

Word from CEO Kevin Sexton:

The Importance of Inclusion in Schools for Student Success

Over the last few weeks the Trust schools have been working on the preparation for achieving the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM). Inclusion Quality Mark provides UK schools with a nationally recognised validation of their inclusive practice and ongoing commitment to developing educational inclusion. There are **three award levels**, beginning with the [IQM Inclusive School](#) Award.

1. Promoting Equity and Access

At its core, inclusion is about ensuring that every student, regardless of their background, ability, or need, has access to the same quality of education. This includes students with disabilities, students from different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds, and those with diverse learning styles. In an inclusive school, all students are given the tools and support they need to succeed, leveling the playing field and challenging traditional barriers to education.

2. Fostering a Sense of Belonging

A key to student success is a sense of belonging. Inclusive schools create environments where every student feels they are a valued part of the school community. When students feel included, they are more likely to engage in class, build positive relationships with peers, and develop self-confidence. This social integration not only supports emotional wellbeing but also enhances academic performance, as students are more motivated to learn in an environment where they feel accepted.

3. Enhancing Social and Emotional Learning

Inclusion in schools helps develop social and emotional skills by encouraging students to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds. These interactions foster empathy, cooperation, and collaboration—skills critical for success both in school and later in life. Inclusive classrooms teach students how to navigate differences and build respectful relationships, contributing to a more harmonious school culture and preparing students to thrive in a diverse society.

4. Raising Academic Standards for All

Research shows that inclusive education benefits not only students with special educational needs but also their peers. Inclusive classrooms often utilise differentiated teaching strategies, such as project-based learning or cooperative group work, which enhance learning for all students. These approaches encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, leading to higher academic outcomes. Moreover, teachers in inclusive settings tend to adopt more flexible and innovative practices, pushing the boundaries of traditional teaching and learning.

5. Breaking Down Stereotypes and Reducing Prejudice

Inclusion challenges stereotypes and prejudices by exposing students to diversity in all its forms. When children grow up learning alongside peers who may think, look, or behave differently, they are less likely to develop biased or discriminatory views. Inclusive schools become microcosms of a more just and equitable society, teaching students the values of tolerance, respect, and fairness.

Over time, this leads to more inclusive communities and workplaces, as students carry these lessons with them into adulthood.

6. Building a Supportive Educational Culture

For inclusion to be successful, our schools must cultivate a culture of support and understanding. This involves not only providing appropriate resources for students who need them but also offering training and professional development for teachers. When educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support diverse learners, the entire school benefits. Strong leadership, committed staff, and a shared vision of inclusivity help create an environment where every student can reach their full potential.

7. Long-Term Benefits Beyond the Classroom

The impact of inclusive education extends far beyond academic success. Students who learn in inclusive environments are better prepared for the real world, where they will need to interact with a diverse range of people. Inclusion fosters resilience, adaptability, and open-mindedness, qualities that are increasingly important in today's globalised world. By nurturing these traits, our schools are setting students up not only for academic achievement but for long-term personal and professional success.

Conclusion

Inclusion in schools is not just a moral imperative; it is a key driver of success for all students. By promoting equity, fostering a sense of belonging, and preparing students for a diverse world, inclusive education helps build the foundations for a more successful and harmonious future. Schools that embrace inclusion create environments where every child has the opportunity to thrive, unlocking the full potential of each student and ultimately benefiting society as a whole.

Mr K Sexton

CEO, Mersey View Learning Trust



School Improvement Liverpool Meet the Team

The collaboration between Mersey View Learning Trust and School Improvement Liverpool represents a dynamic partnership dedicated to fostering academic excellence and enhancing the overall educational experience for our students. By leveraging our collective expertise and resources, we aim to implement innovative strategies that address the unique challenges faced by our schools.

Together, we are committed to creating a supportive environment that encourages student engagement, promotes professional development for educators and drives continuous improvement across all levels of our Trust. Through this partnership, we envision a brighter future where every student can thrive and achieve their full potential.

Janette Walker



Janette Walker has been working with Mersey View Learning Trust as a school improvement partner since May 2024.

As a primary teacher, Janette gained extensive leadership experience over 34 years in several Liverpool schools. She has a deep commitment to reducing educational disadvantage which was forged working in areas of high deprivation, including as a Headteacher.

