



I want to begin by thanking all of our staff for your hard work over the past few weeks. January and February can be the toughest of months, but I know from visiting our academies just how much has been achieved in the last few weeks, especially with our oldest year groups as they begin to approach national assessments and exams.

In this edition, we highlight some of the incredible work taking place in schools and by the central team. I also briefly cover school funding and Ofsted. As a Trust, we can have an impactful voice by speaking as one collective organisation, rather than as individual academies. Although this activity often takes place in the background, speaking up for our pupils and academies with key decision makers such as the Department for Education and local MPs is a vital part of our role in Anglian Learning.

**Jonathan Culpin**  
Chief Executive Officer

[anglianlearning.org](https://www.anglianlearning.org)

## Parent and carer survey results



Thank you to all of our parents and carers for your active participation and involvement in Anglian Learning's recent Trust-wide engagement survey.



As our partnership of schools continues to develop, we really value the feedback and comments shared by everyone in our communities. More than 1161 parents took the time to share their thoughts, and this will be invaluable in helping us better support you in your individual schools, as well as providing a greater understanding of how our schools work together.

Anglian Learning has been operating as a multi-academy trust since 2016, and in this time, we have needed to change and adapt as we begin to mean more to different people. With this in mind, we were particularly pleased that significantly more parents and carers were aware this time that their child's school was a member of Anglian Learning and is part of a network of like-minded schools that work together. Over the past few years, we have worked hard to make this more noticeable, without our schools losing their unique community identities.

Your feedback also highlighted that we may now need to improve the way we show parents and carers how our Trust works together, the support and opportunities this provides for pupils, staff and schools, and to demonstrate more of the impact this has. Of course, most of the work takes place behind the scenes, addressing such issues as maintaining health and safety, finance and human resources but it is important to us that you have a greater understanding of how our schools benefit from working together in our Trust.

This 'Trust News Update' provides you with information on collaborative Trust-wide activities, which benefit your child(ren) in different ways. You may wish to follow our Anglian Learning [social media accounts](#) where we share and celebrate the successes of our academies and the people working in our schools. If you have any further ideas or suggestions of the information you would most like to know about the work of Anglian Learning, please do not hesitate to share these via [communications@anglianlearning.org](mailto:communications@anglianlearning.org).

