

Palladian Academy Trust NEWSLETTER



Dear parents, carers and friends

Welcome to our spring newsletter - keeping you up to date with developments and events in the Palladian Academy Trust.

Huge congratulations to Tim Withers for completing the London Marathon - with the very generous support of friends, family, colleagues and the school community. Tim has exceeded his target of raising £1500 on behalf of The Genesis Trust, a charity who do fantastic work with the disadvantaged and homeless in Bath. This is the second time he has raised money for the charity – he also completed the London Marathon for them in 2016. He would like to thank everyone for their support once again.



Above: Tim Withers, with his London Marathon medal

Update from Tim Withers, CEO

One Night at the Palladian – You will read on page 4 about the evening planned for Monday 18 June this year: an exciting opportunity for our students to perform on a very big stage. 'Palladian' is often confused with 'Palladium', but we don't like to make a song and dance about it!

This evening will be a great showcase of our partnership and the many collaborations that are running within it. Do put it into your diary as it's certainly going to be a memorable event.

Visit of Dr Richard Riddell – I recently met with Richard Riddell, Senior Lecturer in Education

Studies at Bath Spa University, who is researching another book – this time on multi-academy trusts, and how the school system is changing and developing. Richard has deep experience of urban education, including seven years as Director of Education in Bristol. His previous publications have been influential, and he has a very long CV.

We agreed that it seems likely that there will be a 'hybrid' or 'dual' system in place for the next few years, with academy groups as well as LA schools. Richard wanted to know my opinions on the benefits of being a single organisation and did pose a question that is sometimes heard: wouldn't such collaborations have been possible from the vantage points of individual schools within an LA?

The truth is: sometimes, yes. However, the PAT is a single organisation with a shared responsibility for our outcomes, and only as strong as its weaker links. Working together across a range of projects deepens our relationships with each week that passes, and this is simply not the same as a group of schools that may choose to work on a particular project for a short time. 'Partnership' is one of our values, and lived out in many different ways.

For example, our eight Trust schools have a '**peer review**' initiative in train. School leaders are visiting each other's schools to review and develop, giving invaluable professional feedback on what is found. This all comes free of charge, of course. If we were to buy in consultancy support, it would have cost us



thousands of pounds. Another example of how we can effectively support school improvement in each of our schools.

In many other ways, for example: assessment, curriculum, site developments, we are working more closely together. Over time, there is certainly a tendency towards this. The DFE have said they will expect our group of schools to give support to others that are thriving less well in the system, and it is certainly true that we have many, many strengths to draw on. 'School improvement strategy' is a key concept for the DFE in the south west, and they expect us to refine and develop our approach each year.

Professional development is another of our five values. With this in mind, a Teaching School application has been submitted jointly with the Wellsway MAT, as well as several other schools and academies. The PAT should learn about the DFE decision on this before the end of the school year, but whatever the outcome, we will be looking for ways to work together with other key partners in the LA and beyond.

It is now public knowledge that two Wiltshire schools, Winsley C of E Primary School and

Fitzmaurice Primary School, are consulting on joining the Trust and trustees welcome this. There is no desire for rapid expansion, but schools which are 'MAT-minded' and wanting to be a part of a special organisation – the Palladian Academy Trust – are always welcome to talk to us, and we know that expanding our 'hub' of central services and support is easier as the size and scope of the Trust develops.

Weeks in school – I recently spent a week in Widcombe Junior School, followed the next week by time in Oldfield Park Infant School. After almost 11 years as a headteacher, it is exciting and challenging to be making connections across our group and joining professionals together. As ever, this is much easier with a close working knowledge of the staff, students and culture of the individual schools that make up our particular PAT 'mosaic'. In that sense, my position is a very privileged one. A map showing the location of Trust schools has been included above – something parents have requested to see.

Above: location of PAT schools across Bath



Above: Tim Withers with pupils at Widcombe Junior School during 'Marathon muffi'

The Palladian Bridge in Prior Park was referenced in our name for this reason: that bridges connect people and make it possible for them to be together. I have been discussing this in assemblies with children in all schools and key stages in the PAT recently. As we approach our two-year anniversary, the state of our union is strong.



News

Arts workshops

On Saturday 24 February 2018, 80 children from Palladian Academy Trust schools attended an exciting arts event with a variety of workshops at Ralph Allen School. We were fortunate to have a talented group of parents and school friends who volunteered to run the workshops which included a rock band, animation, printing, flower crowns, puppet making and architecture. We were grateful to these adults and our art subject leaders in schools for organising this event. It was wonderful to see children from the different schools coming together to develop and extend their interests and talents across the arts. We hope to make this an annual event.

Below: young people from across the Trust taking part in the arts workshops

'Great leaders, fun and supportive.'
PARENT



'My child made friends with a Year 3 child from another school, just how it should work in the PAT.'
PARENT



'What a great afternoon trying out art!'
PARENT



One Night at the Palladian

Parents are invited to a special evening at the Bath Forum at 6.30pm on Monday 18 June 2018, celebrating the arts within the Palladian Academy Trust.



We are very excited as it will be the first time the whole Palladian Academy Trust community will join together to celebrate the talents of our children. Not only will individual schools perform, there will be a number of special items in which our Trust schools will come together to reflect our spirit of collaboration. Art work from each school will also be on display in the foyer – a real treat!

Tickets will be distributed fairly between all schools with one ticket per performer at a cost of £5 each. Seating will be unallocated. Each school will have a number of spare tickets to reflect the number of performers taking part. Your child's school will inform you of their contribution to the evening and whether your child is participating. Each school will make their own arrangements for selling tickets for this fantastic event.

Look out for photographs of One Night at the Palladian in the autumn newsletter.

Staff activities

In February, many staff from across the Trust participated in training delivered by Hwyl Roberts for the first Trust INSET day of the academic year. Staff were inspired with lots of practical ideas to develop the children's engagement, through increasing the relevance of learning and providing opportunities for the children to extend their learning.

Our second Trust INSET day will take place at Ralph Allen School on Friday 29 June with 'wellbeing' as the theme, one of our Trust values.

Primary teaching staff also recently attended Trust training on the new General Data Protection Regulations which come into force on 25 May. This will ensure all data kept in schools is well protected.

Trustees have been holding their meetings at the different schools so they can also get to know staff – usually during a trustee/staff tea before their meeting begins.

Parent Orchestra

One of the governors from Widcombe CE Junior School set up a parent orchestra last year. Its success is growing and it is a great community project with exciting prospects. Jon Gore is keen to develop this venture for parents within the Palladian Academy Trust schools. If you are a keen musician or you used to play and are looking to start again, consider joining the parent orchestra at Widcombe CE Junior School. So far there are around 25-30 parents who play a range of instruments including flutes, oboe, clarinets, violins, cellos, trumpets, trombone, French horn, drum and piano. They play a wide range of film/TV themes and pop/rock. They practise once a month and perform at various school/pre-school fairs, concerts, street parties and busking in town. They are very friendly and not too serious. Members turn up when they can, often with children in tow.

If you are interested in joining, please contact: jgore@widcombejuniorschool.com or drop into a rehearsal (2nd Saturday morning of each month) or find us (the 'Orchestra of Everything') at Party in the City next month.

Commonwealth Gold

Congratulations to ex-Ralph Allen student, Serena Guthrie, part of the England netball Commonwealth Gold team!



Above: England netball team

For all PAT correspondence and enquiries, including feedback about this newsletter or ideas for future content, please email: Yvonne Miles, PA to Tim Withers: y.miles@palladianacademytrust.com