

Finham Park Multi Academy Trust

World Class News

February 2021

Edition 24



Westonbirt Arboretum



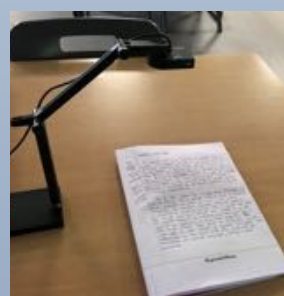
Learning Beyond the Classroom



Showstoppers!



Using visualisers as an effective teaching and learning tool



Graphic novels are great!



What a result!



Welcome from Mark Bailie

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the latest edition of world class news.



The first working day of 2022 was our annual FPMAT Training Day. This is an important day in our calendar as it is when all staff across the Finham Park Multi Academy Trust come together. As we have grown, we are now a staff of just under 700 which of course adds to our capacity for collaboration, sharing best practice and co-construction and our commitment to a World Class educational experience for children from age 3-19 years.

The programme contained a wide range of different workshops and training sessions that staff could select from, as well as two keynote speakers: Rachel Johnson and Professor Adam Boddison. We are fortunate to be able to attract such high quality and nationally acclaimed speakers, and a great range of training opportunities to match the needs of our staff.

It is fantastic that so many of the workshop and training sessions were delivered by our own colleagues - what a talent we have! Thank you to everyone who delivered sessions, supported co-construction meetings, or helped behind the scenes. It is wonderful that we were able to come together, albeit virtually.

In addition, we run a comprehensive training programme throughout the year. This in turn has a positive impact for children as their teachers and school staff receive regular high-quality training. I know that the staff in the primary schools are looking forward to training on Talk 4 Writing on our next training day in February, and secondary colleagues are continuing with their co-construction projects on moderation and assessment which are already well underway.

Despite the relatively short half term, there have been so many examples of great learning and opportunities for children across the MAT. It is a pleasure to see children being able to benefit once again from the opportunity to go on trips and visits to places of interest and enter and participate in competitions.

As we come to the close of the first half term of 2022, I would like to thank children and staff for their hard work and hope they take the opportunity to recharge their batteries ready for some of the exciting projects and work that will be taking place during the rest of the Spring Term. I wish all of you and your families a restful break over the Half Term.

Mark Bailie
Executive Headteacher
Finham Park Multi Academy Trust



Primary Support and Innovation Leader



The Spring term started with the annual Finham Park MAT training day on January 4th at which all staff from across the Multi Academy Trust joined together for a day of training and development. The day was online again this year, with a range of live sessions, courses, keynote speakers and co-construction meetings held throughout the day.

Thank you to everyone who helped with both the organisation and the running of sessions, the feedback shows that staff really appreciated the opportunity to benefit from the sharing of good practise across the trust. Rachel Johnson (CEO of PiXLs) gave a talk that was inspirational and motivating. Several colleagues commented on her engaging down-to-earth approach. Professor Adam Boddison presented an introduction to SEND and an update on the current national picture. As SEND is a MAT wide focus this was a useful introduction and was then supplemented and enhanced by several live sessions on attachment theory, behaviour, and anxiety.

I have been busy supporting in the primary schools, with a focus on behaviour, developing teaching and learning, and assessment. I have been working alongside teachers in the classroom to develop their practise and supporting subject and phase leaders to develop the subjects or areas that they lead on. I was involved in a deep dive into history, where we observed lessons, looked at pupils work and conducted “pupil voice”. This identified some great practise in the teaching of history, one example of which was where children were enthused about the subject by being engaged in an archaeological dig. You can read more about this further on in the magazine.

The leadership teams in several of the schools are involved in the Exemplary Leadership course this year. The first part of this course has been focusing on developing student culture. We were able to participate in virtual school visits to see how other schools have implemented different elements from the course. The leadership teams are currently working on a gap task introducing and developing an area of pupil culture such as the morning routine or transitions in their schools. As part of the morning routine, this might involve all children being greeted on arrival at the classroom, saying good morning to them and having a conversation with them, helping them to have a positive start to the day. After half-term we are starting the second part of the course, focusing on observations and feedback.

The reading development group have been busy organising an online author event with Tom Palmer, where he will be talking to children in years 6, 7, 8 and 9 across all the schools on his books *After the War*, *Arctic Star*, *D-Day Dog* and *Foul Play* on Friday 11th February. Kenilworth Books have signed bookplate copies of these books for sale if children are interested in reading any of the books that he refers to in his talk.

Schools are looking forward to the INSET day on February 28th where all the primaries are excited about participating in the long-awaited Talk 4 writing training. Secondaries will continue to work on co-construction projects and activities.

Yesterday I had a fascinating day at Lyng Hall as part of the team conducting a Health Check with a focus on reading and literacy and the provision for SEND and pupil premium pupils. It was a very interesting day, and such a privilege to see all the nurture and care that goes into supporting the young people to be successful in school and be the best that they can be.

Emma O'Toole
Primary Support and Innovation Leader



Learning beyond the classroom with Y4

As well as working hard in the classroom, year 4 have been learning through other mediums and challenging themselves with differing experiences and various exciting ways of learning. We have had a number of visitors, including a dentist who taught us about the importance of teeth and how we can look after them. We also had a speaker from Western Power who came in to speak about the benefits and dangers of electricity.

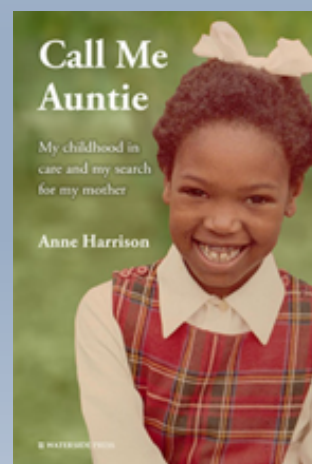


We were fortunate to have Siobhan Fitzpatrick a local Paralympian who competed for Great Britain at the Tokyo Olympics visit. She has been chosen to promote the upcoming Commonwealth Games and has appeared on the BBC. Not only was she generous with her time and words but she also allowed the children to hold all her medals!



Anne Harrison a wonderfully eloquent speaker from the local community also came to visit us. She spoke about being the only black person growing up in care and how her negative experiences of racism inspired her to serve her community. She was a police woman, magistrate, social worker and worked in the care system striving to improve the support and provision for all within the care system. Her speech left a lasting impression on staff and children and she has written about her experiences in a book *Call Me Auntie*.

