collaborating with Newham Bookshop, we have successfully curated a collection of books authored by individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds, spanning genres suitable for early years through to Year 6. We hope to enhance our pupils' reading for pleasure experience during their lunchtimes and class visits to the library bus. The feedback from the children encapsulates their enthusiasm for the expanded selection, making the library bus a truly engaging and educational space.

"Today we had an opportunity to view the books that we received from the Brian Peppiatt book fund. I enjoyed sorting out the different books such as non-fiction, comic, fiction and many more. I really liked seeing all the books from the different authors, some of which I recognised; so now I am keen to read more!" – Isha, 5S.

"It was really fun reading the books. I enjoyed setting up the books on the book stands. Now that I have seen all the books, I am excited to go in the library bus with my class to read the books." – Minsa, 1O



Cricket Enrichment Day

Essex Cricket visited Downshall on 12th October 2023 to deliver a Cricket World Cup assembly and a day of cricket workshops. 120 children from KS2 were able to take part in 1 hour long, expertly taught cricket workshops throughout the day, that included skill development and game-play scenarios. The children had a fantastic time learning and competing together and are looking forward to more opportunities to play in the future.

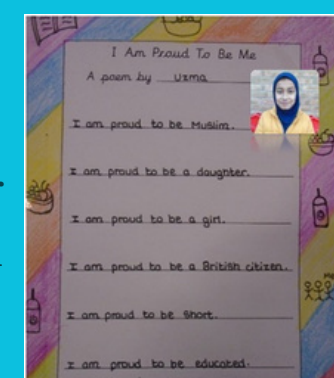
"I loved how the teacher encouraged me and helped me with my positioning of the bat so that I could swing it correctly to hit the ball. Then I could use my new skills in an exciting game" – Amisha, 4A



BREE Project

This term, our Year 6 students have been eagerly participating in the BREE project—Building Resilience to Extremism through Enquiry. The project has been taught across many London boroughs, however we are proud to say we are the first Redbridge school to participate. The purpose of the scheme is to empower children to become critical thinkers, and enable them to question differing views, misconceptions and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. The journey began with students exploring their own identities and recognizing commonalities with others. An example of this can be seen in the diversity poems by David&Uzma, 6PB. Self-identity is a fundamental aspect of the entire program, and students joyfully embraced the diversity within themselves. These lessons will continue with exploring profound concepts including identity, extremism, radicalization, and terrorism. While we recognize the weightiness of these topics, it is imperative for our students to actively engage with them, fostering both understanding and honing critical thinking skills.

"We are learning how to think critically. This means you should think before you do. Not thinking before speaking or doing can be dangerous. I've understood cyber-bullying can actually be more intense than physical bullying, this is not something I had thought of before. I also know extreme behaviour is when someone takes their actions to the next level, which can be against the law" Zohan, 6PB. "These lessons have been teaching us how to respect each other. We are learning how to think outside the box. I know extremism is when someone does a bad thing which is much more than normal behaviour and takes people out of the comfort zones." Aisha, 6O. "I have learnt that critical thinking is when you think logically; you think before you make a decision about something. I am really enjoying the lessons. I enjoy the parts where I am able to hear both points of views when we are debating about a statement. It allows me to think before deciding." Umar, 6O.



ELMHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL



A fruit-loving caterpillar, feathery owl babies seeking their mummy, a cacophony zoo animals and some blustery autumn weather...these are just a few of the adventures we have been enjoying in the Reception SEND Literacy group!

Since September, the children have been working through a daily structure starting out with a hello song, followed by song choosing, a phonological awareness activity, a listening and attention game, then a sensory story, mark making before closing with a goodbye song.

The hello song has been a chance to work on name recognition and responding, as well as building an invaluable feeling of belonging. Song choosing has given opportunities to practise choosing from a selection of two using verbal or non-verbal communication including gesture, eye pointing and signing, as well as being a lot of fun. During phonological awareness activities, the children have encountered the 'noisy zoo' and 'noisy farm' sounds and explored the initial letter sounds *m a s d t* through multiple senses- the fluffy monkey, runaway ants, the slithery snake, the drum and the push-along tiger. Through activities devised by the Complex Needs Team, the children have been developing their receptive language in the 'Listen Now and Look At Me' and 'Pass The Bag' games. These have been enjoyable for children and adults alike!



Undoubtedly, the sensory stories have been the highlight of the group. Each story– from *Owl Babies* to *Handa's Surprise*, *Autumn Walk* and *Brown Bear*– has come to life and been made relevant to the children through objects and multisensory experiences. The children's senses have been activated through items such as aromatic lavender oil, crunchy autumn leaves, a fan, a torch or simply through body percussion and movement such as clapping, tapping or jumping. The children's mark making linked to the story has yielded beautiful results– from concertina books with animals matched to colours, to owls feathered with autumn leaves and stunning printed butterflies. It has been wonderful to see the children developing not only their skill but their enjoyment too when using various objects to make marks on different textures.



