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AVANTILIFE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST



HOUSE WARMING

Open Day Number 1 for Avanti House was one to remember. Principal Gareth Jones tells us what really went down that night...



Follow me
to page 6!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

TEACHING THROUGH STORIES - **LOTS** OF STORIES
READING IN REDBRIDGE

ABOVE & BEYOND - ORIGINS OF THE AVANTI ETHOS

What is Avanti Schools Trust?

Avanti Schools Trust is a significant but focused multi-sponsor/proposer of high quality education for all with a growing number of schools, including VA schools, Academies and Free schools. The Trust now also welcomes convertor academies to join the family and also offers services to third-party schools.

The Trust is differentiated by having very strong community links, supported by grassroots parental demand, and positive working partnerships with the local authorities where we work.

We promote holistic, responsible lifestyles through a vegetarian diet, a curriculum that integrates yoga and

meditation and a built environment that actively fosters environmental concern.

By drawing on the teachings of Krishna Chaitanya, Avanti Schools Trust schools embrace a universal, inclusive approach to spirituality, aimed at rekindling a personal, loving and spontaneous relationship with the divine (Krishna).

Avanti Schools Trust schools are open to all, whether of faith or of none. Our schools prepare young people for their respective life-journeys by promoting: *Educational excellence; Character formation & Spiritual insight.*

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AVANTI SCHOOLS
TRUST

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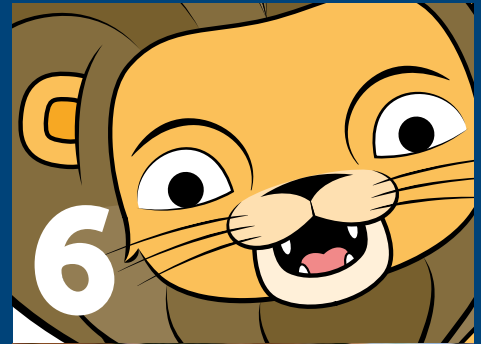
Are you striving to establish a more creative and imaginative classroom? Well, you've come to the right reading corner.

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A family that milks cows together, stays together. A look back to our first conference in the Kent countryside.



Noticeboard

Do not forget...

The Avanti Life publishing team is a small one, but it wants to grow. There's actually lot's of room for you to contribute and have your say so please feel free to get in touch and get involved!

Write to matthew@avanti.org.uk with your ideas. Look forward to hearing from you.



REMINDER!

DON'T MISS THE DIWALI
CELEBRATIONS AT
AVANTI COURT

MONDAY
12TH NOVEMBER
5.30PM TILL 7.30PM

Guess what...
Avanti House Principal Gareth Jones, and Krishna Avanti Primary School Principal Chris Spall have received unexpected invitations to Downing Street as one of a select group of new Free School Heads. The two hour meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 7th and is a celebration of the expansion of Free Schools. Other Government and Department for Education officials are also likely to be present.



Avanti Schools Trust participated in the Sewa Day initiative by planting trees with pupils from Avanti House. Sewa Day is an international initiative, backed by the United Nations Education, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), to encourage participants to perform acts of kindness without expectation of reward. We look forward to seeing all of our schools and communities participating in this annual event.

James Biddulph, Headteacher at Avanti Court, talks about an exciting new reading strategy for his primary school in Redbridge

Avanti Court opened its doors for the first time this September. With four reception classes and one Year 1 class, the school has quickly made a mark on its community. Children are settled and enjoying their new school.

At Avanti Court we are passionate about reading. As part of our key priorities we are developing a reading strategy to engage all children by offering irresistible learning experiences. As well as investing in a wonderful phonics scheme called *Phonics Bug*, which has vibrant and attractive books and also includes a virtual book bag and virtual books, we have a number of strategies to enrich the children's reading experience.

