

RELEASING POTENTIAL

MAGAZINE



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Culture

Employee
Assistance
Programme

National
Year Of
Reading



SPRING 2026

RELEASING POTENTIAL

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2026



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



Welcome

Our annual INSET for all St. Bart's employees was an opportunity to reflect on what **culture** means across our multi-academy trust. We have summarised the event in this issue.

Every member of St. Bart's staff has access to our **Employee Assistance Programme**. You can find what this means for you inside.

We take a look at the **National Year of Reading** campaign that is happening across the U.K. throughout 2026 and how you can get involved.

We have an update on our Evidence into Action Partnership with the **Education Endowment Foundation**.

There is also a collection of news stories from across St. Bart's demonstrating our lived **PEACE values**.

All this, plus our regular features. Happy reading!

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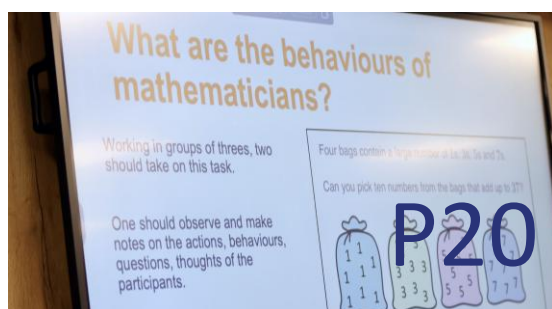
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John Collier

Releasing Potential Magazine

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Disclaimer

Views expressed in
Releasing Potential
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St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Culture

Our Trust-Wide INSET for 2026



What does a positive and supportive culture for all look like?

What are our shared beliefs and values?

Who is responsible for setting the culture?

How do we express these through policies, practices and interactions?

CULTURE

How is the culture lived, breathed and experienced?

What role do we all play in maintaining a positive culture?

How do we help all people grow in our settings?

How do we ensure that everyone is psychologically safe?

Culture

Our Trust-Wide INSET for 2026

On Friday 14th February 2026, staff from across St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust gathered together for our annual INSET event which this year covered the theme of CULTURE.

The morning began with a welcome from our CEO, Lisa Sarikaya, who explained the reason behind the chosen topic:

"Culture is a set of shared beliefs, values and practices.

It's just what we do around here. Culture is more than

values on a wall – it's how people think, feel, and act.

It shapes every interaction, decision, and outcome.

You feel culture almost immediately.

You shape it through attention, consistency and care.

If core values represent the roots of our organisation, then culture is what can be seen atop the tree.

Culture reflects the way the leaders and employees act...even when no one is watching.

Culture 'eats strategy for breakfast'. Positive culture is essential for good decision making."



At St. Bart's our desired culture aligns closely with our PEACE values –

CULTURE SPARKS PASSION

A strong culture connects people to purpose. When values align, individuals become emotionally invested. Passion is sustained by shared beliefs and meaningful work which builds an organisation and culture where staff want to work, can do their best and choose to stay.

Culture ignites the fire that keeps us driven.

CULTURE ENCOURAGES AND ELEVATES

A supportive culture fosters psychological safety.

In strong cultures people feel supported and encouraged.

Encouragement leads to innovation, creativity, and resilience. In the right culture, encouragement becomes fuel.

CULTURE DRIVES AMBITION AND COLLABORATION

Ambition thrives in environments that reward progress.

Collaboration is effortless when there is mutual trust and respect. Ambition without culture is chaos.

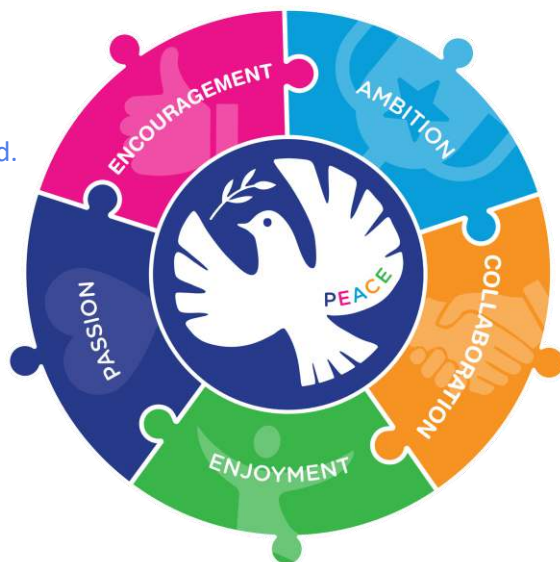
Collaboration without trust is hollow.

CULTURE CREATES ENJOYMENT AND BELONGING

We need to build a culture that is rooted in clearly expressed values,

behaviours and ethos. Culture only thrives when there is authenticity that protects, nurtures and develops it. Enjoyment comes from being valued and included.

Culture turns work into something you look forward to.



Culture

Our Trust-Wide INSET for 2026



Culture. It shapes how we work together and how we treat one another. It's expressed in our everyday actions, in the way we communicate, support and collaborate.

At St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust, our culture shapes what it means to be part of our family of schools. It's a shared foundation that guides how we strive for excellence in all we do.

Being part of this family means more than just education. It's about opportunity, community, and preparing every child for life in all its fullness. This same sense of community shapes the environment we create for one another - one built on respect, trust, and shared purpose. Pupils are taught how to become valuable, well-mannered, and respectful members of society. These qualities also define how adults build relationships with each other - through respect and kindness.

Our shared vision and values shape the way we work, the way we respond to challenges. We work together to be the best that we can be, supporting each other and achieving success. This shared commitment is what strengthens our culture and the experiences we create together.

At St. Barts, we believe education goes far beyond the classroom. It's our shared culture that makes this possible. It brings purpose and consistency to everything we do. Our trust wide enrichment programme enables every child to grow personally, socially, and academically. This brings learning to life, and it makes pupils want to learn more.

But enrichment at St. Barts is about more than activities. It's about belonging. Belonging grows when people feel included, listened to, and supported.



Watch Daniel Jones' video about culture at St. Bart's by clicking on the picture above.

Our digital worship program allows children to share faith, reflection, and creativity with schools across the trust. While spelling, times tables, and art competitions bring our whole family of schools together. These opportunities allow every child to discover their passions and shine. These shared experiences strengthen our sense of community and help shape a positive culture.

Innovation and technology are central to learning at St. Barts. A culture of innovation thrives when we remain open to new ideas and feel confident to keep learning.

Inclusion at St. Bart's means that every child, regardless of ability, can be confident, engaged and fully part of our family. Our tailored support, resources and inclusive learning experiences reflect our shared commitment to inclusion and wellbeing.

It's our collective culture that ensures everyone, from pupils to staff, feel valued and included. And this is the impact of our culture; the way we think, act, and work together. It is what makes those possibilities real and how we release potential together.

Culture

Our Trust-Wide INSET for 2026

Chair of St. Bart's Trust Board, Johnny Anderson, shared his top ten examples of positive culture indicators that he has personally experienced across our MAT.



1. A warm welcome shown by everyone

"I've witnessed St. Bart's colleagues giving the warmest greetings to adults and pupils. This positive first impression directly helps stakeholders to feel connected with their colleagues and I assure you all that it matters."

2. Respect

"I see many examples of colleagues equally valuing and respecting school-based and central colleagues, as well as pupils and parents. And I have had the pleasure of seeing it regularly in all of our settings."

3. Fairness

"I continue to see situations and developments where everyone's view is sought. I see regular and consistent examples of everyone having the same recognition and the same opportunities."

4. Belonging

"On visiting our schools I walk into diverse, but consistently inclusive and belonging environments, which in turn encourage creativity and innovation. Employees that feel they belong are more likely to stay, grow, and thrive in St. Bart's."

5. Great leadership

"I think this sets us apart from other trusts I visit. Our leaders are professional, able and talented. Personally, I find them to be honest, highly likeable, approachable and fair. What I admire the most is their investment in their staff, their wellbeing and personal desire for happy stakeholders."

6. Shared values

"I feel we have a culture where shared values lead us more than rules. We don't just seek compliance, but a far greater contribution for the benefit of those we serve."

7. Credibility

"Based on feedback, I know that you exceed the expectations of the communities you serve. Your actions consistently match your words."

8. Innovation

"Innovation was at the start, and the key reason for the formation of St. Bart's. It is great to see the varied, continuous developments taking place. The leadership and delivery of the curriculum in our schools is inspiring."

9. Prioritising professional development

"The continued offer of growth opportunities indicates that colleagues are valued. It has been the key reason for boosting engagement, staff retention and it continues to build a future-ready workforce."

10. Collaboration and sharing

"This is key to the organisational development we desire. I regularly see teamwork, improving relationships and regular opportunities for sharing great practice where colleagues are not afraid to ask tough questions of themselves, and are not afraid to answer."

Culture

Our Trust-Wide INSET for 2026

Our keynote speaker for the day was **Dave Keeling**, author of *The Little Pocket Book of Laughter*, *The Book of Invisible Teaching* and a contributor to the *Big Book of Independent Thinking*.

Dave grew up in a pit village in Nottinghamshire and was tap dancing three times a week by the age of ten. Never one to shy away from challenge and risk, he then moved into the world of acting and trained at the prestigious London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

Dave is also a 'Lead Happiness Consultant' for **Laughology** – a company that promotes fun, science-backed techniques that support workplace happiness, transform behaviours, shift mindsets and create high-performing people and teams.

Dave's session covered a range of culture-related themes, providing attendees with practical tools to take away and apply in their own contexts.

He began the session by reflecting on his own educational journey, highlighting the highs and lows of school life, summarised as a 'crammed, passed, and forgot' approach to exams.

Dave encouraged us to deal with our 'wonky thoughts' and show the world how brilliant we are. As an experienced 'laughologist', Dave presented clearly (and hilariously) the neuroscience of humour, laughter and happiness and its relationship with cultural change, leadership development, and mental wellbeing.

He shared ways to activate our 'reward chemicals', warned us of plateauing in our careers, reminded us of the legacy we can leave behind, and shared strategies to increase psychological safety at work. A HUGE thank to Dave for his inspiring and motivating talk.



Do you have an attitude worth catching?

Dave's

FIVE TOP TAKEAWAYS



People who feel good make better choices.



Plateauing sends organisations backwards.



The more emotional the experience is, the more we remember it.



We have autonomy over how we feel.



Courage is not the absence of fear, it's the mastery of fear.

Culture

St. Bart's Leadership Team Desired Culture

We believe that strong, authentic relationships are the foundation of effective leadership. We prioritise connection, trust, and genuine care for one another, recognising that our relational culture directly shapes the wellbeing and success of our staff, pupils, and community.

Common Purpose and Intention

The desired culture we expect members of St. Bart's leadership teams to demonstrate and promote have been captured in our 'Leadership Team Desired Culture' poster. It sets out six themes that underpin effective relationships:

COURAGEOUS

Not deterred by danger; brave.

DIGNIFYING

Make something seem worthy.

FAIR

Impartial and just; without discrimination.

HONEST

Free of deceit, truthful and sincere.

LOVING

Feeling or showing love or great care.

TRUSTWORTHY

Able to be relied on as honest and truthful.

