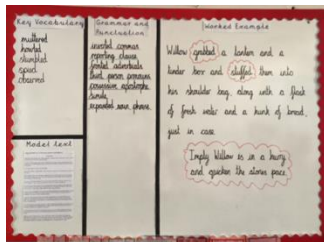


Raleigh & Admirals Academies

Our Learning Environments & Cultural Capital – A Principal’s view

Over the years, the way in which we teach our pupils has changed. Our staff team feel that the subject content of our lessons better meets our children's needs, and our curriculum is more interesting and motivating. As I have previously shared with our parent community, we continually try to explore cost-effective ways of enriching the curriculum by offering alternative learning experiences involving children leaving their classrooms and the Academy site.

However, our classrooms and corridors are important to your child's learning journey. The staff team across both Raleigh and Admirals follow a consistent methodology which ensures that all displays support learning and play an important part in lesson delivery. Subject displays are now referred to as 'Working Walls', but the content of which varies from subject to subject. For example, a 'Working Wall' for English will always include key vocabulary and written model text for the lesson, grammar and punctuation guides and a worked example to support current learning. Having this information readily available in the classroom means that a child can access it of their own volition, often helping them to become 'unstuck' or move on to the next step quickly.



For those subjects taught less frequently than Reading, Writing and Maths, History and Geography, for example, it is necessary for the content of a 'Working Wall' to include 'prior knowledge' which reminds children of what has previously been taught. In addition to this, 'new knowledge' is included as well as a 'knowledge organiser' which will clearly map the 'learning journey' and show a child where their learning is heading, i.e. what's coming next.



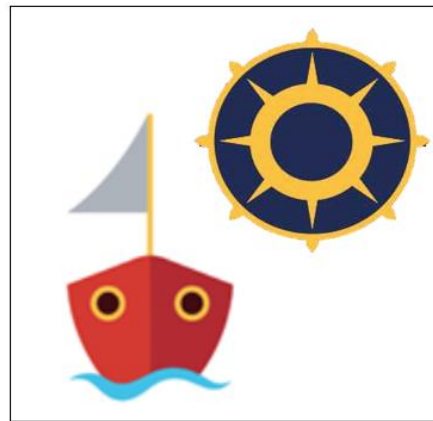
Promoting the need for children to recall information from the past is vital in allowing them to connect with new information and new knowledge; ultimately, this allows the brain to build connections which will, in turn, broaden a child's knowledge and vocabulary. This is often referred to as a child's 'Cultural Capital', which is where the skills, knowledge and behaviour that we teach the children allow them to become culturally aware, ultimately helping them succeed in school, in their chosen careers and wider society.



We also promote Cultural Capital via the use of our corridors. Whilst this may seem an odd statement to make, we ensure that the displays we produce for the children are interesting, relevant and demonstrate high-quality pupil work. This is in an attempt to raise aspirations, support learning through inquisitive



content and value diversity, history and culture. Our corridors can often be places where our children may need 'reminding' of the behaviours that need to be displayed instead of telling them 'what not to do'. Sometimes, simply by pointing at a word painted onto a corridor wall can lead to a child immediately regulating. This may stop them from making the wrong choice and remind them how to demonstrate the high standards of behaviour that will allow them to become respectful citizens of the future! **Greg Sadler, Executive Principal**



Upcoming Term Dates 2024/25

Monday 24th February '25

Spring term '25 resumes

Friday 4th April '25

Spring Term '25 ends

Wednesday 23rd April '25

Summer term '25 begins

Our Academy Improvement Priorities for 2024/25

Leadership at all levels within the Academies secures sustained improvement in the delivery of the curriculum

Across the Academies, outcomes for all pupils demonstrate a sustainable & improving trend

Continue to embed high quality teaching & learning, ensuring that assessment in all subjects informs curriculum delivery

Continue to embed a high standard of pupil welfare which promotes pupil independence and responsibility

Fundraising – The Big Spend!!

As reported in the Autumn 2 newsletter, our team of staff fundraisers, and supporting adults have now raised enough money to begin donating funds to reduce the cost of Year group trips. They have agreed to subsidise planned visits for reception through to Yr6 by £220 each; this has now reduced some of the costs that parents are asked to pay. With the increased charges for hiring transport, this generous donation has really helped us continue our trip offer. We are extremely grateful to all concerned. Thank you!