Following her successful school career, she worked full time for Ofsted as an HMI, leading inspections for primary, special schools and initial teacher education. She continues to inspect and works with several other organisations on a freelance basis.

Erica Sharman



Erica is currently working as a school improvement advisor with a variety of educational providers across the Northwest and West Midlands. This was a natural progression from her most recent employment as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Erica has experience inspecting schools across all key stages from Early Years and Foundation Stage to Sixth Form. Before working for Ofsted she was a senior leader in a large secondary school. As the senior leader with responsibility for teaching and learning, Erica was instrumental in gaining their outstanding judgement which led to the school becoming a teaching school.

Part of her work within the secondary school was leading the NPQML and NPQSL courses. Within this role, she also worked with other schools in the area to help them bring about improvement in all aspects of their work. At the time that Erica left this position the school was the lead school in a MAT of two secondary schools and two primary schools.

Erica is at heart a mathematics teacher. However, she has line-managed many other subject areas in her roles in school. These include: RE, humanities, science, performing arts and PE.

Before entering the world of education, Erica worked for a large accountancy firm where she prepared and audited accounts for companies of all sizes. These ranged from small single-owned businesses to large international corporations.

Martin Hanbury



Martin has worked with people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for over forty years in a variety of roles including teaching assistant, domiciliary carer, teacher, headteacher and chief executive officer. He has recently retired from his roles as Chief Executive Officer of the Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust, Headteacher of Chatsworth High School and Community College and Principal of Chatsworth Futures.

Martin also serves as a trustee of The Tutor Trust and Leisure for Autism.

Martin's career has focused on the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in school and college settings and he has combined his role within the Chatsworth Multi Academy trust with work across several universities. Martin has a Ph.D. focused on Leadership in Special Education and holds several Masters degrees. Martin has published *Educating Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders: A Practical Guide* in 2005 (2nd Edition 2012) and *Positive Behaviour Strategies to Support Children and Young People with Autism* in 2007.

Developing maths skills in children is important because it helps them develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and logical reasoning skills. These skills are useful in everyday life and can be applied to many situations, such as understanding time, sharing, and counting.

Early mathematical understanding is strongly associated with later school achievement. Children who start behind in maths tend to stay behind throughout their education.

Transferable Skills

Mathematics helps children develop transferable skills that can be used in everyday life.

Spatial Awareness

Mathematics helps children develop their spatial awareness.

Mathematical Language

Mathematics helps children learn mathematical language, which includes words like, “more”, “less”, “add”, and “take away”.

Some ways to help children develop mathematics skills include: using manipulatives and representations, embedding math experiences throughout the day, reinforcing math concepts and language as they arise and using mathematical language when cooking together.

Through a series of workshops, quizzes and ‘hands-on’ experiences, pupils from each of our Mersey View Learning Trust schools will develop their strategic thinking and use logic to solve a variety of puzzles and challenges.

As ambassadors for their subject, they will hopefully take their newfound skills back to their classrooms and inspire others with their love of maths. Supported by their teachers and with a healthy dose of competition, pupils will be able to tackle the more complex mathematical puzzles that will extend their learning and enable more of them to achieve higher scores in next summer’s exams.

The Maths Room at Forefield Junior School (pictured) will play host to the challenges. Who knows if we will inspire a future Fibonacci?



FOREFIELD JUNIOR
SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
NETWORK



FOREFIELD COMMUNITY
INFANT & NURSERY
SCHOOL

In our Early Years Network we have used baseline assessments to identify common themes in barriers to learning for the youngest children in our MVLT schools. These common themes include communication and language difficulties, self regulation and executive functioning barriers and Personal, Social and Emotional skills including developing secure attachments and building relationships with other children and adults within the setting.

Early Years leads shared good practice of communication and language intervention programmes currently used to support children with barriers in this area. Staff will be accessing training to deliver the NELI Early Language Intervention Programme proven to improve language and behaviour for 4-5 year olds.

All schools will also adopt the Voice 21 Oracy programme this year, which will develop staff knowledge and skills around developing oracy for young children. The first training development day is planned for November and staff are keen to get started, delivering this across settings and seeing the impact this will have on communication and language skills for our youngest learners.

