An introduction to the Forward As One Church of England Multi Academy Trust

One team; One mission; One family
Welcome

Welcome to the Forward As One Church of England Multi Academy Trust.

As a Church of England Multi Academy Trust, our work is rooted in the Christian values of service, justice, faith, grace and love. It is our experience that these values add value in any school – including schools without a Christian heritage – and so we welcome all schools, whatever their designation, to join us in our mission to improve educational outcomes for all.

As a family of schools, we are deeply committed to achieving outstanding outcomes for the children of Bolton and its surrounding areas. We believe that our children deserve no less than the very best opportunities to fulfill their potential and to achieve their dreams.

It is our job – as a group of schools - to make these ambitions for our children a reality. At Forward As One, we work together to deliver the highest standards of learning and teaching, an engaging curriculum for all children, and inspiring environments in which children and adults alike can thrive. We work in close partnership with our parents and communities because we know how important it is to work together as we strive to give our children the best start.

We also believe that great learning stems directly from great teaching and great leadership. Our staff receive the highest standards of training and are able to learn from and work with experts in their fields. We invest a lot of time and energy in recruiting and training the very best staff because our children deserve no less.

As the trust continues to develop and grow, we will make sure that we deepen our commitment to providing each and every child with the very best educational experience possible. By working together - as schools, staff, and communities - we can achieve so much for our children.

I do hope that you enjoy reading more about our trust and our schools.

Karen Bramwell
CEO & Executive Principal

"The school is inspiring and so are the teachers, they encourage us to be on our best behaviour and give us hope in everything we do."

Kaden, Year 6 pupil, Gorsefield Primary School
As a Trust with a Church of England foundation, we live the following values

**Family** - working together for collective success

**Openness** - sharing with and being accountable to others

**Resilience** - overcoming challenges through commitment and perseverance

**Wisdom** - developing a life-long love for learning and understanding the world around us

**Aspiration** - pursuing excellence in all that we do

**Research** - grounding everything we do in evidence and best practice

**Diversity** - fostering inclusive and vibrant learning communities

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“Our aspirations for children

It is our aim that all children within the Forward As One Academy Trust become:

- Enthusiastic and life-long learners
- Resilient
- Critically reflective
- Hard workers
- Confident citizens
- Strong communicators
- Respectful

We strongly believe that every child should leave our schools with a deep enthusiasm for life and for learning.
Our Schools

Each school within Forward As One has their own unique ethos and culture. We celebrate both the diversity of our schools and the shared commitment to excellence that they provide.

We are one family and one team, with one mission. Everyone within our trust is committed to one another’s success - yet also proud of the uniqueness of our individual schools.

St Paul’s CE Primary School, Astley Bridge

St Paul’s, Astley Bridge is an outstanding school. It has also been designated as a National Support School (which means it has been recognised by the government as a beacon of support to schools that are looking to improve).

The life of the school is strongly underpinned by its Christian ethos, a commitment to diversity, hospitality to all cultures and faiths, and a deep passion for providing children with outstanding learning. Our school aims to develop respectful, independent, thoughtful, considerate and resilient community members who reflect on what they do and take responsibility for their actions.

We are also very proud of our new nursery provision which is making a big difference in preparing children as young as two to thrive as happy and confident learners.

The Principal St Paul’s is Mrs Lister. She says: “St Paul’s is a place where everyone – children, families and staff – are valued and given the opportunity to thrive through learning and by working together.”

St Paul’s CE Primary School, Astley Bridge, most recent Ofsted Inspection Report.

“Teaching is exemplary. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of all pupils, they plan challenging lessons, ask deep and meaningful questions, and meticulously plan lessons which involve and excite pupils of all abilities”

“Pupils say that they feel safe and cared for and that they are proud to be members of the school family. They are highly cooperative and understand the importance of learning together.”
Gorsefield Primary School

Gorsefield Primary school joined Forward As One in April 2015 and has since been on a significant journey of improvement. The school also has a nursery, where children from as young as two are accessing high quality learning and provision at such a crucial stage in their development.

Pupil outcomes improved significantly when the school joined Forward As One and a new Principal has now been appointed by the trust to ensure that Gorsefield continues to go from strength to strength.

The staff at Gorsefield strongly believe that there is no limit to what our children can achieve and we are committed to working with children, parents and the community to ensure every child reaches their full potential.

Our teachers and support staff are now benefiting from and contributing towards the high quality training and development that takes place across Forward As One – ensuring that every child receives the best teaching and learning possible.

The Principal at Gorsefield is Mrs Onyekaba. She says: "Every child at Gorsefield is special and has huge potential. We are determined to provide the highest standards of learning possible and the big improvements made since joining the trust are moving us closer to that. We have an open door policy and we are deeply committed to working closely with parents and the community to make sure that all our children receive the very best start in life possible."

