



October 2020

DEALT NEWSLETTER

'Igniting the future'

A message from the CEO

Dear Parents and Carers,

I cannot quite believe it, but DEALT reached its first birthday in April 2020, just as we went into lockdown! The plans we had made to celebrate this were put to one side, as we developed a different set of plans to manage the COVID situation whilst providing key worker provision. DEALT is now in a situation where all of the schools are reopen, and collaboration and mutual support has been key to us reaching this point.

The last 18 months have been incredibly busy with lots of developments at school level and across the DEALT. Our initial aim during this period was to ensure that all the transitional arrangements from the KCC to the DEALT were as smooth as possible and largely I am pleased to report that they were. We have now moved beyond this and have recently set up a central finance team from our existing bursars who will be based at Northbourne.

The Heads have been working closely together to share good practice, training and provide support for each other when this is needed. A key example of this is when DEALT could provide interim leadership for Sholden Primary School, whilst the Local Governing Body could recruit a permanent Headteacher.

The Members, Trustees and Governors, who are all ultimately volunteers, give their time so willingly to support and challenge myself and the Heads, especially over recent months. Thank you-You have been amazing.

We are always looking at how we can do things even better and there will be more news soon regarding a number of exciting developments. Jo Hygate

A message from the Chair of Trustees

None of those involved in setting up DEALT could have imagined that we would be having to respond to a global pandemic in our first year of operation. Despite this challenge we have been able to successfully establish the Trust and start to deliver on some of our objectives, working in collaboration with the local governing bodies. We have been pleased to welcome new Trustees from the local community who have brought additional skills and experience to support our work. I hope that at some point we will be able to introduce them to you. Finally, on behalf of the Trustees I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the entire staff team for the outstanding work they have carried out over the past months to make our schools as safe as possible for our children to continue with their education. *Roger Walton*

Welcome to New Trustees and Head teachers

Over the last year, we said goodbye to three trustees, as they returned to be Chairs of their Local Governing Bodies. Many thanks to John Utting, Sandie Butcher and Phil Marsh for the commitment they gave to DEALT in the set up stage. After a successful recruitment, we have secured four new Trustees with skills in: Health and Safety, Project Management, Law, IT and contracts. More details of our new Trustees can be found on the DEALT website.

We have also said goodbye to two of our wonderful Headteachers, both of whom have taken on different roles in Education.

As a result, we welcome two new Head teachers to DEALT-Mrs Rose Cope and Mrs Dawn Theaker, who are running Hornbeam and Sholden respectively. Previously Mrs Rose Cope was Head of School at Kingsdown and Mrs Dawn Theaker was Deputy Head at Deal Parochial.

Everyone has settled into their new roles well and are looking forward to an exciting future with DEALT.

Conferences

All DEALT teachers came together last November to listen to Will Ord, our keynote speaker, on Outstanding Learners. The conference looked at research evidence on children's learning, common issues and (most importantly) practical solutions. Since November, all schools have been trialling different strategies such as question of the week, mind pits and the use of Lego bricks to build on discussion.

Evaluations from staff were so strong, that Will Ord has already been booked for next year's conference to focus on Philosophy for Children.

More information can be found at Will's website www.thinkingeducation.co.uk

Finance News

The first good news is that DEALT accounts for the first five months have been sent to Companies House and are available on the DEALT website. The accounts and recent external audits all demonstrate the strengths of the financial systems and procedures we have brought into DEALT and the hard work of the CFO and the bursar team.

DEALT is in a strong financial position and each of the DEALT schools received a capital lump to support an IT or premises project. This money has been spent on windows, redecoration and IT classroom equipment.

Better use of academy funds...

One of the key philosophies within the DEALT is the efficient use of funds, to enable saving of both finances and time, freeing up resources to better facilitate educational activities. So far, we have had only a year to act on our financial independence. What a year it has been:

Switching our Accounting and Budgeting Tools: Saving £2,135 per annum

Switching our Governor Services Platform: Saving £5,395 per annum

Switching our HR and Payroll Services: Saving £19,752 per annum

Switching our Utilities Contract (Start Oct 1, 2020) Saving £15,000 per annum

Central Service Team

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In July, the final approval was given to create the new Central Services Team. As of September, the team began work at the new premises of Northbourne CE Primary School. There were a total of 4 new roles created within the DEALT. This has been achieved with no redundancies in any of the school offices, so front office activities are unaffected. To make the next level of financial savings possible and to ensure we have financial robustness, this is the right way forward for DEALT and the impact of the Central Service Team will be carefully monitored by Trustees.

To cover the cost of the Central Service team, the school's contribution to DEALT has been raised to 4%, but in the majority of schools, this has been offset by a reduction in staffing costs, as the schools are now not paying for these bursars or external financial support.

Capital projects

DEALT was able to contribute a £6,000 capital investment fund to each academy, to encourage Head teachers to complete projects they might otherwise have deferred for another year or more:

At Northbourne, the hall was redecorated and the car park extended, £9.3k

At Sandown, windows were replaced and refitted in Year 6, £3k

At The Downs, Sholden and Hornbeam, academies invested in their IT hardware through laptops and whiteboards, £19k

At Hornbeam, a new corridor carpet was laid, £6.6k

Deal Parochial, a full change of lighting to LED panels, £5.2k

The DEALT intends to continue to actively pursue capital investment in ICT and Infrastructure.



Children at Sholden CEP School enjoying their new interactive white board!

Member Schools

Deal Parochial CE School, Hornbeam Primary School, Kingsdown and Ringwould CE School, Northbourne CE Primary School, Sandown Primary School, Sholden CE Primary School, The Downs CE Primary School.