



10th March 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

It has been a busy few months across the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership Trust, with a number of Ofsted inspections and release by the DFE of the '*multi-academy composite examination result data*'. Since I last wrote to you, we have had five further Ofsted inspections across our schools, all of which have seen schools graded 'good' or better. Some of those schools have moved to a 'good' judgement from being 'requires improvement', again demonstrating the impact the Trust has on pupil outcomes and experiences.

The Ofsted inspections to date are:

1. Hayesfield Girls' School, Bath – retains its 'good' school judgement, with some clear further improvement since the last inspection. Of particular note, the results achieved by children in mathematics following adaptations made to the curriculum/assessment and the positive response to the school's drive on student leadership and anti-bullying.
2. Preston Academy in Yeovil – moved from 'requires improvement' to 'good'. The school had received two 'requires improvement' judgements before joining the Trust and the Trust is mentioned in the report for the support given to bring about improvement at the school.
3. Dundry Primary – moved from 'requires improvement' to 'good'. This school has not had a 'good' judgement for over 20 years and has had 5 previous 'requires improvement' judgments. We are delighted therefore that with the Trust input and support, it is now graded 'good'.
4. Westfield Primary in Midsomer Norton – moved from 'good' to 'good' with 'outstanding' features - a fantastic achievement. The report recognised the excellent pastoral care and personal development work undertaken by the school, grading this area 'outstanding'.
5. Longvernal school in Midsomer Norton – moved from 'good' to 'good' with 'outstanding' features. Inspectors said this school had 'outstanding' leadership, 'outstanding' behaviour and 'outstanding' personal development. Again, the Trust was mentioned in the report, for the support it had given.

It is very satisfying to see our schools improving or sustaining excellence. There is no doubt in my mind that schools working together and supporting one another brings about better outcomes and experiences for all children. As a Trust, we ensure that standards remain high and where there are issues or concerns, we take action to address these before they become significant issues.

I am delighted to report to you as well that the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership is the highest performing South West based multi-academy Trust for GCSE results. This government measure takes all schools in a Trust and combines their GCSE results. This then generates a score for the Trust on the value they have added for children between KS 2 SATs and GCSEs. We are at the top of this league table in 2022, something I had expected given the improvement in results we have seen at many of our secondary schools. This serves as further evidence of the impact of the Trust and collaborative working across our schools. For example, all of our secondary schools use the same Maths teaching resources, assessments and support materials. This means we can compare the quality of teaching and progress of children across schools in the MAT and place resources at schools that need further help to improve. We have a dedicated Trust maths teacher who travels to schools and supports groups of children with their Maths learning. The same applies for the other core subjects of English and Science. This type of provision would be difficult to afford and manage without the Trust direction and of course, a collaborative working approach.





Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership
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In other news, we have now submitted planning applications for expansion of some schools in the Trust. Norton Hill has plans to expand and completely refurbish its technology teaching area and High Littleton is moving to be a one form entry school and therefore needs a new classroom. The combined build costs for both projects will be close to £2 million, (much of this funded by the Trust) and both schools will see facilities enhanced significantly for children. We have many other projects taking place across schools including refurbishment of toilets at St Dunstan's and Somervale schools and new security fencing at Beechen Cliff.

The new build for the Autism Base at St Dunstan's is nearing completion and a new reading area is now in use at Farrington Gurney Primary. We look forward to developing further resource base provision for children with additional needs at a number of other schools as well. These provisions attract additional funding to help SEND pupils access the curriculum.

The Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership is now 10 years old and has grown from the original 2 secondaries based in Midsomer Norton to 28 schools. We are hoping to welcome another 4 schools into the Trust this September. These are likely to be special schools and I am hoping we can develop a special school hub within the Trust. This hub will benefit children significantly as we intend to ensure better collaboration and sharing of best practice across the special schools. We also plan for our mainstream schools to benefit for improved access to services which can be used to support children. I will of course write to you later in the year with further updates on this planned growth.

I wanted to thank parents/carers for their support and understanding following the strike action taken by some teachers who are members of the NEU teaching union. 14 out of 28 MNSP schools have been able to remain fully open during this industrial action, but there has also been some significant impact as a result of the strikes. I am sorry for the inconvenience this has caused and we are determined to ensure that pupils will not be affected in the long term by missing school on these days. I hope that the NEU and Government are able to reach a conclusion to the dispute as soon as possible.

As if to further compound the strike action, snow disrupted school opening on the 8th March. We had fully intended to keep schools open, but were prevented from doing so by health and safety concerns relating to school sites. In addition, many schools outside of the MAT decided to close very early on the morning of the 8th and this then had an impact on our staff who needed to be at home with their own young children. I was disappointed not to have all schools open given that most roads were passable by the time school opening times were upon us. Well done to Westfield School in Midsomer Norton. They remained open despite pretty heavy snow!

In summary, it has been a busy couple of half-terms, but I remain deeply proud of the schools in the Trust and children that attend them. It is easy to be negative and worry about the future, but I have to say, the children and staff I meet every week across the schools in the Trust are a delight – positive, full of energy and ambitious to do well – even the teenagers!

Thank you as always for your support.

Alun Williams
CEO

