



DDAT

Derby Diocesan Academy Trust



Children from each of our 33 schools worked with stars from some of the biggest shows in the West End to mark our 10th birthday. You can read more about our celebrations on page three.

INSIDE:

Why Walter Evans is joyful - Page 2

St Peter's unlocks potential - Page 4

Schools making headlines - Page 5

Eco project gets a boost - Page 7

St Giles continues to be a Good school - Page 8

Seasons greetings from DDAT

by Dr Sarah Clark, CEO

In this season of giving, we are reminded of the blessings of community, family and friendship and what it can achieve. I continue to be blown away by the generosity of our schools and look forward to the celebrations taking place at this special time.

In the spirit of unity, pupils in all our schools will be participating in activities that honour both the Christian faith and the diversity of beliefs represented across our Trust. So many of the stories that we are sharing within this newsletter demonstrate how our children, schools and colleagues support each other to grow, achieve and to flourish. We hope that you enjoy reading about them and look out for some nativity photos from the central team - we've been on a trip down memory lane!

Here at DDAT we have had much to celebrate in 2024, including welcoming three new school communities to our family and the milestone 10-year anniversary of our Trust. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in nurturing the hearts and minds of our students.

We pray that you and your family have a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with hope, love and faith.



Best wishes, Sarah Clark

Award for our governance guru

Jayne Hadfield, who is our Governance Support Manager, has received a long service award from Derby City Council, after clocking up an impressive 25 years service.



Jayne supports clerks and local academy committee members providing quality, up-to-date training and is always available to offer support. Congratulations Jayne and thank you.

Pudsey joins our celebrations



Arboretum Primary School welcomed a very special guest alongside BBC Radio Derby and East Midlands Today to celebrate Children in Need.

Pudsey took part in icing biscuits, a Pudsey relay and a dance off. The children in Y4 sang 'Stand by me' (the Children in Need song) to Pudsey and our Y1 and Y2 pupils read him some poems.

Arboretum had more than their 15 minutes of fame; they were live on the radio and TV!

Good school remains joyful



Walter Evans Church of England Aided Primary School, in Darley Abbey, has been described as aspirational and joyful by Government inspectors who found that pupils thrive, achieving well socially, academically and personally.

The school was judged to have remained 'Good' during an ungraded inspection from the Office for Standards in Education.

In their report, inspectors stated the grade might be Outstanding if a full inspection had been carried out and they praised staff for having high expectations for pupils.

They found the 450 children on the school roll are courteous and respectful of each other and staff, while curriculum planning is ambitious and well-sequenced.

The school has a culture in which reading is prioritised and is highly effective, while mathematics is 'a real strength'.

*Head teacher David Brown said:
"Expectations are high and inspectors found our pupils have positive attitudes to learning and talk about it with enthusiasm."*

New multi-use games area kicks off in style

At the **St Laurence Church of England Primary**, in Long Eaton, staff officially opened a new multi-use games area. Executive headteacher Ronni Barker and assistant headteacher Peter Hallam - alongside two children from UKS2 - cut a big purple ribbon, with the whole school and parents cheering them on.

This has been a project that was several years in the making and has now been completed. The children are very excited about it and have begun to use it for PE lessons, break and lunch times and after school. In the near future, the school hopes to use it for inter and intra-school competitions.



Pupils help us celebrate first decade of DDAT

This term we have been celebrating the 10th anniversary of Derby Diocesan Academy Trust with two very special events.

Children from all of our schools worked with stars from some of the biggest shows in the West End to create a special performance marking the milestone.

The project involved all the pupils learning the lyrics and British Sign Language to 'You Will Be Found' from the hit musical Dear Evan Hansen – a song about finding happiness.

And two pupils from each school were brought together to perform as a choir at a special birthday celebration at Bishop Lonsdale Church of England Primary School, which was the first to join the Trust.

Among the stars helping the children with their performance was Sam Holden, who was appearing in Hamilton later that evening in Victoria Palace, London.

The choir's final performance was captured on film and was premiered on a big screen at the home of Derby County, Pride Park, during our first professional conference.

Gold medal winning para-triathlete Steve Judge, who battled his way back to the running track after being told he may not walk again following a severe car accident, was one of the speakers, along with fellow keynote speaker Dame Alison Peacock, chief executive of the Chartered College of Teaching.

More than 650 school staff, including leaders and teaching assistants, joined us for the day of learning taking part in a whole day of talks and workshops, covering a wide range of topics including music, maths, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), leadership, languages, computing, modern languages, finance and mental health.



“Over the past decade, our Trust has grown, evolved and flourished, thanks to the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm of our pupils, and the support of our wider community.”

Sarah Charles, Chair of Trustees



'Awesome' trip to Toc H



Hardwick Primary School children were given an incredible opportunity to attend Toc H Camp, near Ashbourne.

Here's what the children had to say about it...

