



St Ralph Sherwin

Catholic Multi Academy Trust



Our Journey Together

- news from across the St Ralph Sherwin Trust

JULY 2020

ISSUE 11



Welcome to the final edition of our SRS newsletter for this academic year.

In September, we began

the second year of our Trust full of excitement and optimism about the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead; little did we know what was waiting for us around the corner. As we draw this academic year to a close, we are faced with a number of new challenges, which we could never have foreseen only a few months ago. For me, our priorities have been re-shaped and a focus on serving our local communities and the most disadvantaged at this demanding time is crucial. This, in

addition to the mental health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils, and digital learning, are three of our key areas of focus for next year.

The other significant key area for the Trust next year will be around 'Promoting Equal Opportunities'. Equality of opportunity is very important to me, whether you are talking about age, gender or any other way that marks one person out as different to another. I am, therefore, setting up a working party of SRS staff and governors from September who represent the diversity and uniqueness of our Trust. More details will follow regarding this and I look forward to chairing this group.

This newsletter will celebrate much of what has happened in the last term. I would like to thank staff for all of their hard work and

continued support. Their efforts to keep schools open and to welcome back our young people are inspiring and demonstrate what a truly great workforce we have within our Trust.

I would also like to thank parents and pupils for their incredible efforts during these difficult times. We all appreciate the support that has been shown to our staff and perhaps one positive to take away from all of this is that our students will value their education and their teachers more than ever now.

Enjoy your summer break with your families.

Sean McClafferty

Chief Executive

ENGLISH MARTYRS' CELEBRATES 'OUTSTANDING' DCI GRADE

English Martyrs' Catholic Voluntary Academy has been graded an 'Outstanding' Catholic school in its latest Diocesan Canonical Inspection Report.

Inspectors evaluated the Catholic Life of the school, religious education and collective worship and graded every area 'Outstanding'.

In their report, they said: "English Martyrs' is an outstanding school which successfully lives out its mission to light up the lives of the pupils who attend the school and beyond. Parents say that the faith development at English Martyrs' is 'stitched into its fabric'. Pupils

recognise and appreciate how the Catholic Life improves them as individuals and leads them towards a happier life." It was noted that the Catholic Life of English Martyrs' was "vibrant, loving and inclusive".

"Teachers, pupils and leaders are valued and the school is inspirational in its promotion of Catholic Social Teaching.



"Behaviour is exceptionally strong as are the relationships between all members of the school family."

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Joe Hopkins
Trust Lead Lay
Chaplain

**Returning –
'What are we
gonna do?'**

The Jungle Book is one of my favourite Disney films, I love the songs, the characters the story, and growing up I found it wasn't too scary for the easily scared little Joe either. I particularly liked the vultures, and at the moment I'm feeling a particular affinity with them and their constant question of 'what are we gonna do? I don't know what do you wanna do?', too. These are very strange times and I am so proud of how our school communities have responded to it. They have coped with drastic changes, often with as much notice as the general public. Always keeping the safety and development of our children as the top priority. It is also wonderful to see that at a time of such confusion, when it could have been easy to let our focus drop from developing our faith, they haven't.

I have found the last couple of months bizarre, intriguing, exciting, boring, stressful, relaxing, and many other emotions. It has been a real rollercoaster of feelings. Currently, instead of visiting schools, I'm making videos, it can be hard to see the impact other than the number of views on YouTube. It has convinced me further that as great as technology is, it can never replace human interaction. Our teachers have made incredible online resources, and they would say nothing beats being in the classroom. It made me think about two things, firstly, why Jesus reaches out to us and 'what are we gonna do now?'

