

CONNECT NEWSLETTER

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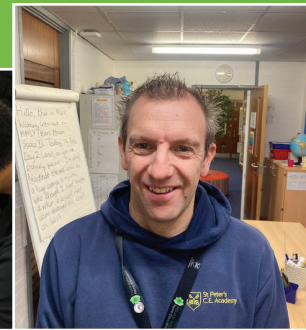
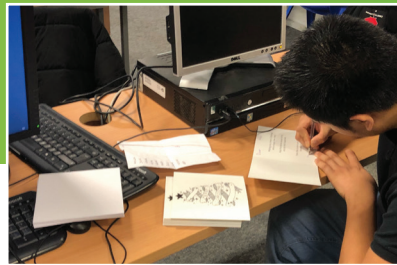
New Deputy CEO

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10 Minutes With
Chris Innes



Chris interviews Deputy CEO, Matt Coleman

NET's new Deputy CEO sat down with CEO, Chris Hill, for a conversation about his career and aspirations in his new role.

Chris: We first met while I was head at Higham Ferrers and you were head at Windmill Primary School. What's your journey been like from then to now?

Matt: At that time, I was overseeing Windmill's introduction into Nene Education Trust, (then Manor Learning Trust). There were a lot of political discussions, and the landscape was tricky, but I knew that this would be the right decision for the school long term. NET offered a very geographically local group schools serving similar communities. We came in just when Manor Learning Trust rebranded to NET and I've really appreciated the opportunity to work alongside you to shape what the Trust has become.

Chris: What are your thoughts on moving from a school leadership role to a more system leadership role?

Matt: There's a sense of removal from the day-to-day routine of classes, followed by meetings and the like - it's very regimented. Moving into the Director of Primary Education position, I found the first nine to 12 months of that period very difficult. I'd gone from being surrounded by my school family every day to being quite vulnerable and on my own. I questioned a lot of things in that time. Then COVID hit and that loneliness was exacerbated. I looked inward and did a lot of work on myself. That change from operational school leadership, which filled me up completely, to the system leadership role allowed me to become more comfortable in myself and what I stand for.

Chris: And now you've been doing that for a few years, developing a really strong school improvement team. Does that give you satisfaction?

Matt: It does. When you step back and look at where we were and where we are now, there's a sense of pride. One of the things I feel I'm good at, and I get a lot of satisfaction from, is developing people. It's not about me doing all the doing, it's about supporting, enabling and developing others to be better human beings and be better at their job.



There are so many things to be proud of. You and I don't veer from our values, and that's massive. I can go to bed at night knowing that there might be difficult decisions, tricky conversations, because it isn't all sunshine and flowers, but I'm sticking true to my values.

Chris: As we've said in many of our development opportunities, culture and leadership values pervade throughout an organisation. That's what I've seen you be able to do with other people both within your team and with teachers and other staff in our schools. What is it that makes NET special?

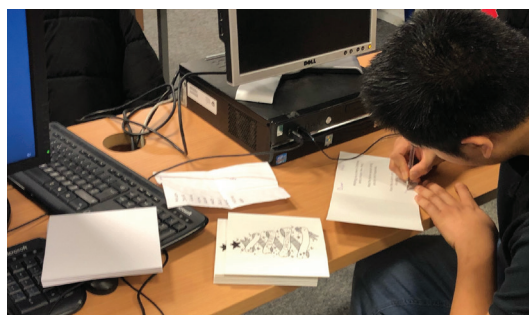
Matt: We work in a sector that is high stakes and high accountability. We are held to account by the outcomes for young people. We're almost encouraged to narrow things in order to enable those outcomes and get good results. We never lose sight of that in our organisation, but we do have a focus around the whole child, there are wider opportunities. I think that's the privilege of working in education in any capacity. We can influence and support our young people to have a wider, global understanding. I won't say we get it right all the time, but I think holistically we have a mindset that there is more to life than exam results and we equip our staff to prepare children for the world.

You can hear the full interview with Matt in the latest episode of the NETCast.

First Class Delivery

A group of sixth form students from Manor School helped make the festive season extra special. 14 sixth form students braved the cold and wet weather and delivered almost 1000 Christmas cards to residents within the local area.

The cards were designed by the students as part of a competition, and the winning designs were professionally printed. The children then added handwritten Christmas wishes before delivering them. Those that received the cards said that it was a lovely surprise and embodied how the school is a key part of the local community.





CEO Update

For this and the next edition of CEO Update, I would like to spotlight some of the teachers in training and early career teachers who are the future of the Trust. We'll be finding out more about their training, their development and why they went in to teaching.

Today, we'll be talking to an apprentice and a former apprentice, shedding some light on this unique route into teaching: Jayne Evans, Apprentice at Stanwick Primary School, and Sarah McKean, Early Career Teacher/former Apprentice at Newton Road School.

Chris: What initially drew you to teaching as a profession?