It is important children see people who can overcome problems as it inspires them to show resilience and not to give up on dreams and hopes. These visits will hopefully impact on our children beyond year four.





Year four have also completed a number of science experiments, applying a practical side to our learning. We have looked at how different drinks affect our teeth highlighting the danger of sugar in drinks, especially those claiming to be healthy drinks. We also created poo to complete our understanding of our digestive system from teeth to the end product. The children loved looking at how diet can affect their poo, some inquisitive and brave went beyond looking and wanted to touch our creation!!



Year four also performed in our annual Dance Show with an amazing routine about space and the planets. We used music from Elton John, (guess the song), to tell the story of astronauts leaving earth to find and settle on a new world.



To extend our links with our local community we visited Finham library and St Martins Church. At the library we met some lovely volunteers who told us how they managed to keep the library open and how they want it to serve our community. At St Martins Church the children were told the story of Christmas and they made decorations to take home or to put on our tree or window display.



We also use our lovely grounds regularly for outdoor learning. We have been able to incorporate a range of subjects Art, Geography, Literacy, Numeracy, PSHE and Science. The children enjoy the practical side and it helps them realise learning takes place



everywhere and in many different forms beyond their exercise books and classrooms.



Phil Savage

An Autumn Day to Be Emerged with Nature

Written by: Zak, Matvej, Yuqi, Micaiah (Year 7 Student Reporters)

Edited by: Cam-Ron (Year 9 Student reporter) and Mrs Nguyen

On the 10th of November 2021 we visited Westonbirt National Arboretum. You might be flabbergasted and confused as to how we managed to get the opportunity to go on such an amazing adventure? Well, the answer is that it was a special reward for us – students of Years 8 and 9 who showed a passion in Science and STEM related activities. All the tickets were completely free thanks to the hard work of Mr Foode - Deputy Curriculum Leader for Science and the organisation of Mrs Nguyen – our Learning Resource Centre Manager.

At exactly 7:45am all 57 of us and 6 staff members eagerly walked to the school gate where the distinctively yellow colour Johnsons' Coach was waiting for us. We were amazed by the astonishing space inside the coach. However, before we could settle down in our cosy seats, the first thing we had to do was to use hand-sanitiser 😊. The journey took us around 2 hours to get to the Arboretum. There wasn't a single moment we felt bored as the scenery outside the coach windows took all of our attention. It seemed as if we were travelling along a vast tunnel lined up by the vibrant reds, shiny golds, deep purples and fiery orange all around us. When we arrived, we took a short walk to the Learning Centre and met our workshop facilitator outside, she spoke to us about her expectations and Covid-19 guidelines. After putting our bags down, we split into two groups A and B.



We were in Group B and stayed at the Centre for the first half of the day and team-worked on ideas for our very own project 'Sketch It' in which we needed to come up with ideas to design a mini memorial garden by the right hand-side of our school gate and near the BASE building of our school. We found it fascinating to be able to sit at the Arboretum, in the open and work on how we could present our ideas using the inspiration from the Arboretum surroundings.

Do you know that...

The Westonbirt National Arboretum is a tree-garden and cared for by their Tree Collections Team.

The Arboretum holds around 15,000 specimens, and 2,500 species of tree from all over the world. It plays an important role in research and conservation of trees.

Its story began with the wealthy Victorian landowner, Robert Holford and dated back to 1829. The Holfords planted trees in a very artistic way, hence today when we visit the Arboretum, we are walking through a living piece of artwork. In Victorian times, people loved collecting things from the natural world.

After a quick lunch we swapped groups so that the other group could work on their own presentations.

We were taken deep into the Arboretum to look at different species of trees. Our task was to learn about how trees create oxygen. They do this by absorbing carbon-dioxide which is stored inside the tree trunks and released as oxygen through the leaves. We also learned that when trees are cut down and burned, all of the carbon-dioxide gets released into the air.

Do you know that...

Historically, beech trees were native trees and have grown in our country around 10 000 years ago. They originated from southern England and south Wales.

As climate change continues, quite a number of 'our native trees' are beginning to struggle.

The Westonbirt National Arboretum is for 3 main reasons: for the people's enjoyment, the trees themselves, and the wildlife. This helps to combat the global climate change.

Our next task was to pretend we were tree scientists, focusing on how to expand the growth of beech trees. We were surprised to know that a tree can get a disease that spreads to different types of trees? We had to come up with an idea to isolate the trees that carry the disease. One of our ideas was to make a specific area for these trees, separate them from the healthy ones.

Finally, we went to another part of the forest to find different machineries used for planting and taking care of the trees. We found a shotgun shell that was used to kill animals that were damaging the trees. How interesting!

2:10pm – Time to be back at school.



Our reflections on the amazing opportunity full of colours

Charlie of 7I: it was amazing and I loved what nature had to offer us.

Zak of 7W: I enjoyed the sound of birds chirping and all that nature has given us.

Yuqi of 7W: I thought the trip was fascinating and very interesting because I learned about how some trees was infected and how they produce the oxygen.

Matvej claimed that he enjoyed the designing task as he found he could be very creative and could try different things. On the other hand, Micaiah liked the outside more as he felt as if the trees were a work of living art.

Now some thought from Mr Foode - Deputy Curriculum Leader for Science:

"During November 2021, we took our students to Westonbirt National Arboretum. This was an amazing opportunity for the students to engage in activities and topics they had never considered. The students took part in guided activities looking at how the Arboretum conserves trees, and how they

use technology to do so. We also took the opportunity to look at Remembrance Day and the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by our veterans. The students were very mature when discussing this and even began planning a remembrance/sensory garden we could build at Whitley Academy. The students were an absolute credit to the school and really impressed the team at Westonbirt with their questions and attitude to the sessions."

"The environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share." Lady Bird Johnson (1912 – 2007) - an American socialite and the First Lady of the U.S as the wife of President Lyndon B. Johnson from 1963 to 1969





Bebras Challenge

Problem solving and puzzles are at the heart of Computer Science and yet it can be difficult as a teacher to find tasks which will stretch the most able while not disenfranchising others in the class.

