

TOGETHER WE THRIVE

TRUST NEWSLETTER - POSITIVITY
SPRING 1 2026





Woodfield
Infant School



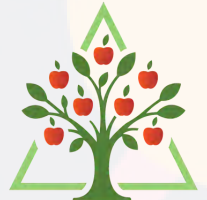
Wilfred Owen
Primary School



Greenacres
Primary School



St Mary's
CE Primary & Nursery School



The Orchard
Rooted in care, growing in confidence



Market Drayton
Infant & Nursery School



POSITIVITY



Shropshire
Primary Partnership



Market Drayton
Junior School



St George's
Junior School



St Peter's
CE Primary & Nursery School

TOGETHER WE THRIVE



Carla Whelan
CEO

At Empower Schools, **positivity is at the heart of everything we do.** It's more than just a word—it's a value that guides our actions, shapes our relationships, and defines our schools. Every child, parent, and staff member experiences this positivity daily, whether in classrooms, playgrounds, or in the wider community.

Positivity in Action: Belonging and Kindness

Relational practice is the foundation of behaviour in all our schools. Our motto, **#choosetobekind**, reminds everyone in our community that positivity is a choice we make each day. By working together—staff, students, and families—we build a culture of belonging, safety, and encouragement.

Supporting Families with a Positive Mindset

Providing strong links and pathways ensures that every child's needs are met. Attendance is strong because families value school, and surveys show parents consistently recommend our schools. Every step we take is rooted in the belief that positivity and encouragement create better learning outcomes and stronger communities.

Positivity in Our Communities

We actively contribute to our local communities, collaborating with businesses and agencies to strengthen connections and opportunities. We place high priority on learning environments that inspire growth, creativity, and confidence. Every member of the Empower team knows that positivity is not just about being kind—it's about improving daily, coaching others, and helping every child flourish.

Creating Positive Learning Environments

Across our schools, we design dynamic and natural spaces that support learning and well-being. We strategically use technology, connect with local neighbourhood's, and maintain spaces where children can learn, explore, and succeed. Positivity is the lens through which we make every decision, from classrooms to community projects, ensuring that every child and staff member feels valued and empowered.



Connect with us to explore how our offer can support your vision and goals.

- Collaborative Sharing
- Coaching
- Training/CPD
- ITT
- Conferences/stalls

empowermat.co.uk

[@CarlaWhelan](https://twitter.com/CarlaWhelan)

[@EmpowerMAT](https://twitter.com/EmpowerMAT)



Sam Scott
Director of Education

For me, positivity starts with our trust values. They keep us grounded and help us stay focused when things get challenging for staff, children and our communities.

Collaboration is a huge part of my role and I've seen real progress over the last two years, nearly 100 teachers and LSAs completing the NPQLT together. It showed what we can achieve when we work with a shared purpose.

Closing the attainment gap isn't easy, but I believe it starts with equity and a genuine "we can do this" attitude. That positivity has to reach beyond our schools and into the communities we serve.

Personally, I've started reading self-development books, something I never thought I'd say. They've helped me strengthen my mindset so I can approach challenges with more intention and optimism (I would highly recommend 'Miracle Morning' by Hal Elrod).

For me, positivity isn't about ignoring problems; it's about trying to face them with belief, energy and a commitment to making things better.



Tricia Slater
COO

As COO, my focus is on creating the conditions where positivity can thrive across our Trust. By strengthening operational excellence and ensuring our estates are safe, compliant and uplifting, I help remove barriers so colleagues and pupils can flourish. This term, I have collaborated with site staff and BSMs to gather their insights on improving efficiencies and enhancing our collaborative delivery.

Collaborating more widely with colleagues from across the sector too provides immense advantages. Engaging in COO networks beyond our Trust allows me to exchange best practices and infuse Empower Trust with innovative ideas, fostering a positive atmosphere.

Streamlined systems, efficient resource management, and well-maintained learning environments reduce workload, build confidence and promote a calm, supportive culture. Through high-quality shared services, strong compliance, and sustainable estate planning, we reinforce a daily sense of safety, value and wellbeing. In doing so, we bring our Positivity Promise to life, not through words, but through the environments and operational foundations that help every school, every colleague and every child in our Trust to shine.