*When
relationships lead,
potential follows.*



Click on the image above to access the poster online.



Employee Assistance Programme

Support to manage life's everyday challenges



Employee Assistance Programme

Support to manage life's everyday challenges

Balancing the competing demands of our work, personal and family lives can be difficult, frustrating and time-consuming. That is why St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust is providing an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in partnership with *Life & Progress* to offer a little extra support to manage life's everyday challenges.

Support when you need it

Occasionally you might experience a time when nothing seems to be going your way. When issues such as childcare, finances, relationships and caring for the elderly begin to mount up, it can start to cause stress and anxiety. Available by telephone, email, instant messaging and online, your EAP provides free, confidential information and support to help you gain a better work-life balance.

Telephone & Online Counselling

When going through a tough time, or even if you just need information on a particular issue, your EAP and wellbeing service can support you. If you're experiencing negative thoughts or difficult feelings, speaking to a counsellor can be a great way to help you to remain positive and happy. Given that all our consultants are trained counsellors or psychotherapists, that initial conversation may be all you need.

Assurance of confidentiality

Confidentiality is the foundation of the EAP. You only need to state that you work for your employer. You don't need to give your name, you can use a pseudonym. All counsellors abide to BACP's Ethical Framework for Good Practice and all employees sign confidentiality agreements. Only statistics are recorded. No identifying information is provided to your employer.



Life & Progress

Benefits for St. Bart's employees

- Free of charge
- Available 24 hours a day, every day of the year
- Confidential
- Independent from your employer
- Access to impartial specialists
- Support on an unlimited number of issues
- Saves time and legwork
- Helps you plan ahead with practical matters
- Supports you during more difficult times

Employee Assistance Programme

Support to manage life's everyday challenges

Confidential Care

Your EAP & wellbeing service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whether by phone or talking to a consultant online, you can contact us as often as you like and speak for as long as you need.



Mind and Body

The capabilities of our physical selves are deeply intertwined with our emotional states. So, while a healthy diet and plenty of exercise are necessary for good mental health, we need to feel relatively well to practice sound physical self-care.



Home Life

Our home lives hold several emotional attachments and practical responsibilities. It's not always easy, but with the right kind of support and guidance, home life can be one of the most rewarding and nourishing resources.



Money

Facing economic insecurity can have a profound impact on your sense of safety and wellbeing. Learning where to find support is often the first step. For some, it's even possible to discover a whole new way of living.



Legal

From divorce to inheritance tax, from workplace bullying to household disputes, legal challenges are part of everyday life. A bit of sound advice can make all the difference between a frightening and overwhelming situation and a challenge that can be faced and overcome.



Work Life

There is a strong link between physical and emotional wellbeing, engagement at work, and productivity. Put simply, the healthier you are, the happier you are, the more able you will be to do your job effectively.



Employee Assistance Programme

Support to manage life's everyday challenges

Additional resources

In addition to the dedicated telephone and online assistance programme, *Life & Progress* also provide a range of additional resources.

Support Bulletins and Case Studies

Access their Support Bulletins covering a range of topics. The latest titles include 'Time to Talk' and 'Coping Strategies for Better Sleep'. Their Case Studies offer real-life examples of common situations and practical advice for handling them. You can find the latest bulletins and case studies here -

<https://www.employeesupport.co.uk/bulletins/>

Wellness Activities

The Wellness Haven offers a holistic approach to well-being, combining guided meditations, soothing soundscapes, and insightful podcasts to nurture your mind, body, and spirit. Whether you're seeking stress relief, a boost in focus, or simply a moment of peace, explore the curated collection and embark on your personalised path to wellness. Find out more here – [Activities - L&P Employee Support](#)

Webinars with Thrive Talking

Join webinar presenter Garth MacAnally and the *Thrive Talking* producers as they discuss a range of topics. Each webinar features special guests, award-winning speakers and professional experts. Visit <https://www.employeesupport.co.uk/webinars/>

St. Bart's Portal for all EAP services is here -

<https://www.employeesupport.co.uk/portal/>

Please note: Access to the employee assistance programme and online resources require a login. Please contact your Principal or Line Manager for details.

Life & Progress



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Support Bulletin

Time to Talk

A national reminder of the power of conversation in the workplace

Talking about mental health has never been more important. In every workplace—large or small—people are juggling pressures, responsibilities, and personal challenges that aren't always obvious on the surface. Stress, anxiety, low mood, family worries, financial pressures... many of us carry more than we let on.

Time to Talk is a national reminder that even the briefest conversation can make a meaningful difference. Taking a few minutes to check in with a colleague, listen without judgement, or simply ask how someone is doing can help break down stigma and build a more supportive working environment.

For employees, these conversations matter because:

- **They reduce stigma** – When colleagues speak openly, it becomes easier for everyone to seek support when needed.
- **They strengthen teams** – Understanding each other's challenges fosters trust, empathy, and better working relationships.
- **They remind people they're not alone** – A simple, genuine chat can make someone feel seen and supported.

Life & Progress

Call us today in confidence

You don't need special training or perfect phrasing. Often, **being present and willing to listen** is all that's required.

So today, take a moment—reach out to a colleague, ask how they're doing, or open up about how you're feeling. A small conversation might be exactly what someone needs to feel a bit lighter, more connected, or more able to cope.

And remember:

If you or someone you know needs additional support, your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is here 24/7 for confidential, professional help whenever it's needed.

Let's make Time to Talk a reminder that in every workplace, on every day, talking about mental health is normal, welcome, and powerful.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)



Coping Strategies for Better Sleep

Quality sleep is one of the most powerful foundations for good mental and physical wellbeing.

Yet for many people, restful sleep can feel elusive, particularly during busy or stressful periods. The good news is that small, consistent changes to your daily routine can significantly improve how well you sleep and, in turn, how refreshed, focused, and resilient you feel each day.

Please consider making sleep a priority by adopting a few simple coping strategies that support better rest.

1. Keep a Regular Bedtime Routine

Our bodies thrive on rhythm. Going to bed and waking up at roughly the same time each day, even at weekends, helps regulate your internal body clock (circadian rhythm).

A consistent routine signals to your brain that it's time to wind down. You might introduce a short pre-sleep ritual such as:

- Reading a few pages of a book
- Gentle stretching
- Practising slow breathing exercises
- Listening to calming music

Over time, these cues become associated with rest, making it easier to fall asleep naturally.

2. Limit Screen Time

Phones, tablets, light, which can disrupt the hormone that helps the evening calm down.

Aim to reduce screen time before bed. If possible, use blue light filters.

- Charge devices outside the bedroom
- Switch to 'night mode' or blue light filters
- Replace screens with books or audiobooks

3. Create a Calm Bedroom

Your bedroom environment can significantly impact your sleep quality. Consider:

- Is the room cool enough?
- Is your mattress comfortable?
- Are there distracting sounds or light?

Simple adjustments like using blackout curtains, earplugs, or a white noise machine can transform your bedroom into a sleep sanctuary.





ERLAND

Secret Garden

NARNIA

School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

shire

Go All In

National Year of Reading 2026

Go All In

National Year of Reading 2026

2026 has been named the *National Year of Reading* by the National Literacy Trust who have launched a major UK-wide campaign (supported by the Department of Education) to boost reading for pleasure across all ages.

The current context

Children and young people's reading for enjoyment is at an all-time low. The latest research from the National Literacy Trust (supported by Twinkl) which explored children and young people's reading for pleasure and daily reading habits in 2025 found that the generational decline in reading engagement continues to be an issue.

The report, taken from the results of 114,970 children and young people in the UK aged 5 to 18 who completed the annual literacy survey, shows a continued decline in children and young people's reading enjoyment, albeit at a slightly slower pace than reported in 2024.

The headlines demonstrate that –

- Parental reading enjoyment is weakening
- Home reading environments are changing
- Fewer children and young people are reading
- Reading decline extends into adulthood

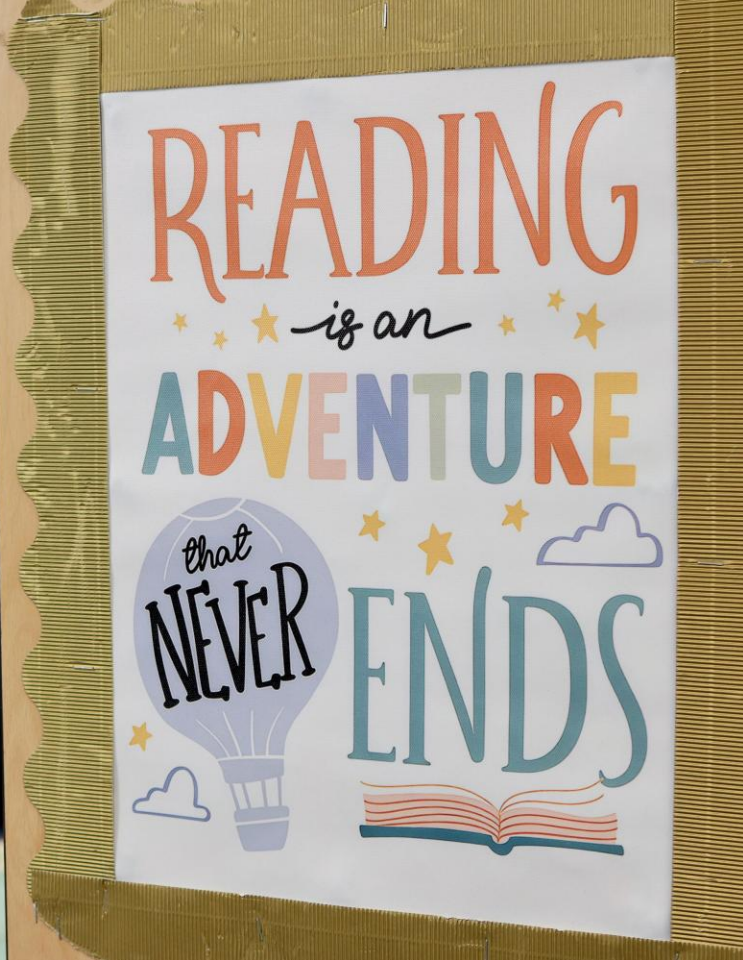
The statistics are at their lowest levels in twenty years since tracking reading enjoyment and daily reading habits began.