"Inviting artists and professionals with different skills can really make an impact on enriching learning experiences in school"

In October we celebrated Book Week. The whole school focused on a book called *Beegu* by Alex Deacon. The book is about an alien who having crash-landed on earth, tries to fit in with the strange humans she encounters – only the children in the story show any empathy! The book links very well to our Philosophy & Ethics curriculum focus (Empathy in Autumn 1). A huge space ship was built in the shared reception area, with messages written in sand, shaving foam and corn flour over the course of the week. Not only were the children encouraged to write responses (developing their writing), the language and imaginative play was incredible, as Headteacher, James Biddulph found out when he engaged with two boys in the role play area:

Rayhan: We're making a restaurant

(tidying the plates and spoons)

Mayur: Yes yes, a space restaurant. What do you want to eat, Mr?

James: Well, I can't see the menu so I don't know what you offer here. (Children look confused.)

Mayur: Let's, let's get one.

James: Where from? How about making a special space restaurant menu...

Rayhan: I'll make one.

Mayur: Yes me too (The boys rush over to the writing area where they busy themselves drawing a menu of fruit and mark making to show different items on the menu)

Mayur: There you are sir. What do you want?

James: Are you the waiter? (Mayur nods) Well, waiters say...'What would you like sir?'

Mayur: What would you like?

James: I'd like space cake

and chips please.

Rayhan: You can't have chips with cake (laughs) but you can with milk.

James: OK I'd like cake with milk. (Boys then go to the kitchen and make my order, chatting throughout about what they should do and which plate they should put the imaginary cake on)

Rayhan: There it is...enjoy the food!

James: How much will that be please? Can I have the bill?

Mayur: You have to pay sixty million pounds!



Read to Succeed!

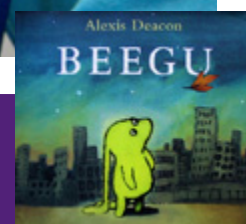
Reading Enriched

Inviting artists and professionals with different skills can really make an impact on enriching learning experiences in school and is a

Leading the reading:
Headteacher James Biddulph
with Avanti Court pupil




The story of Beegu, an alien girl that crash lands on earth and befriends school children, comes to life in a dramatic way.



brilliant way of developing staffs' skills. Children worked with two musicians to write a song based on the story. Randolph Matthews (randolphmatthews.net), a voice and singing percussionist, guided the children to creating sounds and texts to delve deeper into the picture book story and Jane Wheeler (livingsong.co.uk) sang songs with Reception children to help them understand the meaning behind the text.

Every member of staff read their favourite children's story to small groups, modelling to children that everyone is a reader.

The week culminated in an 'Alien March' – children and members of staff came to school dressed in alien costumes – marking the end of our week of space exploration! 

King of the Library

We commissioned Matthew Whitlock to design a Reading Lion, drawn from our Avanti logo. The lion, yet to be named, features on our specially designed reading records and as the year progresses will also become a mascot, used to promote reading, our behaviour Golden Expectations and hopefully countless new projects.

My Reading Record



Name: _____
Class: _____

The ABC's of Reading

A look at the Primary phase reading strategy developed by Avanti Court

The Avanti Court Reading strategy takes into account the governments expectation that all children should leave primary school able to decode words and have a 'love of reading'. We have devised a strategy to build on synthetic phonics as one effective approach to develop children's reading but also draw from an Australian research project which culminated in a programme called *First Steps*. This presents reading behaviours and attitudes in a less linear way and shows how in different phases there are different and complex processes involved in understanding how to read and the meaning behind reading.

PRIMARY PHASE READING STRATEGY			
PHONICS	GUIDED READING (DIRECT TEACHING OF READING)	READING FOR PLEASURE	SUPPORTING EMERGING READERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters and sounds (Reception to Year 2) Daily reading (Volunteers & TAs) Daily synthetic phonics sessions from Reception to Year 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to read (Culturally specific texts related to Krishna Consciousness) Phonics Bug Reading Scheme (home readers levelled books) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Book Week Annual Shakespeare Week High quality book corners in every class room High quality library in each school with wide selection of books, including multimedia texts Books chosen by children and taken home every day Home Reading Record/ parent training Book bags for every child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified children/new starters/ EAL and SEN focused support using Reading Recovery Reading Support (group reading programme)