EYFS leaders also plan to deliver some workshops to support parents in preparing children for starting school. From practical tips on potty training to how to develop a love of reading at a young age, these workshops will support children and families in our local community, using our Early Years expertise to ensure the best start in life and education for all of our children.



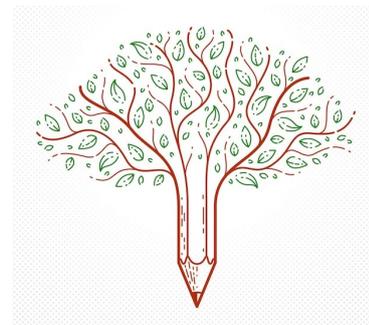
WRITING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT NETWORK



VALEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

One of Mersey View Learning Trust's School Improvement Networks is focused on improving writing.

MVLT's Writing Network has been extremely proactive, even prior to incorporation on 1st September and has already made good progress against our MVLT schools' improvement priority target: to raise attainment in students' writing outcomes, from Early Years to Year 13.



English subject leads have been meeting at Valewood Primary School (VPS), each half term, since 2023, with a keen focus on each agenda. Agenda items to date have included: spelling; grammar; reading to writing process; formative and summative assessment; marking and feedback.

Last term, MVLT, alongside The Rainbow Education Multi Academy Trust, hosted a conference, open to all schools, where Alex Quigley led the day addressing what teachers face on a daily basis: the challenge of closing the gap between our most needy writers and those who show flair and personality at the higher standard.

We all know that the craft of writing is a complex one and the work of this Network seeks to look at best practice, through research, and share this to support improvement across all of our partner schools. There is huge potential here.

This year, MVLT has invested in implementing the No More Marking (NMM) programme and process to enhance assessment of writing across all of our Trust schools. Forefield Infant School (FFIS) has been leading the way, as NMM is a well-established process at FFIS already. Building on their success of implementation, it makes sense for the rich data captured, following assessment, to be shared with Year 3 colleagues at Forefield Junior School (FFJS).

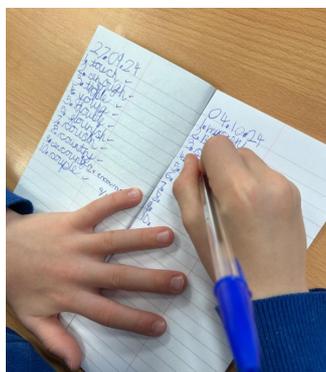
Moreover, this rich data (by the end of Year 6) can then be shared with colleagues at Chesterfield High School (CHS), as our pupils move to Year 7. This way, targets and data can be used effectively to empower teachers in enabling continuity and progression when it comes to maximising outcomes in writing, for cohorts and individuals; minimising repetition; providing support for those who may not be at the expected standard and also supporting teachers in challenging the most able of our writers to reach higher standards in writing.

Our MVLT Writing Network is made up of a strong team of passionate professionals who have a wealth of experience and who have worked not just in their own schools, but also across other schools to support improvement in writing. I always look forward to hosting our half-termly meeting (which could go on beyond the designated hour) as there are so many important pedagogical conversations which spark enthusiasm in the leaders which go on to have a positive impact back in our respective schools. At MVLT, we are fortunate to have such a hardworking, research-based, driven group of English leads who, I know, impact not just on English lessons but in lessons across the whole curriculum. Of course, reading and writing are fundamental skills which are needed in all subjects.

At every meeting, subject leaders bring a selection of books from each year group. One of my personal highlights, last year, was when Mrs Oakes (CHS) brought a Year 13, A' Level essay to show us and it was one of our former VPS student's work. It is always great to see and hear how learning journeys develop, as our primary children move up and through high school. There was much to be proud of and much to celebrate, looking at this piece of work, as well as all the other pieces of work from Early Years to A' Level.

Our priority focus, for next half term's meeting, is editing. We will be looking at how our MVLT schools approach the editing process; is this teacher or student led and how does data from formative and summative assessments support students' targets to improve their independent writing? Lots to be thinking about and lots to celebrate across our schools, as always.

#MVLTForEveryoneTheBest.



ATTENDANCE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT NETWORK

Our schools are extremely proud that attendance within their setting is consistently above national average, this is driven by each Headteacher and a team of people who support families on a daily basis to ensure all of our young people have the access to quality education.



