

Trust Newsletter

Issue 004

Empower
Multi-Academy Trust



Positivity

We adopt a 'can do' attitude and a optimistic approach



A focus on **POSITIVITY** in our Central Team...



Carla Whelan - CEO

What does positivity mean to you?

Firstly, its about smiling, I know that some days this can be more difficult than others but a smile to greet another person means so much. I am met with fabulous smiles daily on visits to our schools, it makes the day light up. Being resilient is a huge part of positivity, so I work on my self-talk to support with this. Self-talk is a way that I keep my focus and vision, not allowing myself to get distracted by negatives and keeping myself focused on the purpose and reason why we do things.

I try to have rules to support keeping my positivity high:

1. List something, I am grateful for each day. This helps the brain to focus on what we have, not what we don't have, and this increases serotonin.
2. Limit my news/social media exposure. The news recently has been very negative, but when we focus on positive news stories it stimulates serotonin. This helps us feel confident that a positive outcome will be the best solution.
3. I remind myself of the things I can do and celebrate about me. Thinking about how we contribute and make a difference to others is a great dopamine enhancer and increases our confidence.

What positive things have you done this half term?

- Supported Headteachers by listening and trying to be there for them as much as I can.

Why positivity is important within the Central Team?

- As we are a key function to the trust it is crucial that we can support our schools and be modelling positivity. Within our team helping and boosting each other and then when we visit schools helping to fuel positivity within them. We are a team - we keep each other going!



Laura Callingham -
Director of Operations

What does positivity mean to you?

Positivity is a resilient approach to challenges, practising proactiveness and promoting optimism.

What positive things have you done this half term?

I have sought networking opportunities with other Trusts to research ways to support and grow Operations.

Why positivity is important within the Central Team?

It is important to aim to be positive within any team to encourage a supportive and proactive culture - this will then be more likely to filter to other teams that you work with.



What does positivity mean to you?

Positivity to me is having a positive attitude even through difficult times thinking of the good aspects of a situation rather than the bad ones.

What positive things they've done this half term?

This term we are starting to budget plan with our schools which is always a highly emotive time due to constraints with funding and increasing costs across the sector. I have been instilling positivity with staff and getting them to see the opportunities that can be availed of through working in a more collaborative way, looking at how we can utilise resources better and become more efficient for the benefit of all of our schools across the Trust. Hopefully this is bringing a sense of achievement and a can do attitude



Tricia Slater - COO

Why positivity is important within the Central Team

Positivity is hugely important in the Central Team. We work in a function where things can and often change on a daily basis and sometimes not always in a positive way.

However as a Team we need to be resilient and look to see the good aspects in any challenges we face so we can ensure that we are providing the best support we can to our schools and the wider community.

What does positivity mean to you?

Positivity, for me, means approaching life with an optimistic mindset and searching out the positive aspects of life's many challenges rather than focusing on the negatives. This doesn't mean spending my days grinning like a loon all the time, or ignoring difficult emotions in favour of a cheerful facade - what it means to me is flipping the bad to seek out the good whenever I can. Research shows a strong link between 'positivity' and health, particularly in relation to protection against the inflammatory damage of stress and I recently attended a training session focussed on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). It was really interesting to learn how our thoughts impact our feelings which then impact our behaviour and how by flipping that thought, can have a huge impact on how we act and behave.

Simple shifts such as smiling more, even fake smiling, reduces heart rate and blood pressure during stressful situations! Practicing reframing can be so powerful; so instead of stressing sitting in traffic, appreciate the extra time you can take to listen to favourite songs and accept there is nothing you can do about the traffic.

This term I was fortunate to attend a 'Celebration of Women' event run by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce with two colleagues from the Central Team. We heard from some fantastic female speakers who discussed personal and professional journeys; we heard about holistic wellbeing and the importance of good nourishment; we learnt about moving how we are naturally designed to do and the psychology of language. The day had an indulgent feel with a mocktail on arrival and a lovely lunch, and it was a much needed break from the normal Friday! We left the day feeling positive and empowered and with some thought provoking takeaways.

Positivity is really important within the Central Team - having a positive mindset and role modelling optimistic behaviours encourages a supportive environment and facilitates productivity within our own team and the service we provide to our schools.