For many years Finham Park 2 have used the Bebras Challenge (<https://bebras.uk>) as a way to do this in class for KS4 Computer Science and as an extra OOSHL for year 7 and 8. Bebras exists in many countries around the world, each with their own challenges. As "Bebras" means Beaver in Lithuanian (or so I'm told), the puzzles are based around anthropomorphic semi-aquatic rodents with differing levels of difficulty. These levels of questions are reflected in the reward of a correct answer - and the negative of an incorrect one. This too results in differing strategies among students - to answer everything (but maybe lose points) or answer just a few they are most confident in. Solving many puzzles or just a few, all are engaged for the full time and receive a certificate marking their achievement.

Bebras takes place in November each year and takes just an hour of lesson time (or OOSHL, plus preparation and practice time. If you'd like to know more about entering, please get in touch with Jon Rogers at FP2.

Bebras also acts as a feeder to the Oxford University Computing Challenge, an annual competition that tests programming as well as problem solving skills. Only the top 10% of students nationally are invited to take part. While we have previously had a few students progress to OUCC, this year we are delighted to have a total of 7 students from years 7, 8 and 9 entering. They will use a block-based programming language called Blockly to solve the puzzles given to them and compete to reach the final round at Oxford University.

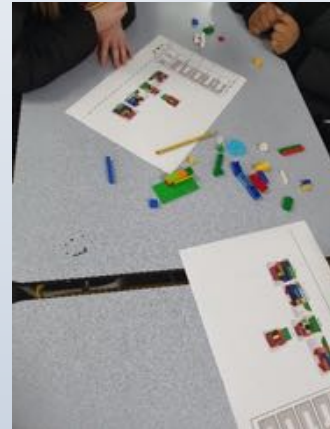


Jon Rogers

Year 10 Design & Technology and Engineering trip

Last week a group of 20 students enjoyed a two day workshop at the Transport museum.

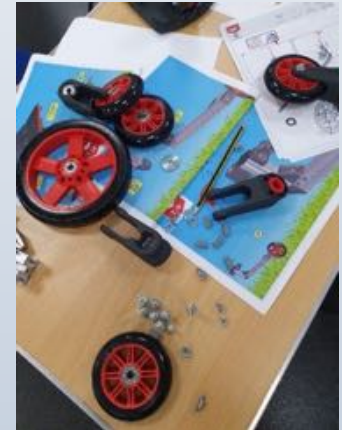
On the first day, students' first task was to work out how the Lego house was built. They used orthographic projection drawings to help them with this. They then had to work as a team to build the house, each taking on a different role as either the engineer, supplier or builder. Of course there were added challenges built into this whereby the engineer could not touch the Lego and was the only one who could see the plan, the supplier could not talk and only the builder could touch the bricks!



After a tour around the museum, the afternoon task was to build a vehicle to carry an egg down a slope, without it breaking. Students had to develop this vehicle that included a chassis, a window, and ensure that there was some kind of bumper system to take the shock of the bump at the bottom. They used junk modelling to complete this task. It was lovely to see the innovative ideas students thought of to develop their idea.



The second day was all about using the Infento kit. This kit is a bit like Meccano but life sized. Students were able to use the modular parts to build a moving vehicle. As there are endless possibilities, students could create their own designs. It was fantastic to see the students work together to build something, to then work out how to develop and improve it.



The two day workshop was a wonderful way for students to develop their problem solving skills, team work and communication skills.



Corrine Maclean



FINHAM PARK
SCHOOL

It's been a long couple of years for our GCSE groups. I am sure we have all seen the data which tells us the last time our cohorts had a 'normal' year at school- Year 11 for example have experienced the full three years of their GCSE's in Covid conditions.

So, when we say that we are proud of them- that really doesn't do it justice. To stand up in front of an audience of your peers, teachers and a video camera and perform, potentially putting yourself in quite a vulnerable position, takes nothing short of incredible courage.

What a result!



Our Year 12's kicked it off in the second week of term with powerful and poignant pieces touching on the concept of freedom and its place in our ever-changing world. Their resilience through adversity has been incredible. Year 11 performed their scripted pieces demonstrating maturity and insight, touching on difficult themes such as abuse, morality and mortality.

Year 10 delivered heartfelt and beautiful pieces, effortlessly merging non-naturalistic satire and realistic monologues from the perspectives of their characters.

Every single individual performed to the best of their ability and we are so excited to see how they continue to achieve.

Mrs Spokes and Ms Bartlett
Finham Park Drama Department





As we've had several students join us during the GCSE course, we have been running our Text in a Day intervention programme. This is for students who need to catch up rapidly in order to access the learning in their English lessons.

Studying *An Inspector Calls* were thirteen students who spent the first part of the day watching a film version and collecting notes on the main characters and themes, as well as exploring some new vocabulary that will help them to produce fantastic essays. Students were able to use complex vocabulary to describe characters (One student confidently described Gerald as duplicitous, despite never having studied the play before) and justify their choices by referring to the characters' words or actions in the production that we watched.

We also used some brilliant resources gratefully borrowed from Stuart Pryke in order to give students knowledge about the central themes of the play as well as set them up with some concrete strategies for independent revision after the workshop. Students were given information about the key themes, which they then highlighted to shorten points and identify the key information. Then, students folded the paper and aimed to re-write the information from memory. When they had written everything they could remember, they were allowed to look back and fill in any gaps or correct any errors with a different coloured pen. Then, students folded again, and repeated, and folded again, and repeated. By the end, all students had significantly increased the amount of knowledge they had about key themes in the play.

Finally, we explored the idea of 'Easy Essays', a resource we've made in house where we teach students to write an introduction to essays as a three part sentence using AND and BUT. So, for example: Priestley presents all the Birlings as selfish **AND** shows this selfish behaviour to have a big impact on Eva Smith **BUT** he shows that not everybody is willing to change. Then, we used Feel, Imagine, and Think and Because, And, But to encourage students to write detailed comments about the effect of Priestley's methods.

As the final activity, all students involved produced an essay response to an exam-style question under timed conditions. In previous years, students participating in Text in a Day have, on average, achieved two grades higher than previously, so we hope these hardworking students are able to experience the same success this year!

Over the next few weeks, we'll run similar workshops for *A Christmas Carol*, *Macbeth* and the Unseen Poetry section of the Literature exams.