- 1 in 3 (32.7%) children and young people aged 8 to 18 said they enjoy reading in their free time
- 1 in 5 (18.7%) said they read something daily in their free time
- Reading enjoyment has fallen by 25.9% in the last ten years

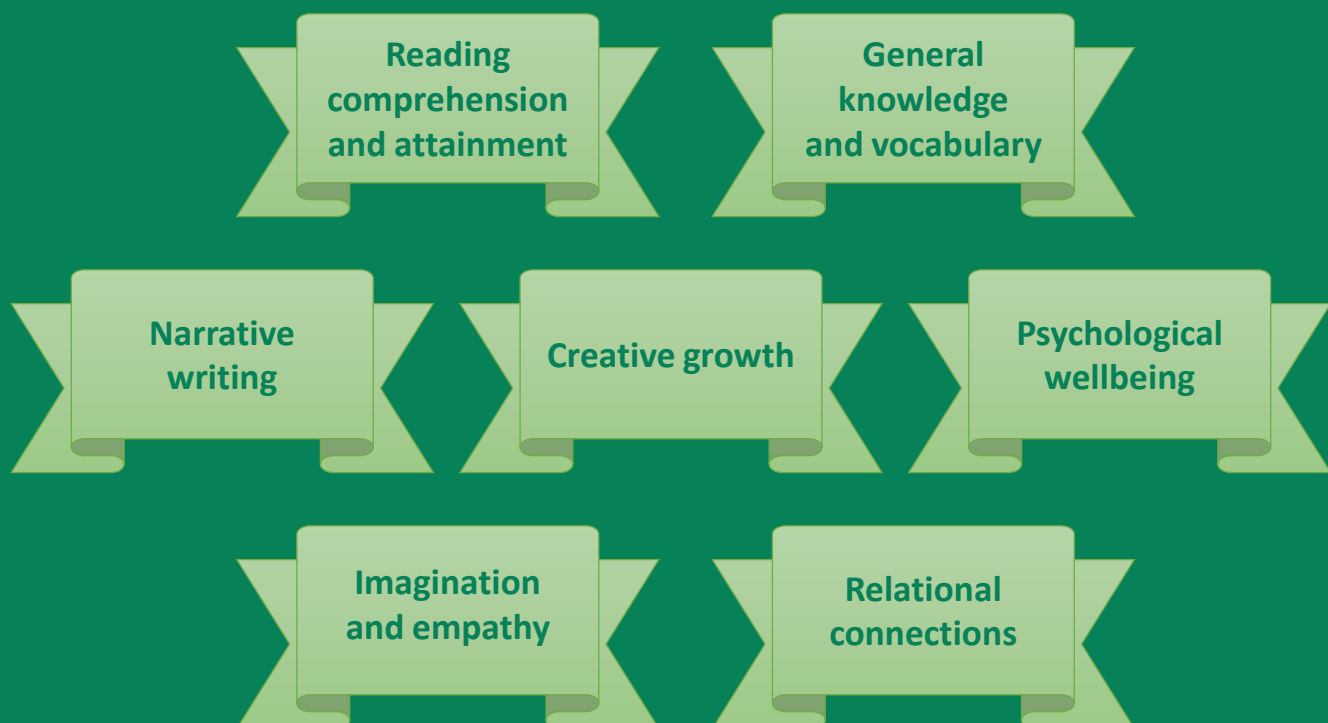
These figures matter because reading for pleasure is not a luxury. It is a powerful driver of educational success and personal development. When children choose to read, it strengthens wellbeing, engagement and a sense of belonging. It supports empathy and emotional understanding. It builds curiosity, self-regulation and a love of learning. It widens vocabulary and deepens knowledge across the curriculum.



**Whatever you're into.
Get ready to GO ALL IN.**



Reading for Pleasure is associated positively with:



Go All In

National Year of Reading 2026

New insights reveal reading motivations

Despite the deeply concerning picture, new insights in the report show us what motivates children and young people to read and offers a window into what might re-engage those with the lowest levels of reading enjoyment.

In 2025 half of children and young people still read fiction or short stories in print each month. Two in five read non-fiction books, while comics, graphic novels and magazines remain popular choices.

What are some of the key motivators for children and young people to read in their free time?

While more girls read for well-being and emotional support, more boys lean towards reading to connect with causes or the wider world. Reading to build knowledge and skills was equally strong across genders. Children and young people who report low levels of reading enjoyment, though less engaged, still recognise reading's educational value - nearly half said it helps them learn new words or new things.

How can we support children and young people to grow a love of reading?

The findings from the report suggest a need to align reading with children and young people's personal interests and media habits in order to encourage a love of reading in their free time.

Insights highlighted the following key motivators for those who took part in the survey:

- Books tied to films or TV series
- Books with visually appealing covers
- The freedom to choose what they could read
- Hearing recommendations from friends, family or teachers
- Encouraging reading through a variety of formats
- Consider using digital formats

“The data shows us the scale of the challenge – the National Year of Reading is an attempt to respond in a way that feels human, realistic and inclusive.”

National Literacy Trust



A close-up photograph of two young boys in school uniforms. The boy on the right, wearing glasses and a red sweater over a white shirt, is leaning over the boy on the left. The boy on the left, also in a white shirt and a striped tie, is looking intently at a book. The book has a colorful cover with a maze and the text 'THE ULTIMATE MAZE ADVENTURE! WHERE'S WALLY A MAZE IN'.

"We believe reading is a powerful plug-in to the things you already love – a great way to go deeper into your existing passions."

National Literacy Trust

Go All In

National Year of Reading 2026

**GO
ALL
IN.**

Reading for Pleasure

Together, we can grow a generation of readers so that no child is left behind.

Aim of the campaign

The aim is to make reading relevant, social and personally meaningful, and to tackle declining reading habits through activities in homes, schools, libraries and communities with the theme 'Go all in'.

How it will work

There will be a termly cycle of professional development and resources for teachers and practitioners, with memorable events for children and young people.

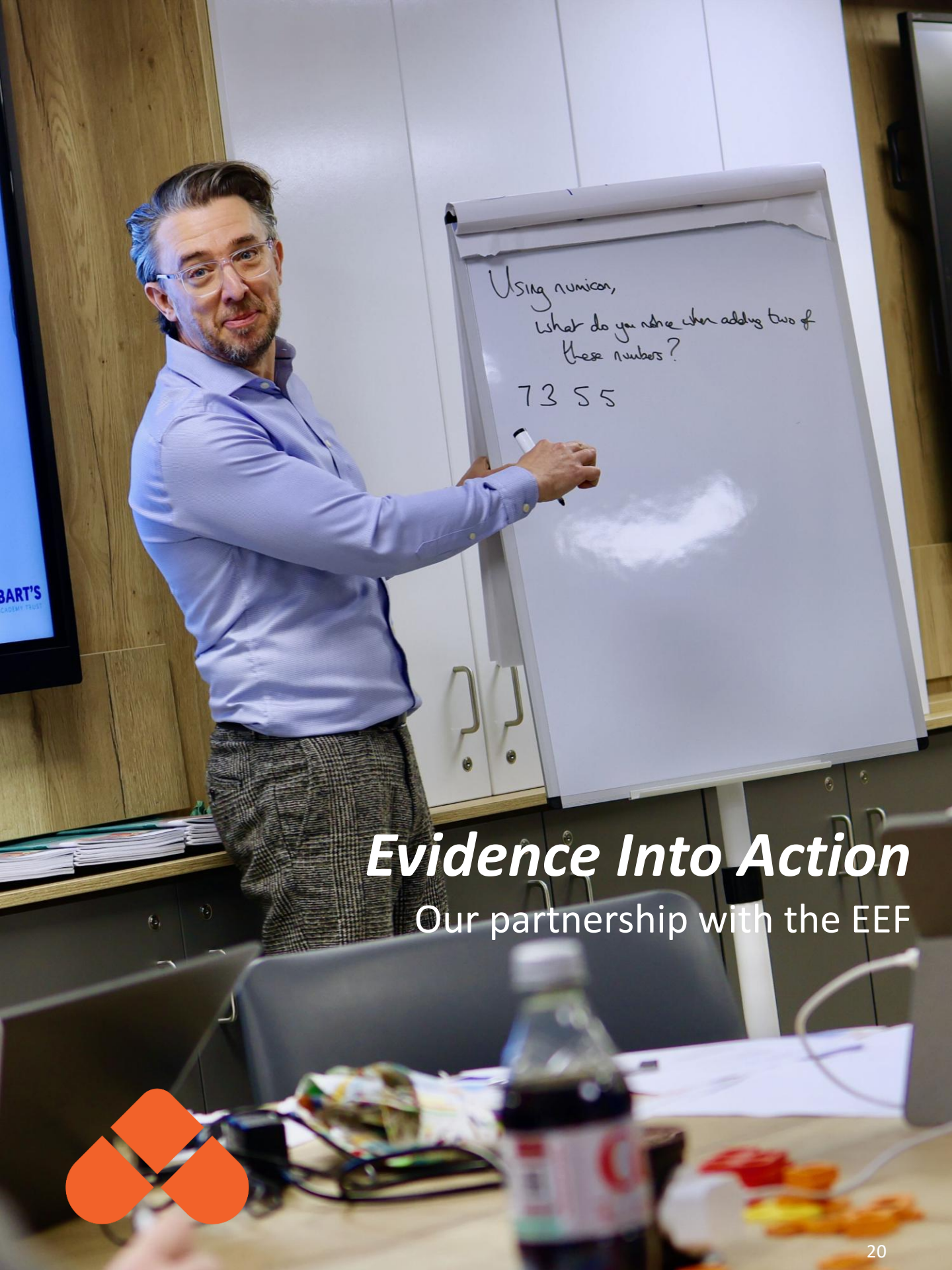
What do we mean by reading?

Reading includes print, digital and audio formats. It includes stories, information and ideas. It is shaped by choice, relevance and identity. It can be personal, shared and social.

Find out more

Visit the official website by clicking on the image on the right.





Evidence Into Action

Our partnership with the EEF



Evidence Into Action

Our partnership with the EEF



The Spring Term saw our Evidence into Action Partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation enter its next stage as we held four face to face professional development days for St. Bart's Maths Leads and Trust Leaders.

Maths Leader Days

Our maths subject leaders attended the first two CPD modules delivered by EEF Evidence Lead in Education (ELE) Tom Manners. These sessions covered Making Connections and Making Maths Concrete from our 'Power of Three' model.

Trust Leader Days

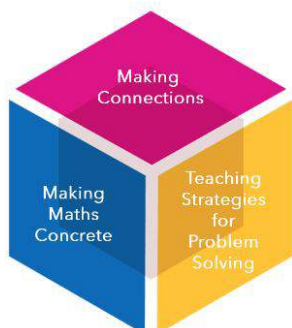
St. Bart's principals and members of the School Improvement Team attended two trust leader days. The first was an opportunity to ensure individual school implementation plans are being driven through. The second was an opportunity to explore the EEF principles behind effective professional development and ended with action planning for Year 2 of the partnership.



Above: Maths subject leaders from across the St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust attended the first Professional Development Day in January 2026, facilitated by Tom Manners (ELE).

