



**Lower Heath**  
CE Primary School

Part of the **Marches** Academy Trust

# LGB ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

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# Our Vision & Values

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As a Church of England School, we aim to develop Lower Heath's ethos through our Christian vision and the specific needs of our community.



**(Matthew 5:16)**

## Love

† "Love is patient, love is kind"

1 Corinthians 13:4

## Respect

† "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you"

Matthew 7:12

## Faith

† "Faith can move mountains"

Matthew 17:20

## Thankfulness

† "There's always something to be thankful for"

1 Thessalonians 5:18

## Fellowship

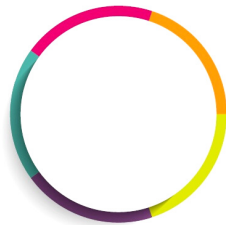
† "Encourage each other and build each other up"

1 Thessalonians 5:11



# Our Vision & Values

Our vision:  
Achievement  
through caring



Excellence

Excellence: striving  
always for mastery  
and personal success

Integrity

Integrity: consistently  
acting with honesty,  
compassion and  
respect

Empathy

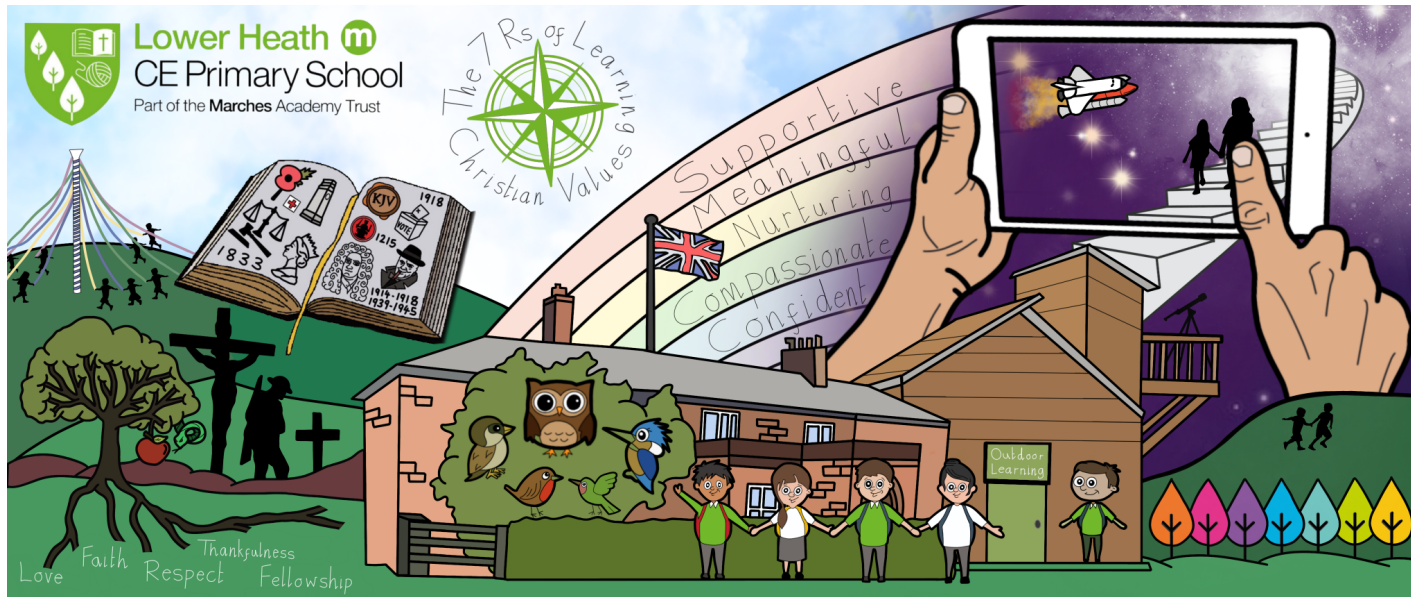
Empathy: embracing  
and supporting the  
uniqueness of every  
individual

