

TOGETHER WE THRIVE

**TRUST NEWSLETTER - INTEGRITY
SUMMER 1 2026**



READING



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



INTEGRITY



Market Drayton
Junior School



The Willows
Setting Foundations, Shaping Futures



St George's
Junior School



St Peter's
CE Primary & Nursery School

#buildingbrilliance

INTEGRITY IN ACTION

In this edition of our Trust newsletter, we explore what integrity looks like across Empower.

You will see:

- We have been shortlisted for 4 awards
- How leaders make principled decisions in challenging situations
- How staff model honesty, consistency and care every day
- How pupils learn to take responsibility and make the right choices
- How teams across the Trust build trust through transparency and fairness

Each story reflects a shared commitment:
to always act in the best interests of our children.

INTEGRITY RECOGNISED ON A NATIONAL STAGE



We are incredibly proud to share that Empower Trust has been shortlisted for four awards at the 2026 National Education Excellence Awards (nEdEx):

- Trust of the Year (Small)
- Most Improved Trust of the Year
- Trust Leadership Team
- SEND Excellence Award

Being named as finalists across multiple categories is a powerful recognition of the collective effort, dedication and integrity demonstrated across our schools and teams every day.

These nominations reflect our shared commitment to doing what is right for children, supporting one another, and continually striving for excellence.

“As I have said, the first thing is to be honest with yourself. You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself. Great peacemakers are all people of integrity, of honesty, but humility.”

Nelson Mandela



Carla Whelan - CEO

INTEGRITY: DOING THE RIGHT THING, ALWAYS

Integrity isn't just a word we've chosen because it sounds good. It's a commitment we live by every single day. It means doing the right thing, even when it's difficult. It means being honest when honesty is uncomfortable. It means putting children at the centre of every decision we make, without compromise.

Why Integrity Matters in Education

Children are watching us. They learn what integrity looks like by observing our actions, not just our words.

When we make decisions in school – how we handle conflict, how we respond to mistakes, how we treat people who are struggling – children are absorbing a lesson in what it means to be a person of integrity. This is perhaps the most important curriculum we teach.

Across our trust, integrity underpins everything:

In our leadership, it means being transparent about the challenges we face and honest about what we're working to improve.

In our curriculum, it means teaching children to question, to think critically, and to understand that doing the right thing sometimes means standing up, even when it's unpopular.

In our safeguarding and inclusion work, it means that no child is invisible, and no decision is made without considering their voice and their wellbeing.

In our financial stewardship, it means managing resources with the utmost care, because every pound belongs to the families we serve.

The Hard Decisions

Integrity often demands that we make difficult choices. Sometimes the easy path and the right path are not the same thing.

We might face situations where:

We need to have challenging conversations with families because we're genuinely concerned about a child's wellbeing.

We have to say 'no' to something popular because it doesn't align with our values or our understanding of what children actually need.

We must invest time and resources in supporting a child with complex needs, even when it stretches us, because that child deserves it.

We have to admit when we've got something wrong and work to put it right.

These aren't comfortable moments. But they are the moments that define who we are.

Children at the Heart

Everything comes back to this: Are we making decisions with children's best interests at the centre? Not convenience. Not tradition. Not what looks good. But what's actually right for the children in our care.

This is why we've invested so heavily in our Inclusion Strategy. This is why we've chosen to become smartphone-free schools. This is why we engage families as partners, listen to staff who work closest to children, and continuously ask ourselves: Is this serving our children?

When we place children at the heart, integrity follows naturally. Because once you've genuinely seen a child – their strengths, their struggles, their potential – you can't help but fight for what they deserve.

An Invitation

As we move into the summer and reflect on this year, I'm asking you to join us in thinking about *integrity* in your own school context. What does integrity look like in your setting? How are you modelling it? What hard decisions might you be facing, and how does your commitment to doing the right thing guide you?

Integrity isn't always easy. But it's always worth it.

With warmth and with purpose



Sam Scott
Director of Education

I've come to understand integrity as the consistency between what we say, what we do, and what we believe. It is something people experience in how we lead.

Integrity shows itself most clearly when decisions are difficult, not when they're easy.

In my role, that often means doing the right thing for children, even when it's uncomfortable. It means being honest and transparent with headteachers and staff, especially when conversations are hard.

It also means owning my own mistakes. Not getting everything right, but being open about it, learning, and moving forward with clarity and purpose.