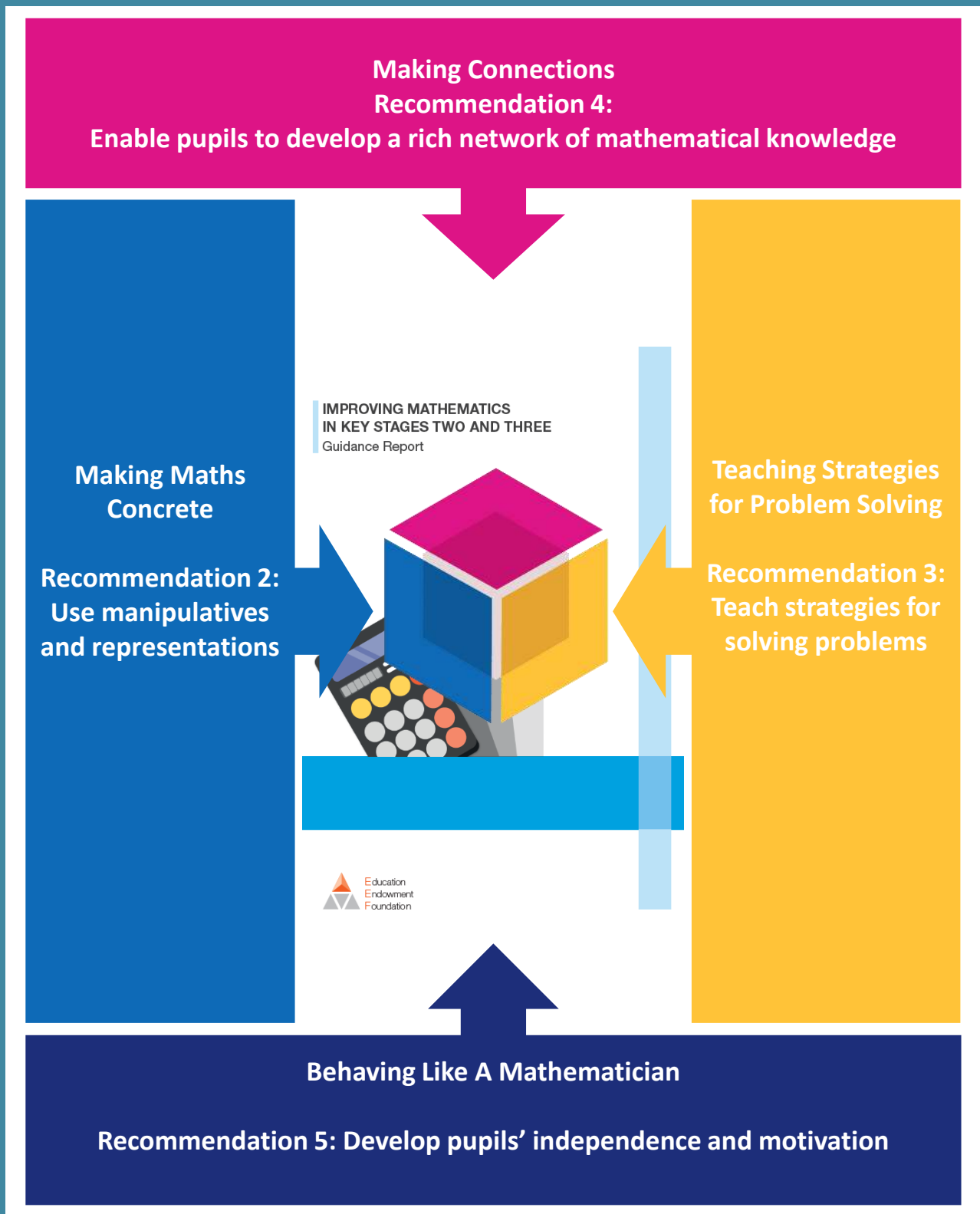


The Power of 3



Behaving like a Mathematician

How Our Power of Three aligns with the *EEF Improving Maths In Key Stages Two and Three* Guidance Report



Evidence Into Action

Our partnership with the EEF



Effective Implementation

Understanding and applying the recommendations from the EEF's *A School's Guide to Implementation* underpins our Evidence into Action project. St. Bart's leaders have spent time considering and reflecting on the most effective ways to 'treat implementation as a process'.

The updated guidance from April 2024 further adds to the evidence by focusing on –

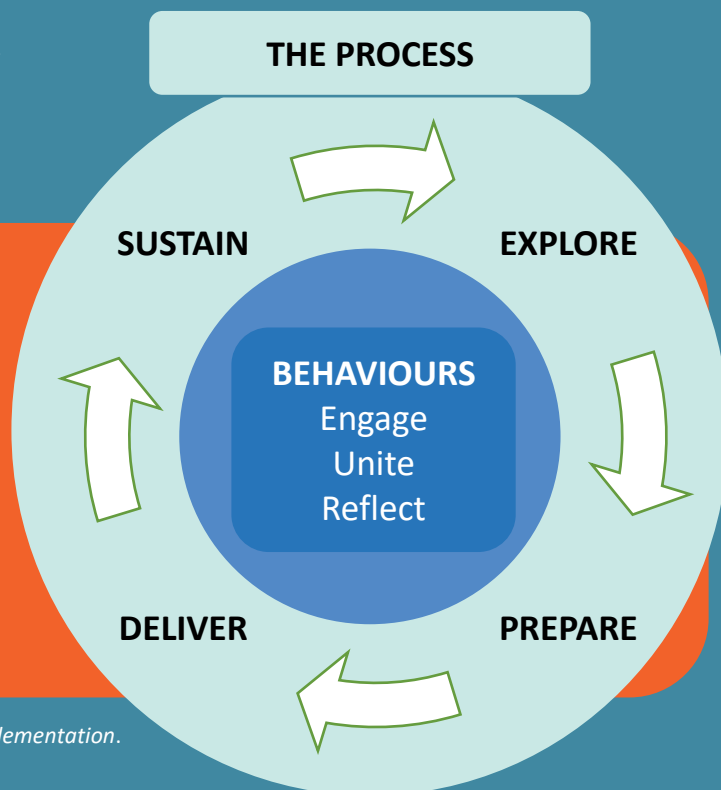
- the **behaviours** that drive effective implementation (Recommendation 1);
- the **contextual factors** that influence implementation (Recommendation 2); and
- a **structured, but flexible, process** to enact implementation (Recommendation 3).

The behaviours and contextual factors underpin effective implementation and should infuse a setting's day to day work. The process helps schools navigate change and organise implementation into four manageable phases: Explore, Prepare, Deliver, and Sustain. In other words, the process helps schools do implementation. The behaviours and contextual factors help them do it *well*.

"One of the key lessons from the EEF's work over the past decade is that implementation matters.

As well as using evidence to identify which approaches or interventions to implement, it also matters how education settings—whether that's a school, nursery, or college—put these approaches into practice. Ultimately, it's not just what you implement but how you do it too."

Professor Becky Francis
Chief Executive, EEF



CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

What is being implemented

Systems and structures

People who enable change

Based on Figure 1 from the EEF's *A School's Guide to Implementation*.

Evidence Into Action

Our partnership with the EEF



BEHAVIOURS

Engage people so they can shape what happens, whilst also providing overall direction.

Unite around what is being implemented, how it will be implemented and why it matters

Reflect, monitor and adapt to improve implementation.

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

What is being implemented – Consider whether your approach is: evidence-informed, right for the setting, and feasible to implement.

Systems and structures – Develop an infrastructure that supports implantation e.g. time, roles, logistics

People who enable change – Ensure people are in place across the school who can support, lead and positively influence implementation.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

EXPLORE

Assess needs,
setting and approach

PREPARE

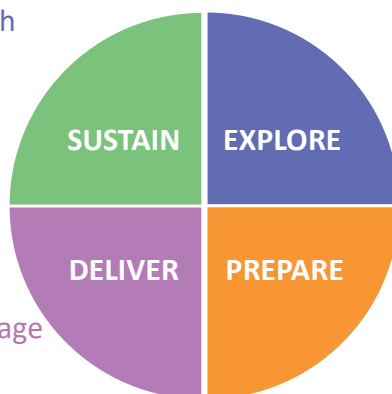
Plan, design and
practically prepare

DELIVER

Monitor, improve,
support and encourage

SUSTAIN

Maintain the effort,
review and act



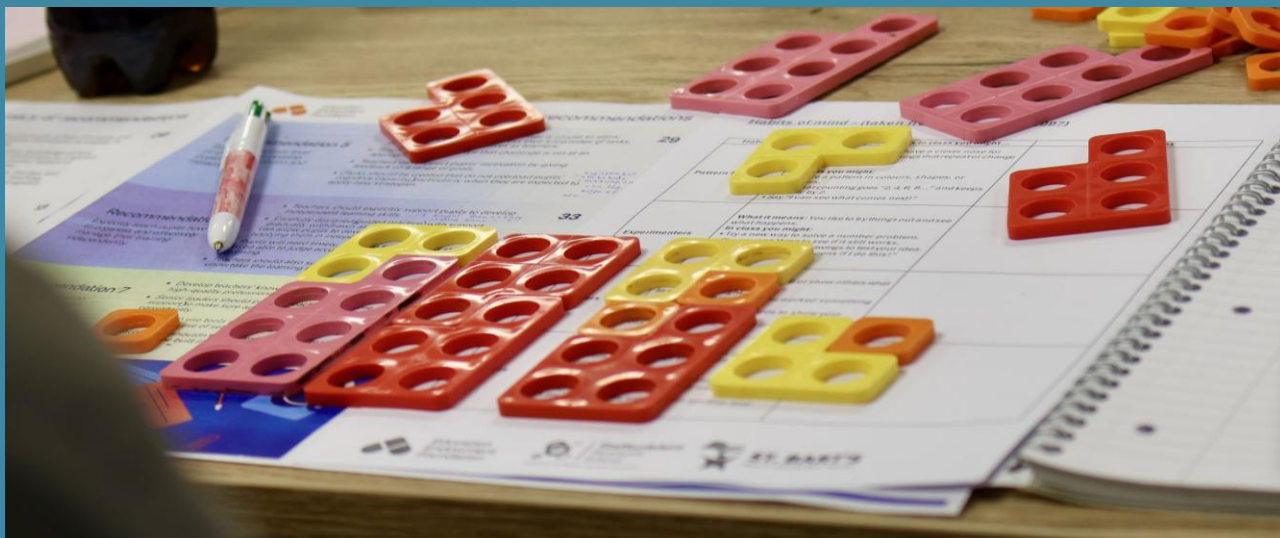
A School's Guide to Implementation
Guidance Report



Click on the image above to access the
EEF's guide to implementation.

Evidence Into Action

Our partnership with the EEF



St. Bart's Maths Communities Of Practice

One of the most exciting developments of the Evidence Into Action Partnership has been a new approach to collaboration.

Our two recently-appointed Trust Maths Leads have been supported by Aspirer and Staffordshire Research Schools to create St. Bart's Communities Of Practice (COP) for Maths. These two groups are comprised of Trust Maths Leaders that meet together to help build system capacity, sustain practice, and share learning.

The focus for the first round of meetings was the individual school Implementation Plans, and feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. The next round of COPs is set to take place in May, which we will report on in our summer issue.

Regional Partnership

Aspirer Research School, Staffordshire Research School, and St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust.

Where and who with?

23 academies in the St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust across Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Stoke-on-Trent.

What's it trying to achieve?

Ensuring consistent and high-quality maths teaching across the trust to improve outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

How will it do that?

The partnership will provide training to trust leaders, maths leaders, and teachers to promote evidence-informed professional development and high-quality classroom practice in maths. The training will explore barriers faced by disadvantaged learners and how to prioritise them. It will equip teachers with tools to build on pupil's prior knowledge, connect learning, and encourage problem-solving.

