

An update for parents and carers from First Federation Trust

Trust News

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A note from our CEO & Trust Lead

Christmas can be a magical time for children and special time for families, as a time for reconnecting and socialising. Whatever your beliefs and however you celebrate, we hope you and your child will find time to switch off, relax and rejuvenate during the holiday season.

In this edition of the Parent News, we would like to share some important news on the new-look Ofsted inspection and what it will mean for you and our schools. See page 2 for more information on this.

We have some news from the last term including information about the Art and Sport Enrichment we offer at the Trust (page 4). We firmly believe that pupils should be able to access and enjoy a range of extra-curricular events, and our schools aim to offer a mix of opportunities in music, art, sport and other areas of interest.

We're happy to welcome Gemma Pattison as the new Head of School at Lady Seaward's CE Primary, and Lottie Bond at Salcombe CE Primary. They both bring with them a wealth of experience and passion, and aim to continue raising standards for all.

Well done to all our schools who have had successful SIAMS and Ofsted reports this term. Ofsted inspectors have concluded that Membury Primary, a small, village school near Chard, is Good in all areas and ambitious with an exciting curriculum. The Church of England has deemed Chudleigh Knighton CE Primary as nurturing, safe, inclusive and supportive, which is excellent to hear.

St Budeaux CE Primary, on the outskirts of Plymouth, has recently injected £50,000 into the school thanks to their trustees. The money was used to redecorate and refurbish the Chapel which is used by pupils as a calm space for reflection, and by the local community for events.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas - we look forward to welcoming children back in the New Year.



Paul Walker

Need to know: The new Ofsted Framework

There has been much in the news about the new-look Ofsted inspection framework, which was rolled out last month for schools. As parents and carers, what does the new inspection framework mean for our schools? [Claire Fegan, Director of School Improvement](#), explains some of the key changes below.

What school gradings will be used by Ofsted now?

Under the new framework, Ofsted will introduce a five-point evaluation scale for inspections: Exceptional (the very highest quality provision nationally), Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention and Urgent Improvement. This is designed to give parents a clear and more detailed picture about how the school is performing across a range of different areas. One key difference is that Ofsted will no longer provide an overall effectiveness grade, so the one-word judgement will disappear.

It is really important to point out that the new gradings don't correlate with the old judgements at all and cannot be compared. For example, Ofsted are clear that fewer schools will be judged 'Exceptional' than were judged 'Outstanding'. Similarly, a 'Needs Attention' grading is intended as a prompt for schools - that current provision may not yet be consistent or fully embedded. This means that if a school is currently working to improve an area, it may well be graded as 'Needs Attention', recognising that the school is allocating time and resource to this part of school life.

Which areas of school will Ofsted inspect?

Ofsted will make judgements on the five-point scale about the following areas:

- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Leadership and governance
- Early years

Safeguarding will also be inspected, but judged as simply met or not met, rather than with the usual scale.





What other key differences does the new framework bring?

Ofsted have been really clear that there needs to be a key focus on inclusion. So, whilst this is an inspection area in it's own right, it is also looked at within each of the other areas. Rightly, inspectors will want to understand how schools help all children to belong, achieve and thrive.

A second key difference is how the framework is used to make the judgements. Before, inspectors used what we would call a 'Best Fit' approach, so that schools were awarded a judgement that most closely matched their provision. With the new framework, inspectors will use a 'Secure Fit' approach. This means that schools will need to show they fully meet every single criteria to be awarded the grade. Ofsted recognise this is likely to mean schools find it harder to achieve positive judgements than they would have done previously. This is especially in areas like achievement and attendance, where the criteria are based on 'national averages'. Naturally, many schools are below average, because that is simply how statistics work!

How will parents feed into inspections and how will they see the result of an inspection?

Parents are still encouraged to share their views during Ofsted inspections. Schools will notify parents and carers when they find out an inspection is happening and the ParentView website will still be used to collect views via the questionnaire. In addition, inspectors will be available on the school gates at least one of the mornings they are in schools and will be keen to hear from parents directly.