Ultimately, integrity is about trust. Without it, nothing we build – as a trust, a team or a community, can truly last.



Ria Westwood
Director of Finance

The finance team consistently show integrity by upholding high standards of honesty, transparency, and accountability in all our work. We ensure that financial information is accurate, reliable, and reported in a timely manner, enabling informed decision-making across the Trust.

We handle sensitive information responsibly and follow the rules.

We also support audits by keeping well-organised records and being open and cooperative, helping ensure everything stands up to review and scrutiny.

Our commitment to doing what is right, even when faced with challenges, reflects a strong culture of integrity at the heart of our operations.



Michelle Harrington
Director of People &
Culture

Showing Integrity in My Role

For me, integrity is about doing the right thing, even when it's not the easiest option, and making sure people feel that fairness and consistency in how we work. Integrity sits at the heart of how I lead as Director of People & Culture, it's something I try to live every day in the decisions I make and the way I support others.

In my role, that often means having honest conversations and handling difficult situations with care. In HR casework, I focus on listening properly, applying our policies consistently, and making sure everyone is treated fairly- because those moments really shape how much people trust us.

It also shows in the systems we build. Through projects like SAMPeople and our work on standardising absence processes, I've tried to create clarity and consistency, so decisions are based on evidence and everyone is treated equitably.

And just as importantly, it's about following through - working closely with Headteachers, Business Support Managers and partners, being open about decisions, and owning them.

Finally, integrity is about thinking beyond the immediate. Through our focus on wellbeing, inclusion and sustainable ways of working, I try to model values-led leadership, making decisions that are not only right for now, but right for our people and communities in the long term.

At its heart, integrity is about building trust every day - through honesty, fairness, and doing what we say we will do.



Molly Palin
People Services
Administrator

In my role as a People Services Administrator at Empower, I demonstrate integrity by consistently acting in a fair, honest, and respectful manner.

I ensure that my decisions and actions align with strong personal and professional values, creating a foundation of trust.

I am reliable and consistent in how I approach my work, treating everyone with the same level of care.

I adhere to the Empower values, using them as a guide in my daily responsibilities.

This commitment allows me to contribute positively to the team and maintain a high standard of ethical practice.

I will continue to demonstrate integrity in my role, while actively seeking opportunities for both personal and professional growth to continually improve.



Lucy Copson
Communications
and Enterprise Lead

For me, integrity is about doing the right thing. It's about being honest, accountable, and consistent in how we show up for our colleagues, our pupils, and our wider community.

Throughout my journey in the Trust, and especially while completing my apprenticeship, integrity has been a foundation for how I've approached my work. Balancing learning alongside my role required openness, being honest about what I didn't know, asking questions, and taking responsibility for my own development.

Now that I've successfully completed and passed my apprenticeship, I can see how important those moments of honesty and perseverance have been in building both my skills and my confidence.

In my role as Communications and Enterprise Lead, integrity means ensuring that the stories we share genuinely reflect the experiences of our schools. It's about representing our community with accuracy, respect, and pride, and making sure every voice is heard authentically. Whether I'm celebrating achievements, sharing updates, or working collaboratively with colleagues, I'm always mindful of the importance of trust, and the responsibility that comes with it.

Integrity isn't always about big moments, often, it's the small, everyday decisions that matter most. It's following through on commitments, being reliable, and staying true to our values in everything we do. For me, it's about creating a space where people feel confident, respected, and able to trust one another, and being proud to play my part in that.



At St Mary's, integrity sits at the heart of our school community and is consistently demonstrated through the actions, attitudes and achievements of our pupils. We place great importance on developing not only successful learners, but individuals who act with honesty, responsibility and respect in all that they do.

This is reflected in the way our pupils' approach both their personal achievements and wider experiences, showing dedication, discipline and a strong moral purpose. Whether striving for excellence in their own pursuits or contributing to shared activities, they embody a commitment to doing their best in the right way.

Our curriculum and wider opportunities actively promote integrity through meaningful experiences. For example, pupils recently marked a significant environmental milestone by making thoughtful and sincere pledges to care for the natural world. These commitments demonstrated a clear understanding of responsibility and accountability, encouraging pupils to act with honesty in their role as global citizens.

In addition, our international partnerships and cultural events provide opportunities for pupils to show integrity through respect, empathy and openness. Engaging with and celebrating the traditions of others fosters a deep appreciation of diversity and reinforces the importance of treating others with fairness and dignity.

