

22 July, 2022



Dear TSAT Portsmouth Governors,

Communication from Director of Education: End of 2021-22 academic year

May I start by thanking each and every one of you for your contribution to our Portsmouth schools this year. For your engagement with school leaders and staff, with monitoring visits and documentation, and with questioning during meetings; through this you have helped us to stay focused on our mission to transform the life chances of the children we serve.

As you may be aware, a few months ago the DfE launched their school's white paper (March 2022) and 24 priority areas for investment were identified. These are all areas of poor outcomes and high disadvantage. In the South East, Portsmouth and Hastings have been named and £40 million is going to be distributed for local authorities to use for bespoke interventions. I am delighted that our two-year partnership with Portsmouth LA to help drive the use of digital technologies has supported the city-wide education strategy, and that there are plans to use some of the investment to support further change. Next year, I will continue to Chair the Portsmouth Education Partnership Digital Drive Team.

The white paper has set ambitious performance targets for schools – there is an expectation that by 2030, 90% of children will reach the expected benchmarks in Reading, Writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2, and that the national GCSE average grade in English and maths will improve from 4.5 to 5.

We have recently been looking at the end of KS2 outcomes across our Portsmouth schools and are delighted that our young people have made excellent progress, despite the challenges of the pandemic. Highlights include 82% of Year 6s at Meon Junior school reaching expected for Reading with an incredible 33% at Greater depth. When looking across Trust schools, the children have also made the best progress from their starting points and their outcomes are well above the national average.

In addition, New Horizons Primary school celebrated the best progress in maths across all Trust schools, with the number of children reaching expected also 3% above the national average. At Newbridge Junior School, 81% of children reached expected progress in Writing and 9% were Greater Depth, which represents outstanding outcomes; also, with the best progress across Trust schools at 0.27. These are tremendous KS2 outcomes driven by our talented and hardworking teachers who have nurtured and inspired our children to feel confident in doing their very best.

If you have a few minutes, please do watch our hub highlights video which captures all of our work this year and says some thank yous and goodbyes to key leaders in our family of schools.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alfzBr0-4W0>

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We will also be saying goodbye to Tracey Harper, Executive Business Manager for Portsmouth primaries, who leaves us at the end of August and been an incredible source of support and expertise. We will miss her greatly.

We have used this opportunity to amend the responsibilities of the role and created a new Head of Business & Operations for Portsmouth, and appointed Carol Durrant into this role who you can look forward to meeting in the new academic year.

There is of course so much else to celebrate, and I felt I must share with you the incredible success of the one:one initiative at The Portsmouth Academy – with every one of the 250 children in Year 7 learning this year through the aid of a HP360 laptop/tablet device.

When we CAT4 tested the children at the start of the year, 48% of them started school either below, or very below, the national average. Through the use of Reading Progress software, 10 months of progress has been added to their reading ages. 23% of children have moved to now be 'on track' for their pathway across the full 3 years of KS3 (this compares to movement of just 9% in Year 8 who have not had devices, and 14% in Year 9).

The impact of the introduction of devices can also be understood through the voices of people whose working/school lives have been improved. Over the year, I have collected some of these stories: do watch Jane's <https://youtu.be/c7psC1XeVcw>.

The school has now submitted an application to become a Microsoft showcase school and you can look through this here, in case of interest. <https://sway.office.com/GTH20yuzjNGXkTQG>

It is worth noting that a number of new teachers and senior leaders, and indeed the new Principal Ash Woodhall, wrote about the one:one devices and Microsoft showcase school pursuit in their applications and it was a determining factor in them choosing the academy in what is a competitive market for recruitment.

As we move into the new year, please be aware that I am stepping into the role of interim Headteacher at New Horizons primary but will continue to work with all schools in the hub and be ably supported by the hub leadership team – Anna Webb, Sara Paine and Ash Woodhall, with Rachel Grey and Sonia Nickerson supporting school improvement.

Have a lovely summer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Sheppard".

Natalie Sheppard

Director of Education – TSAT Portsmouth

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