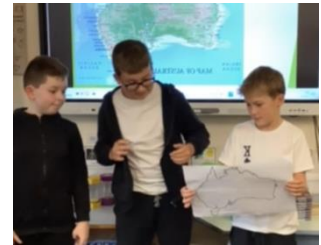


Curriculum Time

Year 5 Geography



In our recent Geography engagement lesson, Year 5 delighted in the role of weather presenters as part of their studies on Australia, having been exploring the country's diverse weather patterns and climate. Inspired by a television weather forecast, the children undertook research to create a weather forecast for a city in Australia. This engaging activity allowed them to use specific meteorological phrases and incorporate gestures typical of professional presenters. It was an enjoyable experience that fostered both creativity and teamwork, reinforcing their understanding of Australia's unique climatic conditions. *Mrs Wilsoncroft*



Year 6 Suffragette Workshop



To support the history unit of 'The Suffragettes', year 6 had a visit from the Drama Hut to revisit and learn some key knowledge about the time of the Suffragettes. Within the workshop, the pupils looked at key events and used freeze frames to represent these, learnt about the imprisonment of some of the Suffragettes and considered what the court cases would look like by performing them and then finally engaging in a 'Suffragette Rally' which included a motivational and inspirational speech about the right to vote and why it is important that women have it. *Mrs Hale*

Academy Council (Governor) Election

Following the recent resignation from our Academy Committee of a parent governor we are now in a position to be able to hold an election for any parent or member of the wider community who would be interested in joining the committee. The time commitment is not too onerous as we hold our meetings in the daytime, one per half term, and encourage members to visit the academy in order to be able to understand how the Academies operate, to engage in strategic thinking and to analyse key areas of Academy performance. If you would like to be considered for the election or would indeed like to know more about the post, please do contact Mr Sadler via the main office.



Year 1 - Art

In art, this half term, year 1, has been learning all about architecture. We learnt that an architect designs buildings. We have studied famous buildings in London. We looked closely at their features. We have learnt about pillars, stained glass windows and arches. We then



created our own stained-glass windows out of black card and tissue paper. This was a bit fiddly, but the children tried hard, and the stained-glass windows have definitely brightened up our classroom. We also looked closely at the gargoyles on Southwark Cathedral. These inspired us and made our own gargoyle pinch pots out of clay. *Mrs Bishop*

Key Stage 1 Sporting Multi Skills Event

During this half term, a selection of our fabulous Year 1 and 2's had the opportunity to attend a Multi-skills event at Theftford Academy. The children had six stations to complete in their teams, which included running underneath the parachute, attempting to crawl through a tunnel and an egg and spoon race. The children loved interacting with the other schools and showed amazing sportsmanship by cheering each other on and applauding their peers. Congratulations to all those who took part. *Mrs Corbyn*



Year 2 – History

This half term, Year 2 has been participating in the Thetford Heritage Project, where we have been learning about Allan Minns, the first black mayor in Britain. During our visit to the Guildhall, the children met Chris Harvey, the current mayor of Thetford. They had the opportunity to ask him questions about his personal life and time as mayor – he was very impressed by their questions! The children also created posters showcasing the improvements they would like to make to Thetford, which will be shared with the councillors at the next council meeting!

Miss McDougall



Year 4 – Art & History

We're delighted to share that our Year 4 students have truly embraced their creativity this half term! They have taken inspiration from the brilliant work of Matisse, using cut-outs to recreate vibrant pieces of art that express their individuality. But that's not all - they've also tapped into their inner Roman architect by designing and crafting stunning mosaics. This hands-on approach enhances their artistic skills and enriches their understanding of art and history. Mr Smith



"Staff encourage pupils to try their best. Pupils mostly respond to this by eagerly contributing their ideas. This aspiration, alongside a thoughtfully constructed curriculum, is helping pupils' achievement to improve." Ofsted, June 2024

Year 3 – Ancient House Visit (Ancient Egyptians Workshop)

Year 3 were also lucky enough to take the short trip to the Ancient House Museum to delve a little deeper into their learning of Ancient Egypt! The children learnt about games they once played, looked at some amazing artefacts and even got to make some Ancient Egyptian sweets! The children showcased fantastic knowledge as well as gained some valuable learning. Mrs Corbyn



Reception class head into 'Outer Space'



Reception has loved learning about Space this half term. We have had a packed half term growing our knowledge, with a range of fun experiences to embed our learning further. We received a letter from an astronaut with some space food to try. We explored looking through a real telescope and making our own. We created our own in-class planetarium experience. We live-tracked the international space station. We became composers like Holst as we moved to his planet music and more!



As we have learnt more, the children have shown an incredible ability to remember more, using some fantastic taught vocabulary to articulate their thoughts. They used their growing skills across all areas of learning to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways, from drawings, writing, role play and more! However, most impressively, the children amazed us with their curiosity, asking questions to expand their knowledge further. Having finished our half term, we are most definitely officially mini astronomers! Miss Cousins



Shaping The Future, an interview (edit) with Greg Sadler by Andy Greenhouse
Thefford Reflections Magazine, February '25

Greg has taught in various schools in London, Essex and Suffolk, attaining the position of Headteacher at the tender age of 36, at St. Felix Middle School in Newmarket. Here, he was introduced to the intricacies of crisis management when the school was razed to the ground by arson in 2009. Since then, he has been Head at six other schools, (none of which have burned down), and then a Regional Director of Education with Eastern Multi-Academy Trust (EMAT) which currently supports twelve Academies across the eastern region.


