

AGORA  
LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP

**Agora Learning Partnership**

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16 February 2024

Dear Colleagues,

I hope 2024 has started well for you all!

**School visits:**

I have had the absolute pleasure of visiting all of the schools in the Partnership on a number of occasions this half term. During some of the visits, I have also been joined by two Trustees – Tony Breslin and Richard Preece – who have recently joined the Agora Trust Board. We have all been extremely impressed with the provision for the children we have seen across the Trust. Thank you so much for all you do; your efforts really do ensure the children receive the best possible education.

**Partnership growth:**

I am absolutely delighted to inform you that, following recent approval from the Department for Education, Creswick Primary and Nursery School be joining the Partnership. Creswick is a primary school located in Welwyn Garden City, just a few minutes away from Waterside Academy. We have been working with Creswick's school leaders since the summer term and it has been an absolute pleasure getting to know them and their lovely school. I truly believe this new partnership to be a really positive one as the ethos and culture of both the School and the Trust are so aligned. The staff and children from Creswick will be participating in many of our Trust events over the coming months and we look forward to formally welcoming the School into the Trust in June 2024.

**Ofsted inspections:**

Just before Christmas, Ofsted visited Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery. I am delighted to announce that the outcome of the inspection was extremely positive, huge congratulations to the children, staff, school leaders, and governors for such an amazing achievement. Inspectors said, "Pupils are proud to be part of the Alban Wood family. They love learning... Pupils are encouraged to aim high. Adults make their expectations consistently clear. Pupils rise to meet these. Around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary...The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It is carefully planned, from the early years through to Year 6. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. At each stage, the curriculum sets out the essential knowledge and key vocabulary pupils should learn." (Ofsted Report, December 2023) There were so many positives in Alban Wood's report and so much to be proud of; well done to all!

Warren Dell Primary School was also inspected in January 2024 and the release of the report is imminent; I look forward to sharing more details about this in due course.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you all a restful break and I look forward to seeing you next half term.

Kind regards

Rebecca Daulman  
Chief Executive Officer

## *Message from Michelle Miles, Chief Operations Officer*

As many of you will know, I joined the Agora Central Team in October. I have enjoyed meeting many of you over the past couple of months and learning all about your wonderful schools.

I have been working on several projects since joining to bolster the operational support to schools across a few key areas, including health and safety, estates, IT, and catering.



The most significant health and safety development has been the introduction of the Every System for the management of key compliance areas. This is now fully operational in Alban Wood, Bromet, and The Orchard, with the remaining schools onboarding over the coming weeks. The system allows the tracking of all statutory and non-statutory health and safety activities, including asbestos management, fire risk assessment, legionella processes, electrical safety and premises management. The aim is that we follow all relevant health and safety legislation, demonstrating compliance with our Academy Governing Boards and ensuring a safe working environment for our staff, students, and visitors.

External fire risk assessments are planned for all of our schools over half term (if they have not taken place already), which will support the work of our brilliant site teams in this respect.

To help us maintain our estate, building condition surveys are due to take place in March. This will support our Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) applications at the end of the year and enable us to build a 3-5 year estates management plan to further develop the lovely environments for learning that you have already created.

As I am sure you will have heard we are striving to enhance our collaboration across all schools within the trust by implementing a new IT strategy from April. This will encompass the service that you get in-house and the support desk, as well as your broadband, telephones, and photocopiers. This means we will need to ask you to share lots of information as we progress through the coming months and clean up your drives as much as possible. This strategy has been designed to make your working lives more efficient when everything has been implemented in full.

The catering contract with Chartwells ends at the end of May so I have begun a procurement process to ensure that we provide healthy, high-quality, nutritious meals for our children at the best possible price. Some headteachers are involved in this process and we will keep you informed throughout. If you have anything that you would like to feed into this procurement then please do let me know.

I look forward to working with you all moving forward; please feel free to contact me if I can support you with any operational matters.

## Congratulations!

Many staff across the Partnership have successfully completed a National Professional Qualification (NPQ); huge congratulations and well done to:

- **Bromet Primary School:** Marie Fox (NPQ in Senior Leadership), Maria Pace (NPQ in Executive Leadership)
- **Oxhey Wood Primary School:** Katie Keane (NPQ in Behaviour and Culture)
- **Wilbury Junior School:** Vicki Arends (NPQ in Teaching and Learning), Chelsea Atkins (NPQ in Executive Leadership) Laurence Hitcham (NPQ in Senior Leadership), James March (NPQ in Senior Leadership), Richard Miller (NPQ in Senior Leadership)



### EduPay

This half-term saw the successful implementation of EduPay, the new payroll provider. Thank you to the Central Team and school staff for working so hard to make this happen. More information about the HR function in EduPay will be coming soon!

