

update



Leading Learning through
Action-led Research and Innovation

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE LAUREL TRUST

ISSUE 1 • MAY 2020



Unprecedented times...

Welcome to the first Newsletter that we have decided to pilot. Our intention is to keep everyone connected with the Trust as informed as possible in relation to our activities and key developments which we think may impact on schools. At this extraordinary time Trustees are acutely aware of the challenges which face schools and we have currently suspended our project activities until such time that we can effectively re-engage. Meanwhile Trustees are continuing to meet online and are developing policies and ideas for future action. We are going to rearrange Trustee events and visits to schools when it becomes appropriate to do so. One recent change which has occurred within the Trust is that our Company Secretary, Ian Pearce, has relinquished his duties and they have been taken over by Stone King, our lawyers, who will now take over all contractual matters. I give my thanks to all project schools for their creativity, courage, and fortitude in these unprecedented times. **Bill Goddard | Chair of Trustees**

On hold but still here to help...



Whilst our research projects and dissemination plans are in general in abeyance I am operating a 'helpline' for those who are making tentative plans to resume their research later this year or in early 2021.

My thanks to those headteachers and research leads who have contacted the helpline. The discussions with you have been invaluable to me and have given me insights in to the difficulties and challenges you are facing not only now but in resuming your research. I do hope they have been helpful to you too!

The phone discussions have also resulted in some possible future models for taking research and

dissemination plans forward and for creating flexibility and added value. As always you have shown patience, goodwill, determination and an impressive amount of creativity. Some calls have resulted in the ubiquitous Zoom sessions. What did we do before we 'zoomed'?

I very much look forward to visiting you with the Trustees when that becomes possible in the meantime if you have any comments or queries please email me at:

maggie.roger@laureltrust.org.uk

We always welcome feedback.

The telephone helpline is open every weekday on **07960 684014**.

**Maggie Roger | Consultant
Director The Laurel Trust**

Schools creating Win-Win Stories



This spring nine of our collaborative partnerships successfully completed their research. Between them engaged 87 schools and 11 Early Years' providers. The schools benefited from wider partnerships and the professional support of 8 TSAs and MATs, 7 Universities and 7 Local Authorities. Some projects also enjoyed the sustained involvement of the NHS, parents, Family Support Workers and specialist autism centres. This multi-agency approach created both connectivity and enrichment and, in some instances, laid the foundations for system change. What characterised the successful projects was shared purpose and hard work balanced by creativity, optimism and a real sense of enjoyment – and even fun!

They demonstrated a hundred-fold that 'creativity is intelligence having fun' and confirmed the adage that people rarely succeed unless they are having fun.



Planning the research



Vulnerability in 'precedented' times...

Rose Durban | Trustee | The Laurel Trust



We're in unprecedented times where the only focus, the only conversations and the only actions are about how we can all do our bit to protect the NHS during the Covid19 crisis so they can look after us when we're ill. But we will, though it's not quite clear when, get to and beyond 'precedented' times when there'll be some new beginnings as well as some hauntingly familiar problems for partnership working and better health and well-being outcomes for children.

We've all experienced big changes in our lives and children not least.

For most, it's been 'stay at home', rather than go to school; online rather than upfront and personal; PE with Joe in the living room rather than with their teacher in the school hall and Sats and May disaggregated for the first time in years. And for some children, it's working well: more time within a mostly harmonious family, more hugs, more reading, more screen time, more baking, more time outside in gardens or parks, more Thursday clapping and more looking out for neighbours. But Covid 19 doesn't hit equally but seems to exacerbate health inequalities, so starkly evident in areas of disadvantage. It's casting a long shadow for those who rely on schools, the health and social care system and the voluntary

sector. Their critical layers of support and protection have been stripped down or away and school closures, while necessary to halt infection rates, have heightened risks. Despite herculean efforts from staff in schools to reach out to those children and families they know to be vulnerable, some have stayed home and stayed at risk.

So, looking ahead, what might help children and communities when we do move into shaping and creating a 'new normal'?

Currently every charity worth their initials (EIF, EEF, NSPCC, OCC, NCB, NYA et al) is publishing Coronavirus related resources. These can be helpful and important but it's currently a competitive and crowded space. What we're keen to do at The Laurel Trust is contribute

and support in a different way. What we're suggesting are three conversations to have on behalf of children as we all rethink what post Covid 19 vulnerability and risk might mean in changed and changing times for children and families and staff: one which is undoubtedly underway within your school and across your school partnership, another with health colleagues and a third with us.

This first fundamental conversation is about the children who are especially on your mind:
continues over

“What we're keen to do at The Laurel Trust is contribute and support in a different way.”

CONVERSATION 1: THE CHILDREN

How can we best meet the existing and newer needs of our children and families?

- Which children may have fallen deeper into the cracks?
- Who's missing out on daily contact with trusted adults, the people who look out for them and provide a crucial source of safety, structure, and support?
- Who's has lost out on access to key workers and support services?
- What are the heightened challenges for your parental community?
Food poverty?
Employment prospects?
Domestic violence?
Mental health?
Contact arrangements?
Bereavement?
And more?
- So, what needs to happen now in school and, importantly, what needs to change across the local Children's Partnership?
- Schools are the key warning signal on behalf of children so who will lead on communicating this area-wide?
- What will be different for children going forward?