# Creativity Collaboratives project update

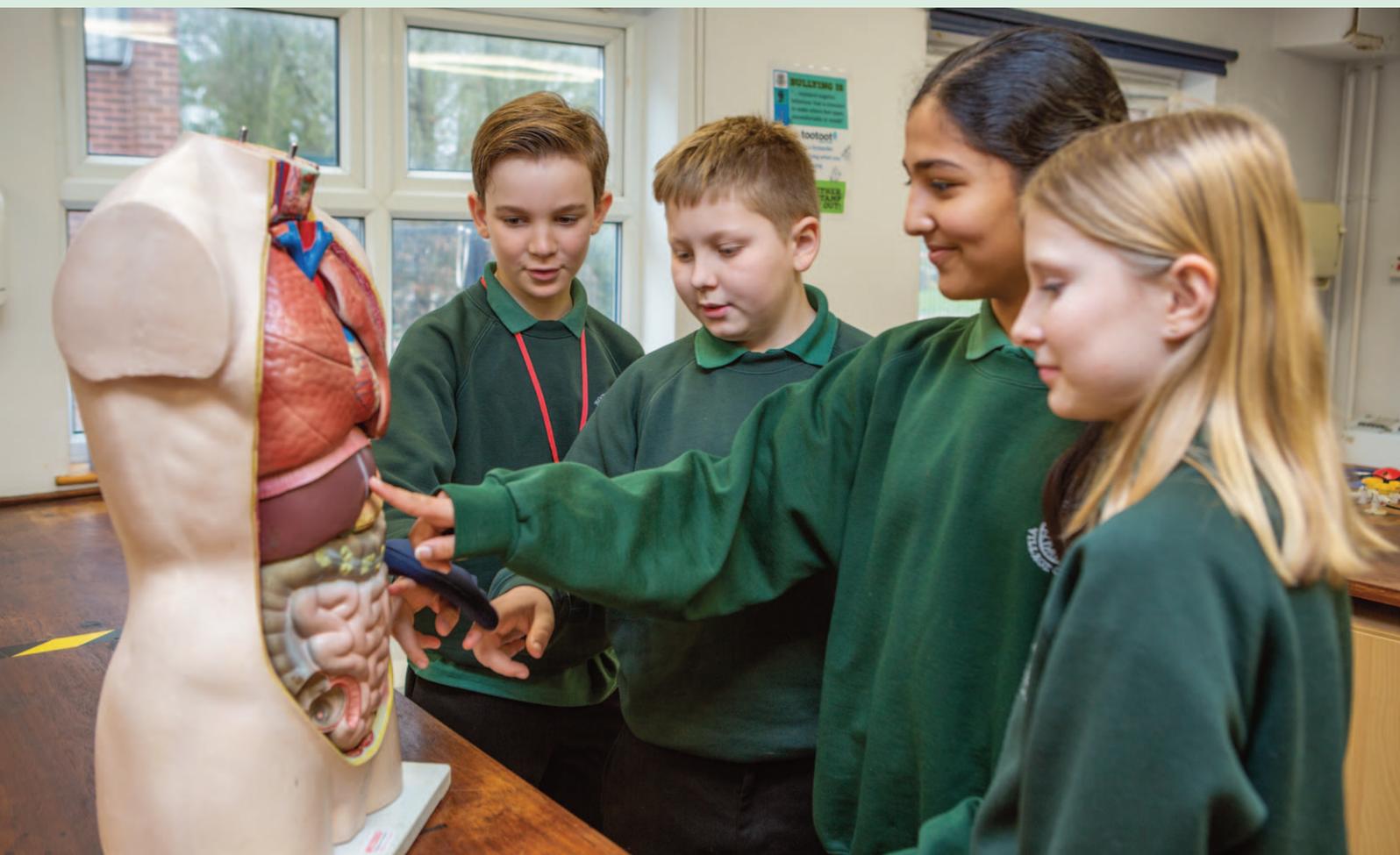


Anglian Learning is one of the eight collaboratives participating in Creativity Collaboratives.

This project is led by [Arts Council England](#) and [The Durham Commission](#), with the purpose of testing a range of innovative practices in teaching to enhance pupils' learning. At the end of Year 2, the overarching findings pointed to school and classroom culture, and teacher and pupil attributes as being central to enabling creativity in the classroom.

After the first term, each academy has already begun to implement new approaches to stimulate creative thinking in our young learners. Primary schools have expanded to include some Key Stage 1 and 2 groups and almost all the Early Years settings.

Secondary schools have been exploring and trialling teaching approaches to thinking in the classroom. The four main strands are: questioning, collaboration, modelling and thinking hard. The findings of the project, as well as best practice, will be shared in guidance for schools later in the year.





# Ickniel praised for offering ‘ambitious, well-planned curriculum’

Four years since their last inspection, The Ickniel Primary School was visited by Ofsted in November for an ungraded inspection which confirmed the school’s current rating of ‘Good’.

Inspectors praised Ickniel for its variety of ‘opportunities that support pupils’ personal development well’.

Also noted were pupils’ evident joy of learning, from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to those with SEND needs, ensuring all learners have access to the same, ambitious curriculum. Diane Mitchell, Headteacher at The Ickniel Primary School, said: “There are many highlights in this

report, but one aspect that stands out is the reinforcement of our core values: resilience, uniqueness, and ambition. I am thrilled that the diverse opportunities we offer have been recognised and contribute towards our children thriving and achieving.”

The school remains committed to enhancing the learning experience of their pupils to help maintain the ‘Good’ rating ahead of the next graded report.

“Inspectors praised Ickniel for its variety of ‘opportunities that support pupils’ personal development well’.





# Secondary education

Building networks, expertise and sharing great practice are the foundations for our Academy Improvement Strategy.

This is achieved by our principals meeting every half term to explore the challenges and opportunities facing our secondary academies and, more widely, Anglian Learning as a whole.

Since September, we have introduced enquiry visits linked to each of our [four Blueprints](#). Our Blueprints set out our expectations for schools, adjusted for

their local context. Senior and Middle Leaders visit each other's schools to explore the provisions and practices to help build networks, expertise and great practice in all our secondaries. Many of these leaders are also involved in the work of our Strategic Groups and Improvement Networks, which have continued to evolve and develop over the last six years.

Finally, it has been great to see many leaders, teachers and professional services staff taking the initiative to make more informal connections across both our secondary and primary academies to help develop their work and reflect our goal of Transforming Together, well.