ATTITUDES TO READING *				
PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5
ROLE PLAY READING	EXPERIMENTAL READING	EARLY READING	TRANSITIONAL READING	INDEPENDENT READERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curiosity about printing and mark making Wants to look at books Points at text, has a go Expresses enjoyment Eagerly anticipates book-reading Plays out characters in stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks about their own reading Asks for favourite stories to be read Joins in and acts out stories Selects books to read for pleasure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a go at reading own words Enjoys listening to stories Reads for a range of purposes (pleasure & information) Responds sensitively to stories Discusses favourite books, authors Selects own reading material according to interest Reconstructs information gained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-motivated to read Reads for range of purposes Responds sensitively Discusses favourite books, authors, particular genres Makes comparisons with other texts Confidence to read a wide selection of texts Reads alone for prolonged periods of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avidly pursues a favourite author, books compared and recommended Feels strongly about reading preferences Totally absorbed when reading & reads for long periods at home and at school Sees books and text as a major source of information Strongly relates to characters in fiction

* Phases drawn from Indicators for Reading Development Continuum, *First Steps*

WEEKLY READING LEARNING AND TEACHING

TAUGHT PHONICS	GUIDED READING (DIRECT TEACHING) OF READING)	READING FOR PLEASURE	ALL TEACHING SESSIONS	SUPPORTING EMERGING & STRUGGLING READERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ hour Phonics session taught in whole group session. As children progress at different rates, children will be grouped according to the Letters and Sounds phase in which they are working in. (Teachers and TAs trained in Phonics) • Repetition & consolidation activities planned for during free-flow and independent activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice-weekly guided reading sessions taught by the class teacher. Learn to Read (Culturally specific texts related to Krishna Consciousness) in guided reading sessions. • Phonics Bug Reading Scheme (home readers levelled books) • Teaching assistants will change children's phonics reading books daily. Children read their phonics levelled book to the TA/ adult, who assesses confidence and identifies another book to support phonic learning or moves child to next level. (Led by TAs under Teacher's supervision) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As well as Phonics Levelled books, books chosen by children and taken home every day • Book bags for every child • Home Reading Record to record reading experience at school and at home. • Story time each day for children during which teacher and other adults share their joy of reading. High quality texts with opportunities for children to read, act out, sing and listen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will provide opportunities for children to read. Text on IWB. Children invited to read along. • Key Vocab on display and used throughout sessions • Literacy Learning Wall identifies focused language. Referred to by adults and children. • Teaching demonstrates the excitement of stories and the importance of finding out information • Everyone is celebrated as a reader. Adults are vigilant to identify how children have been successful in their reading development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified children/ new starters/ EAL and SEN focused support using Reading Recovery • Reading Support (group reading programme)

ASSESSING PHONICS AND READING

TAUGHT PHONICS	GUIDED READING (DIRECT TEACHING) OF READING)	READING FOR PLEASURE	ALL TEACHING SESSIONS	SUPPORTING EMERGING & STRUGGLING READERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics Tests • Sight Word tests • Assessment informs groupings for Phonics sessions (particularly in later phases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Reading assessment format completed and children tracked • Running Record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Records show daily reading at home • They identify children's enjoyment of texts • Finding the 'buzz' in literacy sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson monitoring • Shared best practice • Learning Walls discussed by children – direct impact on children's learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking children • Reading record completed after each session to inform planning and teaching





HOUSE WARMING

Things are hotting up over at Avanti House, as one event after another focusses on filling every last pupil place. The Harrow all-through school held its first open evening in September, and if you missed that one, be sure to make the guest list for their next must-attend House party.

Report by Gareth Jones - Principal at Avanti House

Our main Open Evening for prospective pupils entering Year Seven in September 2013 took place on Tuesday, September 25th. I conducted an initial presentation in the Main Hall and this was followed by a tour of the building with members of the Student Council acting as guides. Each of our classrooms was set up to show the kinds of activities which our Year Seven students have been enjoying and almost all of them were able to stay to talk to new parents about their experiences thus far at Avanti House. Teaching and support staff dealt tirelessly with the many questions asked of them and as ever the pupils were excellent ambassadors for the school. I am

also grateful to the number of Year Seven parents who gave up their time to assist us with car parking, acting as guides, helping to serve refreshments in the canteen and chatting to new and prospective parents and children. It was a first-rate evening attended by around 500 people.