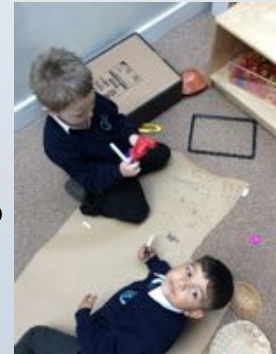


Ruth Kidman



Planning that responds to a cohorts needs and interests.

At Lillington Nursery and Primary School, the EYFS team spent the summer term 2021 developing our curriculum and long-term plans to fit the new statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This crucially gave us time to think specifically about what our community of children need on entry to the EYFS and their exit as they move into Key Stage 1. The long-term plans include a list of possible lines of enquiry linked to the half term themes. It was vital to ensure that the plans are clear on the knowledge, skills and expectations we want our children to receive at each point of the curriculum.



Through observations of the children's learning practitioners have been able to adapt the curriculum offer for the children to support students interests and ensure their learning is purposeful and engaging. At the same time, the possible lines of enquiry allow for us to be reflective and adaptable.

A successful example of this has been seen in Reception where, although 'Superheroes' was only listed as a possible additional line of enquiry, practitioners responded to the children interests in their play to adapt the medium-term plan, shifting the focus text to Traction Man by Mini Grey. This saw a number of children, particularly boys increase their engagement in writing and creative activities as the 'hook' of superheroes really grabbed their attention.



Charlie Pegg



Showstoppers



On Wednesday December 15th Lyng Hall put on its Winter Showcase – Showstoppers. The show featured drama pieces, dance numbers, rock bands, Glee Club, musical solos and more. Our year 13 music technology students provided all of the tech support as part of their BTEC coursework.



The show took a lot of organisation and there were contributions from a great number of staff. My sincere thanks to Mrs Scott who pulled the entire show together, Mrs Collingwood who created the casts' T-shirts, Mrs Coletta who produced the programmes and posters, our visiting guitar teacher Mr Ross who helped the rock band and Mr Lodge who acted as musical director.



Archaeology at Finham Primary School

In Year 3 at Finham Primary the children have been inspired by the Ancient Egyptian topic. They have developed their historical research skills by becoming archaeologists. Not only does archaeology give the children an opportunity to get their hands dirty, they discover about the past, improve their deduction skills as well as their maths skills by plotting where they found the artefacts on a grid and measure each item carefully.



Archaeology is a multi-faceted learning experience. It is not just about the excavation process, although the excitement from the children was clearly evident each time they discovered an artefact. The children learnt how to carefully excavate: both the ancient and not so ancient artefacts. Scarab beetles, Canopic jars, glue lids were just some of the items the children unearthed.

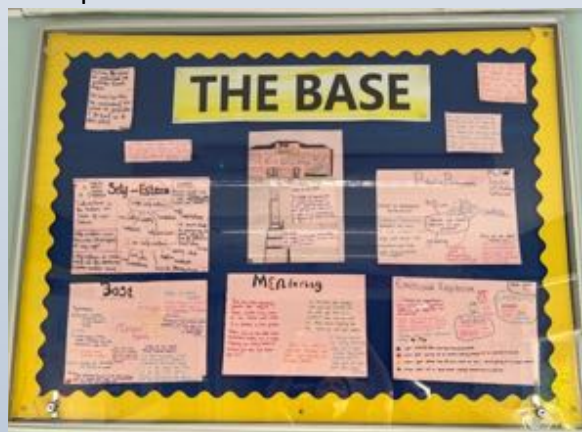
After the initial excavation lesson the children had the opportunity to examine their artefacts and decide which were modern and which artefacts might have been from the Ancient Egyptian era. By studying these artefacts the children were able to make assumptions about how the Ancient Egyptians lived their lives. We also discussed why a glue lid could not have been in the earth since the days of Cleopatra. The discussion about when plastic was invented was most enlightening. The time span stretched from the 1800's until the year 2000! The learning across the lessons was exciting as it was obvious that they not only enjoyed the lessons but the understanding. Organising the resources for the lesson took some time but it was worthwhile as the enthusiasm from the children and learning they gained from it was clear for all to see.



Peter Jennings

Here at Whitley Academy we have a fantastic pastoral team, that are dedicated to supporting all of our students. We have three strands within the pastoral team who are committed to developing meaningful relationships and implementing tailored interventions to meet the individual needs of our students and support with removing barriers to achievement.

The BASE is the school's Inclusion unit where students are provided with an extensive programme of support which aims to support each individual's personal development. At the BASE, students improve their understanding and knowledge around self-esteem, emotional regulation, mental health and protective behaviours. Whilst engaged with BASE programmes, the students also have opportunities to lead on community/school projects, plan and deliver CPD for staff (around topics that matter to them) and learn important life skills that aren't traditionally heavily featured in the mainstream curriculum – such as social skills, money management, personal care and healthy sleep routines.



Foundation teaching groups are smaller classes with allocated support staff attached to each group. This enables students within foundation classes to have additional support and nurture, thus reducing barriers to learning and enabling staff to get to know each and every one of these pupils on a deeper level. The support staff attached to foundation groups often deliver targeted academic intervention to reduce gaps in knowledge and also provide in class support to aid with student's learning and engagement with the curriculum.



For students that are not participating in BASE programmes, nor are they in a foundation class, then we have the 'general population' support staff. This 'team within a team' are often the first point of contact for these students and offer a non-judgmental ear and a helping hand to help solve any problems or worries that the children might have. General population support staff often implement in-class support where it is beneficial for students learning, they are trained to facilitate 'relationship building' conversations with students/staff and students/students, they offer 'well-being 1:1s' for identified pupils as well as delivering some preventative group work around transition, friendships and emotional regulation.

ALL support staff across the academy work collaboratively to ensure a holistic, child centred approach to the support provided to our students.

Sally-Anne Bloom



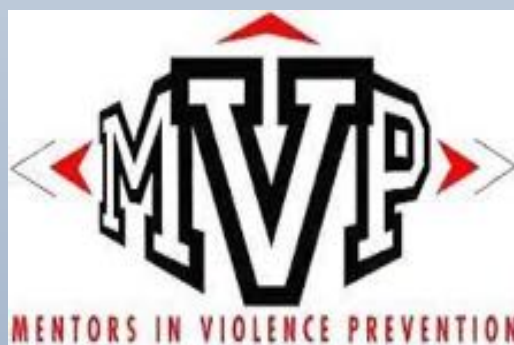


Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a peer mentoring programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence.

