

As we move swiftly to the end of what is always the hardest term of the academic year, I look back with pride on the many and varied achievements that we have, collectively, achieved so far.

I made no secret of my total elation at seeing so many members of staff at the INSET day in October. It was like a vision had become reality, that the real potential of collaboration was being felt and, most importantly, I observed with pride how great, professional relationships were being formed....which as we all know lead to us making good personal friendships in the future. The truth is, working together, sharing the load, learning from each other will have such a significant impact on all of our lives – and fundamentally on the lives of the young people who we care for so much.

I was disappointed that we couldn't involve all staff due to space and this is definitely something that we are looking at for next year - we just need a venue big enough so that everyone can feel the purposeful engagement and depth of knowledge that we experienced on the day.

However, organised events such as this are just the starting point. I could give you numerous examples of how all schools engage across the Trust (as you see for yourself at the many network groups that we hold) or how, indeed, we support each other in the school improvement arena. For example, OMS, Heronshaw, TMA and Fairfields have all made significant differences to the lives of the pupils at Exeter School in Corby. From a teacher training perspective OIA are, and have always been, involved in the training of graduates and quality assurance of our provision – in fact Steve had the onerous task of travelling to Kuwait not so long ago to observe teaching. Chestnuts are always keen to roll their sleeves up and, as the school who I always feel loves a party, are always very keen to get everyone working together – supporting the coordination of events such as the INSET day. We also participate hugely in the local and national system with Whitehouse Primary having a heavy involvement in the Enigma Maths Hub and Two Mile Ash leading the ITT Partnership and Teaching School.

What is crucial, however, is that we never put the home school at risk and, as a Trust School, we will be both givers and receivers of support at different times. Challenging times are inevitable in the work we do, but, when we are emotionally bought into the culture of family, we know a give and take model is always the best solution.

So, please take these opportunities - ask the question – feel you have something to contribute – shout if you want to learn more. Headteachers have a duty to develop you but you also have a duty to take ownership of your own professional development. We have lots of exciting opportunities on offer: 4 of our teachers returned from Dubai last week and 2 went to the Netherlands as part of the ITT team (the early morning WhatsApp pictures did wind me up a little as I sat facing the toilet door on a rainy train to London though!!)



***Continued....***

...or if you're not ready for that, then co-facilitating training sessions, helping out in other schools in your specialist area or a desire to work at Trust level are never ideas that are a bridge too far. Please speak to your headteacher or bring it up in your Performance Management meetings - as I've said on many occasions, you are so valuable to us we want to ensure that working for IFTL gives you lots of exciting opportunities, develops you professionally and gives you that drive to want to be involved more – and don't forget we want to enjoy the journey and have fun along the way!! How can working with our children not be fun? Don't get bogged down in the bureaucracy, look up and look into the children's eyes. We have the best job in the world!

It leaves me now to wish you a well deserved rest and a happy Christmas. Enjoy a wonderful family time and I look forward to working with you all again in January.

With huge gratitude for all that you do,

**Sarah Bennett**

## Teaching and Learning Inset Day

The end of last term concluded with our first IFTL Trust-wide Learning and Teaching Inset day. Our largest collaboration to date, with 120 teaching staff taking part workshops and focusing on key areas of development across the Trust. It was wonderful to see all of our talented teaching staff coming together, collaborating, sharing and having fun together.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the online feedback. Responses have been incredibly positive about the keynote speakers, workshops and day in general.

*"The workshops on offer were excellent, I would like to have attended more workshops"*

*"The workshops and sessions were brilliant as it gave me ideas and techniques to use in the classroom"*

*97% of respondents stated that the Inset CPD will help to improve practice in their school?*

***Many thanks to everyone at TMA for their hospitality, a big thank you to our facilitators for the quality of the workshops and to the Teaching School team for arranging the event. It makes us unbelievably proud that we have this level of skill and knowledge within our Trust.***

We were asked why support staff were not included in this Inset Day. We would love to bring together all employees, however, as our family of schools has grown, we have outgrown a single school venue for all employees. However, based on your feedback we will hold future Trust wide Inset Days relevant to all staff and we are already exploring possible formats and venues for 2019.