Find out more about the EEF's regional partnerships by clicking on the box above.

Offering The World

Pupil Enrichment at Abbey Hill



Offering The World

Pupil Enrichment at Abbey Hill

Abbey Hill Academy & College in Stoke-on-Trent have developed an exceptional enrichment and personal development offer for their pupils which includes educational trips abroad.

Principal **Darryl Ellis** said, “Over the last few years, the KS4 and KS5 educational visits programme has evolved significantly, with a clear focus on enriching pupils’ cultural capital, independence, and social development. The guiding principle behind these trips has been that overseas travel should go beyond simply “going abroad” and instead provide meaningful exposure to culture, history, people, and real-world experiences. In particular, our upcoming Africa residential has evolved well beyond the original offer, with pupils and staff working together to self-fundraise for the trip. There is a strong narrative of pupil engagement, commitment and impact, and our pupils have spoken directly to our trustees about their work.”

Teacher **Nick Billington** said, “Historically, pupils attended annual PGL trips to France, staying at a chateau and participating largely in outward-bound style activities. Whilst these trips were valuable in terms of teamwork and confidence, opportunities to engage with French culture, language, and everyday life were limited. We recognised this and reshaped the trips programme to ensure that international visits genuinely reflected the educational purpose of travel abroad.”

The programme was initially broadened to include visits to First World War battlefield sites in France, allowing pupils to engage directly with historical content studied in school. This then expanded to trips to Paris, incorporating visits to major cultural landmarks and attractions, alongside experiences such as navigating public transport and engaging with city life.



Subsequent years saw further expansion to include:

- **Barcelona** - focusing on culture, architecture, and independent travel using the metro system.
- **Berlin** - exploring 20th-century European history especially World War 2 alongside modern German culture.
- **Kraków** - including a visit to **Auschwitz-Birkenau** - providing a deeply impactful educational experience linked to history, citizenship, and moral understanding.

These trips have consistently combined curriculum relevance with wider personal development.



Offering The World

Pupil Enrichment at Abbey Hill

Inclusion, SEND, and Pupil Premium Impact

All trips are run with a mixed cohort of KS4 and KS5 pupils, including a high proportion of Pupil Premium pupils and pupils with additional needs. This mixed-age model has proven highly effective as both a transition and mentoring experience, with older pupils supporting younger ones and strong relationships forming across year groups.

One of the most striking outcomes has been the level of independence developed by pupils, particularly those with SEND. After an initial period of adjustment, pupils have been observed:

Navigating
complex
metro
systems
independently

Purchasing
tickets and
managing
ticket
barriers

Moving
confidently
around
unfamiliar
cities

Working
collaboratively
& responsibly
in real-world
settings

Seeing pupils who might traditionally be labelled as “less independent” confidently accessing public transport and urban environments has been a powerful indicator of the programme’s success.

Below: Abbey Hill pupils and staff have taken part in a series of community events to self-fund the trips.



Offering The World

Pupil Enrichment at Abbey Hill

Kenya Residential

In May 2026, the school will take 10 pupils to Kenya in partnership with **African Adventures**. This residential represents a significant and exciting expansion of our enrichment offer and reflects our commitment to providing meaningful, life-changing opportunities for all pupils.

All pupils attending the trip have additional needs, with many having a diagnosis of Autism. For these pupils, social interaction, communication and engaging with unfamiliar people and environments can present considerable challenges. Taking part in an international residential of this nature, therefore, represents a significant personal achievement and a powerful step forward in developing independence, confidence and resilience.

Alongside donations from local businesses, pupils have been actively involved in a range of self-fundraising activities, supported by staff. Many of these mean students taking a step out of their comfort zones to raise money for something they are passionate about such as bucket collections at the weekend, bag packing, raffles and collections at corporate events. Through these efforts, they have raised over £21,000 already, demonstrating determination, teamwork and a strong sense of purpose. Any additional funds raised will be donated directly to the partner school in Kenya to help purchase items from their wish lists — which often include basic resources and essentials that we may otherwise take for granted.

The trip will also include carefully planned cultural and recreational experiences, including a mini safari at Lake Nakuru National Park, ensuring a balanced programme that combines service, personal development and enrichment.

Overall, the Kenya residential exemplifies the school's inclusive enrichment philosophy, celebrating what pupils can achieve when given the right support, high expectations and meaningful opportunities.

It is a powerful reflection of our journey, our values and the impact of enrichment on pupils with additional needs.



Key elements of the Kenya residential include:

- Twinning with Anglo Hills Academy in Nakuru
- Working alongside highly disadvantaged pupils
- Supporting building projects and coaching sports
- Developing empathy, global awareness and social responsibility

Offering The World

Pupil Enrichment at Abbey Hill

India – The Golden Triangle

In July 2026, 15 pupils will take part in an educational visit to India, exploring the historic Golden Triangle. This residential further reflects the school's commitment to ambitious, culturally rich enrichment opportunities that broaden pupils' horizons and deepen their understanding of the wider world.

Through these experiences, pupils will gain first hand insight into India's history, culture, religion and global significance. The visit provides meaningful opportunities to bring learning to life, supporting deeper understanding across subjects such as history, geography, religion and citizenship.

The India residential complements the school's wider enrichment offer, fostering curiosity, respect and global awareness while encouraging pupils to engage confidently with new places, traditions and perspectives. It represents another purposeful step in ensuring pupils experience a rich, broad and balanced curriculum beyond the classroom.

Offering the world

The KS4 and KS5 trips programme has grown from traditional residential visits into a bold, inclusive, and highly impactful offer.

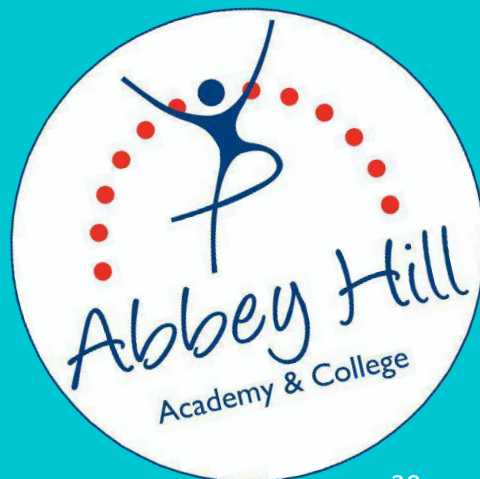
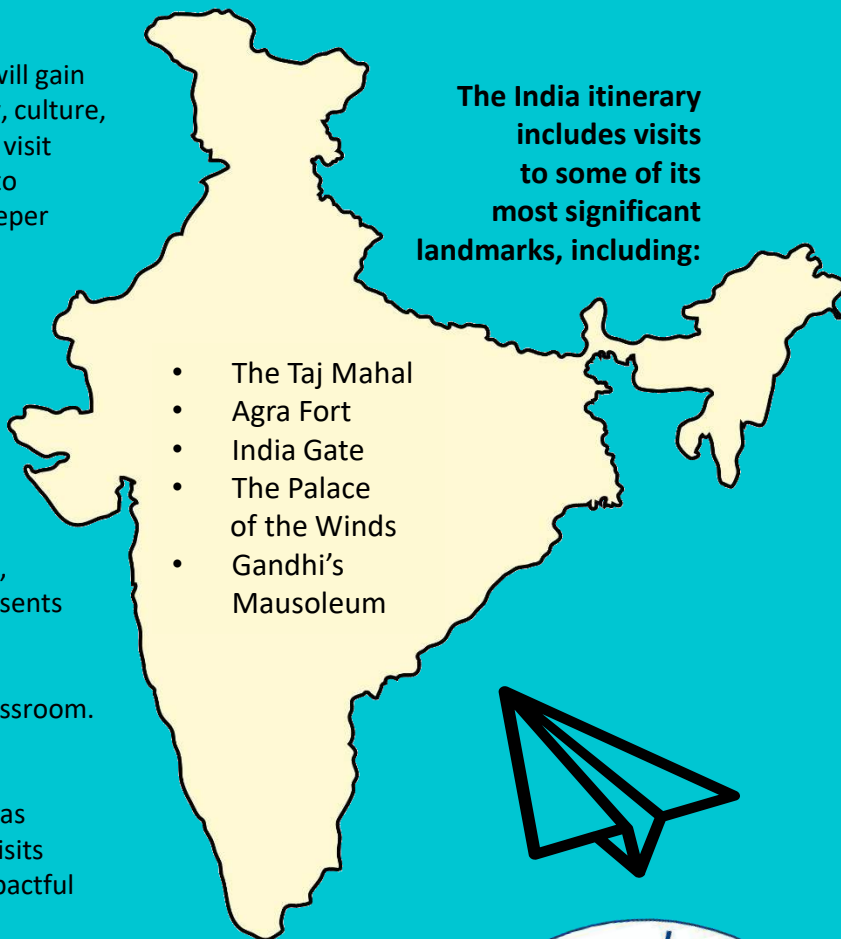
It supports:

- Cultural capital and global awareness
- SEND inclusion and independence
- Pupil Premium engagement
- Transition between key stages
- Curriculum enrichment and personal development

With destinations now spanning Europe, Africa, and Asia, the programme reflects both ambition and equity. As for next year? The foundations are firmly in place and the world really is waiting.

The India itinerary includes visits to some of its most significant landmarks, including:

- The Taj Mahal
- Agra Fort
- India Gate
- The Palace of the Winds
- Gandhi's Mausoleum



A photograph showing the back of a person with short, grey hair, wearing a dark blue hooded sweatshirt. The person is standing in front of a light-colored, textured wall. The text 'we are humanutopia' is printed in white on the back of the hoodie.

we are humanutopia

The Big Jump

Personal Development for Year 6 Pupils

The Big Jump

Personal Development for Year 6 Pupils



Empowering young people to be brave, dream big and create positive change!

We are proud to be working in partnership with **humanutopia** to deliver **The Big Jump** - a personal development and enrichment programme for all Year 6 pupils within our MAT. Designed to support children growing up in an uncertain world, the programme challenges young people to understand themselves, build confidence, and believe in their potential as they prepare for the next stage of their journey.

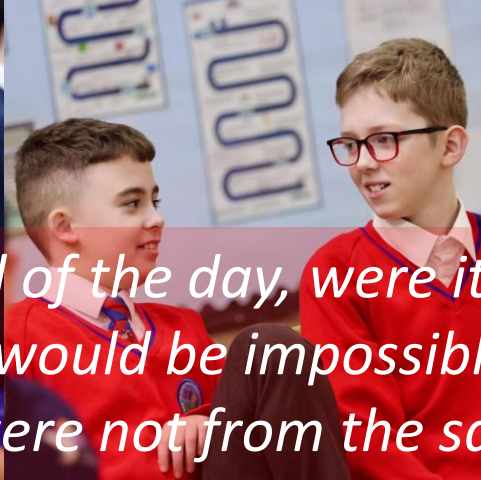
St. Bart's pupils have benefited hugely from highly interactive and engaging sessions delivered by the humanutopia team. Our Year 6 children were encouraged to be brave, think big about their futures, and make the most of their final year of primary school.