Molly Palin
People Services
Administrator

As the People Services Administrator, I bring a consistently positive attitude to my role, approaching each task with enthusiasm, empathy, and commitment to supporting both teams at the shared services as well as the schools.

I have recently started a HR apprenticeship, which has strengthened this mindset further, giving me new opportunities to learn, reflect, and grow. I remain open-minded, adaptable, and proactive, contributing meaningfully to the team. By maintaining this positive approach and embracing every learning opportunity, I am confident that I will continue developing both personally and professionally.

My positivity is also inspired and strengthened by the positivity of those around me, and I am truly grateful for everyone in the Trust who encourage, support, and uplift me as I progress.



Lucy Copson
Communications
and Enterprise Lead

Positivity is a value that sits at the heart of Empower MAT, shaping how we work, connect, and support one another.

Over the past year, my journey within the Trust has shown me how great a positive outlook can be. Stepping into the Communications and Enterprise Lead role has given me the opportunity to continue to collaborate with colleagues across all of our schools, celebrating achievements, highlighting inspiring stories, and shining a light on the incredible work happening every day. Whether I'm designing newsletters, capturing the energy of school events, or sharing updates across our platforms, I see first hand how positivity helps everyone.

Alongside this, completing my multi-channel marketing apprenticeship has encouraged me to stay open-minded, curious, and appreciative of personal growth. Each new skill gives me greater confidence, and positivity plays a key role in staying motivated and embracing learning.



Sarah North
Headteacher

St Mary's

CE Primary & Nursery School

Where Every Day Matters & Everyone Counts

At St Mary's, positivity shapes everything we do. It guides our curriculum, enriches our activities, and inspires the way our children learn, play and grow. Across school life—whether in the classroom, on the playground, in competitions or during workshops—children are encouraged to embrace challenges, support one another and celebrate every success.

This positive approach can be seen daily: in their enthusiasm for learning, their teamwork and sportsmanship, and the mature attitudes they bring to new experiences. By embedding positivity into our routines, we help pupils develop strong academic habits and the life skills they need to thrive.

Skills4Bills Workshop

Today, our Year 6 pupils took part in the inspiring Skills4Bills workshop, where they explored real-life money choices through a fun and highly interactive game. The programme introduces children to important financial concepts such as budgeting, spending decisions and understanding the consequences of overspending, empowering them to see how everyday choices can shape their future.

The pupils threw themselves into the session with enthusiasm and demonstrated fantastic maturity as they discussed how to make sensible financial decisions. Their positive attitudes and thoughtful contributions made the workshop a real success.

To make the experience even more exciting, the children each received their own piggy bank to take home, an encouraging first step in building strong savings habits.

Overall, it was a wonderfully uplifting session that left everyone feeling confident and motivated about making smart financial choices.



Chess Competition

Our chess teams are on cloud nine after coming 1st and 2nd in their latest chess tournament at St George's Junior School in Shrewsbury. Their success wasn't just about strategic thinking—it was powered by the incredibly positive attitude they carried with them throughout the day.

St Mary's A team won every single game to finish on a perfect 20 out of 20 points. This remarkable result reflects not only their skill, but also the confidence, calmness and optimism they showed at every table. Their positivity helped them stay focused, support one another, and approach each match with enthusiasm.

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Sarah North
Headteacher

St Mary's

CE Primary & Nursery School

Where Every Day Matters & Everyone Counts

With St Mary's A team already securing their place in the Shropshire Finals, the finals spot from this particular competition was up for grabs. St Mary's B team seized the opportunity with determination and a wonderfully upbeat spirit. Their belief in themselves—and in each other—played a huge role in earning second place. Thanks to this resilience and positivity, BOTH teams will now proudly represent the league at the Shropshire Finals.

A huge thank you to St George's Junior for hosting and to Shropshire Junior Chess for organising such a supportive and encouraging event.

Congratulations to all the children—your hard work, teamwork and positive mindset truly shone through and made this achievement possible!