It addresses a range of behaviours including name-calling, sexting, controlling behaviour and harassment, and uses a 'by-stander' approach where individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators but as empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way

At Lyng Hall School we have a team of MVP's in year 10 who are working with every tutor group in Year 7. The MVP's all wear badges to identify them so all children can approach them if they want help with a situation. The mentors work with their allocated tutor groups during registration time but have also gone into lessons to deliver additional materials.



MVP Goals

- Raise Awareness
- Challenge Thinking
- Open Dialogue
- Inspire Leadership

Quotes from pupils in year 7;

"The sessions really help me understand the reality of the world"

"The sessions really help me understand about things that aren't good for you"

"I believe that being with the MVP's has benefited me greatly and helped mentally and physically. I am truly grateful for them for managing to help me during school and feel more comfortable with myself. I feel they have educated dozens of



people and will continue to teach more”

Quotes from an MVP mentor;

“For me MVP is about guiding the younger year groups to be more accepting and empathetic towards their peers whilst also encouraging them to speak up if something is going on in theirs or someone else’s life





Graphic Novels

Graphic novels are “novels that use images, as well as words, to tell a story.” They can improve children’s reading skills and encourage them to dive into books for fun — the perfect recipe to develop a love of reading.

There are some myths about reading and one of them is that [graphic novels](#) don’t count as “real reading.” However, graphic novels are high-quality reading material. Just like traditional novels, graphic novels have exciting and complex plots, characters, and conflicts and will improve your child's reading skills like any other book would. They are fantastic choices to engage children in reading for pleasure.



Graphic novels are *full* of text. Yes, they have drawings, illustrations, and sometimes photos, but they also have text that readers must actually decode, analyse, and comprehend. They help to build pupils vocabulary as although there is not space for many words on the page of a graphic novel the vocabulary has to be carefully chosen for maximum effect. With graphic novels, children still follow plots and character development. All of these things will help to improve their reading comprehension.

Graphic novels are engaging, especially for reluctant readers, as they can add the extra support children need to help them through a text. They tend to be particularly captivating for children, and the combination of text and pictures provides context for stories that they may otherwise not completely understand.

Graphic novels help to make challenging texts accessible to pupils of all abilities and if read alongside the classic texts readers gain a greater understanding of the stories.

Graphic novels can help to aid those with learning differences, for example, readers with autism can learn about emotions by observing the images on the page as they read the story. Those with dyslexia can read a page or even a book without feeling too overwhelmed by the number of words on the page.

Pupils at Lillington have been enjoying English lessons built around graphic novels. Year 3 and 4 have been focusing on *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes and Year 5 and 6 have been studying *Tom’s Midnight Guardian* by Phillipa Pearce. These texts can be easily shared with the whole class through using a visualiser to display them on the large screen.



Graphic novels are a fantastic way to engage children in reading for pleasure.



Diverse Book Club

At Lyng Hall we are a very diverse community and we are proud to say that our staff and students are trying to find ways to educate each other on different parts of society. Miss Chand and a handful of students have put together the diverse book club which is where students get to read books written by people from different ethnic backgrounds; this helps them to understand and learn the correct ways to respect one another. Keighley and Olivia visited Miss Chand to find out more about the diverse book club. Here is what Miss Chand said!

Can you tell us a bit about what the Diverse book club is?

Last year I started a book club where we explore books which are written by authors of colour and we think about how that increases representation. There are about 6 of us at the moment and the idea of the club is to have a wider understanding of other cultures and other races/ethnicities.

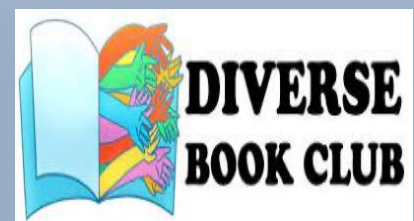
How is the club setup?

We meet up as a group every fortnight on a Thursday after school. They all have a book they are currently reading or have read and we just share our ideas in what we thought of the book. At the moment they are all reading different books but we are hoping to get some funding so we can explore one book together at a time. We are also hoping to create a diversity book section within the library! We are hoping this will encourage other pupils to read these books and join the diverse book club.



T Thandi – “Book club is a safe space to speak your true feelings and opinions. We display different cultures and are able to trust each other with all our heart”

A Clayton – “Book club is a space where we can share our opinions and explore different cultures throughout books. It has been nice to be a part of a club where we can build a new diverse library”



A Mohammed – “Cultural book club is a place where we explore different cultures and beliefs – this is important because we can understand how others live and their different rules so we can appreciate this”

L Rankine – “Book club is a place where we can speak about topics that can go unacknowledged. We speak about race and equality which is important



If you have any interest in this club don't hesitate to find Miss Chand and find out more or become apart of this amazing group of individuals!



Using Visualisers as an effective teaching and learning tool

Visualisers are a relatively low-tech inexpensive bit of kit that most departments already own; they had a renaissance in lockdown as an effective tool for remote teaching but are they something you consider using in your real-life classroom as an alternative to 'death by PowerPoint'?

Develop a culture of self-assessment and independent reflection.

A powerful way of giving immediate feedback in the classroom is to pop good examples of students' work under the visualiser. You can talk through the strengths of the piece and mark it live which gives a very clear demonstration of what success looks like in your subject. This is motivational for students who can see their work shared with their peers and for those who might be struggling to get going or to understand exactly what is required of them. Not only is it instantaneous, it saves on photocopying. Alternatively, if you spot a misconception in a student book you can project it to the screen for whole class feedback in seconds.

By simply sharing an image with the whole class, teachers are able to live mark work, demonstrate where it can be improved and give the students time to go away and make improvements as applicable. What's more, this can also help to reduce the time spent marking in class. Used wisely, your visualiser can be the ultimate time saver.



WAGOLs (What a Good One Looks Like)

Visualisers are also perfect for teachers to model work 'live'. Most of us have been there trying to demonstrate how to construct a great response either writing inelegantly on the board or typing onto a slide whilst trying to maintain good classroom management! Using a visualiser makes it easier to demonstrate a good writing style as well as allowing teachers to verbalise their thought processes as they construct the sentence. You can also face your class whilst you model, making it easy to keep track of student engagement.

