

TOGETHER WE THRIVE

TRUST NEWSLETTER - EMPOWERMENT
SPRING 2 2026





Woodfield
Infant School



Wilfred Owen
Primary School



Greenacres
Primary School



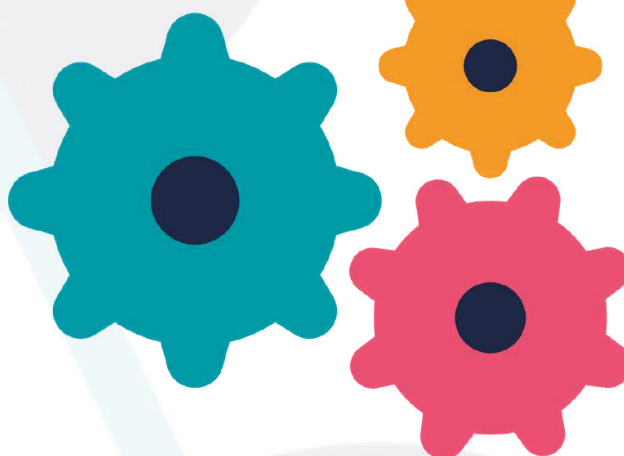
Market Drayton
Infant & Nursery School



The Orchard
Rooted in care, growing in confidence



St Mary's
CE Primary & Nursery School



Shropshire
Primary Partnership

EMPOWERMENT



Market Drayton
Junior School



The Willows
Setting Foundations, Shaping Futures



St George's
Junior School



St Peter's
CE Primary & Nursery School

#buildingbrilliance



Carla Whelan - CEO

Empowerment is something we live every day, not just something we talk about.

Empowerment is at the heart of everything we do. Across our schools, it shapes the way we support children, develop staff, work as a community, and make decisions that improve outcomes for all. Empowerment isn't a single initiative for us—it's a culture that guides our actions and expectations.

Empowering Children Through Strong Attendance and a Rich Offer

We believe every child deserves the chance to thrive, and that begins with being present. Our

schools work proactively with families to remove barriers to attendance, offering early support rather than reactive intervention.

- Staff build strong relationships with pupils and families so concerns are spotted early.
- Pastoral teams provide tailored support—whether emotional, practical, or academic—to help children feel safe, confident, and ready to learn.
- Once in school, children access a rich, broad curriculum and a wide range of experiences that help them discover their strengths and grow into their potential.

Empowering Staff Through Professional Learning and Collaboration

Our staff are our greatest strength, and we invest in them accordingly.

Professional learning is not an add-on—it's part of our identity as a Trust.

- Staff engage in high-quality CPD that is relevant, evidence-informed, and aligned across the Trust.
- We create opportunities for colleagues to share expertise, observe practice, and learn from one another.
- Our comprehensive employee offer helps us retain skilled practitioners who feel valued, supported, and able to progress.

Empowering the Community Through Collective Expertise

Empower schools do not work in isolation. We combine our strengths so that every child benefits from the collective expertise of the Trust.

- Leaders and teachers collaborate across schools to solve problems, share resources, and develop consistent approaches.
- Specialist knowledge—SEND, safeguarding, curriculum design, behaviour, is shared widely so no school is left to face challenges alone.
- We see ourselves as part of a wider civic community, contributing to local partnerships and supporting families beyond the school gates.

Empowering Governance Through Clarity and Accountability

Strong governance ensures that empowerment leads to real impact.

Governors and trustees hold us to account while championing the needs of children and staff.

Data, evidence, and lived experience guide our decisions, ensuring we focus on what truly improves outcomes. This is our lived commitment.



Michelle Harrington
Director of People &
Culture

This term, I have demonstrated Empowerment by contributing to strengthening the conditions that enable our staff and children to thrive. Through the launch of our comprehensive Wellbeing Hub, colleagues now have accessible mental health and wellbeing support, helping create stable, positive environments for pupils to attend well and reach their potential.