Ryan Macnair (Partnership Manager at humanutopia) said, "When we first decided to engage with St. Bart's, I was under no illusions as to what a big undertaking this would be for us and for all of the schools involved in the programme. Delivering the programme to over 20 schools, 31 classes and nearly 900 Year 6 pupils in three weeks was no small task but it was made possible by you working with us, travelling to other schools or being very welcoming hosts to staff and children from other schools. True partnership between us, schools and the trust! I know our programme deliverer Steve was especially impressed by your young people. The respect shown to our team was incredible and a mark of how you work to build mutual respect in your classrooms. He was also impressed by how quickly and easily your young people worked and built bonds with children from other schools. By the end of the day, were it not for the uniforms, it would be impossible to tell that the pupils had only met each other this morning and were not from the same class or indeed same school!"

You can find out more about what humanutopia offer to schools by clicking on the photograph above.



"By the end of the day, were it not for the uniforms, it would be impossible to tell that the pupils were not from the same school."



Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



WHITCHURCH PUPIL DOES WONDERS FOR CHARITY

The staff at **Whitchurch CE Federation** have been in touch to express how incredibly proud they are of their pupil Elliott, who has been fundraising for **Cancer Research** and has already raised an amazing £1,250.

Head of School **Tom Lewis** said, "His compassion, determination, and generosity truly inspire our whole school community. Elliott's efforts show him to be a genuine Agent for Change and an excellent prefect, leading by example and living out our Christian values of kindness, compassion, and love for others."

Elliott explained, "I am raising money for Cancer Research because my Grandad has been struggling with cancer, and I think it's the right charity for me to donate to. I want the money to go towards those who are struggling with cancer in their own lives. I have started a sponsorship event in school and the community. I am trying to raise as much money as possible, by promising not to cut my hair until Manchester United have won 5 matches in a row. So far, they have won 2 games, and I have raised £1,250 for the charity."

You can support Elliott in his Cancer Research fundraiser by clicking on the logo below.



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK



PASSION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



PARK HALL'S RISING FILMMAKER!

We are incredibly proud to share that **Layla**, a pupil from **Park Hall Academy**, has been named Runner-Up in this year's **PQA Stoke-on-Trent Winter Filmmaking Challenge, Bring Hope Home**.

This national competition was inspired by **Charlie Quirke's** 5-day, 140km fundraising trek in support of **Alzheimer's Research UK**, honouring his mum, **Pauline Quirke MBE**, who founded the **Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts** in 2007.

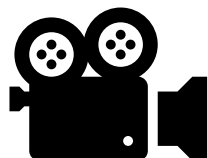
The challenge invited young people to explore what hope means to them and bring that message to life through film.

We were especially touched by the emotional message at the heart of Layla's film, where she speaks lovingly about her nan's journey with Alzheimer's and the power of kindness, memories, and the magic of a simple hug.

"I hope one day there's a cure for Alzheimer's... Until then, hope is what keeps us smiling... Hope is a part that remembers even when Nan can't."

Huge congratulations, Layla! Your creativity and compassion shine brightly.

You can watch Layla's film by clicking on the Park Hall Academy logo on the right.



PASSION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



ST. BART'S WELCOMES PARMINDER SINGH GARCHA

Parminder Singh Garcha, Deputy Director for the West Midlands at the Department for Education, visited **Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy** and **Abbey Hill Academy and College** on Wednesday 4th March, to discuss the new SEN white paper and planned reforms.

Parminder has over 25 years experience and a proven record in transformational leadership in large, complex organisations. He is an expert in education, skills, adult learning, SEND, regeneration and funding with a passion to make a difference. Parminder is passionate about improving life chances for children and young people and facilitating economic inclusion for communities.

It was a pleasure to welcome him to St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust and we look forward to meeting him again in the future.



PASSION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION AT SAINT NATHANIEL'S

St. Bart's Chief Operations Officer **Vickie Keeling** has been in touch to share an example of sustainability at its simplest level. She was visiting Saint Nathaniel's Academy where the Estates Manager **Dave Ball** has made coasters for staff members from a salvaged branch. Well done Dave!



PASSION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



MEIR HEATH ACADEMY ARE IN THE ZONE!

In February, **Meir Heath Academy** held a special day celebrating the '**Zones of Regulation**'. The whole school has been focusing on this approach as part of their Professional Growth project.

Assistant Principal **Debbie Askey** explained, "The project will integrate restorative practice, anxiety-aware individual planning (RAMP), and the Zones of Regulation into a coherent whole-school approach to supporting pupils' emotion regulation, relationships, and behaviour, while ensuring parents are informed and equipped to support their children consistently across home and school."

At the time of writing the project has reached the midway point but staff are already seeing a number of positive outcomes. We will be presenting a full report on the project in the next issue of **Releasing Potential**.



ENCOURAGEMENT

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S COMPETITIVE ATHLETICS TOURNAMENT

Bee Active hosted the St. Bart's Competitive Athletics Tournament for Lower Key Stage 2 pupils at Northwood Stadium in February.

The children who attended took part in a range of activities which included the hurdles, long jump, shot put and relay.

The top three schools were as follows -

1st place – Cranberry Academy

2nd place – Offley Primary Academy

3rd place – Woodcroft Academy

Well done to all the children who competed and a huge thank you to the Bee Active and St. Bart' staff who made the day such a great success.

You can watch a short video about the event by clicking on the Bee Active logo below.



BEE ACTIVE



ENCOURAGEMENT



WINNERS



2ND PLACE



3RD PLACE



BEE ACTIVE



ENCOURAGEMENT

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS WITH THE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT TRUST

A huge congratulations to all the St. Bart's teachers on the recent **National Professional Qualification for Leading Teaching (NPQLT)** programme who successfully passed their final assessments in January. This cohort marks the end of our NPQ partnership with the **Teacher Development Trust** as they have taken the decision to pause national delivery of the qualifications.

Over the last five years we have felt extremely proud of our 100% pass rate and the number of delegates that have completed the range of Specialist and Leadership programmes that we have facilitated.

Since 2021 over 70 participants have gained qualifications in the following -

- **NPQ for Leading Teaching**
- **NPQ for Leading Teacher Development**
- **NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture**
- **NPQ for Early Years Leadership**
- **NPQ for Senior Leadership**

As planning for our 2026-27 professional development offer for St. Bart's begins, we will be considering further opportunities for developing our next generation of leaders. Stay tuned!



AMBITION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

SUCCESSFUL SIAMS AT ST. JOHN'S CE IN KEELE

Congratulations to **St. John's CE Primary Academy** in Keele, Staffordshire who had a very successful SIAMS in February. The inspection recognised that the school "is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish."

Notable Strengths

- The vision of 'life in all its fullness' is clearly articulated and lived out daily. It is expressed through the values of faith, hope and love and has a significant impact on life at St John's. The vision sustains the school community through times of change and challenge, helping pupils and adults to flourish.
- St John's is a happy school where pupils live and learn harmoniously together. They delight in celebrating one another's uniqueness. This culture of acceptance and belonging helps pupils and adults feel safe, known and loved.
- Religious education (RE) is highly valued by pupils. The curriculum is well sequenced and planned and engages their curiosity. As a result, pupils develop impressive levels of religious literacy and engage with complex questions.
- Encouraged by the vision and inspired by what they learn, pupils demonstrate a strong sense of personal responsibility. This is evident in how they serve others and by the way that they contribute meaningfully to the wider community.



**Statutory Inspection of
Anglican & Methodist Schools**

***"St. John's is a happy
school where pupils
live and learn
harmoniously
together."***



AMBITION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP DAY WITH ANGELA O'BRIEN

At the beginning of March, the **St Bart's Central Team** took part in an insightful Systems Leadership session delivered by **Angela O'Brien OBE FCCT** (Macdonald Associates Consultancy and CIC).

The session explored levels of work, helping the team reflect on where their roles add the most value within the organisation.

Angela also shared the steps and common traps that can arise within systems leadership, and gave practical ways to recognise and navigate them effectively.

It was a valuable opportunity for our whole central team to step back, have reflective conversations, think strategically, and strengthen how we support our academies and colleagues across the Trust.

Thank you to Angela and Systems Leadership CIC for delivering such a thought-provoking and engaging session.



AMBITION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S SHORTLISTED FOR A MAT EXCELLENCE AWARD

We are incredibly proud to share that **St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust** has been shortlisted for the SEND Award (13+ schools) at the **MAT Excellence Awards 2026** (Optimus Education).

With the announcement, MAT Excellence wrote: "St. Bart's MAT, with 23 academies including Abbey Hill Academy & College, embeds SEND inclusion through research-informed practice, Apple Trust 1:1 iPads, Bsquared tracking, Virtual School collaboration and initiatives such as their SEND & Inclusion Conference at Bet365 Stadium, creating trust-wide belonging, equity, and high aspirations to ensure that all children, including those working significantly below age-related expectations, thrive."

This recognition reflects our ongoing commitment to inclusion across all of our academies. Every child in our Trust matters, and we are determined to ensure that all learners are supported to flourish and succeed.

We would like to thank the leaders, teachers, support staff, families and pupils who make inclusive education part of everyday life across St. Bart's.

Following our shortlisting for the Environmental Trust of the Year in 2025, this is another proud moment for the Trust and a real reflection of the collective effort across all our academies.

You can find out more about the MAT Excellence Awards by clicking on the image on the top right.



What are the MAT Excellence Awards?

This unique event will give trusts the opportunity to celebrate their achievements and recognise their impact on pupils, staff and the community. Presented by Optimus Education, the leaders in national educational events.



SEND award sponsored by



AMBITION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



BELGRAVE'S BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy have taken a unique approach to strengthening relationships with their parents and families through their 'Blessings Table'. This is an initiative they have introduced with the support of the local **Co-op** store and family hubs. With their help, the school offers fresh produce and hygiene products to any family that needs them. But the table offers so much more than that. It can be a meeting place. It can be an opportunity to chat. It can be an opportunity to touch base or seek advice, or it can simply be the offer of a friendly ear.

Extended Primary Home School Link Worker **Lorraine Jones** explains, "To begin with, it felt like people were uncertain about approaching the table, perhaps worried about other people's perceptions. That, for me, was a real shame. Everyone who looks my way gets a "good morning", and I offer whatever we've got through promoting 'no waste'. That seems to take away the stigma. From the point of view of my role in school, it has raised my profile. It offers me the opportunity to speak to parents in a neutral space and if I see someone who is unusually withdrawn, I can ask them if they fancy a pack of courgettes followed by, "Are you okay?". A kind word can work wonders. It really has blossomed. There's lots of banter and lots of laughter, especially when I've got a dozen butternut squash I'm desperately trying to get rid of, it turns into a discussion on what's the best way to cook a butternut squash! It's connection. Families also donate to the table. Families I see regularly now come to the table to see me rather than the office. Parents who need something specific come to the table. Families are aware of it. I think the table has had a massive impact. Who knew a table could do all that?"