The new inspection framework uses a report card format for sharing the gradings. The report card will combine at-a-glance grades with drop-down summaries of strengths and areas for improvement. I would really encourage parents to read the detail of the report, rather than just the judgements, as that is where the important details that make each school unique will be. A positive is that Ofsted have worked to make these reports more accessible for people, particularly on mobile devices.

Ofsted have released a short video explaining the new framework to parents which can be viewed here: [New Ofsted report cards and grades: a guide for parents](#)



Art and Sport Enrichment at the Trust

At First Federation Trust, we believe that children who attend one of our 29 primary schools should have the opportunity to experience events outside of and alongside their time in the classroom. We believe in providing wider opportunities for children in our care that complement their educational experiences.

Together we ensure that children have the opportunity to take part in the following activities before they move on to a secondary setting:

- Perform in a setting outside of the school building
- Participate in a musical performance
- Participate in an art exhibition
- Watch a musical/drama production performed by professionals
- Participate in a sporting event held outside of the school premises
- Perform in the local community to support an event or facility e.g. care home
- Learn a musical instrument
- Participate in inter-school sports events (FFT and local schools)

As all of the 29 primary schools within the Trust are unique in terms of size and location, each will also have an individual offer which is appropriate for the context and geography of the establishment. Schools will provide enrichment times where children have the opportunity to work outside of the usual classroom curriculum.

We also ensure that children are signposted to any local clubs and facilities when they display a particular interest or skill in sport, art and music.

At the end of the 2024/25 summer term, schools were invited to have an art exhibition to display children's artwork at a local village hall, or at school during open afternoons, school productions and celebration workshops.

Schools were also invited to participate in a sports event at any point during the school year, with specific sporting events, for example, egg and spoon races, sprinting, standing long jump, ball bouncing, and more. Results were collated for each year group with overall Trust winners.



Development at Sidmouth CE Primary

Artist impressions of the state-of-the-art new building, outdoor space and multi-use green area (MUGA) at the Manstone Avenue site at Sidmouth CE Primary School have been revealed, highlighting the impressive plans for the school, its pupils and the local community.

The development, which is being undertaken by Skinner Construction, is starting to take shape and due for completion in May 2026. Existing buildings are being replaced and renovated with the aim to create a modern indoor and outdoor space to meet evolving educational needs.

Alex Spraggon, Head of School, says, 'It's been great to see work commencing on the Manstone site, and to have a vision of how the new site will look next summer. We're excited to be able to deliver an inspirational new learning environment in which pupils can continue to flourish and achieve, both indoors and out. Spending time outdoors whether through play, sport or relaxation can significantly help with mental well-being, physical development and physical health, and so we're really pleased to be able to offer the MUGA as an all-year round area for sport.'

Sidmouth CE Primary is a member school of First Federation Trust, a multi-academy of 29 primaries across Plymouth, Devon and Dorset.

Helen Warren, Director of Operations from First Federation Trust, says, 'This is a collaborative project which has been partly funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and Devon County Council, for which the Trust and school are extremely grateful. We're looking forward to seeing the progress on this development which will benefit the wider community as well as the school and its pupils.'

Mr Spraggon continues, 'Applications for children due to start primary school in September 2026 close on 15th January 2026. We have spaces available in our Nursery which is available from the age of two, and across the school, so please contact the reception if you're interested in a tour of our facilities.'



St Budeaux CE Primary opens Chapel



The Right Reverend James Grier, Bishop of Plymouth, has officially opened the newly refurbished Chapel room at St Budeaux CE Primary School. Designed as a calm and sacred space, the Chapel will provide opportunities for Christian reflection, prayer, and spiritual development, supporting the school's ethos and values. In addition to its role in nurturing faith, the Chapel will also serve as a fully functional venue for local community groups, strengthening links between the school and the wider community.

Trustees donated £50,000 to the primary school, which is based on the edge of the city and offers Nursery and primary school education for children aged two to Year 6. The money was used to renovate the existing Chapel, transforming it from its basic origins to a useable area with brand-new kitchen, soft furnishings offering cosy corners, practical furniture, and refreshed, light and airy decoration.