A Wonderful Half Term at St Mary's

As we reach the end of this half term, we are incredibly proud of all our children. Their hard work, enthusiasm and consistently positive attitudes have shone through in everything they've done. From classroom learning to teamwork on the playground, they have shown kindness, resilience and a genuine love of learning. It has been a joy to see them challenge themselves, support their peers and celebrate their achievements. A huge well done to every child for making this half term such a positive one. We can't wait to see what they achieve next!



**St George's
Junior School**

Excellence & Enjoyment Are Achievable

Kelly Lee
Headteacher

At our school, we are committed to creating a culture where every pupil and member of staff feels valued, supported, and inspired to be their best. We focus on promoting and celebrating **positivity**, one of our core values, and helping everyone recognise the power of noticing what is going well, even on the days that feel a challenge.

Weekly 'Positivity and Special Mentions for Pupils and Staff'

- Celebrating kindness, effort, teamwork, resilience, and moments where pupils embody our values.
- A chance to recognise colleagues who have gone the extra mile, supported others, or brought a positive spirit to the school.

These small recognitions help build confidence, strengthen relationships, and remind us all that positivity is contagious.

Celebrating the Value of Positivity

Across classes and our pupils we recognise

- stories of positive actions and attitudes
- examples of pupils and staff lifting others up
- assemblies and discussions centred on kindness, gratitude, and positivity

By making positivity visible, we help it grow.

Focusing on gratitude and 'Small Wins'

We're encouraging everyone to pause and notice the good moments in each day. This includes:

- sharing "What Went Well" reflections
- celebrating small successes, improvements, and efforts
- encouraging pupils and staff to express gratitude to one another

Focusing on what's going right helps to build stronger wellbeing and a more optimistic mindset.

Resilience and Growth Mindset

We are also continuing our work on developing resilience and encouraging a growth mindset across the school. This means:

- framing challenges as opportunities to learn
- praising effort, perseverance, and strategies—not just outcomes
- helping pupils understand that mistakes are a natural and valuable part of learning

Together, these habits help our students grow into confident, adaptable learners who believe in their ability to improve.

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Market Drayton
Junior School

At our school, positivity isn't just something we talk about—it's something we live every day. Guided by our Trust values and our shared sense of belonging, we continue to build an environment where every member of our community feels valued, supported and recognised.

We are proud of our Positive Behaviour Policy, which places relationships and consistency at its heart. This approach ensures that every child understands expectations clearly and feels secure, recognised and encouraged.

Our Recognition Board continues to be a daily highlight in classrooms. It shines a light on pupils who demonstrate our school values, strengthen their learning habits and show kindness, determination and respect. It has been wonderful to see children cheering for one another and celebrating each other's efforts.

Each Friday, pupils have the chance to earn the coveted Best Seats in the House award. Winners enjoy their treat of hot chocolate while celebrating the brilliant contributions they have made throughout the week. This moment of joy is a simple but powerful way to build self-esteem and acknowledge the positive choices our children make.

We believe deeply that everyone belongs. Our school is a place where differences are valued, relationships matter and every child knows they are a vital part of our team. We work together, learn from one another and support each child to develop socially, emotionally, and academically.

This strong sense of belonging extends beyond the school walls and into our homes and wider community. Our Friday enrichment sessions have been received with tremendous positivity. These sessions offer pupils exciting new experiences—creative, physical, outdoor, and community-based—that help broaden horizons and deepen connections.

This term, our enrichment offer has been strengthened through the generosity of our local businesses David Wilson Homes and Men's Shed Community Group. Both organisations have supported us by revamping our Forest School area, providing new opportunities for exploration and hands-on learning. From improved outdoor spaces to additional resources and equipment, their contributions are already having a fantastic impact on the children's experiences. We are incredibly thankful for their commitment to helping us grow an inspiring and enriching school environment.

Every day, we see the power of a community that works together, celebrates each other's achievements, and embraces differences with kindness and respect. Together, we are building a school where everyone thrives.

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The Orchard

Rooted in care, growing in confidence

This term saw the official opening of The Orchard at Greenacres Primary School, a proud milestone for both the school and the wider community. On Friday 6th February, staff, pupils, families and guests gathered for a special ribbon-cutting ceremony with Julie Buckley MP, Carla Whelan, representatives from Shropshire Council, and the dedicated team whose hard work brought this vision to life.