COLLABORATION

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL WORSHIP

Whitchurch CE Federation was honoured to host a moving **Holocaust Memorial** worship, bringing together pupils, faith leaders, civic representatives and guests in a powerful act of remembrance, reflection and hope.

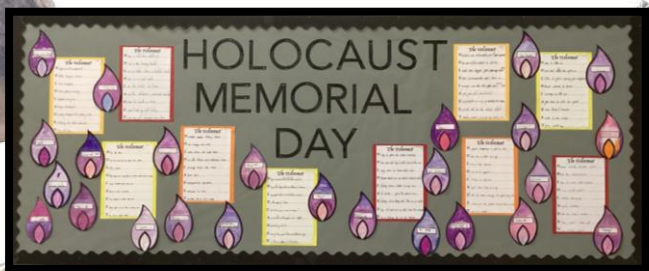
The whole school and faith visitors gathered for a KS2 worship, welcomed by Mrs Camacho, Mr Lewis and Mr Penney. Representatives from **Shropshire Council** and **Whitchurch Town Council** shared their support for the **Holocaust Memorial Day 2026** theme, highlighting the importance of remembrance and education.

Pupils then shared their learning through memorial flame artwork and thoughtful acrostic poems, read with dignity and care. Interfaith reflections were offered by members of the **South Shropshire Interfaith Forum**, followed by the lighting of a commemorative candle to honour the victims of the Holocaust and all genocides. An ecumenical prayer invited the community to reflect together before moving outside for the planting of a commemorative cherry tree.

The ceremony concluded with prayers at the tree by **Reverend Christopher Precious** and thanks to all involved. The cherry tree will stand as a lasting symbol of remembrance, responsibility and our shared commitment to stand against hatred and build a kinder future.



COLLABORATION



"The cherry tree will stand as a lasting symbol of remembrance, responsibility and our shared commitment to stand against hatred and build a kinder future."

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



EARLY EXCELLENCE ROADSHOW AT SAINT NATHANIEL'S ACADEMY

In March, we invited **Early Excellence** to work with colleagues from across St. Bart's, focusing on something incredibly important in Early Years education – outdoor play.

Attendees explored why it's so important to get outdoor provision right from the very start, and how high-quality outdoor environments can support children's development, curiosity and wellbeing.

When outdoor spaces are thoughtfully planned and consistently high quality, they become powerful places for learning.

Overall, it was a really valuable day and great to see so many colleagues sharing ideas and reflecting on practice.

Thank you to **Sarah Carey** and **Clare King** at Early Excellence for delivering such an engaging and insightful session, and to Saint Nathaniel's Academy for hosting.



Early Excellence
Inspirational Learning



COLLABORATION



Early Excellence
Inspirational Learning



Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



NATIONAL READ-ALOUD CHALLENGE

We are absolutely thrilled to have won the **MAT of the Year National Read-Aloud Challenge 2025**. Our St Bart's pupils have benefited greatly from their engagement in the challenge, reading almost nine thousand books over last summer. At St Bart's, reading is a key focus for us, ensuring that all children become confident, competent readers. We are so grateful to the **NRAC** and **Fonetti** for providing this platform for our pupils to further develop their reading fluency and confidence when reading aloud, alongside reading for pleasure.

St. Bart's School Improvement Officer **Eva Cerioni**, said, "As a MAT, we prioritise the importance of all pupils developing a love of reading and becoming confident, competent readers. Our schools encouraged all pupils to engage in the challenge, reading a huge amount of texts over the summer holidays. We are so proud of our amazing pupils for taking part and grateful for the staff and parents who supported them in the challenge. Thank you to all our schools for registering their pupils and for encouraging their engagement; without them, the children wouldn't have read so many books and made this award a reality. I am excited for what we can do during the summer of 2026 now!"

Our St. Bart's trophy will be going on a tour of our schools, including North West Regional Winners, **Nantwich Primary Academy**, so that all pupils, teachers, leaders and parents in our school communities can celebrate their success!

You can find out more about the initiative and the winners here –<https://www.readaloudchallenge.co.uk/2025-results>



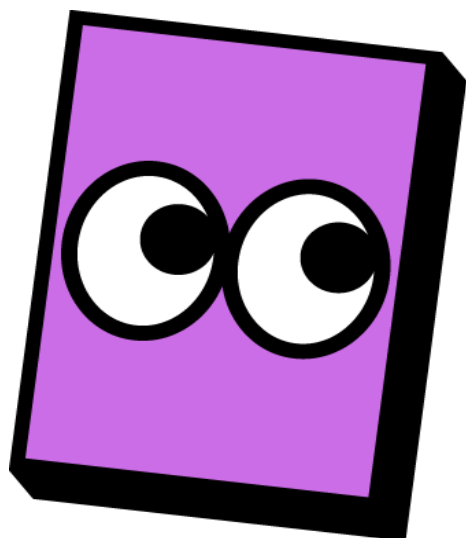
ENJOYMENT

Living Our Values

News from across St. Bart's



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



WORLD BOOK DAY[®]



ST. BART'S CELEBRATES WBD 2026

The mission of the charity **World Book Day** is "to champion the fun of reading" and their Big Six principles that encourage children to read for fun are:

- Being read to regularly
- Having books at home and school
- Finding time to read
- Having a choice in what to read
- Having trusted help to find a book
- Seeing reading as fun!

World Book Day 2026 promised to be "bigger and better than ever" during the **National Year of Reading** (see pages 14-19) and this was certainly the case across St. Bart's schools.

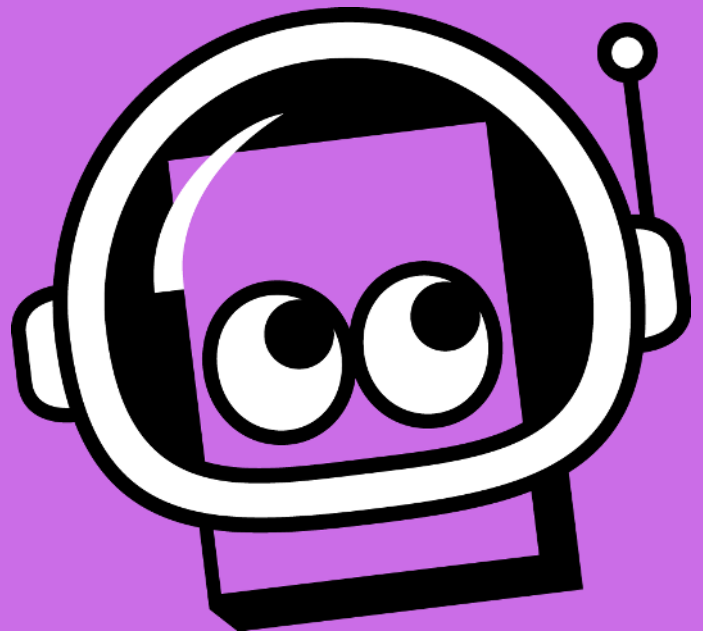
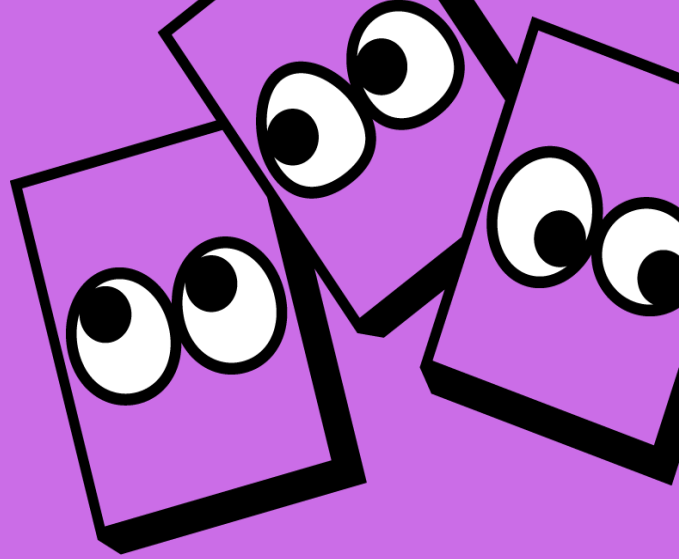
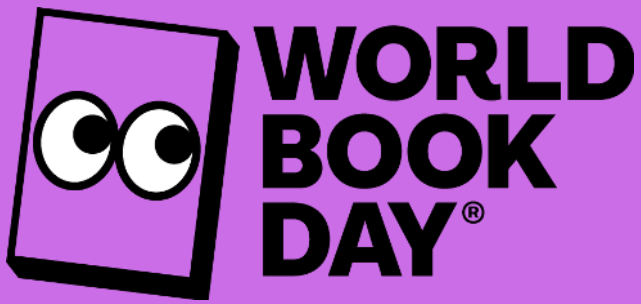
As well as dressing up as favourite literary characters, staff and pupils also took part in a wide variety of activities, both indoors and out. There were whole-school assemblies, book swaps, story writing challenges, Masked Reader competitions, and book-themed cake sales. Well done to everyone involved!

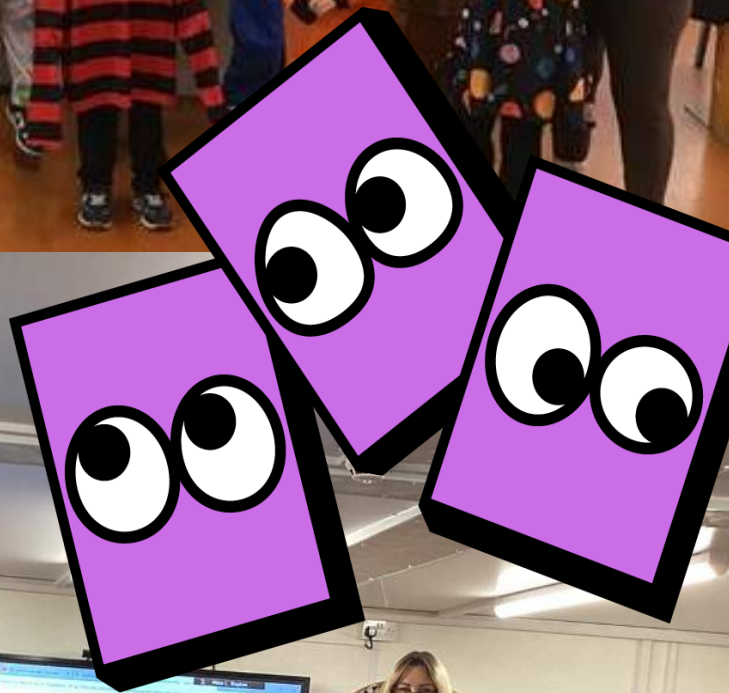
**We know that
when children
choose to read
more it makes them:**

- **Better at reading**
- **Feel better**
- **More successful**



ENJOYMENT

















St. Bart's Pupil Parliament
Spring Meeting at Keele Hall

Spring Meeting 2026

Our termly Pupil Parliament meeting was held at Keele University in January, and the day began with academy sustainability updates.

This was followed by feedback from the recent pupil survey which asked children to name the issues that are most important to them.