[Click here to read the full article online](#)

Salcombe CE Primary in Devon, part of First Federation Trust, is pleased to announce the appointment of Miss Lottie Bond as new Head of School. With over fifteen years teaching experience including over a decade in school improvement, Miss Bond has demonstrated a strong commitment to and passion for the educational sector.

Miss Bond began her leadership journey as an English Specialist Leader of Education, supporting schools across Plymouth. Her impact grew rapidly, leading Year 6 at Salisbury Road Primary during a pivotal time, where she spearheaded a transformative teaching and learning programme.

Her leadership helped guide the school through the challenges of COVID and into a successful Ofsted inspection, showcasing her ability to build strong, motivated teams and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

[Click here to read the full article online.](#)



New Head at Salcombe CE Primary

Chudleigh Knighton SIAMS



Chudleigh Knighton CE Primary near Newton Abbot in Devon, is 'living up to its foundation as a Church school' and enabling pupils to flourish according to the latest SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) report by the Church of England. With an environment that nurtures the wellbeing of all and a community that is committed to living well together, Chudleigh Knighton has been highlighted as a safe, inclusive, supportive school which is outward-looking and nurturing for families.

Simon Westwood, Head of School, said, 'We make it our mission to encourage every individual to Dig Deep, Learn Together and Embrace Life to the Full within a caring Christian community, and we've created an ambitious curriculum and exciting personal development offering to support them in this journey. We aim to raise the standards of education for all our pupils, including those who are more vulnerable.'

[Click here to read the full article online.](#)

Gemma Pattison, an experienced leader in education, has recently joined Lady Seaward's CE Primary in Clyst St George near Exeter as the new Head of School. Gemma, who was previously Head of School at Kenton Primary, started in her new role at the beginning of Autumn term.

Gemma Pattison, Head of School said, 'I feel truly privileged to take on the role of Head of School at Lady Seawards. This is a school with a rich heritage, solid Christian roots, and wonderfully supportive community, and I look forward to building on our strong foundation and maintaining the Church ethos. My aim is to continue raising standards in teaching and learning while placing a strong emphasis on creativity and ensuring every child feels valued and supported. We want our pupils to leave Lady Seawards not only with excellent outcomes, but also with confidence, kindness, and a sense of belonging.'

[Click here to read the full article online.](#)



New Head at Lady Seaward's CE Primary



Membury Good Ofsted

Inspectors have concluded that Membury Primary School in East Devon is Good in all areas of their latest Ofsted report, with well-behaved and respectful pupils residing in a supportive, friendly and ambitious environment. Children are offered an exciting curriculum which has been recently improved by a dedicated team of professionals.

Heidi Wickens, Head of School said, 'We are very proud of our small school and everything we are able to offer and achieve. We think of ourselves as a big family. We know our pupils and families individually having built in-depth, supportive relationships over the years, and with our unique, one-class environment we work hard to meet pupils needs and we're able to support those where they need it. Ofsted has recognised how well the children at Membury learn to read as we know exactly what they all need to focus on, and pupils are regularly encouraged to practise and revisit key knowledge across all areas of learning. At times we have new pupils join during the school year; we always ensure a very warm welcome and offer the help they need to settle in as swiftly as possible. We're very keen to engage with children from other schools in the Trust and local area to encourage pupils to interact with others and provide a more seamless transition to secondary school.'

Kath Powell, Director of Inclusion at First Federation Trust, said, 'Staff at Membury Primary have the passion, skills and knowledge they need to provide expert support to pupils. With a small setting, teachers sometimes need to present different ideas and subjects to the class which they manage well. Due to the unique nature of the school, those with SEND and additional needs are extremely well supported. All children are well nurtured and challenged where needed. Together, we are determined to offer the best possible education for pupils, and we will continue to support the school to make any future improvements.'

With strong community engagement, external visitors, a broad range of sports activities and clubs including construction and computing, and the opportunity to learn to play instruments, all areas of learning, personal development, and social interaction is enhanced as much as possible. This is a small school with a lot to offer.