### Farewell...

Lynne Wilson-Leary has decided to step down from the Agora Trust Board to spend more time with her family.

Lynne's role as Trustee has been just one of her leadership roles during the time she has been connected to the Partnership.

Lynne has been involved in the Trust since its inception, starting as the Academy Improvement Lead, before becoming the Chief Executive Officer and then joining the Board as a Trustee three years ago on her retirement from the CEO role.

Lynne will be missed by many in the Agora community. We wish her well for the future!

## PARTNERSHIP NEWS

### You said...we did...

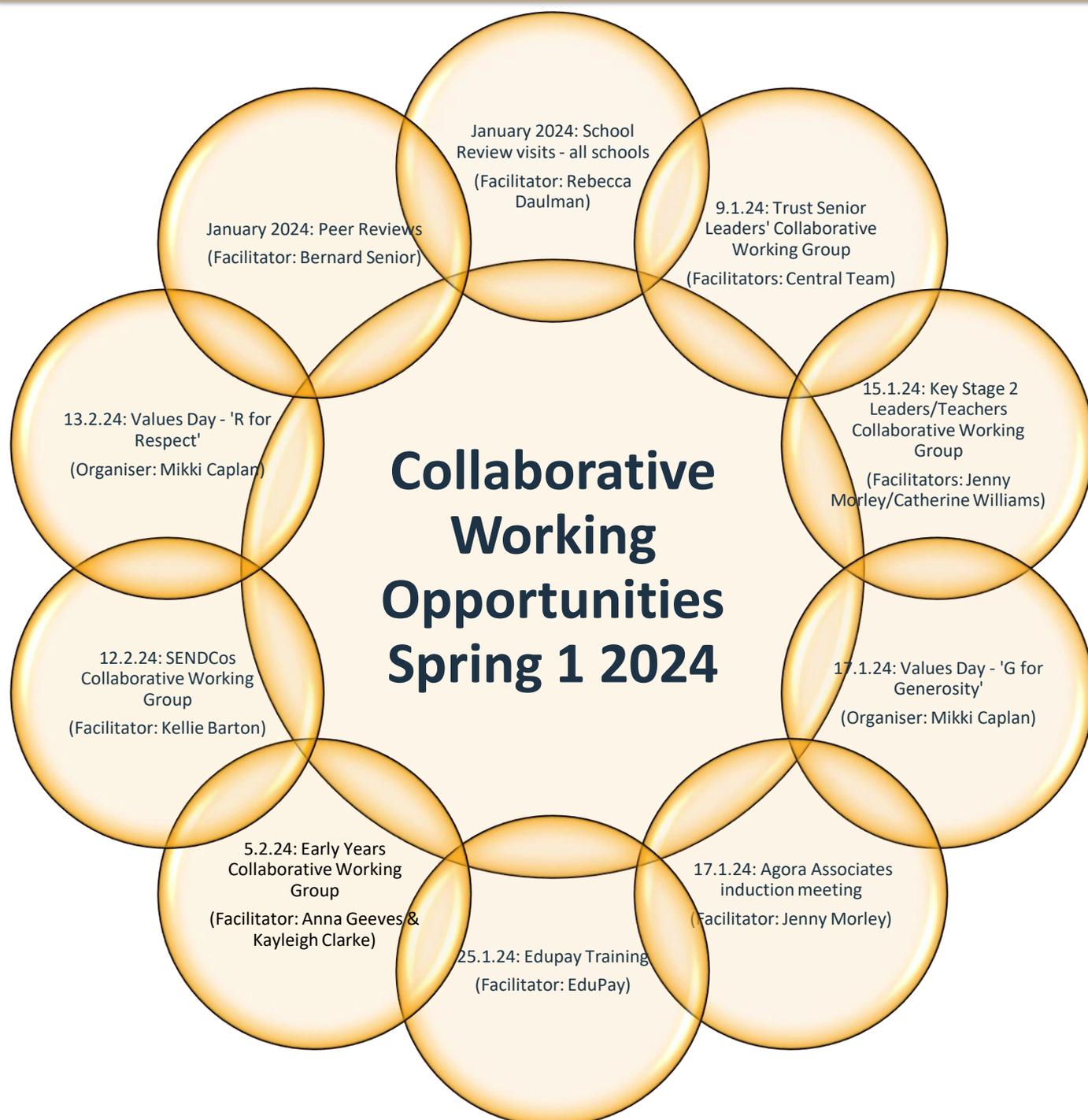
Staff across the Partnership said...having more time for their well-being was important. In response, we organised a well-being day – a day for all staff to focus on their well-being. We hope you had a wonderful day!