I have also supported a culture where staff feel able to engage confidently in their roles by using the commitments set out in our Trust Strategic Plan and People Strategy to guide how we shape professional learning, wellbeing support and staff experience across the Trust. Trust-wide wellbeing and kindness initiatives continue to bring colleagues together to share expertise and strengthen our collective responsibility. In addition, by developing clear and supportive People processes and working closely with colleagues across the Trust, I contribute to a sense of shared understanding and collective responsibility that helps everyone feel confident and supported in their decision-making.



Sam Scott
Director of Education

When I reflect on what Empowerment means to me, it takes me back to my own school days. I had a strong primary education with teachers who brought a wide range of expertise and experiences.

They encouraged us to take part in many different sports, I was lucky enough to be taught by a gymnastics coach, a teacher who had played netball for Wales, a cricketer, and even a teacher who introduced me to ballroom dancing.

These opportunities developed my love of sport, but more importantly, they opened up doors and possibilities.

This sense of empowerment continued into my secondary education. Teachers believed in me and encouraged me to succeed, despite challenges at home and growing up in what would now be described as a disadvantaged family. Their belief in me helped to build my own belief in myself—something that has stayed with me ever since.

From a work perspective, empowerment now sits at the heart of my role. I am privileged to work with those at every stage of their professional journey, from the very start of their training through to leadership development. A key part of my work is empowering those in the teaching profession to continue breaking down barriers for young children and helping them develop the skills, confidence, and adaptability they will need in a fast-changing world. By working and learning together, we empower one another and support meaningful growth.



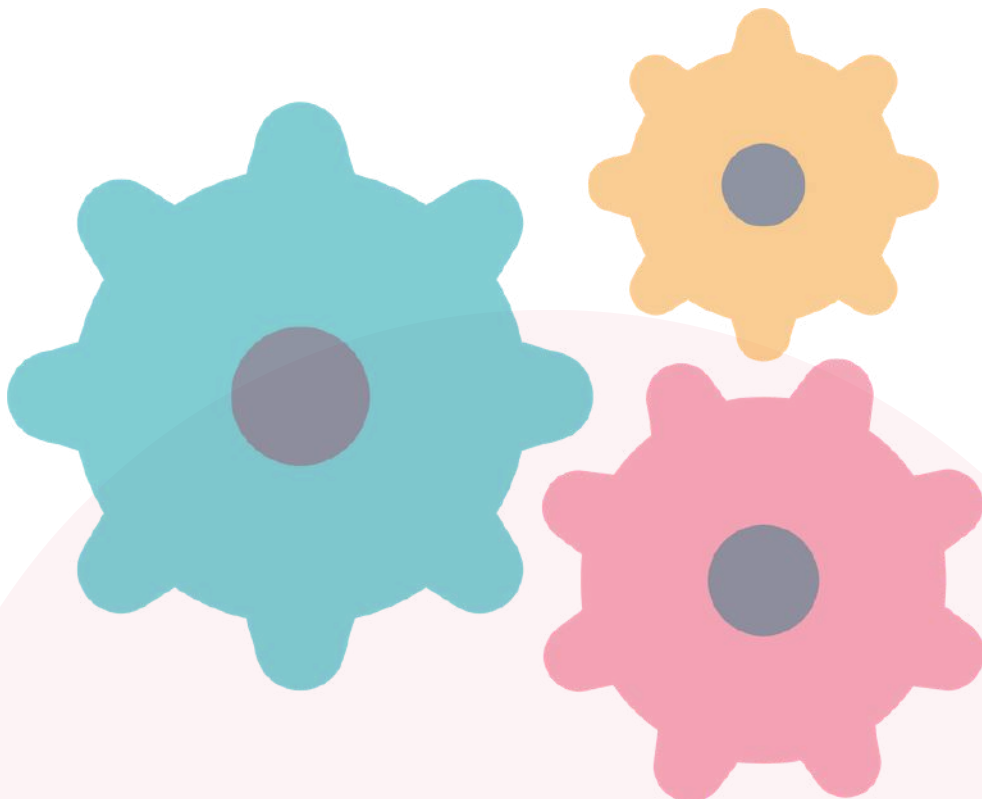
Lucy Copson
Communications
and Enterprise Lead

Empowerment for me, it's about feeling trusted, supported, and encouraged to grow, and over my time in the Trust, that sense of empowerment has shaped both my work and my confidence.