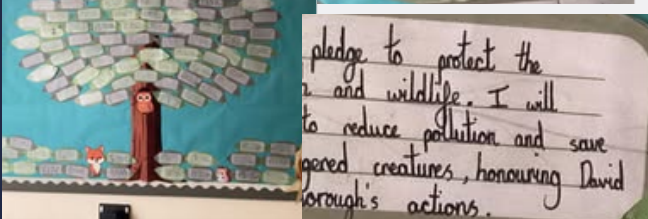
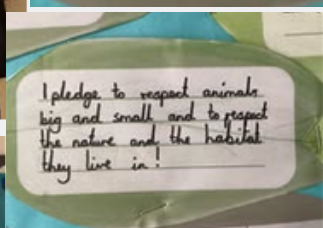
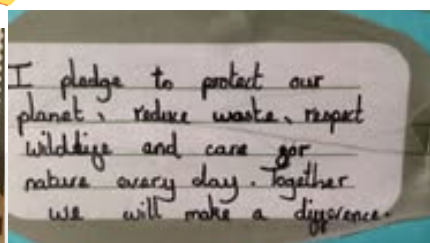
Across all areas of school life, integrity is not only taught but lived. Our pupils understand that it is about making the right choices, even when it is difficult, and contributing positively to their community and the wider world.

Celebrating Success at the English Championships

We are incredibly proud of our young gymnast's achievement at the Under 12 Challenge English Championships.

Showing dedication, discipline, and integrity, he earned 1st on Rings, 2nd on Parallel Bars, and was crowned Overall Champion.

A fantastic and well-deserved accomplishment — congratulations! 🌟



Celebrating Sir David Attenborough's 100th Birthday

To honour this remarkable milestone with integrity, we created a Pledge Tree where every child made a sincere commitment to care for wildlife and protect our planet. Each pledge reflected thoughtful understanding and genuine responsibility, values at the heart of Sir David's lifelong dedication to truth and the natural world. It was a meaningful way to be inspired by his legacy while encouraging our children to act with honesty, respect, and accountability towards the environment.

Ukraine Day at Our School

We were proud to celebrate Ukraine Day in partnership with our partner school in Poltava. This special event provided a wonderful opportunity for our pupils to engage with and learn about the rich culture, traditions and heritage of Ukraine.

Throughout the day, children took part in a wide range of exciting Ukrainian-themed activities, including art, music and food experiences. These activities not only broadened their cultural understanding but also encouraged curiosity, respect and appreciation for other communities.

As a school, we are committed to demonstrating our core values, and the event was a clear reflection of integrity. By building meaningful connections with our partner school and honouring Ukrainian culture with thoughtfulness and respect, our pupils learned the importance of empathy, honesty and doing what is right.

We looked forward to sharing highlights from each class as the day progressed and celebrating this memorable experience together.





St George's
Junior School

Kelly Lee
Headteacher

St George's Junior School – Living Our Value: Integrity

At St George's Junior School, we are proud to be part of Empower Trust, where we are committed to developing not only successful learners, but children of strong character.

What do we mean by Integrity?

At St George's, we teach children that integrity means:

doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. We support pupils to understand that integrity involves:

- Being honest in what they say and do
- Taking responsibility for their actions
- Showing fairness and respect to others
- Making positive choices, even when it feels difficult

This reflects our commitment to ensuring that every child feels safe, valued and part of a positive community, where strong values support success.

Our Approach at St George's

Integrity is not something we simply talk about, it is something we actively teach, model and reinforce every day. At St George's, we ensure that:

- Staff consistently model honesty, openness and fairness
- Children are given opportunities to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning
- A clear, shared language helps pupils understand what integrity looks like in practice

This consistent approach supports all pupils to develop strong moral understanding alongside academic success.

What Integrity looks like in our school - You will see integrity in action across St George's: In the classroom

- Children are encouraged to admit mistakes and learn from them
- Pupils take ownership of their learning
- Staff create an environment where honesty is valued and praised

Around school

- Pupils make the right choices independently
- Fairness and honesty are promoted during social times and play
- Positive behaviour systems recognise and celebrate integrity

Through assemblies and the curriculum

- Stories and discussions explore real-life situations and moral decision-making
- Pupils reflect on how their actions impact others
- Opportunities are created for responsibility, leadership and teamwork

Why This Matters - Integrity helps children to:

- Build strong, trusting relationships
- Develop a sense of responsibility and accountability
- Grow into confident and principled individuals

These are essential qualities that will support them throughout their education and in later life.

