I am incredibly proud that our first Trust newsletter will be issued to all staff of the Trust on our first joint PD day. It symbolises our strong union and that the future lies in a strong team working together, building our Trust’s future so that all children in our community have the best possible learning experiences, that will ensure they have enhanced life chances.

Sarah Longville, Executive Headteacher

It was a significant step forward for The Marches School in establishing The Marches Academy Trust.

Having been the Chair of Governors at The Marches School for some 25 years, we have always pursued the opportunities that would move the school forward and ensure the continuous improvement that would benefit our students. We could see that by becoming an Academy this would open up new opportunities and freedoms whilst, at the same time, by establishing ourselves as a Multi-Academy Trust, we would be able to offer our strength and expertise to help other Schools who might also want to join our Academy Trust.

It is very pleasing that Sir John Talbot’s chose to join the Trust and that this has provided the support and improvement necessary to secure the future of the school.

We are lucky within the Trust to have the support of some exceptionally committed governors who provide the support and challenge required to the leadership team, which will keep our Trust moving forward along a path of continuous improvement.

We have an outstanding team of professionals amongst our members of teaching and associate staff within the Trust and we are keen to ensure that they experience the benefits of new and improved opportunities for development and career opportunities. We want the students in our schools to receive the best teaching and learning they can and that they leave school as robust individuals prepared for this ever changing world.

In coming newsletters I will be asking my fellow Directors to tell you a bit more about who the Board of Directors are and what we aim to achieve.

It is a great pleasure to have been involved in establishing The Marches Academy Trust and I look forward to working closely with all stakeholders in supporting our Schools.

Arthur Walpole
Chair of the Board of Directors
School Direct Update

The applications for the School Direct Teacher Training programme are coming through to UCAS steadily across all the subjects. Currently we have received 58 applications in total, 18 for primary/EYFS and 40 for a secondary subject. Offers have been accepted by 26 applicants (18 secondary and 8 primary) and another 9 have interviews planned after half term. The applications are coming in from much farther afield than previously experienced and are of an exceptionally high standard.

The Marches Training profile page on UCAS is an impressive read and is definitely having an impact on applications. We know that applications for the shortage subjects (Physics, Maths and Chemistry) do not tend to come in until the Spring Term as applicants for these subjects tend to keep their options open longer into the UCAS cycle.

The Marches Training exhibition stand has been present at several university careers events already, including Staffordshire, Wolverhampton and Lancaster. The NCTL also hold several ‘Train to Teach’ events across the country that we will be attending. The weekly teacher training clinics continue to be well supported with an average of 6 individuals attending each week. The new website, social media activity, roadside banners, online and press adverts have also made a positive impact on applications.

If members of the Trust know anyone who is considering teaching as an option please ask them to get in touch.

Kate Aspinall, Business Development Officer, Marches Training aspinall.k@marchesschool.net or 01691 664455
Great success across the board for the student leadership team has made a big impact on life at the Marches this year. The locker project has made impressive headway, nearing completion as only “finishing touches” are needed. Interviews held to aid the long-term project of expanding the canteen gave promising results. International news was brought to students’ attention with the inspired and creative #bringbackourgirlsassembly.

The issue of lockers in a Marches student’s life has been constantly brought up over the years. Our head girl Daisy Carter explains how throughout many years of student forum, lockers have been a concern to many students of all ages. Tackling this idea proactively ensures that the leadership team faces “one of our largest issues” head on.

Consequently, installing lockers are this year’s student leadership team’s lasting legacy. Within the time period of one year Hannah Ryan, house captain of Whittaker, explains how she felt this was an “achievable goal”. How will the lockers benefit student life? Life for students at the Marches will be made less stressful, as well as more manageable and organised.

Year Tens looking to apply for the student leadership team 2015-2016 are advised by the current team to bring plenty of ideas & imagination. A pro-active role within the school brings the opportunity to work closely with students and staff, as well as adding a fantastic asset to your applications and CVs for 6th form, college and beyond.