## A big welcome to Heronshaw

On the 1st January 2019, we will officially welcome Heronshaw School to IFtL. Heronshaw School has been working alongside IFtL for over 18 months and the 1<sup>st</sup> January marks the official date when they became an academy with our Trust. We believe Heronshaw will be an asset to the IFtL family and offer a big welcome to Melanie Saunders-Short and her team.



## Corby Update

I am sure that many of you have heard the term 'Corby' over the past few months and hopefully, your Headteachers will have updated you on what we have been doing. However, we wanted to take the opportunity to update you fully.

In January 2018 IFtL were approached by the Regional Schools Commissioner, Martin Post, and asked to consider providing MAT to MAT support to The Wallace Trust - an existing Multi-Academy Trust comprising of three schools:

**Exeter School** - A primary school, age range from 2-11 with 594 children on roll, located in central Corby (currently Ofsted rated 'Inadequate').

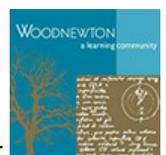
**Woodnewton School** - A large Primary School, age range from 2-11 with 965 children on roll, located in central Corby (currently Ofsted rated 'Good').

**Priors Hall School** - A brand new Primary School which opened in September 2016, age range from 2-11 with 183 children on roll, located in a new development on the outskirts of Corby.

IFtL were asked to provide support, particularly for Exeter School, to drive Educational Improvements and Standards. Over the past few months, we have had a considerable presence at Exeter through the deployment of IFtL's specialist leaders in education who have driven significant changes to the educational offering. To date, this is already showing significant improvements in the quality of provision for the children. This is a long journey for Exeter and the team, but we are committed to improving the school for the children and the wider community.



We are aware that if we are to achieve what we have set out to do then we must have a secure leadership structure going forward. Therefore, we have made the decision to second two of our very experienced, outstanding headteachers (Matthew Shotton, Headteacher – Fairfield's and Melanie Saunders-Short, Headteacher – Heronshaw) for at least a twelve months period on a part time basis to enable us to build on the excellent work to date and ensure a consistency of approach. They will, of course, remain the substantive headteachers of their home schools and together with their amazing leadership teams, we will ensure that Fairfield's and Heronshaw will continue to flourish during this time.



Matthew and Melanie will take up the reigns, as joint Executive Headteachers, from January 2019. It is important that we live our values on a day to day basis and this work with Exeter and the Corby Schools is the very reason why we established a Multi Academy Trust: to share, collaborate, be stronger together and inspire the futures of us all through learning together.

## Staff Survey

Hopefully you will have already completed the annual IFtL Employee Engagement Survey. If you haven't there are still a few remaining days to do so by clicking on the links below. Please note the only difference between the Teaching Staff and Support Staff survey is questions relating to the Trust wide Inset Day.

**Teaching Staff** - [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IFTL2018](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IFTL2018)

**Support Staff** – [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/iftlsupportstaff](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/iftlsupportstaff)

Your thoughts, feedback and insights are incredibly valuable to us. Findings from the survey will be used to identify areas of success and inform areas of improvement and development.

This year we have added wellbeing questions to the survey to gain insights and identify any themes that have arisen across the Trust and to inform and drive initiatives for Health, Wellbeing and workload management. We are committed to doing everything that we can to ensure that staff health, wellbeing and workload is held in the highest regard. I look forward to sharing results from this survey with you.

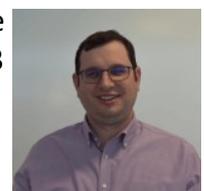
In last year's survey you told us you **'want more CPD for Teaching Assistants'** following this we added **nine separate CPD sessions/courses dedicated to developing Teaching Assistants as part of the MKTSA CPD calendar**. All courses are free to Trust Schools/subscriber members.

You told us you wanted **'more Network groups'** and **'a way to find out more about outcomes of these groups'**. As a result we **increased our Network Groups from 6 to 12** and have **built a dedicated area on the Trust Portal, so everyone can find out about our network groups, identify strategic priorities, who the network representative is from your school and when the next meetings are**.

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. We look forward to sharing this year's findings with you in early 2019.

## Finance Update

Every year the Trust is externally audited to ensure that we are using the funding we receive in an effective and appropriate manner. We would like to say a massive thank you to Rob (CFO) and all of the Business Managers and Finance staff for all their hard work ensuring we are compliant. The Financial Statements were reviewed and signed off by Trust Members and the Board of Trustees on Thursday 13 December. Thank you to all those involved.



