



THE PEGASUS ACADEMY TRUST



WHITEHORSE MANOR
INFANT SCHOOL



ECCLESBOURNE
PRIMARY SCHOOL



WHITEHORSE MANOR
JUNIOR SCHOOL



BEULAH INFANT &
NURSERY SCHOOL



CYPRESS
PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATWOOD PRIMARY
SCHOOL

Executive Principals:

Mr M J Roberts & Ms L D Sampson

Acting Head of School: Mr P Robins

Dear Parents and Carers

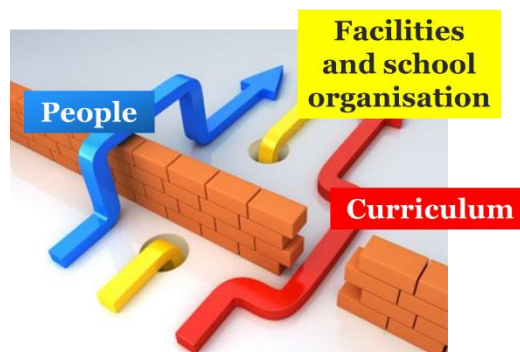
Update from the Pegasus Academy Trust (PAT) regarding Atwood Primary School

Now that all our children are back in school and our new children in Nursery and Reception have joined us we thought we would take the chance to introduce ourselves and update you all about some of the Trust's recent activities at Atwood Primary School.

Pegasus is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), the longest established in Croydon, and we run six primary schools and a Nursery school on behalf of the state. MATs are not for profit organisations and our only objective is *'to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom'*. You can read about our values and ethos [here](#). Atwood joined Pegasus twelve months ago and since then we have been systematically working through a 'to do' list with the staff and governors at the school. We read every response to our parental questionnaire in March of this year and although it was generally supportive there were some responses such as *'We are just not sure joining Pegasus was a great idea. We are still to see a big change'*, which concerned us. This may simply be a problem of communication; we have been busy working on projects but may not have paid enough attention to explaining what we have been doing to the community and this letter is an attempt to rectify that.

In fact 'a big change' was not really necessary at Atwood. This is a great primary school, with good results and strong links to the community. It was immediately apparent to us that there were excellent teachers at the school and great expertise. When new schools join the Trust we have always taken the view that the process of convergence should be two way and Atwood staff have contributed to the thinking and practice of the Trust as a whole – most recently with the [changes made to the Trust's behaviour policy](#). Atwood remains a unique entity and PAT celebrates this. We have tried very hard to retain what is special about the school and will always pay due regard to the community it serves.

The Trust's strategy for school improvement is focussed on three strands as shown here:



All three are equally important and all three strands are ongoing with actions happening simultaneously.

Facilities and school organisation

What was immediately apparent from the outset was that the fabric of the school was tired and without action to remedy the glaring issues there may well have been health and safety concerns in the future. Capital expenditure, funded by the Trust, has meant that these issues never materialised. In addition to [the works that the Trust undertook and funded last summer](#) we have:

- Completely refurbished and refurnished two classrooms – Teal class (Currently Mrs. Mitchell) and Indigo class (currently Mrs. Smith and Miss. Turner);
- Provided each classroom with a touchscreen and a visualiser to support good teaching;
- Widened and resurfaced the main entry road to the school;
- Refurbished the kitchen in the building that hosts breakfast and after school club to allow for a better food service that meets all current hygiene standards;
- Spent £13,000 adding insulation into the buildings in the summer to reduce our energy bills and to be more environmentally friendly;
- In response to requests from Atwood children we replaced the floor in the main KS2 boys' toilets downstairs. The KS2 girls' toilets will be given a similar treatment at half term;
- Completely refurbished the kitchen equipment – new commercial ovens, freezers and fridges;
- Appointed a new caterer after the last one requested that they be released from the contract;
- Completed a full [RAAC](#) survey by a qualified practitioner who confirmed that none is present;
- Provided Atwood with the services of our Facilities Manager, mainly based at the school, to make sure that the facilities work undertaken does not become a burden on the existing Atwood staff;
- Successfully completing the full annual audit process required for academies on Atwood's behalf.

People

A lot of our work under this strand is about using the resources of the Trust to make sure that we recruit well and do all we can to retain good teachers and ensure continuity over time. This is tremendously time consuming given all the compliance, checking and record keeping required. By using central staff to deal with this we can free school based staff to focus on the issues that matter to families. Further examples of what the Trust does to develop our people are:

- Delivering an 'In house' training scheme for our Early Career Teachers (ECTs) who [now have to complete a two year induction](#). Our approach also involves training their mentors. We are one of only two organisations in Croydon accredited to do this;
- Organising network meetings within the Trust for Year group leaders and subject leaders. This has started in 2023 with an Art and DT leaders meeting where leaders could consider good practice across the Trust and how we might improve still further;
- Making sure Members of our Academy Councils' (MACs) are well informed about recent educational developments and prepared for the role they will have to play at the time of an Ofsted inspection;
- The work of our staff development team who have made over a hundred visits to Atwood in the last 12 months working alongside staff using our well established '*Don't tell me, SHOW me*' approach – team teaching and modelling good practice;
- Planning teams

Curriculum

In order to ensure there is no duplication of effort the Trust has been working with staff at Atwood to converge certain curriculum areas over the last 12 months and to properly resource these changes. Many areas of the curriculum remain bespoke to Atwood like PSHE, PE, RE etc. However, examples of curriculum development undertaken include:

- Convergence between Atwood's '*Three write*' model and the Trust's approach to writing in which all tasks begin with a children's book;
- Development of the [thematic curriculum](#) at Atwood which brings together history, geography, art and design technology (DT) in a way that we believe is more meaningful to the children;
- A £10k+ spend on reading practice books for Reception, Y1 and Y2 that now align with the 'Little Wandle' scheme;
- Supporting Atwood's outside learning by funding new vegetable planting beds and both equipment and storage for our youngest children in Nursery and Reception;
- Supporting those with additional needs in their own classes;
- Implementing a whole class reading curriculum – fully resourced, progression checked, training undertaken etc.

Finances

Finally, it might be a good time to be clear about the current situation with Atwood's finances. Put plainly, the school does not currently receive enough funding to cover the things that the school needs, especially in terms of staffing. Over time changes can be made that can slowly remedy this situation but the current situation, as of October 2023, is that the Trust is providing a six figure subsidy to Atwood from the Trust's reserves this year. This is less than last year - where energy costs of £28,000 for just December and January made a huge dent in the finances - but is still a sizeable commitment. We should be clear that Pegasus has never charged Atwood for any Pegasus staff or capital expenditure and will not do so until the school can afford to contribute. It is however, true to say that without the resources of the Trust the school would be in a very vulnerable position. The commitment of the Trust to the school is long term and unwavering and we will continue to work to get the school onto a sustainable financial footing in the medium term.

We have very much enjoyed having Atwood as a member of PAT and we will continue to work as hard as we have done over the last 12 months to develop and improve the school for the families of Sanderstead who, like us, appreciate this excellent school.

Best wishes



Jolyon Roberts
Executive Principals



Lynne Sampson