The Orchard was created in response to the growing level of SEND need locally and the shortage of specialist places across the area. Supported by Local Authority funding, it has been thoughtfully designed as a flexible, child-centred provision where pupils can access both their mainstream classroom and The Orchard, with support tailored to individual needs. At its core is a strong wrap-around approach that keeps every child firmly connected to their class, their Orchard team and their home environment, ensuring stability, belonging and consistent support.

The opening marked more than the launch of a building; it represented our ongoing commitment to inclusive education and to valuing every child's unique strengths. The school extends its thanks to everyone who contributed to making this project a reality. In addition, January brought another highlight as Sue Lovelock, Regional Director at the DfE, visited Greenacres and Wilfred Owen to see the trust's progress over the past two years. Her visit recognised the strong commitment to inclusion across our schools and the continued focus on delivering high-quality teaching for every child.





Sam Scott

Director of Education and
Programme Lead

Shropshire

Primary Partnership

Aspiration • Collaboration • Knowledge

As we come to the end of this half term, we are delighted to celebrate the fantastic progress our Associate Teachers have made during this busy and purposeful period. Their commitment, professionalism, and enthusiasm continue to shine through every aspect of their training.

• ITaPS Week 3 Completed

This half term, our Associate Teachers successfully completed their third ITaPS (Intensive Training and Practice) week. These focused training blocks blend structured input with practical, classroom-based application, allowing Associate Teachers to refine key teaching skills in a supportive, high-impact environment.



• Core Subject Facilitation Sessions Finished

We are pleased to share that all core subject facilitation sessions are now complete. These sessions have equipped the cohort with strong subject knowledge and effective pedagogical strategies, preparing them to deliver high-quality learning across the curriculum. Engagement has been excellent, with facilitators praising their reflective discussions and willingness to try new approaches.



This is a computing Session with AmazingICT

The next half term is set to be equally rich with professional learning opportunities:

Science Focus Week

Associate Teachers will take part in a dedicated science focus week, deepening their understanding of scientific enquiry, progression, and hands-on investigative learning. This will help build confidence in delivering engaging and purposeful science lessons.

Outdoor Learning with Shropshire Wildlife Trust

A highlight of the upcoming programme is a two-day outdoor learning experience in partnership with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. This immersive experience will explore how outdoor environments can be used to inspire curiosity, support cross-curricular learning, and promote a strong connection with the natural world.

ITaPS Week 4

The half term will conclude with ITaPS Week 4, offering another opportunity for Associate Teachers to apply their skills in school settings, receive targeted coaching, and continue refining their professional practice.

We are incredibly proud of the progress our Associate Teachers have made so far this year. Their dedication and enthusiasm are commendable, and we look forward to supporting them through the exciting opportunities that lie ahead next half term.

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Follow the Golden Thread with STEP

Thinking about a career in teaching? Applications are now open through the DfE Apply Portal for our Initial Teacher Training programme. Whether you're a graduate, a career changer, or simply looking for a new and rewarding direction, this is the perfect time to start your journey.

Shropshire Primary Partnership is a proud partner of STEP, working alongside four local training alliances to offer high-quality school-based training, expert mentoring, and excellent employment prospects.

If you're passionate about working with children and want to make a difference in your community, we'd love to support you.

STEP's ITT programmes are designed to develop confident, skilled teachers who can thrive in the profession. The partnership provides:

- High-quality school placements
- Specialist mentors
- Regular training in partnership with the University of Chester
- A strong emphasis on wellbeing and emotional health throughout the programme
- Excellent employment prospects, with many trainees securing local posts after qualifying

Since 2012, more than **400** teachers have successfully trained through the partnership, many now working and leading in Shropshire schools.

👉 Click the image to download your copy of the new STEP ITT Toolkit



School-led, Transformative, Excellence in Partnership

👉 Email: info@stepmw2.co.uk

👉 Email: shropshireprimarypartnership@empowermat.co.uk

👉 Learn more: www.shropshireprimarypartnership.co.uk



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#buildingbrilliance

#AllIn

#togetherwehavegotthis