

# A Year in the Life of the Minerva Learning Trust

This year has been an exciting one for Bridport Schools. In April 2016, Burton Bradstock CE School, Bridport Primary School, St Mary's CE Primary School and the Sir John Colfox Academy joined together to form the Minerva Learning Trust.



The aims of the Minerva Learning Trust are to:

- Work together to design and deliver an inclusive, innovative and stimulating 4 – 19 curriculum.
- Raise the aspirations of ALL within the Partnership.
- Develop and nurture a collective approach to raising achievement through appropriate challenge and support and a commitment to early intervention.
- Provide a learning and teaching environment and culture where all feel safe to take risks in order to learn and grow.

(from Memorandum of Understanding)

## Establishing a Collaborative Partnership

In October all staff in the MLT came together for a training day. There were a range of exciting workshops on key issues such as Improving Short Term Memory, Responsive Questioning, and Supporting Children with ASD or Attachment issues. We also launched other key collaborative projects on the day for Early Years and Year 1 staff to share their experiences and expertise. We believe that working together is the way forward.



## Maths for All

A key area for development across the MLT in 2016-17 has been improving the teaching of Mathematics. Andy Tynemouth of Edge Hill University, supported by Kate Batorska at St Mary's School, led a year long project on "mastery in Mathematics" focussing particularly on how we help pupils to 'keep up' in Mathematics. All the Maths

teachers at the Sir John Colfox Academy, with the Maths leads and identified teachers and TAs from the primaries, took part. Ben Craig, Head of Maths at the Sir John Colfox Academy said, "I have never completed a training course so fruitful, both in knowledge gained and relationships made. No other school in my 13 years of teaching has ever invested this much on dedicated Maths CPD."

## Improving Communication and Language

Another area for development was in Communication and Language. Holly Varndell from Burton Bradstock School was appointed to lead two projects in this area – in Early Years and Key Stage 1 and transition between Years 6 and 7 with a particular focus on writing.

Both the Mathematics and the Language and Communication projects will continue into next year. This has built the collaborative approach across all schools. Holly Varndell said, “Colleagues from three primary schools have become a team who share their knowledge and expertise and help each other find ways to solve challenges.”

## Our Schools have the Edge

The Edge has continued to be an important element for the schools within the Trust. The Sir John Colfox Academy is a Centre of Excellence for the Edge and Andy David is the Edge Ambassador for the South West. The programme aims to develop the skills and attributes needed to help children to be successful learners in school and to give them ‘the Edge’ when it comes to employability.

The Sir John Colfox Academy has continued to develop the Edge and over the last two years: 211 students have completed the Apprentice level and 19 the Graduate level (for Year 11 upwards).

The primary schools have also got involved, with Burton Bradstock and St Mary’s focussing on Communication skills, and Bridport Primary on Initiative.



Andy David will continue to support our schools as he moves to work three days a week with PiXL on the national programme.

## Enriching Children’s Education

The Minerva Learning Trust Schools believe that the experience children have in school should be broad, engaging and develop the talents of all children. We are keen to develop opportunities for children to work together as a team.

Pupils across the schools have worked together on a number of projects. The secondary school students have supported the primary schools in sport, public speaking, the Edge and drama initiatives.



There are already lots of sporting activities across the pyramid but this has been supplemented by Julia May offering after-school sports clubs – hockey in the winter, athletics in the summer – for children keen to develop their skills.



## Support for the Arts

The Trust has a strong emphasis on the Arts. There is now an MLT Choir which has performed at various events already and will be taking part in more in the future. The choir is being sponsored by



Burton Bradstock Festival of Music and Arts and some members of the choir will be performing at their "Tea in the Park" event on 15 August. They have already sung at various local events and were the backbone of the Celebration of the Arts day in

February at Freshwater. This was an exciting event involving over 200 children across the Trust. With drama, music, dance and art it was a real showcase of the talent of our children.

The schools have secured funding from Dorset Music Service to develop music in Bridport schools. Palmers Brewery have also donated funds to support this and as a result we will be able to form and support musical groups and ensembles in our local schools.





Pupils across all schools also took part in a project on graffiti art organised by Crystal Johnson as part of the project to refurbish the Literacy and Scientific Institute (LSI). Local community artist Cleo Heard visited all four schools to teach pupils about urban art. The children learned about the LSI building and its history and then designed emblems which represented local history and business for the hoardings currently to be seen in East Street. Being involved in such community events is very important to the Trust.

## Leading our Trust

One key advantage of the four schools working together has been the bond formed between the Headteachers and the Trustees and Governors of the four schools. We strongly believe that we have joint responsibility for all the children in our care. The Heads share ideas, support each other, plan joint training and look to the future. Working together has also been a real advantage for Governors and Trustees. They have participated in workshops looking at best practice, have shared ideas from training they have attended, and discussed current concerns, like school funding.

## Moving Forward

The first year meant that there were new policies, new systems, and new ways of working for many colleagues in the MLT. There are exciting times ahead as we consolidate and develop further. We will be looking further afield and getting involved in national projects to support learning. We will be collaborating with other Trusts or groups of schools to continue to innovate and ensure the best education for our children. As time goes on the Minerva Learning Trust wants to establish itself as a leader in education, a model for others and a centre of excellence in the South West.

We would like to thank all those who have supported us in our journey so far, particularly the Burton Bradstock Festival of Music and Art, The Literary and Scientific Institute and Palmers Brewery for their sponsorship of events or initiatives. We pride ourselves on being a Trust working in and with our community. But we also look forward to working with new schools and in new areas from 2017 onwards.

## Be part of our success

If you want to know more about the Minerva Learning Trust, perhaps by sponsoring our work or becoming a Governor or Trustee, please contact the MLT at the Sir John Colfox Academy and become part of our future success.