**Interviewer - Lucy Burn, Year 11**
Sir John Talbot’s School
Head Boy and Head Girl

In order to find out about our head boy and head girl here at Sir John Talbot’s School, as well as what they have done so far and how that has benefitted everyone across the entire school, Jess and I were given the opportunity to sit down and interview Lauren Bond and Sam Boardman and get to hear their thoughts on these matters.

We first asked the two of them about what the student leadership team has accomplished this year so far. The list was mighty long! One of the things they feel has had the most influence on the life of the school is through their leadership on the school parliament, for example, reviewing of the reward point system and representing the views of the student body on issues such as access to new printers for all students in the lower school and the sixth form. Charity work is close to student hearts at our school, and they explained that they had organised a 24-hour hockey tournament with the staff, which in total raised a whopping £1775. They have also been instrumental in acquiring new equipment and facilities for the sixth form and the common room, and plan to continue to champion the views of the student body, particularly the 6th Form.

Next, we asked them how they knew that the changes they have made would benefit the school. They replied by saying that they were very proud of being able to raise so much money for charity with one event. The 24-hour hockey tournament had given people more opportunity to help a charity they said as well as benefiting the community’s bond with the school.

Sam and Lauren agreed that it was very useful to have a large group in the school parliament which enabled them to discuss a wide variety of opinions as well as the wants and needs of the varying year groups. This benefits the school as everyone has been given the opportunity to share any problems they have had and then the school parliament has dealt with the issues raised.

When asked about what they thought the student leadership team’s legacy would be and how this will improve life at SJT for students and teachers, Lauren and Sam mentioned that they have been very happy to leave behind an annual charitable event that they have re-introduced. Lauren said that “it brings everyone together” which is very true as all year group members are able to participate. This in turn has made an even stronger connection with lower school, making a more comfortable environment in school, as “often, these students wouldn’t normally choose to associate with each other,” added Lauren. And as for the teachers, those who helped run the 24-hour hockey tournament (Mrs Apperley and co) were “able to enjoy some midnight exercise,” said Sam. Mrs Burton played every match! Untapped talent, there, we think!

Our final question to the pair was: How would you advise and encourage students to apply for the position of Head Boy and Girl in the future? Both of them very quickly agreed that it looks great on your CV. But the real gain is to their own growth as young leaders. They said the experience of the application process, which included a competitive interview, teaches people a whole set of skills in itself and it gave them a great confidence boost. It was all good practice for UCAS Personal Statement writing and university interviews too. Sam said that since being appointed to the position “It felt good to feel very respected by both students and staff alike.”

And with that, Jess and I thanked them both very much for their time and left ready to share all that we had learnt.

Interview by Jess Furber and Tom Dunford, Year 11 Prefects
Developing Learners
Perseverance, Resilience and Grit

There is a lot to celebrate including:

- Sports fixtures
- Performing in Drama
- MAD time of assessments, re-drafting and perfecting work
- Accelerated Reader and using dictionaries in GM to understand texts

After half term I am looking out for examples of the ways in which we work with students to develop **Confidence and Optimism**; please e-mail examples of the things that you are doing and have seen around the school.

Thank you to all staff who have helped with events at The Marches over the past two weeks:

- The 3rd Year 7 **Growing Minds Day** which saw almost every Year 7 performing on stage.
- **Chester University** working with Year 11 raising aspirations for post 16 education.
- The **Royal Navy** working with Year 10, who described our students as ‘one of the best audiences they have presented to in ages’.
- **David Dein** Presentation to Year 9.

Thank you to all tutors who have supported their students with their work experience applications and interviews; **Jo White** has received a great deal of praise for both the new process she is leading and the quality of both the applications and interviews.