Working in Partnership with Families

We know that children develop values most successfully when school and home work together. We encourage parents to focus on integrity by:

- Praising honesty, even when your child has made a mistake
- Talking about situations where doing the right thing can be difficult
- Modelling integrity through everyday actions
- Encouraging reflection on choices and their impact

Our Commitment

As a school within Empower Trust, St George's Junior School is proud to champion a values-led approach to education.

Together, we are developing pupils who are not only successful learners, but also **honest, responsible and ready to contribute positively to their communities.**



Wilfred Owen
Primary School

Aspiration • Opportunity • Knowledge

Looking after our planet is a powerful way that staff and children at Wilfred Owen demonstrate integrity in action. Teaching children to care for the environment shows respect for future generations and reinforces the idea that our choices matter.

We embed sustainability into daily routines, such as recycling paper and food waste, reducing energy use, and encouraging reusable water bottles and lunch containers. These simple actions help our children understand responsibility and see that small, honest efforts can make a real difference.

Outdoor learning is another strong example. School gardens and wildlife areas give children hands-on experience in caring for nature. Planting vegetables or wildflowers and learning about local habitats all help our children develop environmental awareness and pride in their school environment.

Our school has an Eco Council which involves children in sustainability. Trusting children with these roles demonstrates integrity by empowering them to lead and be accountable.

When integrity is woven into both community relationships and sustainability efforts, it becomes a lived experience. Children learn that being honest, fair, and responsible applies to how they treat people and the planet.



Emily Kynaston
Head of School



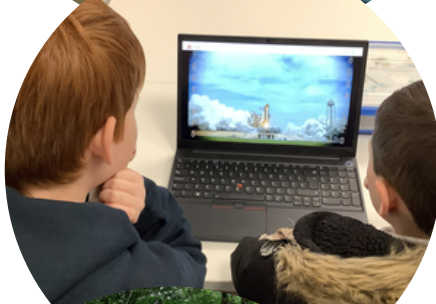
Curiosity • Consideration • Confidence

This half term, Greenacres Primary has embraced the value of Integrity across all aspects of school life. Parents have been welcomed into school through our successful Wow Work Wednesday sessions, strengthening partnerships and celebrating pupil achievement.

Pupils have demonstrated a commitment to sustainability through the work of our Eco Warriors and Gardening Group, who continue to promote environmental responsibility across the school. Our learning environments are also evolving, with the Hive and Orchard spaces developing to provide inclusive and supportive areas where all pupils can thrive.

Digital development remains a key priority. Owl Class have made excellent use of Google Classroom to support their learning, and during their visit to Xplore, pupils showcased impressive digital skills during a coding workshop, applying their knowledge in a real-world context.

Through these experiences, pupils are developing responsibility, collaboration, and pride in their work—demonstrating Integrity in action every day.



TOGETHER WE THRIVE



Beck Preece
Headteacher



Integrity to me is about unwavering consistency between what I believe, what I say, and what I do—especially when no one is watching or when decisions are difficult. It is the quiet commitment to honesty, accountability, and fairness in every interaction. As a person, integrity means I hold myself to the same standards I expect of others. I take responsibility for my actions, reflect honestly on my impact, and remain open to growth

It is grounded in humility - recognising when I need to listen more, learn more, and act differently in order to uphold what is right.

As a head teacher, integrity is the foundation of trust within the school community. It means making decisions that are guided not by convenience or external pressure, but by what is genuinely in the best interests of children, staff, and families. I strive to lead transparently, communicate with clarity, and model the values I want to see embedded across the school. Integrity in leadership also requires courage—to challenge inequity, to stand firm in difficult situations, and to ensure that every voice is heard and respected. It is about creating a culture where ethical practice is the norm and where people feel safe, valued, and empowered.

In my role as a strategic lead for SEND and Early Years, integrity takes on an even more purposeful dimension. It is about being a relentless advocate for inclusion, ensuring that the needs of every child—particularly those who are most vulnerable—are recognised, understood, and met with care and expertise. I approach this work with fairness and empathy, ensuring decisions are evidence-informed and centred on children's rights and potential. Integrity here means challenging systems when they fall short and working collaboratively to remove barriers, so that all children can thrive. It is about holding onto a clear moral purpose: that every child deserves the best possible start and the opportunity to flourish, regardless of need or circumstance.