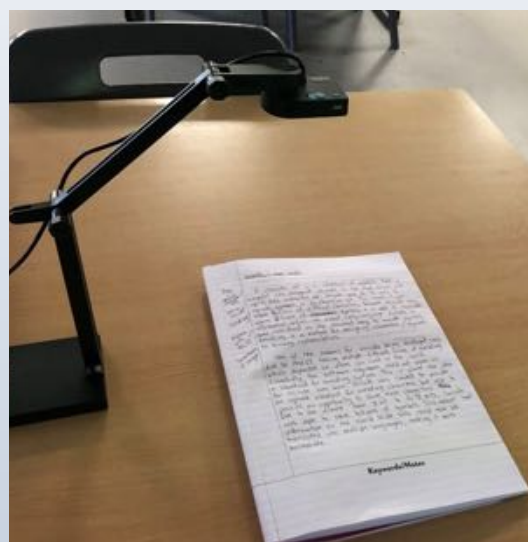
If your subject involves problem solving, visualisers help students to track your thought processes, aiding understanding and are therefore brilliant for supporting students who are struggling or those with SEND.

Visualisers can actually help generate increased engagement within the classroom. By demonstrating in real-time, students are able to give suggestions and ideas, helping to shape the conversation and create a peer-to-peer learning environment and a whole class 'master' piece of creative writing for example or a detailed diagram.

For practical subjects, the visualiser can be even more impactful, allowing students to see up close the different stages of construction and the manual skills involved.

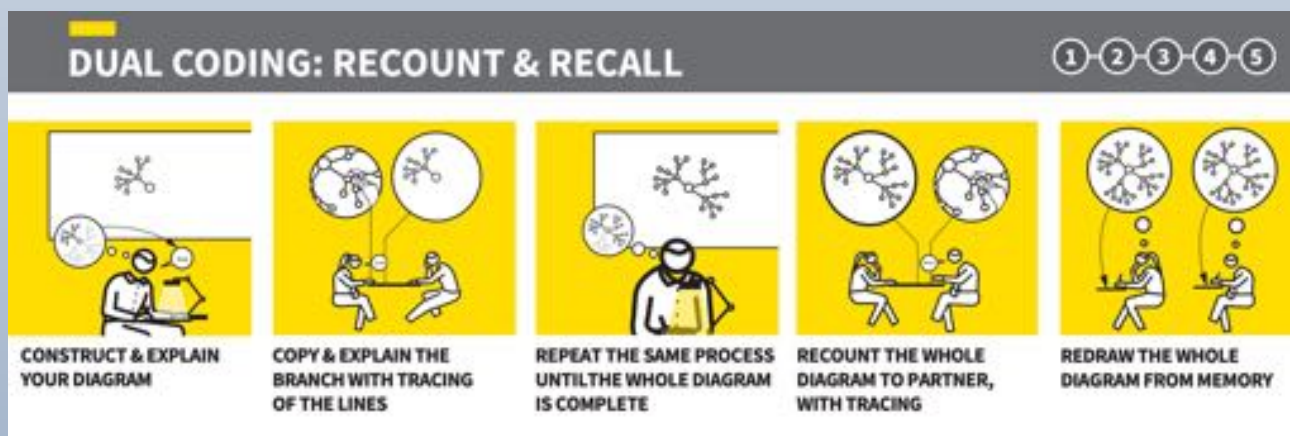
Teacher exercise books

A growing trend on eduTwitter, the concept of a teacher exercise book to showcase the desired layout and amount of work students should aim for in each lesson is another that relies on your trusty visualiser. Keeping your own exercise book is also a good way of keeping track of where you are in the scheme of learning and can be especially beneficial in the current climate where there are numerous students missing lessons and having to catch up with notes and activities. Early career teachers especially might find it useful to attempt the tasks being set for the students as a good way of becoming familiar with a new scheme or activity.



Mind Mapping

One way in which I have been using my visualiser recently is to create mind maps of the



schema I am hoping they develop. Following the Dual Coding Walkthru, I have been experimenting with getting students to follow my thought processes and copy my mind map as I draw it. For example, as I recap all the knowledge my A level Literature students should have about Othello as a tragic hero, I map out the connections between each piece of information and illustrate the most important items with relevant images. The students then try to replicate my map, talking it through with a partner as they do so. In this way the information is more likely to pass into their long-term memory and they should understand exactly how the different ideas are interconnected.

So if there is a visualiser gathering dust in your classroom cupboard or department office, why not give it a try and see whether it revolutionises your teaching?

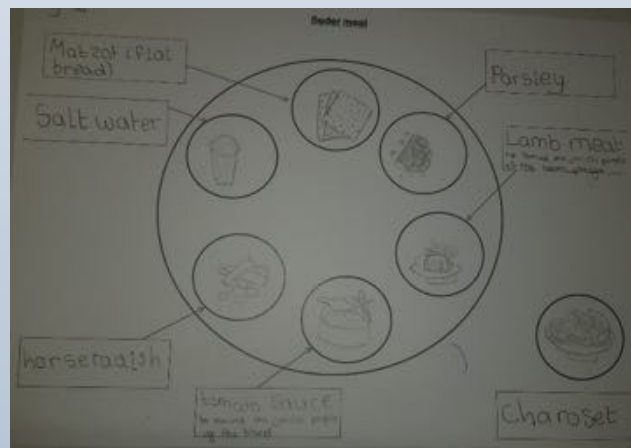
Helen Cooke AHT

It has been a good start to the spring term as students have worked hard and produced some excellent work in RE. The RE curriculum at Whitley enables students to acquire key knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of the religions and worldviews which not only shape their culture and history but guide their own development.

Year 7

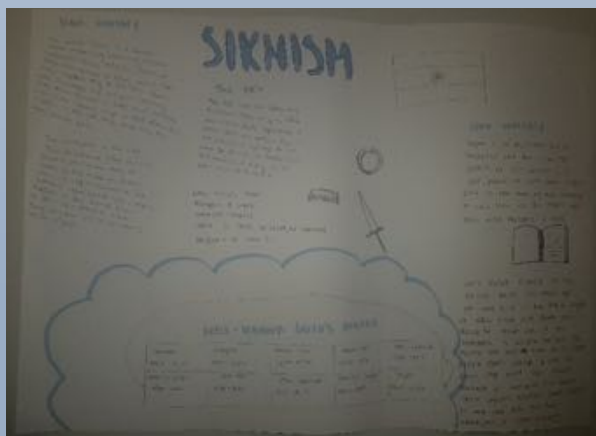
Students in year 7 have been studying the origins of Judaism and learning key beliefs, practices and teachings such as the importance of the Moses, the synagogue and Passover. Students designed the ceremonial meal (Seder) for Passover and the symbolism of the food items.