## Emma Matthews joins the IFtL Team

In November Emma Matthews joined the central IFtL Team, as Financial Controller. Emma will work closely with School Business Managers and Headteachers ensuring financial compliance. Emma will also chair the monthly Business Managers and Headteacher meetings. Emma will also be leading the roll



## IFtL Strategy & Network Groups

One of the exciting opportunities of being within a trust is collaboration across our family of schools to share expertise, support one another and continuously develop excellent practice.

We now have network groups covering:

Strategy Groups	Network Groups
Senior Leaders	Curriculum
Maths	PE
English	Science
Safeguarding	EYFS
Pupil Support	Wellbeing
	Computing

The key purposes of the groups are to enhance collaboration within the Trust family of schools in order to:

- provide CPD
- train the trainer opportunities
- leadership growth opportunities
- work strategically towards IFtL and school priorities
- promote school improvement
- impact positively on our children.

If you have any interest in joining a group or have suggestions for additional strategy and network groups, please speak to your heads or contact Kim Kemp ([kkemp@iftl.co.uk](mailto:kkemp@iftl.co.uk)) with any requests.

### 2019 Meeting Dates

Monday 21st January 2019  
Monday 18th March 2019  
Monday 29th April 2019  
Monday 1st July 2019

**Remember there is a dedicated area on the portal containing Network Group information, lead names, documents and meeting information.**



## Kindness Elves @ Whitehouse

Last week was an extremely busy one for the Kindness elves who have taken up residence at Whitehouse Primary. During the Christmas countdown, the Kindness Elves have been completing random acts of kindness and have been showing children how to complete kind acts that really make others smile (as well as themselves). One elf helped KS1 to be kind by encouraging them to ask children to play, and offering their pencil to others. To add to this, one of our Y1 pupils created a food hamper at home and donated it to the local food bank! It has been a joy for all the staff to see kindness ripple out across the school.





**NOT ALL  
SUPERHEROES  
WEAR CAPES...**



**Are you a TA, HLTA or Cover Supervisor?**

**Do you have the passion and enthusiasm needed to become  
a primary school teacher?**

**We now have a new route into teaching for you!**

Delivered in partnership with Birmingham City University, TMA ITTP is the first School Centred Initial Teacher Training Provider (SCITT) in the country to offer this brand-new undergraduate, school centred pathway into teaching. This course offers trainee teachers the opportunity to get a real hands-on experience in the classroom from the outset, putting research into practice and constantly and quickly applying the theory they have been taught. This approach creates a very effective way of learning combining degree level study with real classroom experience.

## **BA (Hons) Primary and Early Years Education with QTS**

To find out more visit [www.mkitt.co.uk](http://www.mkitt.co.uk) or speak to our team on 01908 533284

*15 years ago, I fell in love with education and have worked in schools since then. Along the way I have extended my personal development through NVQs and have been a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant for several years now. The next obvious step was to gain a full teaching qualification but without a degree I would have to leave employment to become a full-time student or study part time for a protracted period, neither of which (in my 40's) were realistic options. I was stuck. The new school based 3-year undergraduate course with QTS allows me to continue to work alongside my studies. Delighted – extremely. Excited – definitely.*



Leandra Browne, First year BA (Hons) Primary and Early Years Education with QTS Trainee

## CPD Upcoming Courses

At IFtL we are incredibly lucky to have our Milton Keynes Teaching School Alliance part of our family, this means we can all access tailored CPD to meet the Trust Schools key priorities and continuously invest in our people and improve education standards. We are committed to inspiring the futures of us all, which means all schools benefit from a gold subscription, accessing an unlimited amount of CDP for every level of professional development.