It was from this position that he then moved back into the school-based role as Executive Principal at Raleigh and Admirals Academies in Thefford, some two and half years ago. Still working through his development plan, this journey is far from complete. In his words, it is a challenge to consistently achieve the standards he has set. The work never stops.

It was at this point that Ofsted was brought into the conversation. Ofsted, the one word that can instil trepidation in teachers everywhere. Their verdict on both Raleigh and Admirals before Greg took over was 'Inadequate' and 'Requires Improvement' respectively; to bring about improvements in behaviour, the curriculum offer, teaching and learning and then to maintain a consistency of approach, has been Greg's driving force. With the challenges we all face every day, I asked what he considered to be the most challenging aspect of his job and how it was managed. For a moment, he wasn't the teacher. He was the MD, the CEO, the businessman, for his answer was, the financial climate.

Juggling budget issues and spending controls against salaries and rewards were high on Greg's list of concerns, but he exuded positivity when explaining that it was well managed by the strength of the team around him. Team building was of paramount importance, and he was proud of the one now in place – all individual experts, but all team players. He was keen to say that everyone has a voice, and their strength is through the team effort, with reward and award being the way to sustain staff levels.

Part and parcel of this staff management was finding the right balance for everyone between personal and professional commitments, or the art of managing staff well-being. Greg was quick to point out that you can't ask people for more and more, without creating the capacity for it. And so PPA, or Planning, Preparation and Assessment time, was changed whereby teachers can choose to spend that time at home during normal school hours to give them a chance to balance domestic life, alongside being well prepared to deliver great learning opportunities to their classes.

The report came back as 'Overall Effectiveness - Good' with 'Outstanding' listed against Behaviour and Attitudes, and Personal Development, which was a fantastic achievement given the previous grade was 'Requires Improvement.' I could sense the satisfaction in his voice when he told me this and he was again quick to point out how this could not have happened without the dedication of the team of teachers, and the amazing support staff who keep the place ticking.

the bubbly hub 

Of course, there's not many a team that can function without leadership, and even with that leadership the most vital commodity is that of a game plan. I asked Greg about any innovations or programs that he'd implemented during his tenure, of which he was particularly proud of. Almost without hesitation, he told me that the use Pupil Voice is helping shape the future. There is also the PLT – Pupil Leadership Team. This is where ten children of the older end of the spectrum can apply to be a part of the team that meets with Academy Leaders to discuss and organise things within the school that affect all the other kids. The interesting thing about this is that the children have to want to be a part of this team and have to write a 250-word application and then go through a selection process. It's this combined implementation of the PLT and the power of Pupil Voice, that Greg is most proud of, for they truly are helping shape the direction the school is heading in.

As for shaping their actual education, there is another well phrased acronym in use that is instilled into the kids' rationale. ARK. Aspiration, Respect, Kindness. These are the values and attributes that Greg, and the whole teaching team, believe are essential in these tender formative years to prepare them for their onward journey through education and life. They are quick to celebrate and reward children who can demonstrate the values, by word or action, and the teachers can nominate children during the week when they recognise those qualities shining through.

While we were talking about the future, I asked Greg about his visions and ambitions for the Academy in the next ten to fifteen years. After a moment of ponderance he said the real challenge ahead was that of making education an attractive proposition for young people to want to be a part of, though he did counter this by saying that it is an intense profession, but a brilliant one to be in! With this in mind, he continued by explaining his belief in 'growing our own talent'.

They recognise and encourage ECT's, Early Career Teachers. Fresh out of university, these young teachers spend a further two years in training. There's four ECT's already at Raleigh and Admirals and Greg was keen to say that they were great people to have, and already good at their job which had been greatly helped along by the mentoring from the experienced staff. It was this plan of action that he foresaw as the way forward in order to make staffing more sustainable in the future.

It was also important to him and his staff that the children are the focus of their work, but there is often more to it than that. The school, as a whole, provides a service to the wider community around it, serving also the parents and wider families, the staff team as a whole and even the general public. For an establishment like his to keep its momentum, it has to become more than just a school.

From relaying these visions and thoughts to me, it was apparent that Greg had experienced much in his career and has learnt much along the way. He interestingly shared that a notable lesson that some leaders often miss, is learning what 'not' to be like! In accepting who people are, and what people do he has learnt to see the value of it, and to sticking to the vision allows people within the team to know what is expected of them.

Above all, he recognises the importance of his team and would be the first to admit he could not do what he does without them; together they provide the opportunity of a good education, which every child deserves. Put simply, Greg's tagline was 'While we've got your kids, we'll do the best we can for them.' And do you know what? I believe him.