Foundation studies



Year 8

Students have been studying crime and punishment in Autumn 1, learning the causes and punishments of crime. This term, students are learning about Sikhism and the importance of the Gurus in Sikhism.



Year 10: Buddhism beliefs, teachings and practices

In year 10, students are learning Buddhism and Christianity as the 2 main religions for their GCSE. In one lesson, students had the pleasure of taking part in breathing meditation practice guided by a Buddhist monk. They then created their own prayer flags to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. The flags do not carry prayers to gods, which is a common misconception; rather, the Tibetan Buddhists believe the prayers and mantras will be blown by the wind to spread the good will and compassion into all-pervading space.



Sanjeet Mahey



Chinese New Year at Finham Park 2

This February, we celebrated the Chinese New Year at Finham Park 2, with decorations and delicious Chinese food served in the refectory. On February 4th, we had a full school assembly where our pupils learnt about the Chinese zodiac animals and the customs that take place during this festival. Our pupils were also encouraged to greet as many people as possible with a “Happy Chinese New Year” in Mandarin.



For our year 7 Mandarin learning pupils, we had a special off-timetable day, where they took part in various activities to celebrate the year of the tiger. Pupils prepared and performed a play about the Chinese zodiac animals, made New Year banners with calligraphy paint brushes and ink. This was followed with Tai Qi, playing with Chinese shuttlecocks and singing Happy New Year in Mandarin.



At the end of the day, our year 7's took home Chinese decorative knots that they made themselves, a traditional red envelope, and the best Mandarin learners of the day took home a pair of Panda chopsticks. Our pupils immensely enjoyed learning about the Chinese New Year at FP2 and are eager to learn about the next Chinese festival.



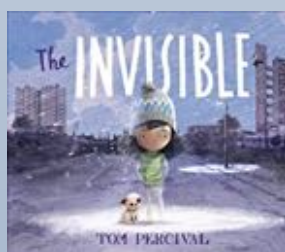
Mr. Harrison

Recommended Reads for Empathy



Empathy Lab has released its 2022 guides to stories that help develop empathy. Empathy is our ability to understand and share someone else's feelings. Excitingly, research shows that books are a powerful tool to develop it. When children identify with book characters, they learn to see things from others' points of view. As they read, they are building their empathy skills.

The 2022 Read for Empathy collection features over 60 books for 4-16 year olds, with many of the books helping readers to understand the lives of those experiencing tough situations, like becoming homeless, or a refugee. Others help children build their understanding of emotions or inspire positive action towards the climate or people in the community. Here are a few recommendations from the collection.



The Invisible by Tom Perceival

This is the story of a girl who goes on to make one of the hardest things anyone can ever make...a difference. And it is the story of those who are overlooked in our society - who are made to feel invisible - and why *everyone* has a place here. We all belong.

Last by Nicola Davies

A rhinoceros remembers his life before grey captivity, one full of colour, with familiar smells and sights. He thinks of his mother being slain by poachers. He has searched the zoo but cannot find another like him. He fears he is the last. He describes a joyless life for all the animals with him, before being rescued and brought back home. The colour is brought back into his life when he realises he is not the last.



Swallow's Kiss by Sita Brahmachari and illustrated by Jane Ray

A beautifully illustrated story about Blessing, who is trying to return a lost bag of paper birds and along the way encounters kindness and the power of community. Written in free-verse, this poetic text draws movingly on the author's and illustrator's work with a refugee centre.

Narwhal's Otter Friend by Ben Clayton

A joyful and hilarious, hybrid graphic novel that features the antics and friendships of sea creatures, from otters to jellyfish, narwhals to crabs. Curiosity is an important aspect of empathy, and the friends learn lots about each other on a rollicking adventure.



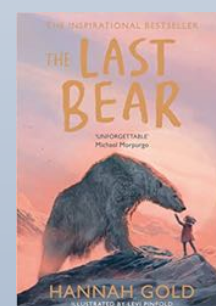
The Shark Caller by Zillah Bethell

This is a wonderful, wild story set in Papua New Guinea, that explores the friendship and grief. Desperate to become a shark-caller to avenge the death of her parents, Blue Wing is instead charged with befriending infuriating newcomer Maple. At first they are angry and out of sync with the island and each other. But when the tide breathes the promise of treasure, can they overcome their differences and brave the deadliest shark in the ocean?

The Last Bear by Hannah Gold

The irresistible new children's book shortlisted for the Blue Peter Award

April accompanies her father to Bear Island in the Arctic. With global warming having driven out the island's polar bears, it's extraordinary when April meets one, and they form a magical bond. An inspiring heroine, prepared to take action based on empathy.



This book is Cruelty-Free by Linda Newbery

'It's not difficult to realise animals have feelings.' Linda Newbery challenges us to live differently, with empathy for animals, and her book is packed with inspiring, do-able ideas for how we can avoid being cruel to our fellow creatures.

When the Sky Falls by Phil Earle

This is a deeply moving novel set in 1941 war-torn London. Angry, abused Joseph is sent to live with gruff Mrs F who is struggling to keep her family zoo going and to keep a mighty silverback gorilla safe. She's not an easy woman, but steadfastly keeps on caring for Joseph and doesn't give up on him, no matter how he behaves. Finally, in the novel's extraordinary climax, he learns to trust.





Christmas Shoebox Appeal



The College and Accept and Respect co-ordinators came through with a wonderful amount of donations for the Migrant Charity shoebox appeal.

A massive thank you to students and parents, who obviously spent time and thought in providing a gift, making their Christmas Day a more special experience. The boxes were a credit to those who took the time and it was touching to see what energy had been put into the production of these.

Thank you to those who delivered the gifts and had supported in ensuring tutor groups were aware and delivered on their promise.

A truly lovely Christmas gift, thank you.

