

ELT News Spring 2022



Sharing the latest news from the Ember Learning Trust

What is the Ember Learning Trust (ELT)?

Although our schools continue to belong to and work within the local authority, Thames Ditton Infant School, Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School, Long Ditton St. Mary's Junior School and Claygate Primary School benefit from a formal partnership, called the Ember learning Trust or ELT.

What are the benefits of our partnership?

Although ELT schools remain separate entities with their own Head Teachers and Governing Bodies, the ELT Trustees meet regularly. They create, monitor and evaluate action plans which formally identify targets for developing strong partnership working to benefit our communities.

Benefits to our School Leadership Teams

Governors:

ELT governors have a collaborative virtual platform to safely share and store documents and training, it also has a collective noticeboard which facilitates secure communication. Our governors network regularly, cascade learning from training sessions and consult on various issues throughout the year. This has been particularly valuable for governors new to role and throughout these unprecedented times. Governors are very aware of increasing demands on budgets so we are able to share best practice and consider opportunities for shared procurement to get 'best value' across our schools.

Senior Leaders:

During this challenging time, where movement between schools and welcoming visitors has been limited, the ELT schools have continued to grow stronger and to work together remotely (and in person when it has been safe to do so).

Senior leaders collaboratively worked on key Covid responses and essential documentation for our shared community such as risk assessments and some operational pieces around our remote learning offers. We recognise that each of our school settings differ and have their own unique challenges and needs, however this networking has been invaluable.

Senior leaders also consider links and opportunities for school development and curriculum work each year.

Peer Review: Leaders identify key priorities for their schools and invite colleagues from the other trust schools to visit, look at strengths and next steps and review practice within the areas of focus for that school. Each school benefits from the external validation our rigorous Peer Review process provides.

LDSM's scheduled Teaching and Learning Review took place in the Autumn Term with a focus on Mathematics and the wider curriculum.

Benefits to staff

All staff teams across the ELT have worked together to share expertise and initiatives, benefitting staff and facilitating our professional development. We have continued to share and compare (moderate) learning across the schools to ensure our judgements and assessments are accurate. This is an important validation process required by the authority.



Joint staff meetings and training events support staff development, for example e-safety training was provided for all staff this term. In 2018, all schools shared training on a new PSE scheme called Jigsaw. This collaborative approach has continued to grow and strengthen since then. A new Early Years Framework became statutory in September and again, networking has enabled all schools to adapt to the new expectations within the framework quickly and with confidence. All schools share the online training package provided by the National College, utilised by all staff which often results in further collaboration after shared learning. All ELT staff received on-line safety training and online safety leads worked collaboratively in anticipation of Internet Safety Day.

Every time our staff teams work together there is an opportunity to network, share expertise and good practice. Subject leaders, middle leaders, SENDCos and year groups seize opportunities to work collaboratively. St Mary's loaned their PE lead to Claygate Primary who enjoyed learning about safe use of apparatus in gymnastics.

Benefits to Parents



As a trust, we are able to jointly purchase resources and in this case fund Online Safety Parent Workshops (January 2022). This was offered to all parents across our ELT schools. Feedback from parents included an increased understanding of the importance of being vigilant with parental controls, raised awareness of danger signs to look out for and what to do if there are any e-safety concerns.

Benefits to the community

Our partnership jointly select charitable events to support, in consultation with staff and children. This year we have already shared Odd Socks Day, Christmas Jumper

Day, Children in Need and Remembrance Sunday. We have collectively raised almost £6000.

Poppy Day

All schools sold poppies and reflected on our British Values as we approached Remembrance Sunday. Pupils listened to various recollections of the war from the residents of The Star and Garter. The residents were then presented with a display of poppies, poems and reflections from each school which were very well received.



Benefits to our children



Of course, supporting our community also benefits our children, giving a sense of worth as our future citizens. Pupil voice opportunities are also considered and our children collectively selected our charities for this year.

Covid has hindered some of our plans, but we have seized every opportunity to safely collaborate for the benefit of our children.

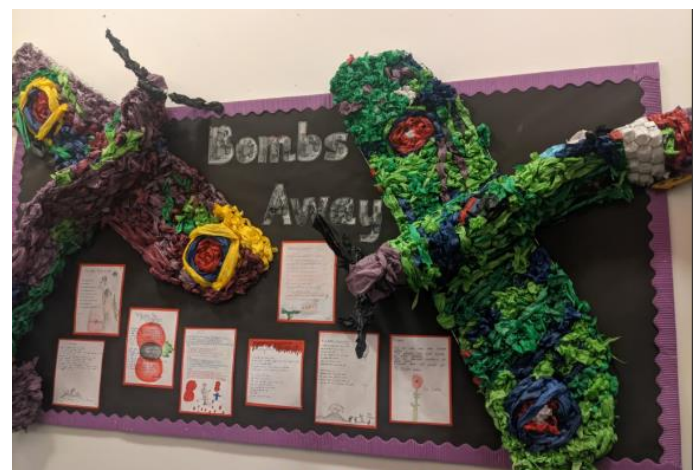


Odd Socks Day gave us an opportunity to celebrate our individuality and uniqueness and to reflect on the British Values of 'Respect' and 'Tolerance' across our community.

Sports

We recognise the opportunities competitive sports bring to our pupils and organise as many fixtures and tournaments for as many children as possible throughout the year. Although this was hindered by the pandemic we hope to return to, and even increase cross school competitions and opportunities in the future.

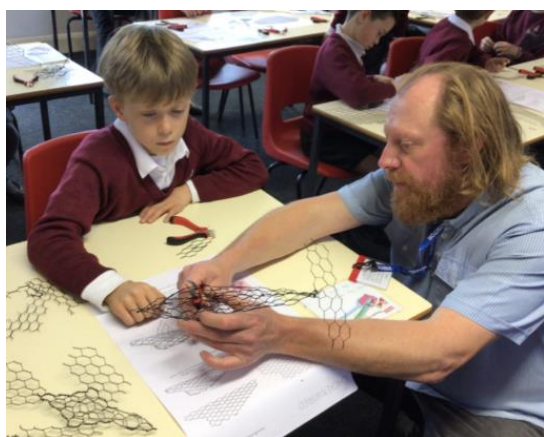
How lovely and what a great opportunity to create a sense of community through shared learning! The ELT funded a sculptor to work across all schools on a shared collaborative project. This is an important strand of the Art and Design curriculum. All schools shared the story; 'The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr Morris Lessmore'. Various written pieces and artwork sprang from this inspirational book. The sculptor created works linked to this book and the theme of flight. He worked with all ELT Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. The children created both individual and collaborative pieces in their own schools during their workshops.



Such an event individually would have been difficult to fund, but again, the collective 'buying power' of the group facilitated this for all schools.



The children sculpted birds and books and even some WW2 bombers!



The Head Teachers and governors look forward to the benefits working collaboratively as a trust brings to our learning community.

Contact Us

Please contact your school should you require any further details about the articles in this newsletter.