Michelle Harrington - People and Culture Officer and Executive Assistant to the CEO

A focus on **POSITIVITY** in our Central Team...



Lucy Copson -
Trust Administrator

What does positivity mean to you?

Being positive is my default setting. I always like to look at the positives of most situations.

Why positivity is important within the Central Team?

A positive attitude will lead to increased communication, trust, and respect among team members. It can also lead to a more open and supportive work environment. With positivity the team work together more effectively.

What does positivity mean to you?

Positivity to me means to never give up and to always have the mindset that you can do this even if you are finding things hard.

I have had a positive impact on the Central Team as I am becoming multi-skilled across all functions within the team, enabling me to provide support as and when required.

Positivity is important in the Central Team as I feel positivity can reflect onto others, which can help with trust and respect between all members of the team. It can also increase productivity. If you feel positive and your team members can see this, it can encourage your team members to want to be more positive too.



Jess Shore - Trust
Apprentice



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What **POSITIVITY** means to our Heads, our children, parents and our schools...



Sam Scott - Executive Headteacher
Market Drayton Infant
and Junior Schools

What does positivity mean to you?

Positivity is having a 'can do attitude'. Sometimes we need to take time to get into this frame of mind. For example, when something new is introduced or when something changes, we need to give ourselves time to consider what the change is, the rationale behind it and what this may look like for us. If we understand that when something is new that it often involves an emotional dip before you move to a more positive outcome, it helps us to maintain a positive mindset, even when things are challenging.

In our schools positivity is what we are all about. We have children from a range of backgrounds and positivity is important. We want to encourage our children to have high aspirations and 'reach for the stars'. Therefore, it is important that we continually introduce children to possibilities through our school curriculum and wider opportunities. We try to encourage children to use the mantra, "We can't do it yet!"



Market Drayton
Infant & Nursery School
Collaboration • Aspirations • Respect • Positivity



Kerry Simmons - Head of School
at Market Drayton
Infant School

What does positivity mean to you?

Positivity means everything to me. When you are positive, generally people around you are positive - it is like the infectious smile. You smile at someone and they will smile back at you and immediately you feel happy and have a can do attitude. In school it is important that we are solution focused and not problem focused. Yes, we will have difficulties but with a positive attitude these can easily be overcome.

What positive things have you done this half term?

Having a can do attitude and modelling this at all times is crucial to my role. If I am not positive, it is unlikely staff and then children are not positive. We need to create the positive culture and uphold this on a daily basis. Smiling through each day is important to me, even though times may be hard, there is always something that can come out of a situation.

Why positivity is important in our schools?

Positivity is one of our school values. Having a positive mental attitude is so important although can be hard at times. With a positive attitude we can do anything and know this drives our progress and achievements.



**Sarah Kynaston - Headteacher
at St Peter's Primary
School**

What does positivity mean to me

Positivity is about coming in each day with a smile. It is about looking for solutions and working together to support each other. It isn't about avoiding difficult situations or ignoring challenges, but about looking at what we can influence and working from there.

What positive things have we done this term -

As a staff, we have all enrolled on the NPQLT (National Professional Qualification in Leading Teaching). To some, this has been a new initiative but because we are all learning together, we are able to approach it with positivity and look to the benefits. Our teaching and learning will improve further and give our children the best life chances possible!

Why is positivity important in our schools?

Positivity is so important in schools. Every day we face different challenges and obstacles. It is really important to be solution-focused or it can all become quite overwhelming. Positivity is what makes school a happy place. Each day is a fresh start and we all face challenges together.



**Karen Matthews -
Headteacher
at The Wilfred Owen School**

What does positivity mean to me

Positivity is having an optimistic mindset. It is accepting that we will always encounter challenges so we need to find a way to navigate them rather than see them as an obstacle to success.

What positive things have you done this half term?

In a term where we have undertaken a series of reviews, it has been vital to show staff that this is to support our drive forward and to ensure they see that development points are a positive as they help us to improve.

Why positivity is important in our schools?

Our children can sometimes encounter a variety of challenges in their daily lives and we want to build resilience. It is important that as role models we demonstrate a positive mindset.

What **POSITIVITY** means to our Heads, our children, parents and our schools...