Jayne: Before having children, I was a training consultant, but that became less viable as I couldn't travel as much. I was a stay-at-home mum for a couple of years while my son was little and then got involved in parent helping at Stanwick around 2013. I really enjoyed it and eventually got a job as a lunchtime supervisor, while continuing to parent help. I then became a TA and progressed to HLTA, before deciding teaching was something I wanted to go into, earning my degree while working full time.

Chris: So that's an incredible progression route. You've worked with children for ten years at this point in different roles, but what was the impetus for moving into that teaching role?

Jayne: When I began parent helping, it really gave me some insight into how schools are run, and I just really enjoyed it and that made me want to work in a primary school long term. Progressing through those roles gave me a lot of experience in things like behaviour management which allowed me to progress into the classroom - where I wanted to be. The HLTA status then allowed me to start taking whole class responsibility, which then lead into the foundation degree and eventually the full degree. It was just a natural progression. The more I worked at the school, the more I was drawn to being a teacher.

Chris: How are you finding the apprenticeship itself?

Jayne: Getting on to the apprenticeship was difficult, between gaining the degree and the interview process. The year itself is very full on between the university sessions and working as an unqualified teacher.

Chris: Is that similar to your experience of apprenticeship Sarah? What did your path to the apprenticeship look like?

Sarah: I was working in schools and nurseries in Germany as my partner is in the Forces. When we moved back to the UK, I was a stay-at-home mum and continued working in nurseries as we continued to move around a lot. Once we settled in Northampton, my husband left the army and began getting a degree himself, which pushed me in to pursuing my own goals, completing the degree and then applying for the apprenticeship.

Chris: Would you echo the sentiment that it can be very hard work?

Sarah: You do have to find a balance of work, studying and your personal life. When I came into the Trust everything was very new to me, so I just embraced everything all at once across the work and study. I also had really good mentors, which helped relieve some of the pressure.

Chris: Do you think that the team and your mentors are a crucial part of the process?

Sarah: Yes, during the first half term my mentor was in the classroom with me every day which eased me into it. I didn't feel any pressure when it came time to teach on my own because I had been doing the job already.

Chris: Now you've moved into the ECT phase. How does that compare to the apprenticeship phase?

Sarah: Workwise it seems like there's less work, as there's less pressure from the apprenticeship. I've continued in the same school with the same class, so that's really helped me as I'm just doing the same thing with less 'scaffolding'.

Chris: We need more people to train to be teachers. You've shown resilience, strength and determination to get to where you are now. Thank you for all your efforts and I'm delighted you're working in our schools.

Does your school have some incredible news? Staff successes? School events?

Contact vbrennan@neneeducationtrust.org.uk to be featured in the next NET Connect Newsletter



5 Wells Development Centre



St Peter's C.E. Academy



Redwell Primary School



Woodford Primary School



Wood Park Infant School



Manor Sports & Leisure Ltd



Long service stars

Some of our most committed colleagues were recognised in an awards ceremony to celebrate their collective service of over 350 years.

Special certificates and trophies were presented to team members who have worked within the Trust network for 20, 25, 35 and 37 years.

These momentous milestones were marked at the ceremony hosted by the Trust leadership team with personal presentations by CEO, Chris Hill.

Chris said: "What a huge honour to be involved in these Long Service Awards recognising the contributions of staff that have dedicated 20 years', 25 years' and more than 35 years' service to the children of the schools in our Trust. Congratulations again to all that received an award!"



Award recipients



Award recipient Sophie Smith



Award recipients Helen Plowe and Lesley Hartnell



Award recipient Elizabeth Alexander



5 Wells Development Centre



St Peter's C.E. Academy



Manor Sports & Leisure Ltd



Award recipient Lynn Roberts



Award recipient Martin Brooks



Award recipient Seema Verma



Award recipient Andrew Sharman



Award recipient Emma McDowell



Award recipient Lynn Squirell

Roll call of award recipients included:

Seema Verma (Manor School) - 37 years' service.

Martin Brooks (Manor School) - 25 years' service.

Lisa Craven (Manor School) - 20 years' service.

Lyn Roberts (Windmill Primary School) - 35 years' service.

Emma McDowell (Manor School) - 25 years' service.

Sophie Smith (Raunds Park Infant School) - 20 years' service.

Marilyn Childs (Windmill Primary School) - 35 years' service.

Lynn Squirell (Manor School) - 25 years' service.

Lesley Hartnell (Redwell Primary School) - 20 years' service.

Simon Hill (Manor School) - 35 years service.

Philippa Crowther (Manor School) - 20 years' service.

Helen Plowe (Redwell Primary School) - 20 years' service.

Elizabeth Alexander (Manor School) - 25 years service.

Andrew Sharman (Manor School) - 20 years' service.



5 Wells Development Centre



Manor Sports & Leisure Ltd

Chair Chat

This month we'd like to give an insight into the local committees that support Nene Education Trust schools and offer advice to the Trust Board on key areas of school performance.

We spoke to **Tracy Linger, Chair of the Woodford CE Primary School Local Committee**, and **Julie Barke, Chair of the St Peters CE Academy Local Committee**, about how the committees work to make their schools better for the young people that attend them.

Could you tell me about your background and how that lead you to become involved in school governance?