Cathy Davies
Headteacher

St Peter's
CE Primary & Nursery School

St Peter's have been awarded The School of Sanctuary Award. This has shown our commitment to the value of integrity by demonstrating our commitment to deeply embed, rather than merely display, a culture of safety, welcome and inclusion through our internal policies, curriculum, and daily actions. We are extremely proud of our award.



Emma Tibbetts
Headteacher



At Market Drayton Junior School, integrity underpins everything we do.

Working together with our community

We believe that the best outcomes for children come from strong partnerships. Our PTFA exemplifies this collaborative spirit, organising events throughout the year including bingo nights, non-uniform days and discos.

The funds raised support essential school resources, subsidise educational visits and provide equipment that enhances our pupils' experiences.

We continue to strengthen our links with parents and families. Alongside parents' evenings, we invite families into school for book looks, where children can proudly share their work. Throughout the year, parents also join us for sports day, Christmas productions, Easter assemblies and our memorable Year 6 leavers' performances – celebrating achievements together.

Our commitment to community extends beyond our school gates. This year, we have organised charity events such as a Macmillan coffee morning, where pupils contributed by baking cakes and running stalls. These experiences help our children understand the importance of supporting others.

Equipping everyone for success

We are committed to ensuring everyone has the tools to excel. Our children have access to digital resources that support learning and prepare them for the modern world.

Teachers have been provided with new laptops, enabling them to deliver high-quality lessons using interactive displays and presentations to enhance clarity and engagement.

We are particularly proud of our Year 6 pupils who attended an EcoCode workshop, where they saw how technology can be used effectively. This helped challenge stereotypes and inspired future innovators.

Taking responsibility for our planet and society

Environmental and social responsibility are central to our school values. Each class has an Eco-Warrior who meets regularly to consider ways to make our school more environmentally friendly.

Classes track how they travel to school, with pupils earning badges for regularly walking – a simple way to support our environment. Our gardening club maintains the Nature's Nest area, creating a calm space that supports wellbeing and encourages local wildlife.

This year, our Year 6 children met with a sustainability officer from Newcastle-under-Lyme Council, helping them understand environmental goals and their role in creating a sustainable future.

Building robust systems for the future

Behind the scenes, integrity means having strong systems in place. Our governing body regularly reviews policies and procedures to ensure they remain effective and relevant. At Market Drayton Junior School, these four pillars of integrity work together to create a thriving community where children are safe, supported and inspired to achieve their very best.



Shropshire

Primary Partnership

Aspiration • Collaboration • Knowledge

Sam Scott

Director of Education and
Programme Lead

As we reach the end of another busy and purposeful half term, we are delighted to recognise the continued progress of our Associate Teachers. Their dedication, professionalism and commitment to developing their practice continues to strengthen, and it is fantastic to see their growing confidence in the classroom.

This half term marks an important milestone for our full-time Associate Teachers, who have now begun their third and final School-Based Learning placement. With teaching commitments increasing to 80% of the timetable, this is a crucial stage in their journey as they prepare for the transition into their first teaching roles.

Our part-time Associate Teacher has also made excellent progress and have now commenced their second placement, continuing to build experience across a new school environment.

This term:

Alongside their placement experience, our Associate Teachers have taken part in a range of valuable professional learning opportunities, including:

- A Key Stage experience day (KS2 or KS3), supporting understanding of progression across phases
- Two days working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, exploring the impact of outdoor learning
- A dedicated SEND Focus Week, developing inclusive practice and approaches to meeting diverse needs
- Ongoing time in school, applying their learning in real classroom contexts

This has been a rich and varied half term, providing Associate Teachers with a wide range of experiences that support them in becoming reflective, adaptable and confident practitioners.



Shropshire
Wildlife Trust



Lakeland
Academy



Flourish Education



University of
Chester



Department
for Education

STEP
Shropshire and Telford
Education Partnership





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Market Drayton
Infant & Nursery School

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

- Collaborative Sharing
- Associate Membership
- Coaching
- School Improvement
- ITT
- Conferences/stalls

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Empower

Multi-Academy Trust

Inspire • Empower • Achieve



#buildingbrilliance

#AllIn

#togetherwehavegotthis