This event was followed by three Open Mornings where parents could witness the school in session. After a short tour, I conducted a brief presentation and chaired question and answer sessions, some of which lasted over an hour. Although only three mornings were scheduled, this was eventually expanded to six as the demand from parents was so great.



While not being complacent, the numbers attending and the nature of the enquiries, suggests that there is very significant interest in the school which should translate itself into a healthy Year Seven cohort next year. By the end of the evening and morning sessions, many parents were expressing their fears that there might not be enough places for their children; we shall wait and see but this recruitment round has given a massive boost to staff confidence and heralds the fact that Avanti House is most definitely on the map.

We have kept up our publicity campaign with advertisements in a number of local and free papers and we now have a revised prospectus to share with parents and pupils.

Parents will have to decide by October 31st and thus we have also pinpointed the feeder Primary Schools who are likely to contribute the greatest number of pupils. Over the next two weeks, senior staff will visit these schools to talk to Year Six pupils, distribute brochures and make sure that teachers in these schools feel confident about recommending Avanti House.

Although it does not appear traditional in Harrow, we shall also be holding an Open Evening for Reception pupils on November 28th since parents have until January 15th 2013 to make their school choices for this phase in education.

On Wednesday, October 3rd, our first Meet the Tutors evening took place for parents of current pupils. This was very well attended and, while the overall tenor of the event was very positive, some issues did emerge which we are currently addressing. The following afternoon, a similar event was held for our Reception parents who had the chance to meet our two Reception teachers – Mrs Robson and Mrs Shingala. Mrs Edwards has reported back that this too was a positive affair with parents reassured that their youngsters were in very safe hands.

Current numbers in year Seven are 75 and for Reception 56, with four places to be filled and 29 still on the waiting-list.

Straight from the Principal's mouth

What better Avanti House news source could there ever be, than Gareth Jones himself

POETS THAT KNOW IT

The English department under Ms Vasudeva has been focussing its early lessons on poetry and a school-wide poetry competition brought entries from over thirty pupils. First and second prize-winners - Bivun Bid and Ishani Desai – were announced at a special assembly on World Poetry Day on October 4th at which time several staff members read their favourite poems.

COFFEE DRINKERS UNITED

A fund-raising event to coincide with the nationwide Macmillan Coffee Morning raised £100 for the cancer charity.

Students face the music

The programme of Music tuition began in earnest on Monday, October 1st with lessons in cello, violin, guitar, piano/keyboards and drums. Several students have been encouraged to buy instruments through the Harrow Music service and over 35 pupils are involved in tuition.

MATHS IS COOL - TRUE OR FALSE

The school Maths Club has had an impressive start, with a number of students now already experiencing university level maths topics. In recent weeks, students have been learning about formal logic and how a simple statement or argument can be proven true or false through mathematics. A major use for formal logic is in computer programming and students will be given the opportunity in the future to extend these skills in a programming club in year 8.

Bon voyage

A residential trip to France is planned for December 3rd to 7th which will see children visiting the World War One battlefields at Arras, sight-seeing in Paris, a day at a PGL activities centre and a day at Euro Disney. This trip is also being opened to Year Four pupils at Krishna Avanti.

CRICKET 101

KAPS has been approached by a local representative from the BRIT Insurance-sponsored "Chance to Shine – Educating through Cricket" programme. The ECB coach, Vimal Somani, is happy to work with KAPS and Avanti House youngsters, providing kit and coaching. Additionally, we have been offered the use of the fields at the nearby Mumbai Gardens venue. This is an excellent opportunity for our youngsters who are already excited at the prospect.