The main results ranked as follows –

- 20% - Pollution and littering**
- 16% - Plastic and waste**
- 12% - People not caring about the planet**
- 11% - Forests being cut down**
- 8% - Animals becoming extinct**
- 8% - Water waste**
- 5% - Melting ice caps**
- 4% - Energy waste**
- 4% - Fossil fuels**

The survey also highlighted the fact that only 51% of pupils were confident in their understanding of what 'sustainability' needs.

There was then an opportunity for table discussions to consider these key questions –

- *Do the pupil pledges match the St. Bart's pupil priorities?*
- *Is anything missing?*
- *Do we need to change or add anything?*
- *How can we make sure that 100% of St. Bart's pupils understand what sustainability means and know what they need to do to live sustainably?*

After break there was a presentation from visiting experts **Biffa** who gave a talk on 'Reducing Waste and Increasing Recycling in the Community'.

There was also a St. Bart's energy update including the impact of Solar PV, a summary of which follows on the next page.



St. Bart's Energy Update

In the last year –



40% of St Bart's academies reduced their electricity consumption.



83% of St Bart's academies reduced their gas consumption.



90% of St Bart's academies now have energy efficient lights.



7 St Bart's academies are now generating renewable electricity from Solar PV with another 5 to be completed by Easter 2026.

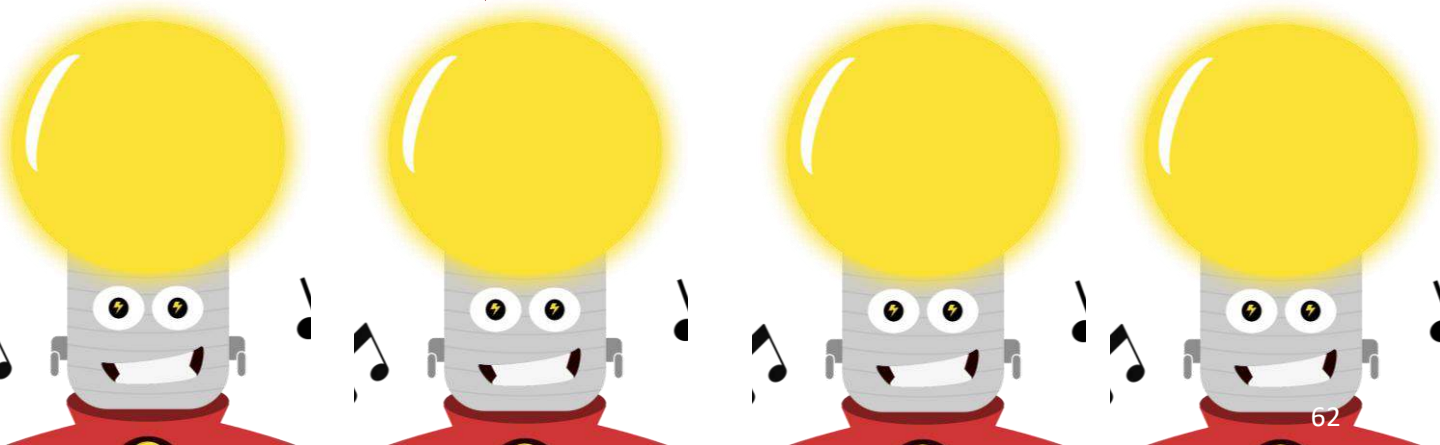
But we can do more. SMALL CHANGES can have a BIG IMPACT.

Use active labelling to show which plugs can be switched off safely.

Measure how much energy your devices and appliances are using.

Use timer plugs to switch off appliances that use a lot of energy overnight.

Close external doors at break and lunchtimes to keep the heat in.





ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST
PUPIL PARLIAMENT



HEADlines

Welcome to our regular feature which profiles a different Headteacher/Principal from one of the St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust schools.

Name:

Melanie Southern

Job Title/School:

Principal at Meir Heath Academy

Why did you choose education as a career?

From a very young age, I knew that teaching was for me. Education was always my chosen career pathway, driven by a desire to work with young people and make a meaningful difference to their lives. I never imagined that I would become a headteacher. What makes my role particularly special is that I now lead a school in the community where my grandparents lived just around the corner. That personal connection gives me a deep sense of pride and responsibility, and it reinforces my commitment to serving the community and ensuring every child has the best possible opportunities

Where did you first start teaching and in which year group?

I began my teaching career in Staffordshire and have worked across three schools within the county. My first teaching post was at St Filumena's in Caverswall, where I taught a Year 1 class. I still remember those children very fondly - your first class is always incredibly special. I later moved to St Dominic's Primary School in Stone, and over the years I have had the privilege of teaching across all key stages. My experience has ranged from transforming an EYFS classroom - even giving the old wooden shelves a lick of bright primary colours during the summer holidays - to preparing Year 6 pupils for their SATs in a way that was both fun and nurturing. These experiences have been fundamental in shaping my approach to teaching and leadership.



Describe your journey into leadership.

My journey into leadership began very early in my career, encouraged by a headteacher who had previously been my teaching practice mentor during the fourth year of my degree. She recognised my potential and, when she later became a headteacher herself, I joined her school. Under her guidance, I was encouraged, supported and nurtured into leadership. That experience gave me confidence, direction and a strong sense of purpose, shaping me into a driven leader who understands the importance of developing others. It also reinforced my belief in the power of mentorship and the responsibility leaders have to recognise and grow talent within their teams.



HEADlines



What has been the stand-out moment of your career so far?

Every day in this role is different and special, and that's exactly why I love my job. There have been some unforgettable professional highlights - I've received a letter from the Prime Minister congratulating our school on our phonics results, and just last month I received an email from the Education Minister praising our work in supporting disadvantaged pupils at Meir Heath Academy, noting that our outcomes place us among the very best nationally. These recognitions are incredibly rewarding, but the moments I look forward to most every year are the lighter, joyful ones – like World Book Day. At our school, we turn it into a fun-filled week of reading activities, and we always go all out dressing up, celebrating stories and inspiring a love of reading in our pupils.

How do you think colleagues would describe your leadership style?

I believe my colleagues would describe my leadership style as supportive, approachable, and always with children at the heart of everything we do. I value collaboration and enjoy sharing ideas and best practice with other schools across the trust, always happy to help where it benefits children. I aim to lead by example, creating a culture where staff feel valued, encouraged, and empowered, and where every decision is focused on giving our pupils the very best opportunities.

Describe your school using the title of a song. 'We Are Family' by Sister Sledge.

Share a dream that you are yet to realise.

To travel more and explore different cultures around the world. I'm a real foodie and love to cook, so discovering new flavours, ingredients, and culinary traditions is something I'm particularly excited about. I hope to experience it all first hand one day -and maybe bring a taste of the world back home.

What interests do you pursue when you are not at work?

Each school holiday, my daughter and I hop on the train to Birmingham New Street for a Bullring lunch adventure - Starbucks, Bill's, Wagamama... and whatever else catches our eye. It's our fun little tradition, and this year, with her turning eighteen, it might even include a celebratory cocktail on our visit!

What is your favourite staff room drink/biscuit combination?

I usually go for a Starbucks medium skinny latte – I'm not a fan of biscuits, and instant coffee is definitely not for me. I like to think of myself as a bit of a coffee snob, and for me, it's all about savouring that perfect cup of coffee.



Recommended

Reads

John Collier shares his choice of quick reads from the world of research.

Recommended Reads:

Navigating Professional Learning In The New Ofsted Framework

Context:

The new *Ofsted* framework contains a section within the ‘Leadership and governance’ evaluation area that assesses the quality of your school’s “professional learning and expertise”. Inspection teams will now consider “the extent to which leaders ensure staff have access to high-quality, evidence-informed, sustained and coherent professional learning programmes that build expertise and are aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, subjects/teams/phases and individual needs”. To support schools with this, the *Teacher Development Trust* have produced five free ‘Navigating Ofsted’ resources to help you respond to the changes meaningfully.

Why should I read them?

The content of the resources give you a solid place to start when it comes to the new inspection framework and each one covers a separate theme that aligns with the areas that Ofsted will gather evidence about –

- *Creating Coherent Professional Learning Programmes*
- *Ensuring Professional Learning is Focused on Impact*
- *Drawing Upon Evidence in Professional Learning*
- *Nurturing Purposeful Collaboration in Professional Learning*
- *Strategic Leadership of Professional Learning*



Click on the images above to download a copy.

Key Takeaway

“Schools and leaders make significant investments in staff professional learning, whether through direct budget spend or the cost of staff time. With resources so limited, it’s more important than ever to be confident that the time and money being spent on professional learning is having the intended impact. Making time now to consider your strategy is a good investment in developing sustainable and effective professional learning.”

Termly Meetings Summer 2026

ACADEMY OPERATIONS Thursday 7th May (10.00am-1.00pm) in The Hub

ATTENDANCE NETWORK MEETING Tuesday 30th June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

ENGLISH NETWORK MEETING Tuesday 19th May (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

CHURCH SCHOOLS NETWORK MEETING
(1.00pm start) at Kingsland C.E. Academy

Friday
8th May

Friday
26th June

EARLY YEARS NETWORK MEETING Thursday 16th April (9.30am-12.30pm) at Nantwich Primary Academy

EAL NETWORK MEETING Wednesday 17th June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

ESTATES Thursday 11th June 10.00am-1.00pm) in The Hub

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT BOARD
(9.00am-3.00pm) in The Hub

Friday
18th May

Friday
3rd July

PHONICS NETWORK MEETING (Optional) Tuesday 2nd June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

QUALITY OF EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING
(1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

Wednesday
20th May

Wednesday
1st July

RELATIONAL RESTORATIVE PRACTICE NETWORK Wednesday 24th June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING Tuesday 16th June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

SAFEGUARDING NETWORK MEETING
(1.00pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

Tuesday
14th April

Wednesday
10th June

SCIENCE NETWORK MEETING Tuesday 9th June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

SENCO NETWORK MEETING
(1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

Wednesday
22nd April

Wednesday
3rd June

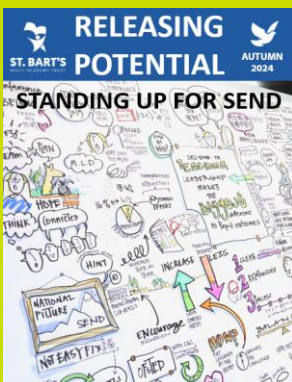
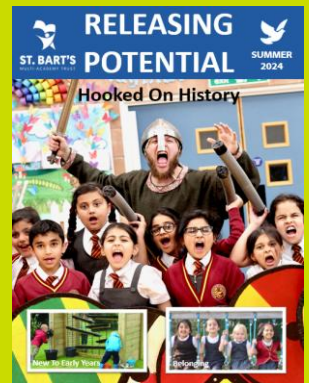
SENIOR MENTAL HEALTH LEADS NETWORK MEETING Wednesday 8th July (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK MEETING Thursday 4th June (1.30pm-4.00pm) in The Hub

WELLBEING NETWORK MEETING Friday 5th June (10.00-11.30am) in The Hub



Back Issues



Previous issues are available at
[Releasing Potential Magazine - St. Bart's](#)



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MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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