### Upcoming courses for Spring 2019.

CONTINUOUS PROVISION IN LITERACY AND MATHS

January 9, 2019 @ 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm



**GAIN NEW  
SUPERPOWERS!**

STORY TELLING IN MATHS with TT Education

January 22, 2019 @ 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

IOSH MANAGING SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS SETTINGS Part 1

January 23, 2019 @ 9:30 am - 4:00 pm



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME with System Leaders from MKTSA

April 24, 2019 @ 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm

GREATER DEPTH FOUNDATION SUBJECTS

with Alex Bedford from Chris Quigley

February 12, 2019 @ 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

THE WRITE STUFF with Jane Considine

February 14, 2019 @ 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm

RHYTHM, RHYME AND READING with Kirstine Beeley

February 28, 2019 @ 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm



GETTING TO GRIPS WITH BEING AN EFFECTIVE SENIOR OR MIDDLE LEADER with Adrian Francis – Project outcomes and personal development goals

March 26, 2019 @ 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm



MILTON KEYNES  
TEACHING SCHOOL  
• ALLIANCE •

Visit our website for our full list of courses and to book your place: [www.mktsa.com](http://www.mktsa.com)



## Ashbrook and Holmwood Consult to join IFtL

Ashbrook and Holmwood, as feeder schools to Two Mile Ash School have always played a valued and important role in the educational journey of children within IFtL. Over the past 12 months the Bridge Partnership and IFtL have worked even closer together.

At the start of the year The Bridge Partnership Governing Body approached IFtL and expressed their interest in formalising their relationship by converting to academy status and joining IFtL.

Over the past months, IFtL, the schools, and Governing body have worked closely together to ensure an alignment of vision, values, and a shared commitment to providing exceptional educational opportunities to all. We are confident that the addition of Ashbrook ranked 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and Holmwood ranked 'Good' by Ofsted would be an asset to the Trust and enable us to provide an exceptional education offering for children aged 2-11 in the Two Mile Ash, Great Holm and Crownhill communities that the schools serve.

Children will benefit from a smooth and consistent transition from Infant to Junior school. Staff can collaborate, share skills and resources and have a wider range of opportunities available to them and the schools will benefit from economies of scale which can be enjoyed being part of the Trust. All of which can only be of benefit to the children, staff, parents and wider community.

Following their expression of interest to join IFtL, the school, and the IFtL team will now work together through a due diligence process to ensure all parties are fully informed about the relevant educational, legal, financial and operational positions of the school. It is likely that this work will be completed in during the Spring Term of 2019.

If you have any questions regarding the proposal for Ashbrook and Holmwood Schools joining IFtL please contact [jhoskins@iftl.co.uk](mailto:jhoskins@iftl.co.uk)

## A word from the Chair of Trustees

Multi-Academy Trusts have a unique legal structure – they are accountable to the Department of Education (through our Regional Schools Commissioner, Martin Post), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and beholden to both company and charity laws. Our Trustees, led by Chair, Marilyn Hubbard, are ultimately accountable for the educational, financial and overall performance of the Trust as a whole and are passionate about IFtL being a place of opportunities – for children, staff and our communities.

The Central Operations team reports to Trustees on a termly basis and is held to account on a vast array of activities and key decisions.

As a trust, we are incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated group of skilled volunteers across all sectors of our IFtL family who make such an impact on our school lives.

Recently, IFtL were invited to attend a Multi-Academy Trust review with the Regional Schools Commissioner, Martin Post. This was an opportunity to review our past year alongside our plans for the future. It was a pleasure to be able to highlight how all our schools are working together and really empowering each other, through shared expertise and support, to deliver the best for all our children and we received very positive feedback from Martin Post. We also talked about growth and the opportunities for school improvement delivery that this offers during 2019.



# Operations Update

## Health and Safety Audits

During October and November, all schools were audited by the trust Head of Operations on their health and safety performance. These audits covered compliance, procedure and the daily operation of the schools. These audits are a part of our commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all our staff, pupils and visitors and are designed to highlight areas that may need improvement. All schools did well in general across the board and we would like to thank everyone for their cooperation with these audits. We have highlighted some areas for improvement at school level as well as at trust level and we will work with schools to help deliver these improvements to ensure that our IFtL family of schools is as safe as we can be.