### Our Pledge

The Central Team, working with senior leaders from the Partnership schools, has been reviewing and updating the Children's Pledge and Staff Pledge. More details about these will be coming soon!

# Together for Staff and Children:

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the Agora events and activities this half term...and for your commitment to Partnership-wide collaboration.



## Agora Associates

Interested in being an Agora Associate? Contact Rebecca Daulman, Chief Executive Officer ([Rebecca.Daulman@agoralearning.co.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Daulman@agoralearning.co.uk))

# Apprenticeships

## What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships can be used to recruit new employees; they can also be used to retrain or upskill existing staff of all ages and levels of experience, in a wide variety of roles. This can be through workplace learning and formal training.

Wilbury Junior School has used the apprenticeship levy each year in various forms, from supporting teaching assistants within their current roles to helping teaching assistants gain qualified teacher status.

### Gabriella Cordaro

Gabriella started with Wilbury as a midday supervisor whilst studying hair and media makeup - she was unhappy in her course and college and sought alternative employment. She was appointed as a teaching assistant apprentice level 3 – which she passed with distinction. She continued her apprenticeship journey, working part-time at Wilbury, whilst attending Bedfordshire University, where she started a BEd degree with QTS. After some time, Gabriella returned full-time to Wilbury and continued onto the second year of a degree course through the Open University. She is currently working as a HLTA and hopes to complete her degree in May 2025. She then plans to do her PGCE through the apprenticeship levy or the 12-week TES route for QTS.



### Alex Kelly

Alex started working at Wilbury as a 16-year-old student, passionate about music and inspiring children using music. He completed his apprenticeship and is now in the first year of his degree with the Open University. In his recent performance management review, he expressed a desire to increase his teaching time to give him more opportunities. School leaders agreed that they could provide these opportunities to support him on his journey. Alex leads afterschool clubs and aspects of music and covers PPA and leadership time. He will complete his degree and then do his PGCE or TES Schools Direct route for QTS. His energy in school is infectious and he is a positive role model to our children.



### Tammie Chowles

Tammie has been an employee at the school since September 2018. She completed her GCSE in English and Maths in 2021 and is now taking part in the level 3 teaching assistant apprenticeship. She is a great teaching assistant who works hard to build positive relationships with pupils. She is a positive role model to children and other teaching assistants; she believes learning is lifelong. She is due to take her end-point assessment in December 2024.



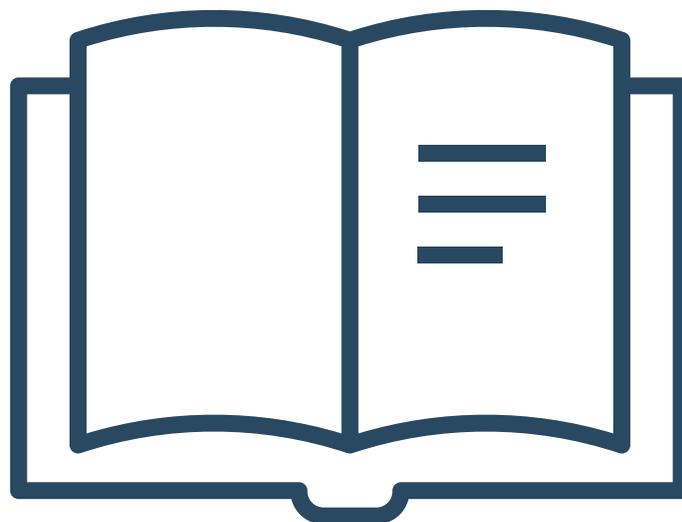
Having apprenticeships in school brings a different level to Wilbury's staffing structure, where a whole team effort provides the support and nurture their apprentices need to help them on their career path!

**“Apprenticeships are a great way for schools to improve the skills of their employees.”** *Education & Skills Funding Agency*

Interested in finding out more about becoming an apprentice? Please email [HR@agoralearning.co.uk](mailto:HR@agoralearning.co.uk).