Heidi continues, 'We currently have spaces available all year groups so please get in touch with the office on 0140 488 1491 or email office@membury-primary.devon.sch.uk if you would like to arrange a visit.'

[Click here to read the full article online.](#)



Christmas Activity Ideas

Here are some Christmas activity ideas to keep little brains busy – and not break the bank!



Bake and Decorate

Make gingerbread houses, sugar cookies, or brownies, then set up a decorating station with sprinkles and icing. Weighing ingredients is great practice of measuring skills and reading recipes together can engage even the most reluctant readers!

Craft and Create

Make paper snowflakes, popcorn garlands, homemade ornaments, or cards with natural materials like leaves and pinecones. For younger children, these activities are brilliant for honing their fine motor skills, whilst older children will enjoy the chance to be creative.



Read and Watch

Create a cozy reading nook with Christmas books. You can watch stories being read aloud here: [76 min Christmas Collection 11 Books Animated & Read Aloud](#). Watching festive films (complete with festive snacks of course!) can provide great opportunities to talk about storyline, characters and settings.

Indoor Hunt

Hide clues for a Christmas-themed treasure hunt or play Christmas bingo. Work together to read and solve clues or cards. Here is a lovely example of bingo: [Let's Play Festive Bingo: Free Printable Game](#) | [Meri Meri – Meri Meri UK](#) and there are many more online!





Christmas Activity Ideas



Toy Donation / Care Packages

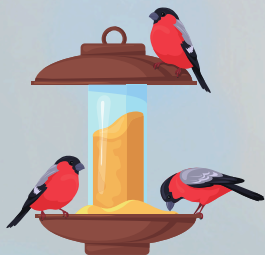
Clearing out old toys to donate to charity shops or making a special Christmas box for a child in need can make way for conversations about being grateful and having empathy for other people in different situations.

Christmas Driving Scavenger Hunt

If you need to get out of the house but the weather is bad, you could try a scavenger hunt from the car. There is great fun to be had spotting different types of decorations in the local area and lots to talk about as you travel! [Free Christmas Light Scavenger Hunt Printable - Slay At Home Mother](#)



Look After the Wildlife



At this time of year, it's nice to give the birds some high-energy food, and fruit-or fat-based bird feeders are really easy to make together. Help and encourage children to watch out for and identify the wildlife that comes to enjoy them.

There are some great ideas for different bird feeders here: [Make a bird feeder - CBeebies](#)



Celebrating our Governance Volunteers

We're incredibly grateful to all our governance volunteers who generously give their time to help our schools thrive. A special thank you goes to the following individuals for their contribution to the governance of the Trust over the past four years:

- ★ **Matt Roe**
- ★ **Georgia McMenemy**
- ★ **Lee Thomas**
- ★ **Kristie Braden**

Parent Council Members

Parent council members represent the voice of **a parent** not the voice of the parents. Their primary expertise is as a parent and they play a vital part in our governance structure. At least one parent council member is elected for each school, and at least one from each school is a member of the governance Hub Board.

Parent Council

This term, we were delighted to welcome the following new parent council members:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ★ James Waddington
Lady Seaward's CE Primary | ★ Christie Campbell
Bere Alston Primary |
| ★ Natalie Siddons
Lady Seaward's CE Primary | ★ Beth Gillan
Marshwood Primary |
| ★ Kimberley Woods
Westcliff Primary | ★ Sami Tucker
Willowbank Primary |
| ★ Charlotte Rippingale
Axminster Primary | ★ Michelle Tomlison
Willowbank Primary |

New Hub Board Members

We were also delighted to welcome:



Sarah Rock-Evans who joined **Bruce Roberts** as **foundation representative** in the **East Devon West Dorset Hub**

We are very lucky to have a great team of trustees and hub board members, who give their time generously to support our schools, and contribute to our Trust mission to provide all pupils with the best education.



Keep in touch

Follow us on social media and via our website to keep up-to-date with our latest news



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