**Duncan Cooper**  
*Director of Secondary Education*

# Primary education



The Spring Term started with Anglian Learning primary academies meeting for a [joint professional development day](#), led by speaker Christopher Such.

The day concentrated on the science behind the teaching of reading. This well-received event, involving both teachers and teaching assistants, fostered a positive atmosphere and set the tone for the term ahead.

Academy improvement visits in the Spring Term will be honing in on the Safeguarding Blueprint, which sets out the Trust's expectations for how we support and protect our young people in and outside school. The focus for these visits will be looking at how our primary academies are successfully implementing an effective PSHE curriculum, tailored to meet the diverse needs of pupils, alongside provisions for mental health and wellbeing support.

Deputy headteachers will continue to work together on collaborative efforts to explore approaches to assessment,

ensuring of a comprehensive approach that meets the needs of individual academies, whilst aligning to a collectively agreed set of principles.

**Rachael Johnston**, *Director of Primary Education*





# Trust growth

In September 2023, we welcomed Wimbish Primary Academy in north Essex. Before Anglian Learning, the primary school had been through a challenging time.

Prior to becoming part of the Trust, its pupil numbers had dropped by half; the building was in a poor state of repair and the education standards, including behaviour, had deteriorated substantially.

The academy is still on a journey to improve, but it has undergone substantial transformation since September. Under the leadership of Executive Headteacher Nichola Pickford, supported by Executive Deputy Headteacher Nicky Butcher and Assistant Headteacher Lizzie Beecroft-Sullivan, other key staff from Anglian Learning's central team and The Meadow Primary School, standards of education are rising rapidly; behaviour has substantially improved; a strong curriculum has been introduced; and parental perceptions are starting to shift.

Parts of the school have been repainted, re-purposed and refreshed, together with improvements to health and safety and facilities for the outdoor areas. Our sincere thanks to all involved in this hard work, especially the staff body of Wimbish Primary Academy, who have demonstrated resilience, ambition and a determination to make this an excellent rural academy.

We are driven by the moral purpose of ensuring that all children should have the right to go to a school that provides at least a 'Good' standard of education, no matter where it is in our locality or its starting point. Wimbish is an example of what this means in practice.

“ Standards of education are rising rapidly; behaviour has substantially improved ... and parental perceptions starting to shift



# A focus on Ofsted

At the beginning of this term, a new Chief Inspector of Schools began his five-year tenure. Sir Martyn Oliver's appointment comes at a critical time for Ofsted, given the growing calls for reform of school inspection.

On behalf of the Trust, I have been communicating with local MPs, the Select Committee for Education and the Department of Education (DfE) with ideas on a more humane, fair and constructive process, while maintaining the independence and rigour that is needed in any inspection regime. It is early days, but there are encouraging signs that meaningful change is coming. We shall continue to campaign, with other partners, to protect the wellbeing of our staff and do what is right for pupils and parents.

**Jonathan Culpin, CEO**

## Welcome Bridget Harrison and congratulations Mark Askew



Towards the end of last year, Marleigh Primary Academy welcomed their new Interim Headteacher, Bridget Harrison, following the departure of Mike Fish for a new career opportunity.

For the past 22 years, Bridget has navigated various roles, including as a Lead His Majesty's Inspector (Schools) to headteacher, and we look forward to continuing to support Bridget in her initiatives for Marleigh Primary Academy.

Anglian Learning is also delighted to confirm that Mark Askew has been appointed the substantive headteacher at Bottisham Community Primary School. Mark's appointment brings stability, focus and inspiration to the school following a successful period as their interim headteacher. Charlotte James will continue as Acting Headteacher for Fen Ditton Community Primary School.



**Mark Askew**



**Bridget Harrison**



# Campaign for better funding

In addition to Ofsted, another area we have been vocal about is the low level of funding received by our academies.

Despite the high level of inflation and other rising costs, schools on average have only received a 2-3% increase in funding.

This underwhelming increase struggles to meet the needs of our academies, which in turn directly impacts budgets for SEND, basic maintenance, ICT and more. As Chair of Schools Forum, the body that makes decisions about how to allocate the money received from central government in Cambridgeshire, I have raised this directly with local MPs and councillors. As we enter the pre-election period it is vital that we raise the profile of school funding on the political agenda and ensure that, whoever takes power after an election, they are committed to increased investment in education.

A significant injection of money is required now if we are to address the issues most impacting upon our children and young people, especially those who are most vulnerable. And making sure we have the resources necessary to recruit and retain the people who can, and will, transform pupils' lives.