Creativity

Creativity: inspiring  
and challenging  
through invention,  
experimentation  
and exploration

Equality

Equality: ensuring  
fair opportunity  
for all



Let Your Light Shine (Matthew 5:16)

# Working towards Trust Strategic Priorities

<b>PEOPLE FIRST STRATEGY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two teaching staff enrolled on NPQ qualifications through the Trust's talent pathway</li> <li>• All staff empowered to develop their own talents</li> <li>• Working on establishing expertise amongst all staff to be utilised throughout the school</li> <li>• Trust Professional Learning and Curious Curriculum utilised to it's full potential</li> <li>• Culture of valuing CPD</li> </ul>
<b>LEARNING FOR LIFE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad balanced curriculum, taking advantage of our local area</li> <li>• Lower Heath Pledge to develop life-skills</li> <li>• Developing Courageous Advocacy through our curriculum</li> <li>• British Values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development play a strong part in our Personal Development curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active parent group, keen to support the school and the children</li> <li>• Strong governance with a broad skills-set and regular presence in school</li> <li>• Links with Fauls Holy Immanuel Church and community are valued</li> <li>• Supportive partnerships growing to enable Lower Heath to be at the heart of our community</li> </ul>
<b>SUSTAINABLE FUTURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two new classrooms ready for September 2023. This will have a huge positive impact on our current school population and enable us to make greater links with the community, thus attracting additional pupils to secure our future numbers</li> <li>• Close partnership with finance team has resulted in careful budget planning, maintaining a surplus budget</li> <li>• Safer Schools Accredited – Lower Heath is a safe and secure environment, meeting the needs of the children</li> </ul>

# Reflections

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As I approach the end of my first academic year as Lower Heath CE Primary School's Headteacher, I consider the importance of reflection to recognise the many achievements that have been made by our children, their families and our staff and governors.

As a strong and dedicated team, we have pulled together in a time of financial hardship to ensure our children receive the highest possible education. We continue to develop our curriculum, provide exciting visits and events for our children to experience, whilst ensuring workload and, therefore, wellbeing of staff is not compromised. Our children at Lower Heath really are delightful and deserve the very best!

Learning can be challenging; I firmly believe it is our role as educators to instill a love of learning in our children. To provide them with a thirst for knowledge, an inquisitive mind and the resilience and skills to navigate their way out of their comfort zone into their learning zone, enabling them to experience that incredible feeling of success. This is achieved through our nurturing culture where children are confident to make mistakes, as they know it will lead to learning.

We are proud to be an inclusive school. Providing for all of our children, whatever their background or ability, has been a key focus for us this year. The consequences of missed education due to the Covid 19 pandemic has certainly made this mission more challenging. However, by remaining true to our vision, that all children have talents and potential which can be liberated through encouragement and compassion, we will continue on this journey together.



*Helen Reynolds*  
Headteacher



# Attendance

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Our attendance figures, particularly in the latter part of the autumn and early spring term, have been impacted by the reduced immunity, resulting from Covid isolation. This has affected both staff and pupils.

With our Pastoral Lead working with the Trust Attendance Officer, and the LA Education Welfare Officer, dramatic improvements have been affected since February half term.

Our tracking systems have been reviewed and are robust, enabling us to swiftly identify and support families where pupil attendance has fallen. We have trained staff to support 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance', which enables us to identify any anxieties around school attendance and provide help where needed.

All staff have been made aware of our collective responsibility to encourage attendance and how

they can identify concerns, challenge situations and support families to work towards a solution.

Additional communication to parents about the importance of attendance and the impact of missed schooling on children's education and wellbeing has been a key strategy this year.

Lateness was also identified as having an impact, and as a result, children were not arriving in school ready for learning. Our early morning system has been changed to make it more welcoming for the children, which has reduced lateness figures.

We continue to receive a significant number of term-time holiday requests which are rarely authorised. Our two week October half term is to be advertised to encourage parents to use this as an alternative way to access cheaper, out of term-time holidays.

Our approach to managing attendance continues to be about working collaboratively with families.





# Improvements to Infrastructure & Processes

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Last year, Lower Heath secured substantial funding through the Trust's capital bid allocation to build two new classrooms. The classrooms are due to be completed and ready for use from September 2023 and will be extremely beneficial to our learning environment. We have plans to use our additional space to connect with our community, offering spaces for local groups to use.

Our staff team continue to be motivated to develop themselves with two staff working on NPQ qualifications through the trust. This additional CPD has fed into next year's School Development Plan, inspiring staff to pursue the Early Years Quality Mark and SEND Inclusion Award.

Our IT connectivity has been vastly improved through more reliable wireless connections, installed in the spring term.

Our whole school community has come together to improve our outdoor learning facilities. All EYFS children have weekly 'Welly Wednesday' sessions. The new, improved outdoor classroom was launched with a whole school Forest School day and will be utilised throughout the school next year.

Support for our SEND pupils is a priority at Lower Heath. We have further developed our internal systems and timetabling of targeted interventions delivered by trained teaching assistants. Termly meetings with parents are scheduled to ensure there is a strong team around every child. Progress is closely monitored through our Assess - Plan - Do - Review process.





# LGB & Governance

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Our LGB consists of Sue Ricketts (Chair of Governors), Gemma Nellies (Vice Chair), Helen Reynolds (Headteacher), Helen Hipkins (Staff Governor), Reverend Sue Armstrong (Foundation Governor), Sarah Appleby and Sarah Allwood (Parent Governors).

The staff team and the LGB have an extremely positive relationship with shared vision and purpose.

Our LGB has a broad range of experience and skills and provide support during the termly Executive Review process. They provide links with the Trustees, and the Chairs from each trust school work collaboratively, connecting our family of schools within the Trust.



As locals themselves, our governors have extensive knowledge of the local area so are well placed to offer guidance when approaching school development, in particular furthering the Trust strategic priority to connect with communities. They attend many of our community activities, open days, fund-raising events and whole school 'tidy-ups'!

Using their knowledge of the culture and ethos of the school, governors are always invited into the recruitment process, ensuring we appoint the highest quality of staff who will be able to further the vision of Lower Heath. They recognise the importance of the people first strategy and the learning for life culture, and fully support growing our own staff.

Governors have worked with our marketing team to develop strategies to build school numbers to sustain our future.

School staff are very grateful for the support of this dedicated group of people who provide a breadth of skills to our LGB.





# People First Strategy

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Lower Heath continues to value all stakeholders, recognising that people are the greatest asset of any school. Parents and teachers have strong relationships and communicate freely for the good of Lower Heath children.

We continue to develop our staff through Trust supported CPD, NPQs and by sharing expertise within our family of schools, which is a particular strength of the Marches Multi Academy Trust.

With a small staff team, it is important that everyone feels valued and heard. We have implemented weekly team meetings to enable teachers and teaching assistants to share plans and collaborate on improvements within their classrooms.



Our annual 'We Thrive' staff wellbeing survey recognised the challenges facing the education sector currently such as funding and lack of time and headspace. Respondents also commented favourably about our staff team: "I enjoy my job and work with lovely people." "Relationships between colleagues are supportive, kind and friendly."

Teachers also appreciated the purchase of quality schemes of work which are used effectively to reduce workload caused by lesson planning. Through these schemes, our curriculum is robust, and valuable time can be devoted to the provision of quality first teaching.

Our appraisal system provides another opportunity for staff to be heard and to share their personal interests for their development, which we are able to support through the Trust's talent pathway.

Our school is proud to have individuals with diverse knowledge and talent which can only develop further with our positive approach to professional development.



# Learning for Life

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From when our youngest children join us at the age of three, right through to their final year, aged eleven, we encourage them to use their time in Lower Heath creatively and productively to prepare them for their next education chapter at secondary school.

In our ever changing world of technology, we use Apps and online platforms such as Times Table Rock Stars, Spelling Shed and Nessy to motivate our children to take responsibility for their own learning. These systems also enable staff and parents to celebrate their progress.