"The 10-day camp was just awesome, we loved it! There was so much to do there; laser tag, rock climbing, swimming and there was a huge outdoor area where we could play various games and sports.

"There was a big tent with endless arts and craft activities to keep us busy even when the weather was a bit grey. The most enjoyable had to be the zipline and the chocolate eating contest!

"We went on long walks in the countryside where we enjoyed helping little bugs out of harm's way and we just loved exploring through the trees.

"There was even a little shop called Tony's Tuck Shop where you could buy some sweet treats. Yummm!

"It was the perfect place to meet new people, make new friends and learn how to play new games.

"Thank you Toc-H."

Junior school praised for unlocking pupils' potential



St Peter's Church of England Junior School, in Littleover, has earned praise from Ofsted inspectors for the way it is unlocking pupils' potential.

The school has been judged as Good in all areas following a recent inspection and the report states: "Through perseverance, courage, respect and compassion, staff and pupils are united in their aim to 'unlock potential'. This aim is realised. It underpins all that happens at the school. It contributes to St Peter's being the harmonious community that it is."

Since the school joined DDAT in 2020, it has overhauled the majority of its curriculum and introduced strategies to address learning gaps.

Pupils' behaviour was also commended by the inspector, who noted that the children knew the importance of the school's 'ready, respectful, safe' mantra and held doors open for adults and each other. Rewards, including house points, recognition in a 'golden assembly' and spending time with the school dog Nelson, were seen as helping the children to thrive, along with extra-curricular activities and opportunities to be mini-leaders and councillors.

Pupils at **Arboretum Primary School** have received praise from the community, Derbyshire Police and Derby City Council for the work they carried out transforming Society Place.

Last year, children at the school began working with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on the Nextdoor Nature project, designed to improve a patch of land which was unloved and overgrown.

One year on and there are trees, insects and flowers. Police say there are fewer reports of antisocial behaviour and there is more pride in the community.

Well done Arboretum Primary School.

Pupils dig Society Place





School helps pupils to reach for the stars...

Inspectors found pupils love attending **Arboretum Primary School** (pictured above) and staff are helping them to reach for the stars.

A team from the Office for Standards in Education judged the school to be Good in all areas and praised it for being at the heart of the community.

The report highlighted several particularly strong areas, including its ambitions for pupils, inclusivity and behaviour.

Inspectors said the pupils told them they loved their school, they feel safe and know they are valued as individuals. They added that their teachers 'are the best'.

They also talked about the Arboretum Promise which provides them with the opportunity to try 50 experiences before they leave school. These include activities such as zorbing, fishing in a pond and starring in a musical show.

On the news

Staff, parents and pupils at **Bishop Lonsdale Church of England Primary School**, were interviewed by a reporter from Channel 4 News about attendance.

The school has contributed to a campaign about attendance which was launched in partnership with Derby County Community Trust and Derby City Council and saw pupils sharing what they love about going to school.



In the news

Several of our schools have made headlines this term, and two of our most rural schools have been the focus of double-page spreads in *The Derbyshire Times*.

The paper said that although **Darley Churchtown CofE Primary School** is one of the smallest schools in the country, staff always ensure pupils have all the benefits of a big school.

Meanwhile, children at **Bishop Pursglove Church of England Primary** are encouraged to make the most of their glorious countryside location.



Bishop meets children who are learning about her life

The Church of England's first female black bishop visited **St Werburgh's (VA) Church of England Primary School** during Black History Month, after she heard the pupils had been learning about her life.

Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin spent time speaking with pupils at the school after she heard the children had created a picture of her as part of Black History Month.

Head teacher Rachael Dean said: "The pupils were absolutely thrilled to meet Bishop Rose in person after learning so much about her."

The children were also treated to some singing from Bishop Rose, as she sung the lyrics from (Something Inside) So Strong by Labi Siffre, which she said she used as her personal mantra.



Holocaust survivor shares his journey

Derby Cathedral School pupils in Year 9 had the privilege of meeting Simon Winston, a Holocaust survivor. Pupil Lena Goryniak reports.

"Simon Winston is a Polish Jew who survived the Holocaust. He was born in 1938 to Jewish parents in a town called Radziłów, now part of Ukraine. Radziłów came under Nazi rule in 1941 which saw the beginning of the dehumanising of all the Jews in the town. There were about 7,000 Jews in Radziłów when the Nazi invaded.

The Nazis built small and cramped places called 'Ghettos' as a temporary solution to all the homeless Jews that they kicked out of their own houses and gave to German families. "Useful" Jews were sent to work and rewarded with little food, the "useless" Jews had been sent to a different part of the Ghetto and often starved to death.

Simon's family were fugitives for two years and hiding from the Nazis, they were hidden by Polish farmers in three different hiding places.

Having Simon come to our school was the biggest honour and privilege I have ever had. It was an amazing opportunity. I feel like I learnt so much - this was such a great chance for me to learn about both the Holocaust and part of my own history as a native Polish person."