At Forward As One we strongly believe that:

- All schools should be unique
- All schools should reflect the needs of their community
- All schools should determine a curriculum that meets the needs of its community
- All schools should work in close partnership with parents and the community
- All staff deserve to be paid a living wage
- Each school should determine how its local governing board manages its own structure
- All schools should be committed to one another’s success and to learning from each other
Life at Forward As One

The core purpose of Forward As One is to provide every child within our trust with the very best educational experience possible. Children deserve the highest quality of learning and development and we are passionate that our children are well prepared to succeed in the lives that lie ahead of them.

Learning

Forward As One delivers an engaging and inspiring curriculum across its schools, ensuring that children benefit from the highest standards of academic learning and a breadth of opportunities to understand and appreciate the world around them. Our learning environments are collaborative and inspirational.

The curriculum is both rigorous and inspirational and covers the core academic subjects – including maths, reading and writing; personal development; and international understanding. We believe that it provides the perfect basis for a rounded learning experience and prepares children well for the future.

Alongside this we are committed to assessment for learning, ensuring that the assessment of pupils is not simply about judging and recording pupils’ attainment, but is also used to help children understand how they can progress further in their learning and reach their goals.

We believe that learning never ends, and that how we assess children should play a big part in helping and encouraging them (and their parents) to be active participants in every stage of learning.

We believe it is important that children’s work is celebrated publicly and that our schools are places that inspire and encourage children’s natural interest in the world around them. We recognise that technology is playing a significant role in children’s lives and will increasingly do so in their futures, and our schools are committed to enabling children to become masters of technology, using it with skill, safely and in a positive way at all times.

Inspiration

We believe that our children should be inspired by the opportunities and the wonders within the world around them. Our children are supported to access a wide range of arts, music, sports and local culture. From learning a new musical instrument, working with coaches from Bury Football club to visiting local museums such as the Museum for Science and Industry – our children are able to gain an appreciation of what is possible through dedication and learning.

Children have a big role to play in identifying their individual and common interests, and we run a number of after-school clubs – in areas such as arts and crafts, gardening, and cycling proficiency. This ensures that children are accessing wider learning opportunities in areas that inspire and enthuse them.

Our children are supported to think critically and develop practical skills around topics such as healthy eating, the environment and road safety. There is a big emphasis on citizenship and taking responsibility for contributing to and improving the world around us. For instance, our young leadership teams take on a number of important projects across our schools including, for example, our current pupils are advising on how we can reduce food waste in our schools. Our children are also encouraged to develop their public speaking skills – for instance, through running assemblies and clubs for other pupils.

Healthy and happy children

As a trust we are deeply committed to children’s (and staff) wellbeing. We believe that all our children and their families should feel welcome, supported, and confident to contribute to the life of our schools and their communities.

We are committed to spotting mental health issues at an early stage and then working with professionals with the right expertise to support children and their families who are in need. We are also committed to ensuring children’s physical wellbeing through offering a wide-range of sporting activities and through learning in areas such as healthy eating and road safety.

We want all of our children to develop resilience and adaptability – preparing them to seize the opportunities and successfully manage the challenges that await them in their lives ahead.
Leadership Team

Karen Bramwell
Karen Bramwell is CEO and Executive Headteacher. She is a National Leader of Education and has supported significant improvements in a number of schools across the North West.

Karen regularly provides training to other headteachers and school leaders across the country. Karen joined St Paul’s as Headteacher in 1997 and is now responsible for the success of all schools, staff and children across the Forward As One trust.

Ruth Onyekaba – Principal, Gorsefield Primary
Ruth is Principal of Gorsefield Primary School. Her expertise and teaching has contributed to improvements in a number of schools across the North West – including Bolton Parish School, which has experienced rapid improvements in recent years. Her specific expertise is in co-operative learning and assessment.

Anna Lister – Principal, St Paul’s
Anna is Principal of St Paul’s and has worked at the school since she began her teaching career. During that time, Anna has also worked with schools across the North West to support their improvement and development in areas such as maths and wider curriculum development. She is an experienced teacher trainer.

Mr Peter Bond – Chair of Trustees
Peter has been a school governor for over 20 years. Under his chairmanship, St Paul’s C of E Primary School was deemed Outstanding in all areas in 2013.

Peter is determined that Forward As One provides service to our children and school communities and that we “put children first, second and third” as we pursue our mission to provide the best for all children through Grace, Hope and Love.

Peter’s professional background is in Project Management.

Debra Meekings – Principal (currently seconded to Bolton Parish C of E School)
Debra is an outstanding leader, with over 29 years of extensive and diverse experience in primary education. She has been instrumental in leading schools both from Special Measures and Requires Improvement to Good, and from Good to Outstanding. Debra is a Lead Facilitator and Coach for the National College and Edge Hill University, delivering a number of leadership and teaching and learning programmes for schools across the North West of England.