Since stepping into the Communications and Enterprise Lead role, I've felt the freedom to develop ideas, collaborate with colleagues across all of our schools. Every time I help share a story, celebrate a success, or highlight the incredible things happening in our community, I'm reminded of how empowering it is to have a voice — and to help others share theirs too.

My multi-channel marketing apprenticeship has also played a huge part in this journey. Learning new skills has made me more confident in my abilities, more willing to take initiative.. Empowerment has been at the heart of that growth, knowing that I'm trusted to learn, try, and improve.

Whether I'm creating content, supporting teams, or capturing moments across our schools, I feel able to contribute something meaningful. And in turn, I hope the work I do helps empower others too, by celebrating their achievements, amplifying their voices, and showing what's possible when we all believe in ourselves and each other.





Sarah North
Headteacher

St Mary's

CE Primary & Nursery School

Where Every Day Matters & Everyone Counts

Empowering Play at St Mary's Primary!

Every lunchtime, our pupils take charge of their play by jumping into French Skipping, Duck Duck Goose, Long Jump, and team relay challenges. With guidance from our wonderful lunchtime supervisors, children lead their own games, encourage one another, and show incredible confidence and teamwork.

The playground is always alive with laughter, determination, and children stepping up to try something new

A huge thank-you to our lunchtime team for creating a space where every child feels supported, active, and empowered to shine.



Gotta Dance 2026

Our dance troupe had the most empowering experience — from having their hair styled, to shining through a focused dress rehearsal, and finally delivering a stunning performance on stage. The pride and confidence they showed was incredible to witness. A huge thank you to Mrs Neesham for her inspiring choreography and dedication during the weekly dance club. Your guidance helped each dancer discover their strength, creativity and self-belief. This night truly showed the power of empowerment in action.





Sarah North
Headteacher

St Mary's

CE Primary & Nursery School

Where Every Day Matters & Everyone Counts

Attendance Monopoly - Treat Tuesday!

We're excited to share Treat Tuesday as part of our ongoing effort to celebrate great attendance! Each class works together to earn rewards on our Attendance Monopoly Board, and when they reach a treat square, they enjoy their well-earned reward the following Tuesday.

This initiative also helps us promote our school value of Empowerment by making progress visible and achievable, children are encouraged to take ownership of their attendance, support one another, and recognise the impact their choices have on their class community. Treat Tuesday empowers pupils to work together, stay motivated, and feel proud of what they can accomplish as a team.



An Empowering Afternoon in Year 5!

Today, our Year 5 pupils confidently opened the school hall to welcome grandparents and members of the Senior Citizen Club for an inspiring afternoon of board games and connection!

The hall buzzed with laughter, teamwork, and plenty of spirited challenges. It was incredible to see our young learners take the lead—building bridges across generations, sharing stories, and creating moments filled with joy and belonging.

A heartfelt thank you to all our visitors for joining us. Your presence helped make this gathering a powerful celebration of community and togetherness!





**St George's
Junior School**

Excellence & Enjoyment Are Achievable

Kelly Lee
Headteacher

Celebrating Empowerment at St. George's

At St. George's, Empowerment is at the heart of everything we do. It's one of our core Empower Trust values and a central part of our school identity. Every day, our children are encouraged to believe in themselves, influence their own learning and take confident steps towards their futures.

Here are just a few highlights of how Empowerment is shining through this term:

Empowered Learners

Across school, pupils are building independence through The St George's Way—being Ready, Respectful and Safe. Our updated Positive Behaviour for Learning Handbook emphasises confidence, resilience and the belief that every child can succeed.

Empowerment through our curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to inspire curiosity, creativity and ambition. Whether pupils are exploring new topics, problemsolving in teams or taking on leadership roles, we want them to feel that their voice matters and their ideas can shape change. Our commitment to a values-led approach is woven throughout the teaching and learning experience.

Empowerment in our school values

We are proud to be part of Empower Trust, whose values guide our work every day: Empowerment, Ambition, Collaboration, Positivity, Respect, Integrity. These values underpin all that we do—from the relationships we build to the opportunities we create.

Empowering future leaders

Children are encouraged to take ownership of their learning journey:

- Leading class roles
- Sharing ideas in school councils
- Taking part in enrichment opportunities
- Celebrating their strengths and aspirations

We believe that empowered children become confident, motivated and successful young people.

A Culture where everyone can thrive

Every adult and child is encouraged to shape their own practice and future—this is the essence of Empowerment across the Trust. We celebrate individuality, support diverse talents and nurture ambition in every member of our community.



Emily Kynaston
Head of School



At Greenacres, we continue to strengthen an empowering and inclusive approach for all pupils. Our Hive nurture provision offers a supportive space where children build emotional confidence and return to learning feeling ready and secure. Through our graduated response and universal offer, staff provide tailored support so every child can access learning and grow in independence.

The Orchard, gives children specialist, relationship-focused support, enabling them to feel confident, regulate effectively and re-engage with classroom learning.

This year we have also expanded enrichment across school through Flourish Friday, giving all children opportunities to develop new skills, explore interests and shine in different ways, in important part of building self-belief and empowering pupils beyond the classroom.

We are part of the Inclusive Attendance Pilot, a whole-school approach where everyone plays a role in supporting strong attendance so that every child can benefit from our rich learning offer.

Empowerment remains at the heart of all we do at Greenacres, ensuring every child can thrive.



Beck Preece
Headteacher



Empowerment within our Trust comes to life through our SENCOs working together with purpose, clarity and generosity, using our half-termly network meetings as a space to share ideas, celebrate good practice, and support one another. These sessions aren't just about problem-solving, they're about being an ear when someone needs to talk, offering reassurance, and building confidence across our community.

By collaborating closely and staying proactive, we position ourselves ahead of the game as we prepare for the upcoming SEND White Paper, ensuring that we are not only ready for change but shaping it together through shared strength, insight, and collective expertise.

Empowerment thrives when all staff actively and positively engage with professional learning, creating a culture where everyone grows together. Our EYFS half-termly meetings and EYFS triads provide safe, supportive spaces to share and develop pedagogy without pressure, just genuine collaboration and curiosity. This spirit of collective improvement is further strengthened through our EYFS Conference with Mr Mc, where the focus on play, enhanced provision for our little learners, and clear progression in writing inspires staff to refine their practice with confidence. Through these shared experiences, we cultivate an empowered workforce that feels valued, skilled, and ready to give every child the strongest start.



St Peter's

CE Primary & Nursery School

Sarah Kynaston

Headteacher



Empowerment at St Peter's: Helping Every Child Shine



Spring 2

At St Peter's, empowering our pupils sits at the heart of everything we do. Whether they're solving problems, leading others, expressing creativity, or making decisions about their own learning, our children are encouraged to recognise their strengths and use them with confidence.

What Empowerment Looks Like in Our School

Pupil Leadership

- School Council, Worship Group, Children's Safeguarding Board and Resilience Reps give children a genuine voice in school development.
- Pupils help shape assemblies, lead charity projects, and make decisions that affect everyday school life.

Building Resilience and Self-Belief

- We use positive relationships, restorative conversations and coaching questions to help children solve problems and resolve conflicts
- Vocabulary such as persevere, reflect, collaborate and aspire is used across school to encourage self-motivation.

- Our motto "Dream, Believe, Achieve and Flourish" reinforces this message too.

Digital Confidence

- Through our Trust's digital strategy and Chromebook pilot, pupils learn to use technology safely, creatively, and responsibly.

Celebrating Individual Strengths

- Class assemblies, enrichment afternoons, and our celebration workshops provide opportunities for every child to share talents—from art and sport to Spanish, storytelling, and leadership.

What Empowerment Means to Us

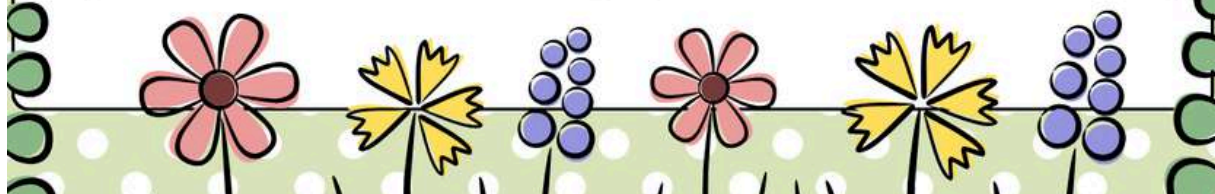
"I like that teachers trust us to make choices about our learning. It makes me feel proud of myself." – Year 3

"When I find something tricky, my teacher helps me think of a strategy instead of doing it for me. Now I know I can do hard things." – Year 2

"In School Council, we talk about what pupils want. Our ideas actually get used." – Year 6

Our Commitment

We believe empowered children grow into compassionate, capable, and confident young people who are ready to shape the future. Through high-quality teaching, strong relationships, and a culture where every voice matters, St Peter's continues to nurture pupils who know they can make a difference.





Emma Tibbetts
Headteacher



Empowering Our Pupils: Building Confidence Through Action

At Market Drayton Junior School, we believe that true empowerment comes from giving children the tools, experiences and confidence to be the best version of themselves. This term, we've seen this vision come to life in two exciting ways.

Rockkidz: Tackling Big Issues Through Music and Movement

Our pupils recently enjoyed an unforgettable visit from Rockkidz, where they were empowered to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing young people today – online bullying, friendships and racism. Through an energetic combination of music, exercise and engaging messages, the session gave children a safe space to explore these challenging topics in a way that resonated with them. The impact was immediate and powerful.

One parent shared: *"My daughter absolutely loved it! And wouldn't stop talking about it! Even this morning she's still buzzing about it! I've never really seen her so excited over something at school although I know you put on a lot for them, this was definitely one of the best things she has done!"* This kind of response shows how meaningful experiences can spark important conversations at home and help children develop the resilience and understanding they need to navigate relationships both online and offline. By addressing topics like online bullying and racism in an age-appropriate, engaging way, we're giving our pupils the language and confidence to recognise unhealthy behaviours and seek support when needed.

Young Sports Leaders: From Participants to Coaches

Empowerment isn't just about receiving support – it's about giving children opportunities to lead. Through our Friday enrichment sessions, we've been training our young sports leaders in key coaching skills and techniques. These pupils are now confidently delivering their own sports sessions to their peers. The impact of this initiative has been significant:

- Building leadership skills: Our sports leaders have developed confidence in planning, organising and delivering sessions independently
- Developing communication: They've learned how to give clear instructions, provide encouragement and offer constructive feedback to their peers
- Fostering responsibility: Taking ownership of sessions has helped them understand the importance of preparation, time management and adaptability
- Creating role models: Younger pupils now have relatable peer leaders who inspire them to get active and try new activities
- Enhancing participation: Sessions led by peers often feel less intimidating, encouraging children who might be reluctant to engage in traditional PE lessons

The Bigger Picture Both initiatives reflect our commitment to developing well-rounded pupils who possess not just academic knowledge, but also the character traits that will serve them throughout life – resilience, kindness, integrity and courage. By providing these rich, practical experiences, we're helping our pupils understand that they have agency in their own lives and the power to make positive choices. We're proud to continue offering these empowering experiences that help our children grow into confident, compassionate young people ready to face the challenges and opportunities ahead.



Shropshire

Primary Partnership

Aspiration • Collaboration • Knowledge

Sam Scott

Director of Education and
Programme Lead

As we reach the end of this half term, we are thrilled to highlight the excellent progress our Associate Teachers have made throughout this busy and purposeful period. Their dedication, professionalism, and enthusiasm have been evident in every aspect of their training, and we are incredibly proud of all they continue to achieve.

When we return from the Easter break, our full-time Associate Teachers will have just two weeks remaining in their second School-Based Learning placement before moving on to their third and final placement on 30th April. Meanwhile, our part-time Associate Teachers will be approaching the end of their first placement in May and will then continue into their second placement. We look forward to supporting all our trainees as they take these exciting next steps in their development.

This term:

This half term, our Associate Teachers have completed

- The fourth and final ITaPS Week, an invaluable opportunity to apply their skills within school settings, engage in targeted coaching, and continue refining their professional practice.
- Science Focus Week,
- A full day of training with our SEND expert, Rachel Butterfield, which focused on deepening practice, evaluation, and inclusive approaches.
- Academic days facilitated by the University of Chester, alongside
- A dedicated PE training session that further broadened their curriculum knowledge.

Although a short half term, it has certainly been a packed and purposeful one for all involved.



Shropshire
Wildlife Trust



Lakelands
Academy



Flourish Education



University of
Chester



Department
for Education

ST P
Shropshire and Telford
Education Partnership



MATNetworks.

Connecting Leaders, Shaping the Future

Chaired by our very own CEO, Carla Whelan, with an agenda that moves beyond theory into real-world practice:

The White Paper & Efficiency

Navigating the future of Trust growth with Vince Green (CEO, Summit Learning Trust).

SEND Insight & Reflections

Caroline Dixon (Supporting Education Group) will share practical perspectives on strengthening SEND provision.

Inclusion & SEND Toolkit

Strategic case studies from 2 of our fantastic headteachers, Beck Preece and Karen Matthews, highlighting the new toolkit and its role in the White Paper.

Understanding Minds

Supporting cognition, communication, and emotional wellbeing in education with Dr Angela Willis CPsychol Education Inclusion Consultant

NELI

Insight and reflections on language development interventions.

Impactful Culture

The importance of language and leadership with Mark Davis (Blue Apple Education).

The Pupil Voice

Hearing directly from the children at the heart of our mission.

Grab your tickets here

MATNetworks Tickets



The poster features the MATNetworks logo at the top, followed by the tagline 'Connecting Leaders, Shaping the Future'. Below this, there are two rows of circular headshots of speakers. The first row includes Carla Whelan (CEO), Vince Green (CEO), Dr. Angela Willis (CPsychol Founder & Director), Mark Davis (Director), and Paul Hanmore (Founder). The second row includes Beck Preece & Karen Matthews (Trust Strategic Lead for SEND & Inclusion) and Andy Smith & Matt Smith (Founding Directors). At the bottom, it says 'Join Us | 23rd April 2026 | Shrewsbury Town FC'. The footer contains logos for Empower Multi-Academy Trust, Summit Learning Trust, Education Services, Blue Apple Education, Youth Shoots, and SMASH Life.

MATNetworks.
Connecting Leaders, Shaping the Future

Carla Whelan CEO
Vince Green CEO
Dr. Angela Willis CPsychol Founder & Director
Mark Davis Director
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Join Us | 23rd April 2026
Shrewsbury Town FC

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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

[@Carla Whelan](https://www.instagram.com/CarlaWhelan)

[@EmpowerMAT](https://www.instagram.com/EmpowerMAT)



Empower

Multi-Academy Trust

Inspire • Empower • Achieve



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#AllIn

#togetherwehavegotthis