



Welcome to the first edition of this newsletter for the parents, carers and families of Brooklands, Gilbert Inglefield and Vandyke. The aim is to share information as we build and extend the links between our schools. Each edition will have articles about the development of the Multi Academy Trust and updates on the work we are beginning to carry out together. Please send any questions or comments to me at Vandyke. [kelibys@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk](mailto:kelibys@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk).

Sara Kelby

## Parent Consultation Event

On Wednesday 19th October a parent consultation event for our MAT proposals took place. Held at Gilbert Inglefield in the library a mixture of parents, staff and governors almost filled the room as chair of governors at Gilbert Inglefield, **John Hassall**, and Headteacher at Brooklands, **Julie Hodgson**, welcomed everybody and introduced the meeting.

**Helen Redding**, Assistant Director (Education & School Improvement) at Central Bedfordshire spoke briefly to provide the endorsement of the local authority for the proposals and **Tim Carroll**, Headteacher at Vandyke, made a short presentation talking to a few powerpoint

slides.

There followed questions and answers and discussion. This was entirely constructive with some telling questions and some to and fro debate. Key areas of questioning centred around possible changes to admissions arrangements, concerns that extra layers of management get added that would distract from our core purpose of teaching and learning, and that the process of possible future growth as lower schools might wish to join would need careful managing.

The event finished with informal conversations. Governors judged the event to have gone well. The relatively



low turnout of parents could be taken as a sign that most parents are unconcerned by the proposals or even positively welcome it as past experience suggests that where parents feel unhappy or discontented they do turn out. Those parents who came along were almost wholly supportive and encouraging.

While the period of consultation has ended we continue to encourage feedback from any source as this is truly helpful in shaping and thinking through our plans.

## Joint Training Day: 3rd January

Brooklands, Gilbert Inglefield and Vandyke held their first joint training day at the beginning of January. ALL staff took place and participated in a proactive and thoughtful way. **Tim Carroll** began by explaining the practicalities of how the MAT would work and then **Professor John West Burnham** led a session for all staff on the benefits of collaboration between schools.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and many staff commented on how much they enjoyed having time to talk to colleagues from our partner schools over coffee and lunch. Here are a selection of comments from staff in our schools:

"The Inset day at Vandyke was really useful, and was lovely meeting other staff from Vandyke and Brooklands. The whole day was positive and we all agreed

that the MAT is a good idea. We must be sure we have the time to sit down with our departments regularly and share planning resources and ideas and to reinforce good practice."

"I thought it was a very worthwhile exercise. It was good to talk to the staff of the other schools and hear their points of view. I also enjoyed the Q&A session in the theatre, I thought it was informative and reassuring.

"The more people that work together the better"

"It was very helpful to work with colleagues from middle schools and hear their ideas on the MAT and their different/similar experiences cross phase."

"It was useful to spend time meeting and discussing the key points with middle school



staff and it was really valuable that it was whole school not just teachers. We could have done with more time to explore all tasks fully although the tasks were well designed and fed into the morning session well. Everyone I was with felt that more time to meet/get to know each other/work on projects together would really enhance the collaboration and there was a genuine will to do this."

"The proposed MAT has already opened up a gateway between us and Gilbert Inglefield. As we are both middle schools and often in 'competition' with one another, this can only be a good thing"

## Maths



On the 20th November **Joanne Sizeland** and I had the opportunity to see the maths department at Gilbert Inglefield Academy in action. We visited 3 different classrooms, covering high, middle and low prior attainment groups and it was clear that the students are very much switched on to maths.

The use of past GCSE exam questions, seating plans that allow

challenge and text books that not only linked to the ICT (MyMaths) but are also challenge based, with different difficulties, keeps the students switched on and working hard.

Overall, we witnessed very positive teaching practices which allow students to learn, stretch themselves and develop good mathematical grounding that is

preparing them well for the trials the new GCSE has in store for them.

We thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity and look forward to further visits which will allow us to share good practice and reflect on our own teaching.

**Amba Pears  
Vandyke**

## Good Practice Visits

Staff from the three schools have begun to go into one another's classrooms. These good practice visits are being well received and staff are finding watching colleagues in the other schools a valuable learning experience. The overwhelming feeling from all the schools is the positive and welcoming environment offered in each school. Whilst each school is unique and has its own very clear identity, the three schools share a common bond of being welcoming, friendly and characterised by very supportive atmospheres.

**Colette Goring-Farrow  
Brooklands**

## English

The English departments of Gilbert Inglefield, Brooklands and Vandyke have recently undertaken



a series of good practice visits, in order to observe the fantastic teaching and learning going on in our schools; all involved have found it a very useful exercise.

We have benefited from planning Year 8 transition tasks together, as well as adapting middle school units of work to fit with GCSE requirements, in order to provide the best foundation for our pupils to achieve in upper school.

It has been particularly pleasing to see how pupils have made the transition from middle to upper and to see how they have blossomed in confidence at Vandyke.

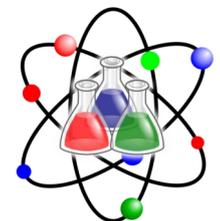
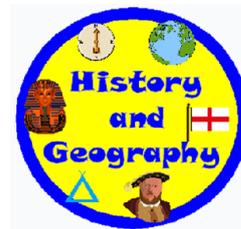
There is now much more regular communication between all three schools and staff are supporting

each other with resources, ideas and advice.

**Hanneke Boemer  
Gilbert Inglefield**

## Future Good Practice Visits

In the Spring term 2017 good practice visits will be extended to Humanities and to Science. It is clear that staff value the opportunity to work more closely together and this can only benefit the children and families in our communities.



**Science**

## Pastoral Continuity Group

Two meetings of the newly formed Pastoral Continuity Group took place in the Autumn Term 2016 between staff from Brooklands, Gilbert Inglefield and Vandyke. Each meeting has a separate focus with the aim of sharing good practice and streamlining

procedures between the schools where possible. The first meeting focussed on child protection and safeguarding procedures. The second meeting was on sharing successful strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality. In addition. The next meeting will



look at behaviour management strategies.

All participants found the meetings useful and informative and feel that our good practice has been strengthened.

## Youth Speaks Competition

In November 2016 Brooklands, Gilbert Inglefield and Vandyke took part in the Rotary Club of Leighton-Linslade RIBI Youth Speaks Competition 2016-17.

There were intermediate and senior competitions and all the

teams performed well speaking confidently and enjoying the experience and opportunity.

One team each from Brooklands and Vandyke have progressed to the semi-final in 2017.



We will keep you informed of their progress.