RIGHT SIDE OF THE LAW

Pairs of tutor groups have been enjoying the "Theatre of Law" project with an external speaker, Johanna Gummett, from the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law. Our pupils have been finding out more about how the legal system operates and will spend a whole day at the law courts themselves, two tutor groups at a time, in November.

Skilled up

Pupils have been offered the chance to attend the World Skills Show at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham on November 16th at which they will have the chance to sample exhibits by a number of top employers and providers of specialist training and apprenticeship schemes. The event offers an unrivalled experience to inspire the web developers, engineers, fashion designers and builders of tomorrow.

Once upon a time...

A writer has been commissioned by Avanti Schools Trust to compile a collection of stories to serve as a valuable teaching resource for its schools.

Vandna Synghal, a journalist currently working as a freelance writer and editor, embarked on the project as of August, so far completing 15 stories. A wide range of academic sources feed into her research, meaning the origins of stories remain balanced, including anything from The Elves and the Shoemaker to excerpts from the epic Mahabharata.

The project aims to support and enrich Collective Worship sessions across all Avanti schools, so stories come under the same seven values which are explored during each half-term.

These values are as follows: 1) empathy 2) self-discipline 3) respect 4) integrity 5) courage 6) gratitude, plus 7) an over-arching value of humility.

Vandna's work to date; a mixture of short stories and anecdotes (see an example below), prepares staff for the topic of self-discipline, providing them with source material for assemblies and class discussion. This is part of the wider resource development currently underway which will also include a multi-faith prayer book and collections of shared singing repertoire.

In a magnificent city called Hastinapur there lived a glorious family with princes of extraordinary strength and great promise. Five of the boys were called the Pandavas and were sons of the great King Pandu. The other hundred brothers were their cousins the Kurus, sons of King Dhritarashtra.

All the boys went to the royal gurukula (Sanskrit for school) and trained under the renowned teacher Dronacharya who was rigorous in his schooling. He left no stone unturned in training his pupils to become great warriors.

One morning, Dronacharya asked the princes to assemble for a lesson in archery. He had arranged for a model bird to be hung from a thin rope off a tree. It rocked from side-to-side among the branches.

"Do you see the artificial bird?" he asked his students who were gathered in a crowd several feet away from the tree.

"Yes sir," the princes said in unison.

"The aim is to target the bird's

eye with your arrow. You will each get one chance," said the teacher.

Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava went first. He raised his bow and drew back the bowstring. But before he could release the arrow, Dronacharya interrupted, "Wait, what do you see?"

"I see the tree, leaves, the sky and the bird," the prince replied.

"Back to your place, you have learned nothing," Dronacharya said sternly.

Another prince stepped forward. It was Duryodhana, the chief Kuru son. He held his bow confidently and made aim for the bird. Before he could release his arrow, Dronacharya asked the same question he had asked Yudhishtira.

"Sir, I can see the branches, leaves and the bird's wings," said Duryodhana, convinced he was doing it right.

"Go back to the group," said the teacher.

Duryodhana returned to his peers. The rest of the princes took their turns but after mounting

their arrows and making similar descriptions they were sent back without trying.

Dronacharya then turned to Arjuna, the last pupil to have a go. Arjuna took his stance and was ready to answer the question.

"What do you see?" came the question.

"The bird's eye," said Arjuna.

Surprised, Dronacharya asked, "Surely you see other things - the tree, the sky, me?"

"No sir, I see only the bird's eye."

"Then release the arrow," commanded the happy teacher.

The arrow flew with great speed and accuracy straight into the bird's eye. The bird fell to the ground with a thud. Dronacharya smiled with pleasure at Arjuna.

"Arjuna has learned the most important lesson in archery; you must see only your target, nothing else. Focus on your goal without distraction. Mark my words, Arjuna will become the greatest archer the world has ever seen."

Indeed, Dronacharya's blessings became true.

Put your thumbs up for Avanti Schools Trust!

about an hour ago · Like ·  1 person

Facebook is, like it or not, a way of life for many people today (1 billion people to be precise-ish). Whether treated as a just another way to communicate or as a powerful web-based opiate to suppress loneliness and boredom, nobody would deny that for its users, Facebook has become integral to the way they function.