Woodfield
Infant School



Beck Preece -
Acting Headteacher
at Woodfield Infant school

What does positivity mean to me

Positivity is about always looking for the good, the joy, the benefit rather than focusing and looking for the opposite. It's about being a 'glass half full' rather than a 'glass half empty' person.

In our job, no two days are the same. This is one of the real positives of the role but also means that every day presents us with something to overcome. Being positive to me is about approaching every one of these with the mindset of 'every problem has a solution' you just need to find it and it might just take a little time.'

What positive things have we done this term -

This term we have met with staff for appraisal meetings. They have provided us all with the chance to celebrate all of the positive work that we do as a team.

Why is positivity important in our schools?

Recent research has shown a decline in resilience, motivation, and positivity in our children. We are the role models for the whole school community, and it is important that we help the children to build resilience and positivity as key life skills.

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."

Is there a parent that has shown POSITIVITY?

This term we have been really lucky to be supported by a number of our parents / grandparents who have come into school to share their version of positivity with the children. We have had parents in to share the positive aspects of their role in the world of being a vet, we have had a grandparent in to share the positive impact of music, a parent to share the positive impact of sports and keeping fit and about 100 parents / carers in on each of two Reading for Pleasure afternoons.



St George's
Junior School



Kelly Lee - Acting Headteacher
at St Georges Junior School

What does positivity mean to you?

I have always been a positive person in both my professional and personal life. I have a keen interest in mindfulness practices and a strong belief in the power of this. It makes a difference to be surrounded by positivity and the strength this brings. We as humans are drawn to others' behaviours, and so if that is showing 'positivity', this role modelling has up-lifting affects on all.

I believe in positively re-framing thinking and this has been something I have practiced and embedded over a number of years. When met with challenges or something that is disruptive, I always consider the positive elements around it; think about what I can control and not let what I can't control take up too much of my energy.

Having a positive outlook helps me to have better health and clarity in making decision, setting and achieving long-term goals.

To be positive, I believe that building resiliency is needed. I do this by:

Having good relationships with friends and family
No that change is part of life, adapt, change and find positive solutions.

Be pro-active with problems

Positivity has the power to spread happiness and give others confidence and belief too



Market Drayton
Junior School



Sally Brayne - Head of School
at Market Drayton Junior
School

What does Positivity mean to you?

Positive things we have done this half-term: dressing up for World Book day to highlight the importance of reading; raising money for Comic Relief and supporting others; one of our children receiving an award from the High Sheriff at her award ceremony at Shrewsbury College. Our boys and girls athletic teams won at a recent competition and are through to the county finals. The girl's football team won their recent match against Whitchurch and are through to the next round. One of our boys scored his first goal for his football team; he was given money from his family and donated it to charity. Some of our children, who belong to Badgers, are collecting Easter eggs to donate to charity. Year 3 performed the Easter story for their parents and carers on Tuesday 19th at the Methodist Church.

Why POSITIVITY is important in our schools?

It is important in our schools because we can help our learners become more resourceful, resilient and socially connected. It helps them learn that anything is possible if you try hard enough.



St Mary's
CE Primary & Nursery School



Sarah North - Headteacher
at St Mary's Primary School

What does positivity means to me

Looking at things from a positive point of view, being able to bounce back from adversity and motivating those around you with positive words.

What positive things have we done this term -

This half term, I have made an effort to remain optimistic to life's challenges inside and outside of school. I have ignored negativity and pessimism and tried to make the most of the potentially negative situation. Finally, I have been doing brain and body workouts to enhance my wellbeing.

Why is positivity important in our schools?

In school, a positive community has a powerful effect on the teaching and learning within the classrooms. Fostering positive emotions helps everyone to navigate the world of relationships with each other and our spiritual growth. Our behaviour curriculum focuses on expressing gratitude which offers a path to being emotionally strong but also passing that positivity along to others. Our value song, 'Nothing is impossible' strengthens that can-do attitude. In Psalms 118:24 it states, 'This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.'

What **POSITIVITY** means to our Heads, our children, parents and our schools...