Mrs Smith



Whitley Teacher lectures at Warwick University

I was invited back to Warwick University where I graduated with a degree in Philosophy. Specifically, the IATL (Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning) department asked me to do a lecture on a module titled, 'Change: Critical Understandings, Practices and Action'. I did a Student Devised Assessment for this module, which was a personal spoken word 1-hour podcast which scored 94% (an exceptional first-class). I was tasked with ensuring I gave a testimonial about my experience of the module and teaching on what I believe would benefit the university students. The podcast had a poetic format and expanded on the necessity of understanding your why before experiencing true mental freedom. I also touched on prevalent issues within our society such as fatherlessness, knife crime and peer pressure. The students anonymously agreed that they were inspired by my words. I took a format where students were encouraged to answer questions about what they would do if there time on earth was cut short. This approach of diving straight into introspection meant students were free to be open about some of their deeper motivations. As it was the first lecture from this module, students rapidly publicly recognized how distinct this module was from differing modules. The module convenors stated that the workshop was 'beautifully designed and engaged students from all backgrounds and perspectives'. I thoroughly enjoyed my time and was encouraged to come back soon!

Mr Adelekan Maths Teacher

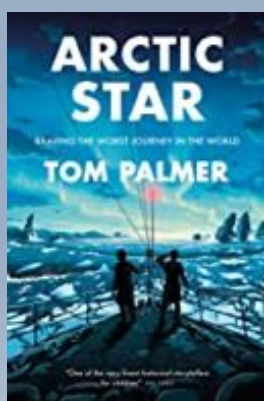
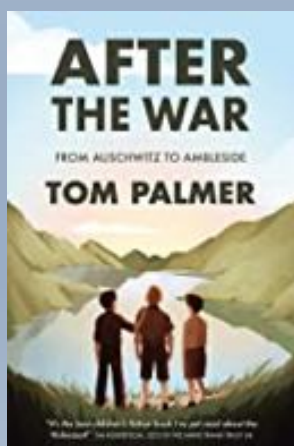


‘Present an Author’ talk by Tom Palmer

On Friday 11th February pupils in years 6, 7, 8 and 9 will participate in an online session with well know author Tom Palmer. Tom will be talking about his books *After the War*, *D-Day Dog*, *Arctic Star* and *Foul Play* with the pupils.

Signed bookplate copies of these books are available to purchase from Kenilworth books. Follow the link below to order online from Kenilworth Books website. Orders can be placed up to Friday 18th February and books will then be delivered to the schools in the week after half-term. Please include your child’s name, year group and school to help the delivery process. Kenilworth Books will give the Trust back 10% of total sales in book tokens to boost the school libraries.

<https://www.kenilworthbooks.co.uk/event/school-author-event-tom-palmer/>



(Books are all £6 RRP £6.99)



Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th February 2022

7pm

Whitley Academy Auditorium

After almost 5 months of rehearsals, Whitley Academy will open its doors for two spectacular nights to showcase our performance of ***Oliver!*** Staff and students have given up almost 100 hours of their time, after school, to make sure that this is a performance that will be enjoyed by all. However, this definitely hasn't been without its challenges. Putting on a musical production during Covid-19 throws all sorts of problems at you and you end up saying to yourself "*it is what it is*" and you move forward as best you can. As I write this, we still have not had one rehearsal that has had full attendance due to isolations!

At the start of December 2021, I made the really difficult decision to postpone the show due to the Omicron variant rearing its ugly head. In my 14 years of directing school musicals, I have never postponed a show so I was really concerned that this would upset the students involved and we would lose momentum, but I'm pleased to say this did not happen. We collectively said "*it is what it is*" and we pushed forward determined that we would perform before February half term.

After the Christmas festivities we returned in January 2022 with one goal; to get this show performed in February. More than anything, the students deserved it. After a very exciting, positive and supportive meeting with Mrs Pettman to discuss all the finer details of the show, we started rehearsals again. Students were so excited to hear that this year they would have a professional set to perform on. This made us all even more determined to produce our absolute best. Now with just over two weeks to go, costumes are being sourced, props are being made, songs are being finalised and more importantly tickets are on sale and I'm pleased to say, they are selling well! If you would like a night of entertainment and to support our wonderful students, tickets can be purchased via ParentPay or Whitley Academy reception. Thank you.

Mrs T Stokes

Director of Creativity and Expressive Arts



Schools within the Finham Park Multi Academy Trust

Schools in the Finham Park Multi Academy Trust set out to pioneer, innovate and deliver a “World Class” education for all children from the age of 3-19 where the artificial barriers of stage and age are removed. Our education aims to exceed the highest national and international benchmarks for academic achievement, whilst ensuring young people develop a passion for learning in all its contexts and are ready to take their place as active members of our global community.

The schools in our Trust have moved beyond collaboration and into co-construction – ensuring our education is developed with and by all members to reflect the needs of our children, their families and the wider community. You can find more information about our schools and what it is like to work in our Trust on our website: www.finhamparkmultiacademytrust.co.uk and by following the various links.

Headteacher: Sarah Bracken

Address: Green Lane, Coventry, CV3 6EJ

Tel: 024 7641 5425

Website: <http://finhamprimary.co.uk>



Headteacher: Theresa O'Hara

Address: Dorchester way, Coventry, CV2 2NB

Tel: 024 7661 0165

Website: <http://pearlhyde.co.uk>



Headteacher: Victoria Wallace

Address: Cubbington Road, Lillington, Leamington Spa CV32 7AG

Tel: 01926 425144

Website: <https://www.lillingtonschool.org/>



Headteacher: Chris Bishop

Address: Green Lane, Coventry, CV3 6EA

Tel: 024 7641 8135

Website: <http://finhampark.co.uk>



Headteacher: Paul Green

Address: Blackberry Lane, Coventry, CV2 3JS

Tel: 024 7672 4960

Website: <http://www.lynghallschool.co.uk>



Headteacher: Russell Plester

Address: Torrington Avenue, Coventry, CV4 9WT

Tel: 024 7771 0720

Website: <http://finhampark2.co.uk>



Head of School: Bernadette Pettman

Address: Abbey Road, Coventry, CV3 4BD

Tel: 024 7630 2580

Website: <https://www.whitleyacademy.com/>



Executive Headteacher: Mark Bailie

Address: Torrington Avenue, Coventry, CV4 9WT

Tel: 024 7641 8135

Website: <http://finhamparkmultiacademytrust.co.uk>



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World Class Education



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