**Sarah Peacock, Associate Assistant Headteacher**

Subject News

**Bowland Maths**

The Marches Maths Department have been successful in gaining a grant of £1,000 from Bowland Maths, an organisation that aims to encourage schools to use a problem-solving approach to real life problems in maths. The department will be incorporating aspects of this approach into their SOWs.

**Chris Luther, Associate Director of Maths. The Marches School**

**Science at Sir John Talbot’s School**

1. **TED Talks** – The Science Faculty have been hosting ‘TED Talks’ every Friday lunchtime since January with great success. TED Talks have been selected by teaching staff with the aim of providing inspirational and mind-opening talks for the students. Topics covered so far include: The Cockroach Beatbox, 1000 Awesome Things, Ocean Explorers and Finding a test for cancer before his 16th birthday. On some Fridays we have had a turnout of over 30 students so this will be continued for the foreseeable future.
2. **Revision Technique Workshop** – With the Year 10 Science exams approaching, the Science Faculty are planning a ‘revision technique workshop’ for our year 10 students to teach them different methods of revision. Students will have three 20 minute sessions with three teachers and will come away with six different revision techniques to try at home.
3. **Welcome** – We have welcomed Andrew Jacobson this half-term who has been covering our Physics lessons due to Bev Maier being on maternity leave. We are pleased to announce the safe arrival of baby Harriet.

**Penny Brown, Director of Science, Sir John Talbot’s School**
Marches Alumni

What have you been up to since leaving The Marches School?
I left The Marches School in 2010. Since then I have completed my A-Levels and I am now in the final year of my Law Degree at Cardiff University. Upon graduating later this year I then plan to move on to complete the Legal Practice Course.

What is your favourite memory of your time at school?
My favourite memory is taking part in all of the school productions. The most memorable being Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dream-Coat, however I enjoyed all of the shows and the variety shows as well. I think such activities are extremely important, as you get to interact with many other people that you may not have interacted with, or even met otherwise, whilst building on skills such as discipline and composure and learning much more alongside that. Plus most importantly having a lot of fun!

Can you give a piece of advice you wish you had when you were 16?
One main piece of advice that I would give is it does not matter what your background is, what jobs your parents have or where you live, if you work hard enough and want something enough, you can do absolutely anything!

Kelly Stant, Class of 2010

Sir John Talbot’s Alumni

What have you been up to since leaving Sir John Talbot’s School?
Since leaving Sir John Talbot’s School, I have completed an undergraduate degree in Geology at Keele University. After finishing this degree I then went on to complete an additional year at Keele to convert my undergraduate degree to a Masters degree in Geology and Sedimentology. At this point I decided to leave academia and attempt to get my first professional job of my career.

I was reasonably successful in attaining a job that would require me to apply my knowledge gained from my geology degrees at Keele University and I have since then been working for the British Geological Survey for the last 4 years as a Petroleum Geoscientist. This job centres around the ongoing search for and assessment of our nation’s oil & gas reserves and I work as a direct advisor to government in the UK, but more predominantly in the Falkland Islands.

What is your favourite memory of your time at school?
My favourite memory of my time at school was most definitely during winter when it snowed. We would have unsolicited snowball fights out on the field for hours before the teachers were able to corral us back inside.

Can you give a piece of advice you wish you had when you were 16?
If I was to give one piece of advice for a 16 year old, it would be say ‘Yes’ more often.

Tom Dodd, Class of 2007

If you are an ex-student of either school, please get in touch and join our fast growing Alumni Network. Please email alumni@marchesschool.net for more details.

NOT TO BE MISSED - Tuesday 24th March 7pm for 7.30pm at Kinoculture - Screenwriter Jesse Armstrong (former Marches student) returns to his home town of Oswestry to talk about his debut novel as part of Oswestry Lit Fest. Co-creator and writer of the BAFTA Award-winning Peep Show, Jesse also co-wrote The Thick of It and Oscar-nominated movie In the Loop. Visit www.oswestrylitfest.eventbrite.com to book tickets.