Attendance is a major focus of the Trust, creating happy, safe and inclusive environments where all children feel valued and part of their school community. The Trust has an Attendance Network, with a representative from each school who meet each half term to create a coherent and consistent strategy across all of our schools, with the mission to get children into school, every day!

The benefits of regular school attendance:

Social Development

Attending school regularly allows students to build friendships and develop essential social skills. Interacting with peers daily helps children learn teamwork, empathy, and effective communication, which are vital life skills.

Improved Emotional Wellbeing

School provides a structured environment that promotes emotional stability. Regular attendance gives students access to support networks like teachers, the pastoral team, and peers, helping them navigate through school.

Engagement with Learning

Students who attend school regularly are more engaged with the curriculum and their learning environment. This engagement leads to greater enthusiasm for education and a better understanding of the curriculum.

Enhanced Future Opportunities

Good attendance develops positive habits that reflect a sense of responsibility, commitment and resilience. Students who maintain consistent attendance have a better chance of succeeding at each stage of their school career and having a more.

Academic Progress and Attainment

Finally, regular attendance is directly linked to better academic performance. Students who attend school consistently have more opportunities to grasp key concepts, complete assessments, and receive teacher feedback, leading to higher grades and long-term academic success.

Young people benefit from the coherent support of their families and the school and it essential that we work in collaboration to maximise opportunities for our students.



**SAFEGUARDING
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
NETWORK**



**WATERLOO PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Designated Safeguarding Leads from across Mersey View Learning Trust have been meeting together, each half term, to ensure that safeguarding remains at the very centre of our work. This group aims to provide effective challenge to ensure that children and young people across the 6 schools are appropriately supported and continue to feel happy and safe in schools. We are working together on key initiatives and the sharing of ideas to ensure that every child receives the very best care and support. This is a significant benefit of our Trust.

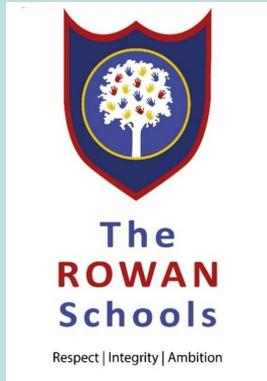
All schools have recently benefited from very positive external scrutiny on existing systems to ensure that all those working or entering onto our school sites are appropriately vetted and that safeguarding arrangements are secure. This external scrutiny by trained Ofsted inspectors is taking place half termly in each school with children and young people being asked about the culture of safeguarding. This is then fed back to local governors and trustees of Mersey View Learning Trust.

We are working together to support the development of Team Around the School, Early Help and to ensure that appropriate challenge and support is in place across each school and also to external agencies working with young people.

**Keeping
children safe
is everyone's
responsibility**



SEND
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
NETWORK



THE ROWAN SCHOOLS



The Rowan Tree



The SEND Network is a collaborative platform that brings together all schools within our Trust with colleagues who are dedicated to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our approach is based on a shared set of principles:

Dignity and Respect

We believe that every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. This ensures that all students, regardless of their needs, feel valued and included in the school community.

Empowerment

We provide students with the tools and support they need to take charge of their own learning and development. By fostering independence and self-advocacy, we help students build confidence and resilience.

Success for All

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where every student can thrive. We aim to provide tailored support that meets diverse needs, ensuring that all students achieve beyond any predetermined limits.

Action at All Levels

Effective support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) requires collaboration and action at every level—individual, school, Trust, and the wider world. By working together, we can implement strategies that benefit all students, enhance the learning environment, and improve pathways to adulthood.

By fostering collaboration and sharing expertise, we aim to create more inclusive and effective educational environments for all our children and young people by:

Collaboration:

To share best practices, resources, and strategies to enhance the support provided to children and young people with SEND across our schools.

Professional Development:

To offer training opportunities, workshops, and seminars to help schools improve their skills and knowledge regarding SEND.

Policy and Practice Review:

To reviews current policies and practices, ensuring they are effective and aligned with best practices in the area of SEND

Support and Guidance:

To facilitate opportunities for advice and support from peers and external providers, fostering a community of learning and growth.

Advocacy:

To advocate for the rights and needs of students with SEND, influencing policy at local, regional, or national levels.