**Jonathan Culpin, CEO**



# Meet our new Trustees

We have eleven Trustees with a range of skills and experience from several sectors including education, science, HR, law and finance, who help to fulfil the Trust board's responsibility in steering Anglian Learning and improving the outcomes of our young people.

In July 2023, we said farewell to two of our long-serving Trustees, Richard Cowling and Sue O'Farrell, but were pleased to welcome two new Trustees in the Autumn Term, Mr Matthew Blake, an established People Director, and Mr Andy Brock, who has a background in global education planning.

In September 2023, Dr Helen Pain, who was recently awarded a [MBE](#) for her significant contributions to science, took over from Dr Claire Lawton as the Chair of the Trust Board. Helen has been on the board since 2020 and is supported by Mrs Pauline Ball as Vice Chair and Safeguarding Trustee Link. You can find details of all our Trustees on Anglian Learning's [website](#).



Andy Brock



Matthew Blake

## Professional learning



The first half term of the (misleadingly) named Spring Term, given the cold and wind, started with a [joint training day](#) for primary colleagues, learning from Christopher Such about approaches to teaching reading.

This half term also sees the next cycle of the Subject Improvement Network meetings. Themes in secondary meetings have included assessment, whilst primary colleagues are looking at subject curriculum design, building on the last meeting that explored what excellence in pupil work can look like. As has become routine, John Kane has again been busy providing leadership development through our middle leader and senior leader programmes.

These meetings and continued professional development not only help to upskill our leaders and teaching staff, but in turn, benefit our pupils' learning experience with the skills and knowledge gained being applied to the classroom.



# Planning for Sawston Village College's future



Anglian Learning is committed to investing into our learning environments, ensuring that staff and pupils can thrive and lead in their communities.

Having successfully made the case for major investment at Sawston Village College, a project by the Department of Education (DfE), will see the academy transformed with modern teaching facilities, better vehicle and pedestrian access and substantially improved energy efficiency, all the while maintaining the ethos and buildings of the first village college.

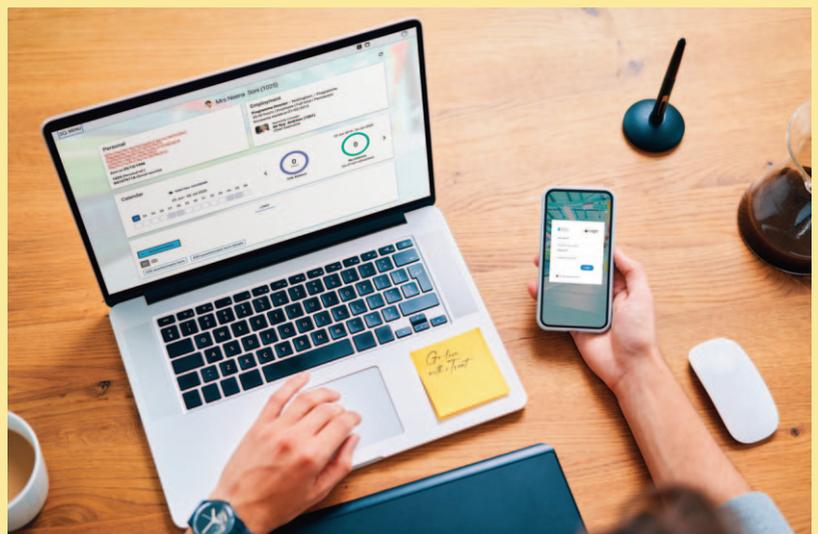
Local contractor Bowmer + Kirkland conducted a public exhibition in January 2024 to help gather the views of key stakeholders to the school and was pleased with the overall positive response to the suggested plans, which include updating important facilities such as the Sports Centre and Marven Centre which are also used by the local community. For more information, you can [visit their website](#).

## HR updates

Anglian Learning will soon be launching a new Core HR and Payroll system, which will be provided by MHR-iTrent, and will be going live on 1 April 2024.

The new system is user friendly and will help to streamline many of the current processes, improve efficiency and consistency, along with providing access to more detailed and advanced reporting.

Once the Core HR and Payroll system is live, we will be building on this and developing the new recruitment system, this will streamline and support our recruitment strategies. In addition, we will be building the performance and learning modules that will support employee development and career discussions to ensure we have robust talent and succession plans in place.



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