For the vast majority, it's a source of news, which is why Avanti Schools Trust has created its own Facebook



page. Facebook is designed to make sharing news easy, but this is where our challenge lies. The spread of our latest news depends not on word of mouth, but word of mouse. Unless potentially interested parties click 'like' for Avanti Schools Trust, they'll never get to hear from us.

Visit our Facebook page [HERE](#), and suggest your friends do the same.

Creating a family of schools

Avanti Schools Trust are considering applying for new schools in several locations to open in 2014. We would really appreciate your support.

Our schools prepare students for their respective life-journeys by promoting educational excellence, character formation and spiritual insight. Emphasis on independent thought and personal choice stimulates every student's innate and emerging passion for learning. This personalised approach provides tailor-made learning paths for all students, ensuring their long-term progress and fulfilment. By drawing on the teachings of Krishna Chaitanya, our schools embrace a universal, inclusive approach to spirituality, aimed at rekindling a personal, loving and spontaneous relationship with the divine (Krishna).

If you have children under the age of 18 or are expecting to have children in the near future, we would like you to fill out a short questionnaire at www.avanti.org.uk/survey. This allows us to gather the information needed to demonstrate demand for such schools in your area. Please pass the website link for the survey to others who you think might be interested.



Learning without limits

Teaching without labelling by ability

On 12th October the teaching assistants from our primary schools visited the Wroxham School in Potters Bar to learn about transforming ability rather than labelling children with abilities. They worked together sharing ideas and observing outstanding teaching and learning.

Conference feedback

I found the session very interesting and useful. I understand the importance of not labelling a child and the effects of it. It is definitely something I would take back to my school. I have improved my knowledge and understanding of ways to encourage children's learning and giving them choices.

It was an eye opener! I totally appreciate the Wroxham School's principle about every kid being a gift and being given a choice to reflect on their own ability without labelling them. I appreciate Mrs Peacock's attitude, motivation and enthusiasm in providing a fair and ongoing development of the precious gems of our future. Thank you for organising this! It is an individual development programme allowing me to strengthen my desire of seeing the kids and providing them with a loving environment to develop and cultivate them accordingly. Future learning: Maybe how to plan a typical day at class – understanding children better.

Very informative and helpful. In particular, useful for reminding us to empathise with each child and also to encourage each child to challenge themselves by choosing in lessons the work they want to do and to empower them to be confident to do so. I will take this back to my class teacher to help us work more than we do already as a team to help each child. Inspirational – thank you!

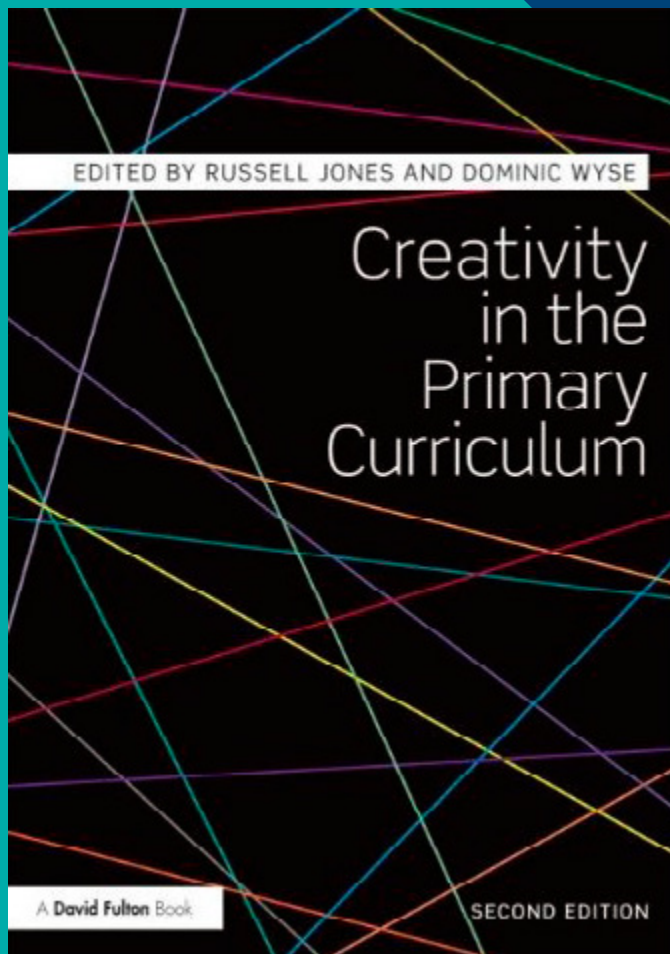
A wonderful talk/presentation by Alison on Learning without Limits. Took on board some very simple yet powerful teaching practices in the classroom and found it very stimulating and interesting. A thorough pleasure to have attended Wroxham and see what was preached being practiced!



ABOVE: Learn more about the Wroxham School and its ethos principles at www.thewroxham.org.uk

BELOW: Headteacher Alison Peacock and INSET her book *Creating Learning Without Limits*





READING Recommended by teachers Corner

**Are you
striving to
establish a
more creative and
imaginative classroom?**

Are you interested in:

- the generosity of creativity;
- creative conjecture;
- being an advocate for creativity;
- welcoming the unexpected,
- the unpredictable and the unconventional;
- taking risks;
- learning which leads to new or original thinking which is of value?

If so, this completely updated new edition of a classic text will show you how to achieve these ideals.

The book is written in a clear and practical way by leading researchers and practitioners, offering help and advice on the planning and implementation of effective creative teaching and learning, and providing examples of best practice through a rigorous theoretical rationale.

A hallmark of the book is its exploration of creativity through curriculum subjects. It builds on this in its first and last chapters by addressing key cross-curricular themes that thread their way throughout the book. Throughout there is an emphasis on critical and reflective practice.

New to this edition are:

- three entirely new chapters on drama, music and geography; The Chapter on Music is written by our very own **James Biddulph** with his tutor, Dr Pamela Burnard. In it they focus on practical ideas, reinforced by research and theory, to engage teachers in thinking creatively about using music in both the music classroom and in the wider school life.
- an update of the introduction to account for advances in creativity research, policy and practice;
- a new final chapter identifying cross-curricular themes;
- greater attention to international dimensions and examples; and
- a new companion website with extended examples of best practice.

In this second edition the authors are drawn from six universities which between them produce some of the best education research internationally, and some of the best teacher education. The authors also come from leading national and international organisations such as the National Gallery in London and the Geographical Association.

Creativity for the Primary Curriculum is a core text for both training and practicing Primary teachers who wish to maintain high standards when approaching their teaching.

ABOVE & BEYOND

Delving deeper into the Avanti Schools ethos

**In each Avanti Life issue we
explore the shared ethos
of our Schools. Join us, as
we go above and beyond!**

All Avanti schools promote educational excellence, character formation and spiritual insight. These values are relatively self-explanatory, but the Avanti ethos takes inspiration from a far more mysterious source - the teachings of Krishna Chaitanya.

Chaitanya was born in 1486 in Nadiya, then East India's epicentre for learning and scholarship. At an early age he founded what quickly became the region's foremost school, widely renowned for its teaching in logic, grammar and rhetoric. He went on to lead an early civil disobedience movement, contesting religious sectarianism. In later life, he turned his attention to spiritual ideals that transcended social

and religious boundaries and thus paved the way for a great spiritual renaissance. He taught that the essence of education is to appreciate how everything has a special relationship with the divine. Such understanding culminates in a profound spiritual realisation of love, compassion and selflessness - the original, pure nature of every being. He emphasised spiritual equality and advocated that humanity can be united through a shared love of God, expressed through the singing of His many names. Chaitanya's exemplary life heralded the dawn of an inclusive spiritual resurgence that continues to inspire people from all faiths.

By drawing on these teachings, Avanti Schools embrace a universal, inclusive approach to spirituality, aimed at rekindling a personal, loving and spontaneous relationship with the divine.