## GDPR and Data Protection

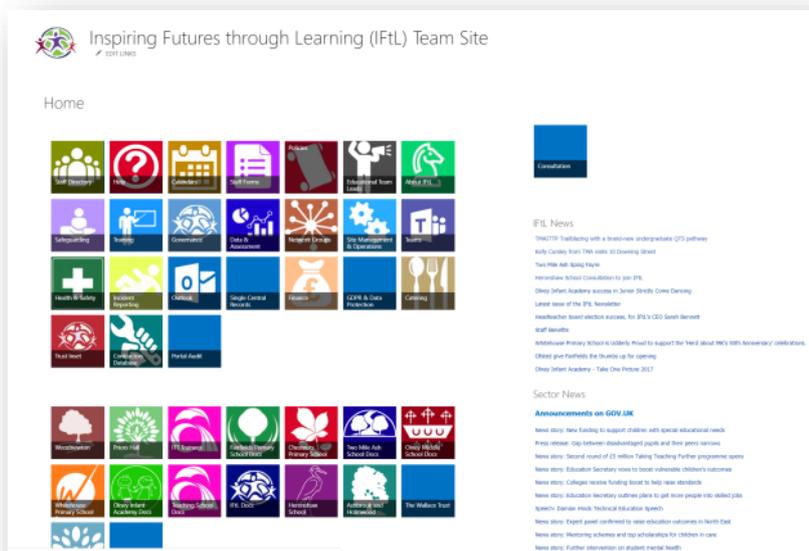
May 25th came and went and the impact of GDPR hasn't really been felt as much as anticipated. All schools have started on their journey towards compliance but we still have a way to go to get where we need to be. As part of this, all staff will be issued a basic online training course to complete to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities. It is only a short course and you should be able to complete this is around 15 minutes or so. We are continuing to work towards compliance with further school visits planned early in the new year. So far, everyone is doing well and we will continue that progress as we move into 2019.



# Portal & Portal Support

Portal help, support, advice, guidance and training is available through Owen Grover by emailing [support@iftl.co.uk](mailto:support@iftl.co.uk)

Please also be aware that there is a 'Help' tile on the portal which contains lots of quick 'how to guides' and step by step information.



**Don't forget that on the portal there is..**

- A staff directory - contact details for all staff in the Trust.
- Incident Reporting Forms
- GDPR Information
- Information on Network Groups
- And much more...**

If you would like to make recommendations and suggestions for future portal development please email [support@iftl.co.uk](mailto:support@iftl.co.uk)

## Wellbeing

At IFTL we are committed to developing a family of schools who inspire all our futures through learning. We value and care for our people. In support of this we want to create an environment where our people can develop and thrive, where we look after each other and keep each other safe and supported. Our family of schools are full of amazing people (You!) with a positive and mature safety, health and developing wellbeing culture. We want to build on this strong foundation to create a workplace and way of working that attracts, develops, engages and retains our people, a place where our work has a positive impact on our safety, health and wellbeing and that of others.

### Taking care of you!

Making better lifestyle choices can have a huge impact on your wellbeing. Public Health England's [One You](#) programme aims to help you get healthier and feel better with free tips, tools and support. Whether it's moving more often, eating more healthily, sleeping better or health checks – '[One You](#)' can help you make small, practical changes that fit in with your life.