CONVERSATION 2: HEALTH COLLEAGUES

How can we best work together to improve support for children's mental health and wellbeing? ...and help you meet the NHS mental health investment standard?

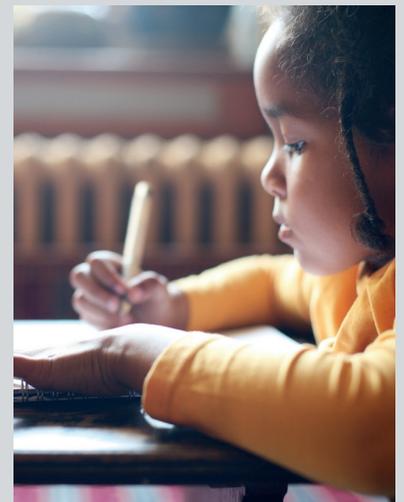
Give to gain through supporting:

- Fruitful relationships and connections with settings and schools
- Joint working on unifying and simplifying the emotional wellbeing and mental health eco system at a local level
- Abolition of 'did not attend' to categorise children who miss appointments and use, instead, of 'was not brought' to add a 'generosity' lens to challenges children might face
- Accelerating the roll out of personal health budgets
- Seizing the baton of smooth, close to home, transitions into adulthood for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and at the same time, contribute in whatever ways you can in the much-needed work to bring back young people from CAMHS and other inpatient units to their community

CONVERSATION 3: THE LAUREL TRUST

How best can The Laurel Trust help make a difference for your children and communities?

- Do we continue to target the same vulnerabilities as before?
- Are there new risks to be aware of?
Increased anxieties
Digital divide?
Self-harm?
Out of sync with routines?
Learning loss?
Changes in SEND support and services?
And what else?
- So how best to contribute to changing your children's learning and life-chances?
- **Please, let us know!**



When poverty and the out of school environment are deteriorating it becomes much more challenging to improve outcomes for poor children.

As ever, it's the human stuff that matters in education and seems to me to matter even more – the hope, the kindnesses, the relationships, the belief in children as our now and our future that schools wrap round their children and their communities. As Charles Handy once said:

“Happiness is having something to work on, someone to love and something to hope for.”

....and I'd add 'someone who looks out for me' and schools do all of that and more. We'd like to help, so please tell us how.

Thank you for all you do to champion and cherish children.

Rose Durban | Trustee | May 2020

Sharing our stories: making a difference

The Laurel Trust publishes case-studies of its research projects to: share their stories, disseminate good practice and to provide an opportunity for a school or network which is pursuing a similar innovation or development to make contact with the Lead Researcher.

We have recently changed the case-studies on our website to highlight two of our very successful projects both of which have been widely disseminated. 'Research Thrives' was presented at last year's BERA Conference

The two projects are very different but both have had a tangible and positive impact on the lives of children, their teachers and improving outcomes. Most importantly, this impact will be sustained as the projects have now moved from research into practice.

CASE STUDY

Astrea Academy Trust
& Totally Runable



'Don't be a Girl about it' was a partnership between Astrea Academy Trust and Totally Runable. It was conducted in areas of deprivation and disadvantage in South Yorkshire.



It explored girls' participation in physical activity in Years 5 and 6 and the attitudes and confidence of the girls themselves and female members of staff. It aimed to increase participation and confidence in sport, to create a transferable mindset and a 'can do attitude' to other areas of the curriculum. Its central theme was to champion the achievement and empowerment of girls in an area where girls' rights are ranked in the bottom 8% for England and Wales. Contact: nat@totallyrunable.com

CASE STUDY

St Richards TSA



'Research Thrives' explored a devolved model to create and embed a sustainable research culture with and across a collaboration of primary schools.

It used enquiry effectively in a range of settings – schools in a coastal challenge area with high levels of deprivation and challenge and nearby primary schools in rural areas. The latter were often isolated from networks with which they could collaborate and improve practice. The research was led by a local secondary school which was investing time, thought and training into building a high-quality and genuine research culture.

If you are working on growing research in your own school, partnership or network the key contact is: Joanne Calladine-Evans. Joanne's email address is:

teachingschool@strichardscc.com



Together everyone achieves more

Building social capital to transform practice... The impact posters from this year's research projects appear in full on our website. Each one reflects collaboration in action and demonstrates talent, teamwork, resourcefulness, originality and achievement. They represent the very best of working together to transform practice and create a 'wisdom bank' for schools and their partners.



Philosophy corner

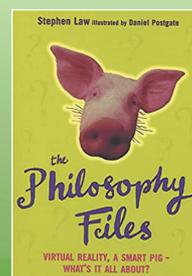
DR MARCELO STARICOFF
Trustee | The Laurel Trust

The Philosophy Corner is a regular column in our Newsletters designed to promote a love of creative, critical and philosophical thinking at school and at home.

Each Newsletter will feature a set of themed philosophical questions to inspire children and adults with an enthusiasm for wonder and for becoming experts in the art of dialogue, discussion and debate. Each Philosophy Corner will also include a suggestion for further reading and exploration of philosophical thought from a very early age.

The theme in this issue is **Our World:**

- What five wishes would you like to grant our world?
- What jobs do you most admire and why?
- Can you create a recipe for a Perfect World, what ingredients would you add and how much of each?



Reading Suggestion:

The Philosophy Files by Stephen Law - it is brilliant! Enjoy!