What positivity means to the children at St Peters Primary School:

Positivity means not being upset if you get something wrong or don't get your own way, learning from our mistakes
- Isis

Positivity means to me that everyone is happy and cheerful - Nieve

Positivity means your light heart and you have a good spirit - Olivia

By believing in ourselves and showing resilience no matter what we are trying to do - Jack

We have shown positivity towards our learning by always having a go, trying our best and not giving up - Eddison

How have you shown positivity?



St Peter's
CE Primary & Nursery School

Dream • Believe • Achieve • Flourish

Visit the below for more information about our school

 www.stpetersschoolwem.org.uk

 St Peters CE Primary, Wem

What positivity means to the children at Market Drayton Infant School:

Keep on trying

It makes you feel happy

By being happy it makes you excited

You can learn better then

You can cheer them up



Market Drayton
Infant & Nursery School

Visit the below for more information about our school

 www.marketdraytoninfant.co.uk

 Market Drayton Infant & Nursery School



What positivity means to the children at Market Drayton Junior School:

Happiness,
Helping other
and Respect

Having an open
mindset that allows
you to succeed

By being positive,
we inspire others to
do their best

Persevering when
things become
difficult



**Market Drayton
Junior School**

Collaboration • Inspiration • Respect • Positivity

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www.marktdraytonjunior.co.uk

Cooperating and
interacting with
others in a friendly,
kind way



What positivity means to the children at Wilfred Owen Primary School:

Positivity is
believing in
yourself and
encouraging your
friends- Amelia-Ann

I would say positivity
is another way of
showing kindness. -
Ella

It is being honest
and modelling
positive behaviour
- Maxi

Positivity is
getting on with
it - Kylan



**Wilfred Owen
Primary School**

Visit the below for more
information about our school

www.wilfredowne.shropshire.sch.uk

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



What **POSITIVITY** means to our Heads, our children, parents and our schools...

What positivity means to the children at St Mary's Primary School:



St Mary's
CE Primary & Nursery School

Visit the below for more information about our school

 www.shawburystmarys.org.uk

 @primaryStMarys

 St Mary's c of e primary school.

'Every week, a class gets to nominate a teacher who has been kind and caring to us. My class chose Mr Creber as we love his smile, his positive attitude and he is a good teacher. '

I nominated Molly who is librarian for a random act of kindness. She helped me choose a book from the library and asked me if I was enjoying it a couple of days later.

Nothing is impossible, the word itself says "I'm possible"

Positivity is important as it helps with inspiration, to be creative and help with our own self worth. Being in a positive environment helps us all to feel more motivated to achieve things together, which will help us to have a good outlook and attitude towards challenges we may face in the future.

A parent from
Market Drayton Infant School

A lovely note received from the grandmother of a current pupil, who also happens to be a former Chair of Governors (she stepped down in 2011). She attended our annual poetry competition on Wednesday, as her grandson was one of the finalists, and she was so impressed that she sent in the this feedback

A grandparent from
Market Drayton Junior School

To the Staff at M.D.I.S.

I was so pleased to be able to attend the "Poetry" readings this morning.

It was such a rewarding experience to not only listen to the brave pupils saying their poems, but to observe the well behaved pupils sitting, for quite a time, on the floor.

A very big "WELL DONE" to Faye Cull for the organisation of such an event. It would

have taken a great deal of her time and energy in an already demanding job. It really was an impressive time.

WELL DONE TO YOU ALL.

Sincerely,

Sarah Pitt.

What **POSITIVITY** means to our Chair of Trustees



Paul Bunting
Chair of Trustees

What does positivity mean to you?

For me positivity needs to be combined with pragmatism. A positive outlook on a problem or an opportunity is usually a good thing but becomes even more powerful when set in the context of a clear understanding of what is achievable. Positivity is for me is a key trait of a great leader.

Building on the need for a positive and pragmatic approach to leadership challenges, I like to think that I have brought that dynamic to the Boards and teams that I lead in the Trust. How successfully I have done this will be for others to judge!

The Central Team are no different to any other part of the Trust when it comes to demonstrating a positive leadership style. Indeed there is an expectation that the Trust wide insight held by the people at the centre can be shared in such a way to bring real added value to much of the organisation. Their positivity should be infectious!





Empower

Multi-Academy Trust

Inspire • Empower • Achieve