“Our Sports Apprentice, Sean, is now in his third academic year at Alban Wood and it is safe to say we have all been so impressed (and very grateful) for the success of his role. Sean has not only increased the productivity of P.E. lessons across the school but has helped encourage children to become more active on the playground during break and lunch times. This has had a positive impact on behaviour during these unstructured times. Due to Sean, we have also been able to offer a wider range of sporting extra-curricular clubs for all year groups, encouraging SEND and PPG pupils to get involved. Sporting Futures has supported us incredibly throughout the apprenticeship and it has been great to see so many children flourish as a result of Sean's hard work.”

*Jonny Spector, Executive Headteacher*



# Agora Learning Partnership Values Awards

Each half term, Headteachers nominate children to receive a certificate and award for demonstrating one or more of the Agora values; this half term's winners are listed below. Well done to our 'Values Award' winners!

## Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery

- Zac B. - Generosity
- Savannah J. - Optimism

## Bromet Primary School

- Reggie N. (Reception) - Ambition when learning
- George F. (Year 4) - Ambition when swimming

## The Grange Academy

- Millie (Year 4) - Respect. Demonstrating a 'ready to learn' attitude every day
- Ollie (Year 4) - Generosity. Consistently demonstrating kindness towards his peers.

## Meryfield Community Primary School

- Bianca (Year 5) joined Meryfield at the start of the year and has demonstrated generosity consistently since then; mostly in the classroom with her kind nature...whether it's to adults or her talk partners. She has shown a level of patience, understanding, and generosity when offering help to others and has been willing to ensure that her partner understands the work by sharing her knowledge and resources.
- Tyler C (Year 6) is always generous with his time in helping his teacher and teaching assistant and other children around the class. Also, when Year 6 walked back from the cinema, just before Christmas, the children were given some Pringles by the Rotary Club and Tyler offered his to a homeless man on the street.

## The Orchard Primary School

- Ashleigh B. (Year 6), Niamh A. (Year 6), and Jonathon G. (Year 6) offered to give up their time to support the Year 1 children with their reading (generosity)

## Oxhey Wood Primary School

- Scarlett (Year 1) - Adventurous and brave: Scarlett does not let anything get in her way.
- Prabhleen (Year 4) - Respect: Prabhleen always models the best manners.

## Warren Dell Primary School

- Nicholas (Year 4) - Ambition: Nicholas always tries to better himself,
- Abbey (Year 4) - Respect: Abbey is a great role model to her peers, showing respect at all times.

## Waterside Academy

- Sophia W (Year 5) - Generosity: Sophia has completed all of her January calendar for acts of kindness.
- Ivy B (Reception) - Generosity: Ivy is always kind to others and will give up her time to help.

## Wilbury Junior School

- Teigan M. (Year 6) - Generosity
- Lauren P. (Year 6) - Generosity

# Dates for Diaries Spring 2 2024



Each summer, the Agora Learning Partnership's diary dates for the next academic year are sent to schools. This year, the dates are also being shared with all staff through the newsletter; please see the dates below:

Date	Time	Event	Person(s)/ School Involved
26/02/24	3.45-5.15	Collaborative Working Group: Music	Music Leads
27/02/24	7.00-9.00	Collaborative Working Group: Chairs' Forum	Chairs of Academy Governing Boards/Trust Leaders/Chair of the Trust Board
04/03/24	3.45-5.15	Collaborative Working Group: English (face-to-face)	English Leads
06/03/24	7.00-9.00	Governance training: MAT Governance	Trustees/Governors
08/03/24	10.00-12.00	Collaborative Working Group: Safeguarding	Designated Safeguarding Leads, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads
12/03/24	9.30-11.30	Collaborative Working Group: Administration, Finance and Human Resources (HR)	School Business Managers, Finance Staff, Administrative Staff
18/03/24 & 25/03/24	NA	Spring 2 mock SATs tests	Year 6 Leaders/Teachers
18/03/24	3.45-5.15	Collaborative Working Group: Physical Education (PE)	PE Leads
21/03/24	12.00-2.00	Collaborative Working Group: Social Media	Social Media and Communication Leads
25/03/24	3.45-5.15	Collaborative Working Group: Mathematics	Mathematics Leads
26/03/24	9.30-11.30	Trust Senior Leaders Meeting	Meetings for Executive Headteachers/Headteachers/ Heads of Schools
28/03/24	9.30-2.30pm	Collaborative Working Group: AHT and DHTs (focus: finance and operations)	Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteachers