

MARCHES SCHOOL
part of the Marches Academy Trust

LGB ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Trust vision and values

Our vision:

Achievement through caring

Mission statement:

As a Trust, it's our mission to empower everyone in our Trust and our communities to live and breathe our values and Achievement Through Caring, to reach their full potential.

Our values:



SCHOOL PRIORITIES



School Priorities (SDP) 2023 - 2024

The Quality of Education:

- 1.1 Literacy across the school
- 1.2 Curriculum Development
- 1.3 Inclusive Learning

Teaching and Learning

- 1.3 Curriculum Implementation - Quality of Education

Standards and Outcomes

- 1.4 RADY
- 1.5 KS3 Data and Assessment Project
- 1.6 Curriculum Impact

Behaviour and Attitudes:

- 2.1 LORIC across the Futures Pathway/Metacognition
- 2.2 Culture for Learning

Personal Development:

- 3.1 Community Engagement
- 3.2 Student Voice

Leadership and Management:

- 4.1 Sustaining Attendance
- 4.2 Sustainability
- 4.3 Ethic of Excellence and investment in Associate Staff
- 4.4 Wellbeing

Sixth Form:

- 5.1 Student involvement in the school
- 5.2 Sustaining attendance



1. Reflections – a summary of the year

We have had an incredible year with so much to celebrate here at the Marches School. Our learning community has experienced a dynamic curriculum and the love of learning has been clear to see.

Teaching and Learning has been a focus, particularly Assessment for Learning. All Teaching staff have taken part and completed Year 1 of the Embedding Formative Assessment Project based on 20 years of research. Our Teachers knowledge has been strengthened and evidence is seen in learning walks.

Student Voice is now flourishing at all levels in the school. Whole School Council meetings have been well received and attended by students in all year groups. The One Voice MAT group have been working on Mental Health in Schools and they share their research with parents.

Curriculum remains strong as validated by Ofsted. EDIB (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging) has strengthened this year with lesson resources that enrich our curriculum and experiences for our students.

The Futures Pathway this year has been dynamic and provided students with a wide variety of learning opportunities – Racism workshops, Wheelchair sports, Electric car events and Enterprise Days to list a few. The Marches Pride March was a particular highlight in the year.

Careers across the school remains strong and above all measures at National levels. We have achieved 100% of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Community links have been strong with multiple partners working with us on many events.

Attendance is in line with the national picture however, this is still below the pre-pandemic levels. Years 8, 9,10,12 and 13 are all above the national measure for these year groups.



2. Safeguarding children and young people (CYP) including attendance of CYP and staff

Attendance systems are in place and effective communication with the Educational Welfare Officer ensures that attendance is a high priority. Heads of Academic Progress for each year group and the Leadership team regularly review attendance data with barriers removed. There has been a real focus on Persistent Absence rates with levels of students meeting this threshold now lower than the national picture. Safeguarding leads and attendance meet frequently to ensure no child is missed.

As a school and with a dedicated team of staff, we work well with external agencies in a proactive approach to supporting families who need it.

All staff are Level 1 Safeguarding trained with 10 trained at level 2. Training records are maintained and regularly reviewed. Safeguarding training is built into staff induction with updates throughout the year.

This year has seen the development and use of CPOMS so staff can access the right information at the right time, whilst still maintaining high levels of confidentiality and discretion. We will continue to build on this next year.

Online safety is an important area that we have focused on this year as part of the Futures Pathway.

The curriculum structure allows for us to adapt our practice to meet the needs in our setting – an example is the work with have carried out with our young people about the dangers of vapes.



2.1 Safeguarding – external and internal reviews

Safeguarding arrangements have been reviewed at the highest level this year by Ofsted. The arrangements are effective.

We continue to evaluate and strive to make improvements in all areas and as such, we have invited an external organisation (Safeguarding Network) to complete a review of our arrangements in the summer term.

Throughout the year, we are monitored and supported by Our Marches Academy Trust to ensure that our Safeguarding standards are high.

The Single Central Record is monitored continuously to ensure that the safeguarding checks are in place and up to date for all staff and visitors to the school. This is quality assured termly by the Chair of Governors and the Head of School, as well as being a crucial role in any external review of safeguarding.



“Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Their needs are identified rapidly and carefully considered plans put in place to meet these. Equally, vulnerable pupils at risk of exclusion, have dedicated support to access an extensive range of opportunities designed to ensure that they stay in school, attend well and re-engage with learning. “ **Ofsted September 2023**

2.2 Attendance report - staff

The number of cover lessons this academic year is 17% lower than last academic year. Internal solutions to long-term absence have ensured that subject specific staff are delivering lessons where possible.

Attendance meetings have taken place this year to support staff returning to school and to reduce any barriers preventing this.

Occupational Health referrals have been used to support staff where needed and these have been valued.



PEOPLE FIRST



3. People First

Our school invests in staff through delivering a high quality and effective professional development programme throughout the year. Staff are encouraged to work with external providers and exam boards to engage in the latest research and evidence to be at the forefront in our classroom practice. The Embedding Formative Assessment Project is one example where staff can collaborate, share practice and take risks in a low threat environment.

Time is made available for staff to collaborate and share good practice, not only within the school, but also across the Trust. Cross Trust Subject Network meetings have been used to drive the Assessment project at Key Stage 3 forward.

The Director's Conference is valued by leaders and creates head space for strategic thinking. This has resulted in departments having a clear vision for improvement and development plans that will positively impact on our students.

Collaboration Days have been used effectively to drive change – an opportunity for students to learn online and for staff to work together on principles that will improve CYP experiences in lessons.

Talent in staff is nurtured and developed – we use the NPQ suite of qualifications to develop skills further. This year has seen many internal promotions as a result.



3.1. Wellbeing

The Staff Wellbeing Committee has continued to meet this academic year. Concerns are acted upon and shared in the staff bulletin. Staff voice counts and is valued. Staff are supported to manage their workload and systems are maintained to respect work life balance.

Policies and principles continue to be reviewed to ensure that they make a difference to learning and reduce workload wherever possible.

This year, the Assessment Principles Project has ensured that staff have had a voice and workload is considered.

The Schools Advisory Service is available for all staff should they need support, staff are sign posted to this.

Line managers operate an open-door system should staff need to talk. A Wellbeing Room is available for staff and valued should anyone need some quiet time.



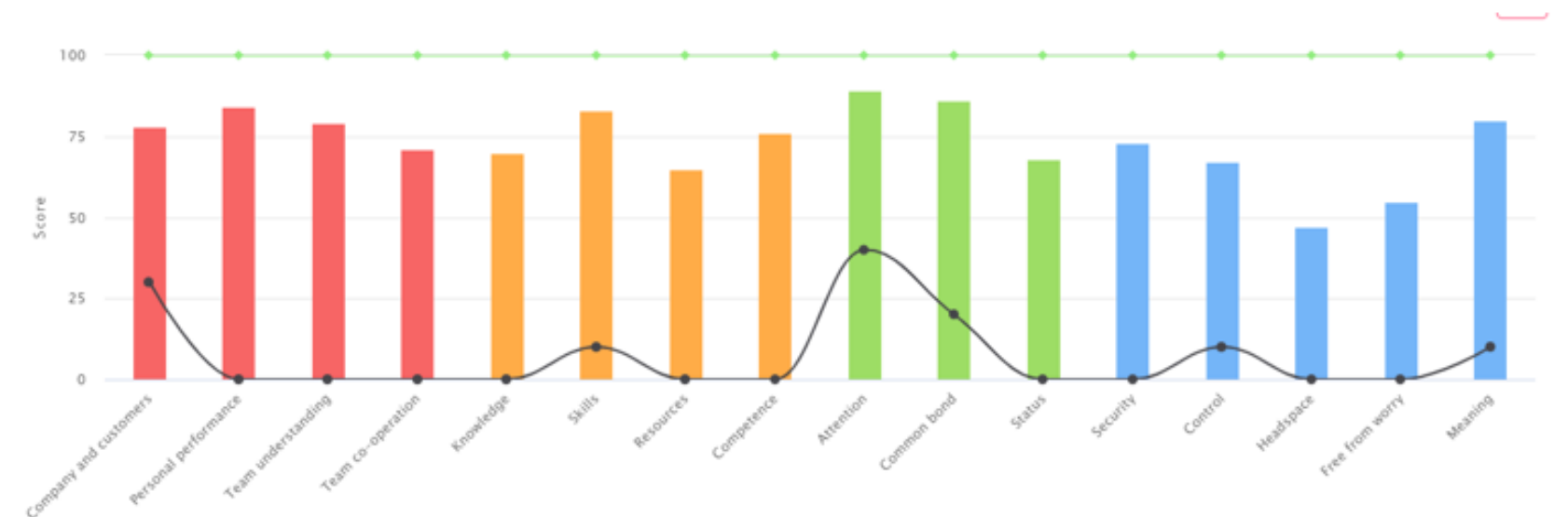
3.2 We Thrive survey

We Thrive is a Trust-based initiative to support staff wellbeing. The Marches School and the Trust use staff voice to understand the needs and concerns of staff and use this information to improve everyone's time at work and further support the Trust's commitment to staff wellbeing.

The Staff We Thrive Survey this year was completed by 50 staff – lower than previous years, possibly due to the survey being run for the last 6 years.

The survey showed a similar pattern to last year with no significant dips. Some measures improved, for example a common bond and personal performance. The majority of areas on the heat map are green to reflect that staff are happy here.

The weakest area is, as always, Headspace – having the time to reflect and think clearly. We continue to work creatively to find ways to respond to voice.



3.3 Professional Learning – developing a culture of continuous learning

NPQs

Staff at all levels are encouraged to continually learn and develop their practice. This year, we have several staff undergoing the NPQ qualifications (2 x NPQH, 4 x NPQSL, 2 x NPQLT and 2 x NPQLBC). Three teachers are recommended for NPQSESCO next year.

Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA)

All teaching staff are completing this two-year professional development project designed to improve the quality of formative assessment across the school through monthly workshops and peer observations.

TLAC (Teach like a Champion)

Two senior leaders and one middle leader have attended the TLAC conference – learning from this will be rolled out next year and built into the CPD calendar.

Improving Teacher Programme

Standards Review observations in the autumn term led to a group of staff with developing talent to be supported with a bespoke in-house programme of coaching, drop-ins and feedback.

Conferences

Staff attendance at external conferences and courses is actively encouraged – recent ones include an adaptive teaching masterclass, MFL curriculum development, Sixth Form leadership, alongside a wide variety of exam board specific CPD. Four middle/senior leaders will be attending the MAT Courageous Cultures Conference in July – developing excellence in leadership. Two teachers attended the Mark Finnis training programme on restorative practice. Strategies will be used to strengthen our practice.

Regular Teaching and Learning Development

Regular Teaching & Learning briefings and weekly staff bulletins are used to keep staff up-to-date with latest research and strategies designed to promote continuous learning and develop pedagogy.



3.4 Talent Pathway – investing in our staff and their progress

Early Career Teachers

Staff new into teaching are supported well. They have a subject mentor and a lead mentor in the school. They follow a robust and effective training and development route across a two-year period. This year, our ECTs have attended weekly twilight sessions, as well as face to face support days focussing on teacher standards.

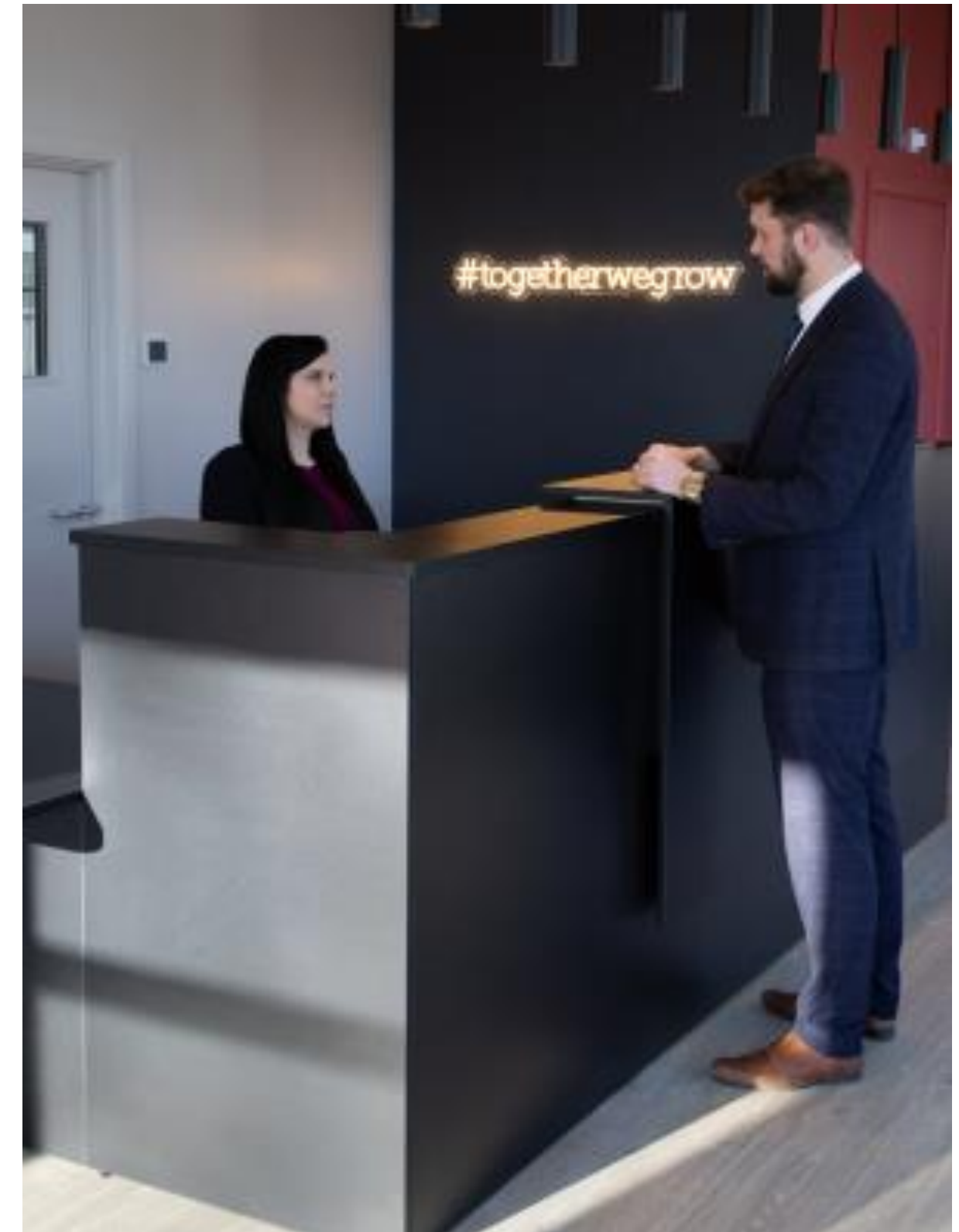
Outward Facing Staff Development

We continue to strive for improvement and key staff have had the opportunity to work with external Trusts and to learn from their practice. Staff have had the opportunity to visit the Olympus Trust and Futures Trust – much learning has taken place and this is leading to key improvements in our Literacy Strategy and the support for Year 7 in their transition.

Developing Others

A number of staff have had the opportunity to lead on training and to develop others throughout the Trust as part of our annual conference. Staff have also supported colleagues in other school within and outside of our Trust. Staff have also developed their own facilitation skills through delivering on the NOQ qualifications.

Staff are encouraged to develop their practice and regular conversations take place in appraisals where staff can request bespoke CPD.



3.5 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) impact

EDIB has continued to grow this year and it is a real strength. Students are encouraged to recognise, respect and celebrate differences within our diverse community.

We have an excellent EDIB Ambassador in place who leads on staff professional development in this area and driving the EDIB agenda forward. Summer 1 saw our Diversity theme flourish as part of the Futures Pathway. A parent information session was held and well received. Students learnt about the 9 protected characteristics and enjoyed a wide variety of activities that have enriched the curriculum and supported learning.

The Diversity Futures Week was full of activities, for example Wheelchair sports, Boccia, Cultural Cooking clubs, Anti-Racism workshops, visits from a guide dog and the Marches 3rd Pride March. The school was also represented in the first Oswestry Pride March in June.

As a school community, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment where all young people can be themselves without fear or prejudice.



3.6 MAT networks and collaboration

MAT Network meetings are scheduled every half-term and are attended by all subject leaders, RSLs, T&L leads, inclusion teams and behaviour leads. The purpose of the meetings is to ensure that school leaders are sharing best practice aligning processes and principles. Staff feedback from these meetings is positive and they drive change.

This year, a large focus has been on the Trust-wide collaboration around the Key Stage 3 Assessment Project. RSLs worked together to write the principles for the project, as well as drive change in their schools. Subject teams across the Trust have collaborated to agree the core knowledge and greater depth statements for topics – these key learning statements will define the KS3 curriculum in every subject.

Network meetings have led to strong links being built across the Trust and middle leaders acting as peer reviewers, mentors and coaches.

Collaboration Days have been used effectively this year and continued to be valued by staff.

MAT Exec leads have continued to support the work of the school this year and work closely with staff to drive whole school improvement. They have led on collaboration with outside agencies and examples of best practice where our staff have had the opportunity to take part in and learn. Staff have appreciated the opportunities and are enthused to share their learning.



LEARNING FOR LIFE



4. Learning for Life

Adaptive Teaching

The school has made great strides in implementing the new Learning for Life framework where all teachers further develop their understanding of how the needs of all our students are met in the classroom. Early work on a systematic approach for recording and tracking intervention strategies and how this will continue next year.

Careers

This area of school is led well by a passionate and enthusiastic teacher. Opportunities for students have been vast and Years 10 and 12 will undertake a full week of work experience in the summer term.

Bespoke pathways and support – The Yellow Zone

Our Yellow Zone area of school provides effective support and pathways for our wave 3 and wave 4 students who need that extra level of intervention. External agencies have been used well this year and we have seen an impact from these sessions. Raise and RESET work well with the function of supporting students back into the classroom.

Enrichment

Enrichment has been going strong throughout the year, with Sport, Music and Drama being popular. Shrek the Musical involved students from all year groups. Over 40 clubs have been attended well by students with many staff volunteering their time.

Duke of Edinburgh

Many students are benefiting from being a part of this scheme and developing lifelong skills. 50 students participated in a two-day expedition in the summer term for their Bronze award.



4.1 Wave system and the development of behaviour and SEND

The Wave System has been developed further this year and wave review meetings are focused on strategies needed to meet the needs for our students. Learning Mentors were appointed to work with students needing bespoke support. The systematic approach that attendance has with a wave focus is being rolled out to the learning pillar of the learning for life framework. Our school has established high expectations of behaviour that students understand and are keen to meet. The few students who do not meet those expectations are actively supported to understand why they need to modify their behaviour. Currently, our behaviour systems are under review to streamline processes.

Our SEND students are supported in our inclusive curriculum. Our teachers are always striving to ensure that quality first teaching enables all students to access great lessons and adaptive teaching builds knowledge. We will continue to review this and ensure any teaching and learning professional development includes an aspect of SEND provision. Our Raise, Hub and RESET areas of school help students access learning and remove barriers through groupwork and building self-esteem. The ambition is always for students to learn in their class environment with subject specialists.



BELONGING



5. Belonging

The House System

Students have had the opportunity to take part in many different kinds of House activities this year – House celebration is strong, and students work together all year to collect points. This year, the form notice boards have had a belonging theme.

We continue to operate a **restorative approach** in our school community where everyone is listened to. Student coffee mornings have been inciteful. Issues raised have been acted upon. Living our values has been a strategy we have started where we celebrate our young people doing the right thing.

Year Group Zones

Student voice on keeping the year group social zones has been clear – they like them and enjoy spending time with their peers particularly the younger year groups with Year 7 having play equipment.

Year Group Structures

The Year 7 tutors are a dedicated team with the expertise in transition. Students will then move onto a Key Stage 3 tutor for two years and we are now rolling this model out into Key Stage 4. They will have the same tutor for Years 10 and 11.



Trips

This year has seen a large number of trips available to our students including numerous overseas visits – Iceland, Paris Madrid and skiing for example. Students have also had the opportunity to visit local areas of interest to develop cultural awareness within our community.

High Standard of Uniform

Uniform standards remain high and tutors check daily.

5.1 Connecting with our communities and community plans

This year has seen over 50 community partners work with the school on a variety of projects enriching the curriculum. Every student in the school has the opportunity to connect with the community. Year 11 students all received a mock interview from the rotary club which they thoroughly enjoyed.

Careers has been strong this year as we remain at 100% Gatsby benchmarks – students have had the opportunity to take part in speed networking, employer assemblies, a careers fare, an electric vehicle event, visits to Aico, trips to local universities and a Public Services Day.

Our school choir has worked with the Choir from the Orthopaedic Hospital and attended a local concert. Our Choir has also attended local events, for example the Christmas light switch on and the Whittington Music Festival.

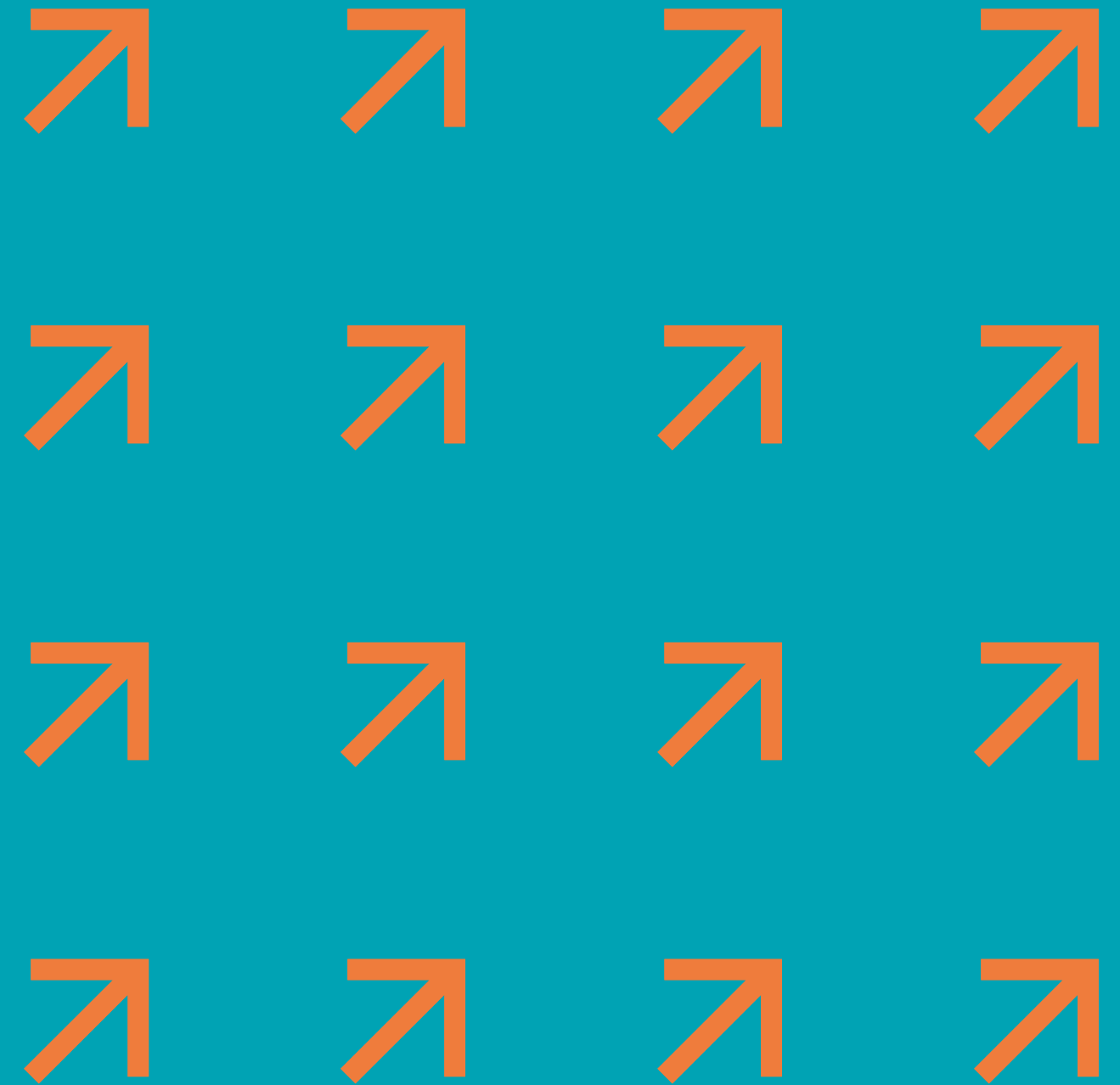
A highlight of our calendar is our school performance, and this year it was Shrek! Primary feeder students attended matinee shows and the community attended in the evening. A high-quality show enjoyed by all. July will see Year 5 students attending the Shrek Extravaganza Workshop.

Primary feeder schools have attended sporting events here at the Marches this year as well as STEAM days where they have experienced Science and Technology lessons.

We held our first set of parent coffee mornings this year and what we learnt from these have been shared with staff.



LGB AND GOVERNANCE



6. LGB and governance

This academic year we have had a full cohort of excellent Governors supporting the Strategic vision of the school. Our Governors have a broad range of skills and experience that enables them to take an in-depth look at the what the school is doing whilst providing appropriate challenge. The Governing body regularly visits the school to ensure that their areas of focus on the SDP move the school forward.

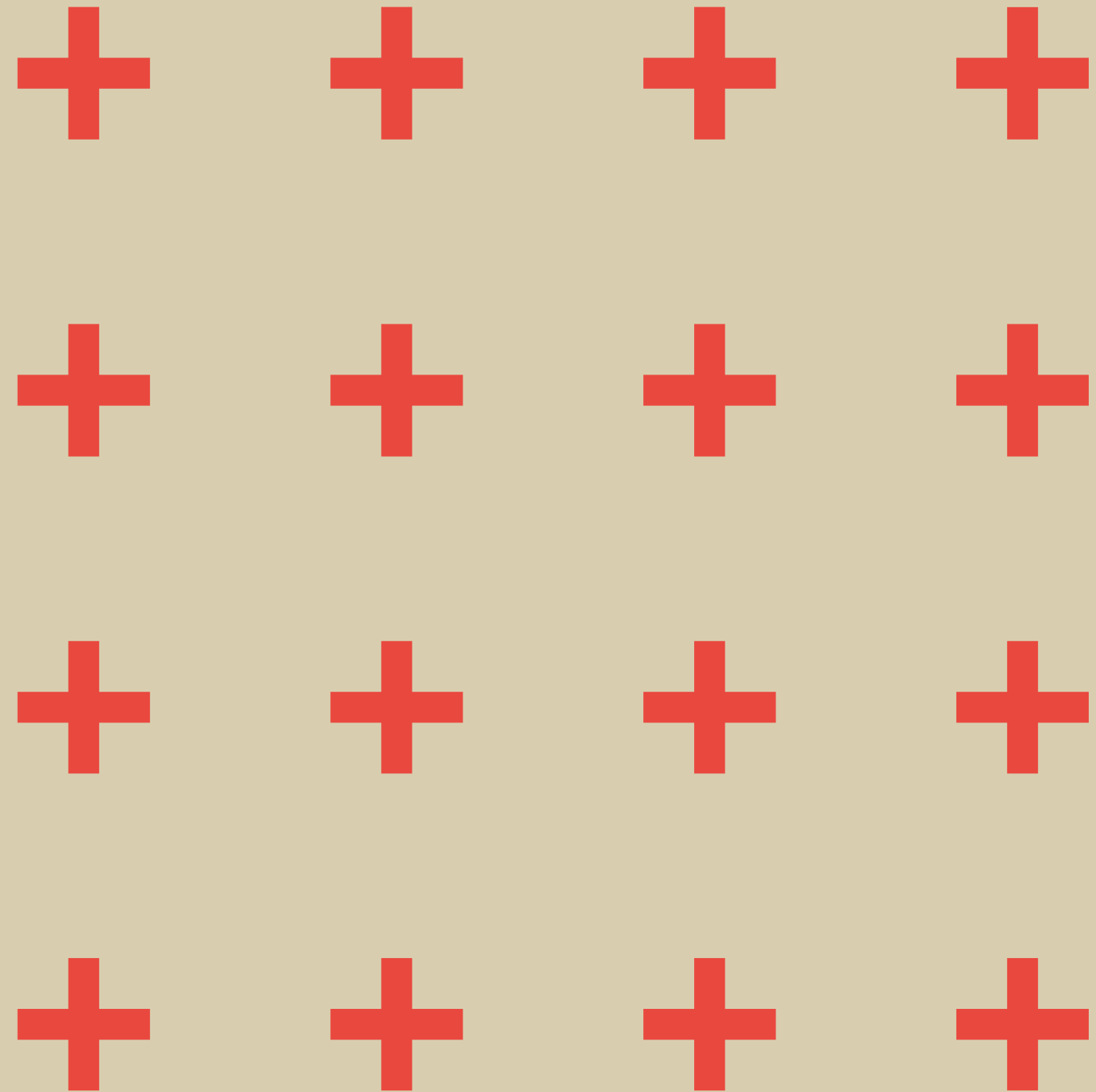
Examples of Governor impact statements from the work carried out this year include:

- Governors sought assurances that the school's investment into the Duke of Edinburgh Award was being well spent and achieving value for money.
- Governors requested sight of evidence to triangulate the impact of the school improvement partnership visits and Quality of Education.
- Governors worked with the Leadership group to develop the School Development Plan for 2024 - 2025.

"I would to thank my fellow Governors and in particular Anna Doggart for her many years service to the school. I believe we now have an extremely well balanced Governing body who bring a variety of necessary skills to be able to ensure that we provide appropriate strategic challenge to the school. This is to make sure that The Marches School provides the best education for the young people of Oswestry. I would further like to thank the staff for their commitment and professionalism, as well as their willingness to work with governors. This I believe was well born out in the Ofsted visit this year where the school maintained their good status." Mr Vince Hunt (Chair of Governors)



SCHOOL HEALTH AND SAFETY - GDPR COMPLIANCE



7. Health and safety including GDPR compliance

Annual Internal Health and Safety Audit

Health and safety practices are audited, and concerns identified. This year, work has been carried out on plumbing and pipework as a result of these checks. Routine work procedures have also been updated to improve local testing practices, with site staff completing National College Certification to support their development.

Capital Funding

A bid was successful, and we are in the process of building a fence to further secure our site. The fence will address safeguarding concerns relating to public access to our Sports field. Works will commence in July to install external fencing along the footpath parallel to Pen-y-Lan Lane to prevent public access, following ongoing issues with disturbance to lessons and social time from dog walkers, subsequent fouling and general concerns over public access to our site.

Trust Audit

A Trust Audit supported our internal findings; key actions being to relocate the Sixth Form fire assembly point due to close proximity to combustible Bleachfield buildings.

GDPR

There have been no reportable GDPR breaches to the ICO.



marches school 

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