EEF research into home learning suggests that primary aged children should be focusing on securing key skills such as reading, spelling and number work. As a result, we reviewed our Home Learning Policy, in consultation with staff and parents, to focus on these areas. Parents are finding this more manageable and children can take responsibility for much of this themselves.

Parents have been involved in workshops to provide them with the knowledge and skills to support their children with learning to read, prepare for SATs and the Multiplication Tables Check.

Our curriculum offers pupils a wealth of experience that will prepare them for future life in a modern society. We promote the distinctive Christian vision and values that enable pupils and adults to flourish.



We recognise children's social and emotional wellbeing is fragile following isolation during the Covid 19 pandemic so follow programmes such as Zones of Regulation and Rest Easy to provide children with strategies to support their mental health. We provide quality collective worship that develops spirituality along with an effective RE curriculum, working with other C of E schools within MMAT.

The Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging agenda has been implemented as a 'Golden Thread' through our curriculum. Through this approach, children are exposed to a variety of cultures, genders and beliefs which are not evident in our school community. Our Cultural Diversity day celebrated different cultures and religions ensuring a culture of justice, responsibility and accountability is understood by everyone in our school.



# Connecting with our Communities

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Lower Heath have a very special relationship with Fauls Holy Immanuel Church which enables us to be part of the Fauls community.

We regularly visit church to reflect on, for example, thankfulness for the harvest and show love for the birth of Jesus at Christmas through reenactment of the Nativity story and singing carols together.

Reverend Armstrong and Merlin, her therapy dog, are welcome weekly visitors, ensuring this link remains strong.

We celebrated the Kings' Coronation with a coronation tea party and crown parade. Feedback was that this was such a lovely afternoon for families to come together that it must be an annual event in the calendar!

Our regular experience days provide us with opportunities to invite special visitors into school to enhance children's learning.



We are always looking for opportunities to broaden our involvement in the community. Some of our children visited a local care home at Christmas to sing carols, and during the summer term to sing and read together. We have joined with local schools to relaunch an athletics competition after 94 years.



# School Improvement

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The Trust's Quality Assurance School Support system continues to provide robust monitoring of school development, coupled with the resources and expertise to realise the vision.

Through this process, Lower Heath have been provided with support to develop the newly appointed headteacher, senior leaders and curriculum co-ordinators along with expertise relating to Safeguarding, SEND and Health and Safety.

Internal monitoring systems are an opportunity to celebrate excellent practice and identify further development opportunities, using both in school and Trust-wide talent.

Pupil Voice is a valuable tool to provide the changes that children feel are important to them. This year, our school council have identified playtimes, behaviour and healthy eating as key focus areas. They have implemented playground and lunchtime rotas, purchased school equipment and set up a scheme to encourage healthy snack swaps. They are also keen to work as a school community to improve the lives of others through charity events.

Our termly meetings and monitoring schedule involves staff and governors in our improvement journey. Regular learning walks and book moderation enable staff to share strategies that work in the classroom.

All monitoring is done with support and challenge in mind with a clear focus on improving learning and outcomes for our children.



# Sustainable Future

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Our newly expanded school premises will ensure our school facilities can provide a quality learning space for the next generation of Lower Heath families.

We continue to access funding from the Local Authority to enable us to support our children with special educational needs and disabilities, offering them the best provision possible in line with our inclusive ethos.

Despite tight budgets, working with the Trust team and our families, we are able to find creative ways to ensure our children don't miss out on any aspect of their primary education.

With the curriculum at the heart of everything we do, we recognise the benefit of devoting time and resources to updating it, keeping it relevant to our children and their future lives in our society.

Our belief in staff development will ensure teaching and learning is of the highest quality. We hope that funding from central government will improve in the coming years to enable the teaching profession to work more comfortably.

With an appealing school environment and vibrant curriculum, we look forward to welcoming new families to the Lower Heath community to sustain our future in Whitchurch.





# Lower Heath CE Primary School

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