A Universal Message

The following excerpt is from the introduction to The Birth of Kirtan - The Life and Teachings of Sri Krishna Chaitanya by Ranchor Prime. (© Ranchor Prime 2011 & Insight Editions 2012 - rprime@fitzroviapress.co.uk)

Sri Krishna Chaitanya was that rare individual: a person whose life embodied his message. He wrote no books, organized no mission, had few direct disciples, and only lived to be forty-eight. During his adult years he was fully detached from the world, and virtually his only form of public teaching was *kirtan*, singing the names of God. In his final years he withdrew into seclusion from all but his closest companions. Yet in his brief time on earth he sowed the seeds of a spiritual movement that even now unfolds across the world. The message of Chaitanya was simple: look for the company of those devoted to the service of God and together hear about God and chant God's names. By so doing, your love will grow and

you will find lasting happiness. He gave profound revelations of the highest reality to a handful of intimate disciples, who preserved them for posterity in Sanskrit and Bengali poetry inscribed on palm leaves or the bark of trees. Until the dawn of the twentieth century he and his teachings were unknown outside India. It was, however, foretold that one day he would be known everywhere. In these urgent times of planetary renewal and transformation this prophecy is coming to pass and his story can at last be told to the world.

Golden Moon

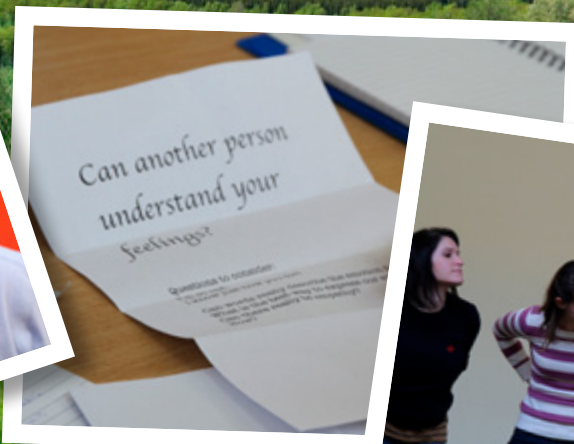
Chaitanya was born in Navadvip, West Bengal, in the year 1486 and mysteriously disappeared

in 1533. He spent his last years in Puri, the then capital city of Orissa in Eastern India. He taught the path of devotion, known in Sanskrit as Bhakti-yoga, and shared his love for Krishna with tens of thousands across India. During his lifetime he was known as Gaurachandra (golden moon), Nimai (having been born under a neem tree), Vishvambhar (sustainer of the world), Krishna Chaitanya (living spirit of Krishna), and Mahaprabhu (great master). From an early age, he showed miraculous powers that persuaded many who were close to him that he was a divine avatar, a manifestation of the Supreme. Although in public he always denied this, his followers believed him to be an incarnation of Krishna.

FORWARD TOGETHER

Our growing family

Snapshots of Avanti Schools Trust
Annual Conference, 11th–12th October 2012
Bore Place, Edenbridge, Kent





FORWARD TOGETHER

Our growing family

How did we do?

Here's what conference attendees had to say:

The conference and the accommodation was an exceptional treat! I really felt that the schools bonded. I am very proud to be a member of this family of schools.

★★★★★

Fantastic opportunity. Jane and James were very very inspiring.

★★★★★

Feel confident that this is the place I want to work in for a long time.

★★★★★

Excellent for establishing real links between schools.

★★★★★

Gained a greater sense of the wider team and some great ideas to use in the classroom straight away.

★★★★★

Fabulous conference - organised exceedingly well. I loved the fact that it had an element of fun and that it was so interactive.

★★★★★

Some very good workshops. I feel more enthused and inspired to be more creative in the classroom.

★★★★★

It allowed me to explore the spiritual element of our schools and what it means.

★★★★★

Had a fine time. Lot's to share. Have a renewed sense of direction.

★★★★★

It enabled me to develop a greater understanding of how I can support the vision and ethos of the school within my daily teaching, but also how I can network and utilise the staff across the Trust.

★★★★★