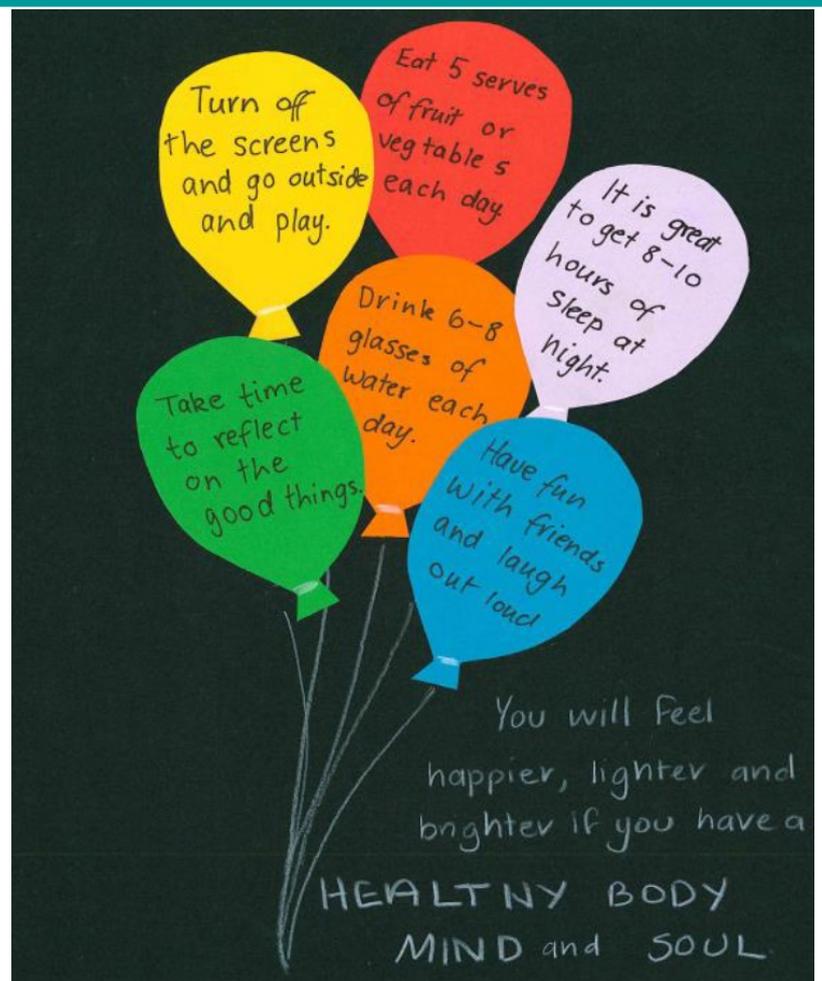
Take the brief quiz and see how small changes can make a BIG difference.

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/how-are-you-quiz](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/how-are-you-quiz)

**HOW ARE YOU?**

At IFTL, we are currently in the process of researching and creating a wellbeing strategy.

Initial feedback from employees has been gathered through the annual employee survey to establish baseline data for our staff which will be published in late January. Initial proposals for the strategy will be taken to the Wellbeing Network Group in January for initial review and feedback.



# Wellbeing and a thought for the new year

## Everything in moderation

Coming back to work after a break is a challenge in any career; when you are teacher, it seems particularly difficult. Feeling exhausted after the first few days of teaching can, if not reality-checked, lead you to dread the next term and at worst, question your own competence. But, here's the truth about the Christmas break; it isn't actually full of restoration and relaxation, but usually stuffed full of domestic catch up and the exhausting pursuit of 'making the most of it'. It is, in fact, hard work, undoubtedly fun and full of the much needed change, but it still takes its toll, both physically and mentally. So, when we return to work, we shouldn't be surprised that it takes a while for the the needle on a stamina dial to return to its normal whirling dervish level of a teacher.

Teaching is not a job where you can have a quiet day if you are feeling under par. Our energy levels have a huge impact on our well-being, affecting both or physical and emotional reliance. Consequently, it's not difficult to see how the demands of the new teaching term can easily lead us to feel overwhelmed.

So, why is it we choose this term to overhaul all our behaviours by starting a new eating regime, put our bodies through an extreme exercise regime, or set ourselves demanding work and personal goals? Many of these will be about trying to raise energy levels in the long term, obviously admirable, but are we adding unnecessary strain? Being aware of what we are already asking of our minds and bodies is key to not pushing yourself into self-destruct mode. The City of London University's research on Teacher Well being identified the teachers' belief that they could do something effectively as a key indicator of their overall well being. When we over-challenge ourselves and fail the danger is that we question our competency in other areas.

I'm not advocating throwing all targets and resolutions out of the window, definitely not. There is a huge benefit to redefining yourself and challenging your behaviours but I do advocate moderation. Thinking of yourself as a classic car, turn the engine on but don't put to your foot to the floor until it's warmed up.

*Joanna Gorse - Lead Tutor - Milton Keynes Teaching Schools Alliance*

## Spread the happiness

Kelly Hopkinson, Wellbeing lead, in partnership with Milton Keynes Teaching School Alliance has organised a Twilight Session focussing on a Whole School Approach to 'Spreading the happiness' the session covers:

- raise and boost morale
- increase happiness and productivity
- raise children's well-being
- increase parent partnership
- increase community cohesion with the school
- create a happier more enjoyable place to work and live
- raise standards through well-being

For more information email [KHopkinson@whitehouseprimary.co.uk](mailto:KHopkinson@whitehouseprimary.co.uk)