Reflecting on the last couple of months, I see how the children have settled into the rhythm of the group thanks to its predictable structure and the interesting, multisensory experiences on offer. Their attention spans have increased; they are more responsive to their names, the stories, songs and communication opportunities. The TAs, Ms Begum, Ms Tutti and Ms Kaur have been invaluable in the group, modelling listening and attention skills, enabling the children to make choices during the activities, attending to their communication bids, facilitating that all-important mutual regulation and– of course– generating the next creative idea for the lesson plans!

The new building is exciting because it will offer a large, bright, modern space for the groups, alongside the state-of-the-art sensory and soft play rooms. We will be able to increase engagement and participation in the learning by setting up tailored learning and more bespoke communication opportunities at different tables within the classroom. TAs will be able to work with children on specific activities linked to specific targets. I can't wait to see how much progress the children will make in the Spring Term!



JONNY WALKER

In 2023-24, the five schools of the New Vision Trust are continuing to work with specialist teacher Jonny Walker.

Throughout November and December, all of the Year 5 students at Vicarage and Gallions are taking part in the Iliad Project.

“The Iliad Project continues to grow and develop each year. Working in Gallions, it has been great to build upon the rich culture of philosophical enquiry. And with Vicarage, the project so far has given me plentiful opportunities to work with the Y5 team, developing teachers’ own reflective practice.

The children in both schools are incredibly eager, and my Tuesdays and Fridays are the highlights of my week.” Jonny Walker

After the February half-term, it will be the turn of Elmhurst, Nelson and Downshall.

This project gives every Year 5 child in our trust the chance to develop their oracy, reflection, self-confidence and engagement with mythical thinking. Children act, reflect, philosophise, pose questions and learn many ways to improve their communication.

And for the teachers, it is a coherent and structured form of in-class CPD, inviting teachers to see their classroom with new eyes, as participant observers.

Looking to Summer, we are booked in for our latest legendary New Vision Trust poetry retreat at the New Forest, from Tuesday 21st to Friday 24th May, with Jonny and Adisa.

The Iliad Project continues to grow and develop each year. Working in Gallions, it has been great to interrogate children's learning relationships build upon the rich culture of philosophical enquiry with the Y5 teachers. And with Vicarage, the project so far has given me plentiful opportunities to work with the Y5 team on drama-based strategies and reflective pedagogical practice. In both schools, the children have engaged with great enthusiasm, and a real passion for mythology.



PEN PORTRAITS OF OUR TRUSTEES



CHAIR OF TRUSTEES: REVD QUINTIN PEPPIATT

Revd Quintin Peppiatt has been the parish priest for St. Mary Magdalene, East Ham since 1995. He is currently chair of the New Vision Trust and Vicarage Primary School. He has been a local councillor since 1997 and was Cabinet member for children and young people.



JANE LUCAS - TRUSTEE

Jane Lucas has been a trustee of the New Vision Board since its formation in 2018, a role she immensely enjoys. Jane's career as a teacher has enabled her to take a strategic approach to her role as Trustee and she is always insightful with her thoughts and feedback.

She has a long standing relationship with Gallions Primary, where she worked from 2004 until 2016 as a Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher. Jane's love for Gallions has continued and she now supports its progress through her role as Chair of Governors. As a Governor Jane is very supportive, she has a good understanding of Newham and its community and is passionate about supporting Gallions pupils becoming lifelong learners. Jane's creative talents have supported Gallions drive for excellence in the creative arts and she is a huge supporter of our commitment to teaching all pupils a string instrument.



MARJORIE BROWNE - TRUSTEE

Marjorie Browne had been a School Governor, a Local Authority Governor and is currently Chair of Governors at Elmhurst Primary school. She is proud to be a long-standing member of the governing body.

Marjorie has always been passionate about helping young people and children. Marjorie is the Gifted and Talented link governor and regularly attends the Shakespeare in school events.

Marjorie has been a trustee of New Vision Trust since it was formed in 2018 and has embraced her role in helping children reach their potential.



NICOLE ABBOTT - TRUSTEE

Nicole Abbott went to St. Michael's Primary School, St. Angela's Ursuline School and then St. Angela's and St. Bonaventure's Sixth Form. She studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University, followed by a law conversion course and law and business masters.

After working in the City as a banking lawyer for seven years, she recently left to be an in-house lawyer at the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Nicole has been a governor of Nelson since 2018 and joined the board of trustees of the New Vision Trust in December 2021.