



June 2015

Dear CSET Stakeholder

You may be reading this as a member of staff in a CSET (Castle School Education Trust) school, a parent/carer of a child in one of the CSET schools or a member of our community. You may know lots or little about CSET. This is the first of what we intend to be regular updates on CSET's developments.

CSET was established as a Multi-Academy Trust in 2013, when The Castle School became an Academy. CSET's aims and values were established at that point and have been maintained ever since.

Aim: CSET's aim is to provide quality education in a caring environment

Our Mission is to create a robust collaboration of schools that provides:

- Strong dynamic and sustainable school leadership
- Excellent professional learning for staff
- A high quality, whole education for children and young people with opportunities, experiences and excellent outcomes that no school can achieve alone

CSET's Values:

- *A deep-rooted and continued commitment to inclusive education*
- *Absolute commitment to a 'rounded' quality education. This includes a commitment to a curriculum which promotes achievement for all and excellent outcomes for students*
- *A strong belief that working collaboratively and in partnership with others - who share our values - strengthens all*
- *A strong belief in the importance of collective responsibility for the success of all children in our community*

CSET's Strategic Priorities 2014 - 2016:

1. To improve outcomes for all children in all of our schools
2. To secure and open Academies that have a good fit with CSET's Values, Vision and Aims
3. Sustainability - To create a healthy and sustainable Trust
4. Relationships - To build powerful relationships that enhance the education of all the children in the Trust's schools and contribute to outstanding professional development for our staff

In the **Thornbury/Alveston area**, CSET now comprises; The Castle School, www.thecastleschool.org.uk (March 2013); Charfield Primary School, www.charfieldschool.org.uk (September 2013); Severn Beach Primary School, www.severnbeachprimary.org.uk (September 2014) and Marlwood School www.marlwood.com (November 2014). In the **Mangotsfield/Downend area**, Mangotsfield School, www.mangotsfieldschool.org.uk and Downend School, www.downend.com are in the process of joining CSET and we have the exciting development of opening a brand new school named Lyde Green Primary School which will be located in the heart of the new Lyde Green housing development on the A4174 ring road. The new primary school opens September 2015 and in September 2016 will include a specialist provision for primary children with Autism. We move into our new building in September 2016, until then, the Lyde Green Primary School's accommodation will be on the nearby Downend School site. By Autumn 2015 therefore we anticipate the Trust will comprise seven schools. There is considerable work currently in process in order to make this happen.

All of the schools are already working closely together in order to realise our ambition of achieving great outcomes. Here are just a few examples of how the Trust has enabled schools that are already members of CSET, or are in the process of joining, to do things better for our students.

- Marlwood and The Castle schools joint Sixth Form arrangements have increased choice for Post 16 students in the area and protected provision in the Sixth Forms in both schools
- The success of The Castle School's Premium Partners Scheme – linking education and business for the development of employability skills and student leadership - has been extended to Downend and Marlwood schools
- One very exciting development is with a national organisation, Whole Education, www.wholeeducation.org The values of Whole Education are very in tune with those of CSET especially the commitment to a broad high quality education that is more than excellent exam results. Whole Education has agreed to work with us to develop a leadership programme for our students, with students at the centre of the creation of this programme
- We are currently auditing our service provision (eg. ICT, financial services, HR etc.) across the schools in order to see how we could do things better and also improve value for money. Marlwood, The Castle, Downend and Mangotsfield schools have secured financial savings by some joint procurement and sharing of services eg. Broadband supplier
- There are numerous examples of how staff have worked together to provide training and development for staff, improve practice and develop the curriculum and resources. This has ranged from staffing appointments, leadership development, curriculum changes and joint creation of resources for new courses. There is a real advantage to staff working together and frequently this means that we have shared expertise rather than buy in external consultants or services. Every financial saving that can be made in order to invest into the classroom is essential at a time of significant budget challenge for all schools
- Marlwood and Castle schools are working with Charfield, Severn Beach and several other local primary schools to build a shared understanding of what it is like to be a learner in Years 5 – 8. We intend to learn from best practice so that all children progress well from Key Stage 2 into and through Key Stage 3

A key role of the CEO is to work closely with the Headteachers and Governors, to know the strengths and areas of development in each of the schools and enable the right people to connect to drive things forward. Governors and Directors challenge and support the schools and each other. Directors held a Development Day in January to work on our strategic priorities and also evaluate the skill set of the Board. The role of Director or School Governor is a very rewarding one and we are always interested in hearing from members of our local and wider communities who are interested in helping us meet our aims. If you are interested, please contact Stuart Hill, Chair of the Trust (heather.maccallum@cset.co.uk).

At the time of writing, our collective responsibility, joint working and committed leadership means that our schools are in a stronger place than they were before working within a Trust arrangement. We anticipate a very good outcome for Charfield Primary School. The school is due a full Ofsted inspection any day. In May, a Section 8 Monitoring inspection took place at The Castle School and endorsed the school's work in improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged students. In September, Downend School achieved a strong Good in inspection and Marlwood, Severn Beach and Mangotsfield's leadership and direction of travel have been endorsed by HMI.

We know that where leaders and practitioners collaborate over clear goals and priorities that progress and impact is greater than working alone. All the school leaders share an absolute unequivocal commitment to the success of their own individual school and as importantly, are committed to the support and development of the schools in the Trust.

With very best wishes and thank you for your support of our schools.



Melanie Warnes