Creative pupils should be proud

There has been plenty of buzz around a new art installation at **Derby Cathedral School** which was created by pupils from sticks of willow and tissue paper.

The five giant bees and a beehive were created with help from professional artist Ruth Lewis-Jones.

The sculptures, which have been installed as a permanent fixture in reception, were created to reflect the school's faith values of fellowship, aspiration, integrity, tenacity and humility.

The project was part of the school's work to improve pupils' cultural capital. By exposing students to professional artists, they can see there are careers in the creative industries.



Green project wins £10k



Derby Cathedral School has won a £10,000 grant to enable it to increase its biodiversity, teach pupils about the environment and undertake scientific research. The school was awarded the money as part of a Government-funded programme known as the National Education Nature Park.

The money will be used to create a wildflower area and a three-metre pond situated at the rear of the school site and Nature Park scientists from the Royal Horticultural Society and Natural History Museum will be analysing the data collected by students to help create a biodiversity map across the UK.

The school, which has had help from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in planning the project, hopes the natural environment will be used across the curriculum and pupils on the Duke of Edinburgh scheme will carry out some of the labouring and planting.

Head of geography Barbara Woodward said: "We are delighted to have secured the maximum amount of money available for our project."

Sunday Times rates Griffie Field

Staff and pupils at **Griffe Field Primary School** are celebrating after being named in the top four schools in the East Midlands.

Head teacher Emma Mitchell said: "We are immensely proud to have been named in the Sunday Times Parent Power List, a recognition that highlights the exceptional achievements of our school community.

"This reflects not only the hard work and dedication of our students and staff but also the unwavering support of our parents and wider community."



Top marks from SIAMs reports

This term, several DDAT schools have been visited by inspector teams from the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMs), who look at the effectiveness of a school's Christian vision, values and leadership.

Bolsover Church of England (VC) Junior School (pictured above) was among the schools visited. The reports states: "The Christian vision underpins all aspects of school life at Bolsover Junior School. Leaders, staff and governors are proud of the difference this makes."

Walter Evans Church of England Primary School was described by inspectors as a warm, welcoming and inclusive Church school with love truly at its heart. The vision of love for "selves and others is deeply embedded and at the heart of everyday life"

St George's Church of England Primary School (below) in High Peak has been commended for fostering a nurturing community where Christian values shape every aspect of school life, helping pupils and families thrive.

During the visit, the school was described as having a "biblically informed Christian vision" that is the inspiration that drives school improvement.





School Street at William Gilbert

Staff at **William Gilbert Primary School** are proud to share the progress they have made to establish a School Street – improving air quality, reducing traffic congestion and creating safer, more enjoyable journeys for pupils.

Efforts have included installing scooter pods and bike racks to support families choosing greener travel options. Children have taken part in campaigns including Derbyshire’s Travel Smart Weeks, Modeshift’s Travel Wise Week and the Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel which all encourage pupils and parents to embrace walking, cycling and scooting.

The school has also hosted a variety of fun and educational events to make sustainable travel engaging and enjoyable. Activities such as scooter workshops, safety awareness days and kinetic-powered smoothie-making sessions using an adapted bike brought excitement and learning together.

The pupil-led ECO Committee spearheaded initiatives such as active travel surveys, breakfasts to reward those traveling sustainably, running competitions and a pop-up reflector shop, and promoting car-free days to reduce car use outside the school gates.

The school has also taken bold steps to pilot the School Street concept, applying for one-day road closures to test the scheme’s feasibility.

Most recently, in November, it hosted five Fume-Free Fridays, trialling road closures that garnered increased interest from local MPs, including Jonathan Davies. William Gilbert Primary is setting an example for a brighter, greener future for all children across Derbyshire.

Well done all!

Nativity throwback

There have seen some glorious Christmas plays and nativities in DDAT primaries this season – far too many to include in our newsletter. Instead, four members of the Trust central team have shared their own festive photos – but can you tell who is who. Answers at the bottom of the page.



St Giles is still ‘good’



A strong leadership and an ambitious curriculum are driving improvements at **St Giles Church of England Primary School** which has continued to be rated Good by Government inspectors.

The school was praised for its inclusivity and determination to ensure pupils do well when a team from the Office for Standards in Education visited.

The inspectors visited the school in July and noted that pupils behaved well, taking turns at activities, sharing ideas and talking about the importance of how to be ‘kind, calm and mindful’. Pupils told the inspectors they enjoyed school and found lessons interesting.

Executive head teacher Ben O’Connell said he was particularly pleased with comments made about the priority given to reading and the school’s new phonics scheme.

Nativity throwback: Answers

1. CEO Sarah Clark; 2. HR Officer Ellie Johnson; 3. Senior School Improvement Officer Matthew Clark; 4. HR Assistant Hannah Boulby.