Julie: I'm a retired headteacher, so I've always worked in education and wanted to continue that involvement, particularly with a local school which was very important to me. When my church was looking for a foundation governor, I volunteered and that's when I joined the committee at St Peters, which then extended to cover Park Infant School as well.

Tracy: My oldest child is 12 and youngest is 7, so he's still at Woodford. I just wanted to be involved where I can and make a difference to the children, while also getting to understand what goes on within the school, why it happens as it does and hopefully try and help as much as I can.

Could you explain the role of committees and your own role within them?

Julie: Unlike a lot of community schools, NET local committees have quite a specific role, primarily a communication role. This involves communicating the school monitoring they have completed, as well as a sort of hands on role within the community, promoting the school in the local area and supporting the Principal and staff.

Tracy: Each of the committee members have their own link role as well, which is their own subject to monitor, such as pupil premium or attendance and behaviour, that we make sure is being managed in accordance with policy. We see, first-hand, the difference that various initiatives are having. We have a clerk who sorts all the paperwork and collates everything, while I will manage deadlines and help with any issues as Chair. There's also a Chairs's meeting at the Trust headquarters, where we receive updates from the Trust which we can then feedback at our own meetings.

What would you say is unique to your approach to the role?

Tracy: My passion for wanting the best for the students, which I would imagine all the members share, that is my driving force. Both of my children are ambassadors for an anti-bullying charity, which made me want to try make a difference in my own way, as well as being a good role model for them and to share that community mindedness throughout the family.

Julie: My background in education, which isn't essential to the role, but does give me an insight into how school's might work. Because I'm a foundation governor as well as Chair, I have links with the local church community, which is important for a school like St Peter's.

How does this all fit into the Trust's strategy in terms of school improvement?

Julie: I think local committees are vital as they are the people in the school who understand the day-to-day working of the school and, through their monitoring and reporting back from meetings, can ensure that the Trust really knows the detail of what goes on and what it's like to be a child in that school. The people in the Trust have working knowledge of the schools, but due to the amount of schools in the Trust, they can't be on the ground all the time, whereas local committee members are in the playground, at events, and able to monitor and talk to children to get that day-to-day insight.

Tracy: When we go into our link visits and local committee meetings, our feedback is given to the Trust's CEO, so if there are any problems or areas for improvement our feedback helps to make plans for the future of the school, as well as measure the effectiveness of the Trust's campaigns. It's nice for the hard work of the staff to get recognition at Trust level, as well as within the school.

Thank you, Tracy and Julie, for your hard work and insight.

Tracy Linger



Julie Barke



10 minutes with...



Name and Title

Chris Innes,
Vice Principal,
St Peter's
Academy.

Who are you and what do you do – what are some of your day-to-day duties/ key responsibilities?

I am Chris Innes, Vice Principal, St Peter's Academy, where I have worked since 2007. I spend half of my week teaching Year six pupils and the other half of my week I deal with my responsibilities as Vice Principal.

How long have you worked for NET?

I have worked for NET since it was formed in 2011.

What do you enjoy about your work?

I love being in the classroom teaching, maths and PE are my favourites. What I enjoy the most is when you have seen a student struggle with something and you manage to unlock that barrier and you can see that they 'get it'.

Do you play/follow any sports?

I enjoy playing golf when I get the opportunity. I love horse racing and have shares in a couple of race horses. I also love football and support Aston Villa and try to get to see their games when possible.

I am involved in motorsport, including drag racing at Santa Pod, as I am part of the crew for my brother who drives an American muscle car, a Plymouth Barracuda. He competes in a national championship and it is great to be a part of it with family.



This is especially the case when teaching years five and six that are learning new content they have not seen before. You are constantly feeding knowledge, which is why I enjoy being in the classroom so much.

Favourite city/destination?

Portugal is a favourite destination and we like going to Menorca. We are heading to Spain this year for our holiday. My favourite city would be Barcelona - it has everything you could want.

Favourite food?

I enjoy anything - Asian, Chinese and Thai foods are definitely at the top of my list.

Favourite book?

War Horse by Michael Morpurgo.

Favourite saying or quote?

"This time next year" - I am a big fan of Only Fools and Horses.



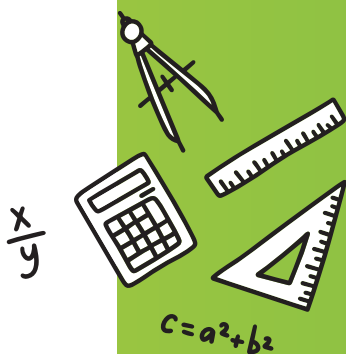
What do you like to do outside of work?

My life outside of work is very sports driven. I have a 10-year-old and five-year-old so a lot of my time is spent as a taxi taking them to the copious amounts of sports clubs and sessions they attend throughout the week, including swimming and gymnastics.

I am also a football coach for Raunds Under 11's so that takes up quite a bit of my time as there is training in the week and games at the weekend.

Fears?

Snakes.



5 Wells Development Centre



Manor Sports & Leisure Ltd

GET IN TOUCH

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