Firstly, God most definitely has the claim for the creation of

remote teaching. Throughout the Old Testament we see the various ways God tried teaching the people of Israel – leaders, commandments, inspired prayer, prophets, visions. All these were different ways God tried to communicate his love, ways in which he communicated that our true happiness can only be found in him, and our thirst can be quenched by no other stream. So, at the most appropriate time in history, God came to live on earth with us, and as one of us. In Jesus we had present on earth the fullness of God. He didn't have to send commands, he held eye contact as he spoke; he didn't send prophets, he himself healed, listened, and corrected, all with a

"What we do is as Jesus asked us to, we return in love and service, we return offering the world the thing they long for most (even if they don't realise it yet) Jesus."

gentle touch. He summed up the greatest lesson on 'what we are gonna do' by pouring out his love and life on the cross, because he desires communion a life giving relationship with you and me. Our absence from normal school (and parish) life has reminded me that we need Jesus. It is not enough to be a good person, to be nice, to be happy. We need him. We need the contact with him in prayer, in the scriptures, in our friendships, in the leadership of our church and in the sacraments, even more than we need our pupils and staff back in the classroom (where they belong). Please don't get me wrong, everyone is where they need to be right now, to be safe. This is important. This horrible pandemic has underscored for me the frailty of humanity, and that this frail humanity is what God wanted to share and glorify. So, the second point, 'what are

we gonna do now?' As churches start to reopen and life starts returning, we experience even more of this new normal. What is God calling us to do? When we entered lockdown we were in the middle of Lent, since then we have had Holy Week, the Easter Triduum, the Season of Easter and Pentecost. We are returning to Ordinary Time in the most extraordinary of times. I'm drawn by the three disciples (Peter, James and John) who witnessed the transfiguration – Jesus transforming in front of them with Moses and Elijah there too. They were expected to walk down the mountain and carry on. Or the 12 after Jesus' ascension as they awaited the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. After what they had experienced they were entering a new normal too. So what does that mean for us. I can't speak about how this will work with social distancing or timetabling. I'd be well out of my depth there, but I can offer a spiritual thought. What we do is as Jesus asked us to, we return in love and service, we return offering the world the thing they long for most (even if they don't realise it yet) Jesus. 'What are we gonna do now?' Well, we are going to love more, we are going to welcome back those who have been away and remember those who won't return. We are going to show each member of our community how much they were missed, how much they are needed and challenge them to do the same. I hope that our Catholic communities (both schools and parishes) will be ready to walk with those people who have suddenly become curious about faith in God and reach out to those who have had their faith shaken. I dream that our communities will be known even more in the wider locations as places of hope and welcome.

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Contd from previous page... Jesus came to bring about an end of remote teaching. When we bring about the end of our time of remote teaching, I know we will make Jesus lovingly, spiritually and sacramentally present too. Though sadly I won't be able to see what this looks like in

September, as I will be leaving the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT. At the end of June I was appointed by Bishop Patrick as the Director of Adult Formation for Mission. I won't be a stranger as I will be working with parishes all across the Diocese. I am very grateful for my time here and for the lovely

welcome I've received at every one of the schools. I will hold you in my prayers as you continue to grow in your friendship with Jesus.

God bless you all,
Joe



A Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy student is to receive recognition of her role as a young carer in her family. Freya Densley has been nominated as a young carer by her mum Faith for the support that she provides for her two younger siblings, who both have autism. Mrs Marshall spoke to Derbyshire County Council about the role that Freya plays in their family and they suggested that she apply for the 13-year-old to be designated a young carer. This will mean that she will receive a family assessment and then be given access to one-to-one support, groups and activities. Mrs Marshall said she was extremely proud of her daughter.

A support worker at Saint Benedict CVA has launched a new mental health and wellbeing support group with a video featuring a range of famous sporting faces. Amateur boxer Sandy Ryan and former Derby County player Igor Stimac are among those who appear in the video created by Sean Hedley to promote his new support group, which is called Isolated Minds. Sean retrained and achieved qualifications in mental health and safeguarding before taking on the role of support officer at Saint Benedict in the

weeks before the Coronavirus pandemic hit the UK. Sean, who used to work for Derby County, said: "I've set up the group on Facebook and Twitter and I came up with the idea of doing a video with well-known people in it. It was quite hard to organise. I'm really pleased with how it's been received." Sean has plenty of plans in the pipeline for Isolated Minds and he would also like to run something similar that would be particularly aimed at young people. He said: "I'd like to see if we could get some sports stars to reach out to pupils."



YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem

You may feel you are struggling with mental health problems. You are not alone, we are here to help! Give our social media pages a follow. Our dm's are always open.

Samaritans 24/7 - 116 123

Sane Line - 0300 304 7000

C.A.L.M (for men) - 0800 58 58 58

@IsolatedMindsUK

Isolated Minds UK

Isolated Minds

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"Pupils say that they are happy and proud to be pupils of the school and are clear as to what makes their school a Catholic school," the report said. Inspectors said that the teaching and learning of Religious Education at English Martyrs' was outstanding.

"Lessons aim to inspire and build independence; the school works closely with the Diocese and Trust to ensure that all pupils benefit from the curriculum. All staff know their pupils well and they carefully plan for each step in their Religious Education learning. Over time, almost all pupils make outstanding progress, well above the average seen across the Diocese," they

said. The report stated that pupils engaged exceptionally well and were eager to take part in all forms of worship. Inspectors said that pupils were given the opportunity to take part in leading collective worship on a regular basis, the very large majority of pupils choose to take this up.

In each edition we run a profile on a member of our Trust. This edition we focus on Becky Hill, the Trust's Data Manager.



Personal
I am originally from Harrogate in North Yorkshire but I now live in Matlock with my husband, son and daughter. My daughter recently graduated in Psychology

from the University of Sheffield and my son is currently studying to become a PE teacher. I have worked in education for the last 16 years, prior to this I had a number of interesting career paths that include modelling, running a pub and accountancy.

Where are you based?
I have an office at St Katherine's House in Derby.

What is your vision for the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT?
One of the strongest features of our Trust is the support that we give each other. Working in collaboration will strengthen our schools and ensure our pupils get the best educational experience possible.

Can you tell us about your day to day role?

I am very lucky to work closely with the DoPS in the School Improvement Team. This means that I get to spend some days in the office and some days out in our schools. I spend a lot of my time analysing data and creating reports to ensure that my colleagues in the Trust have timely, accurate and useful information to help to raise standards and ensure all our pupils make excellent progress.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

The diversity of the job makes it so interesting, as each day is completely different to the next.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF MOVES ONLINE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders across the Trust have found themselves forced to adapt school life as we know it.

Whilst this has been challenging there have been some changes to school life which have proven to be a positive. One such change has been the delivery of career professional development (CPD), with many schools opting for online resources and tools to deliver a suite of training to staff.

As a Trust, we were also keen to support staff professional development during lockdown and wanted to use online training as a way of collaborating and sharing key messages with colleagues.

The sessions we have delivered have all been live and available on the Trust's YouTube site.

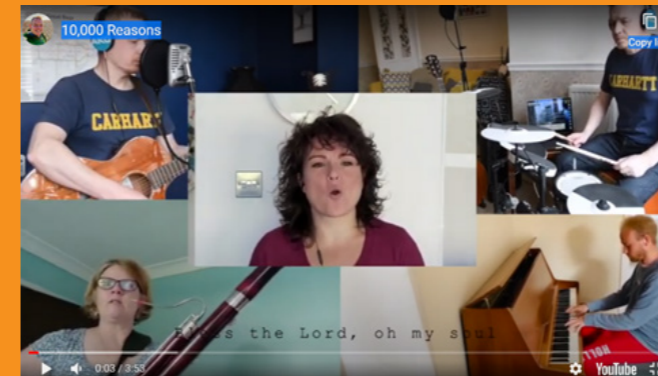
The first session focused on the pupils at home and their safety and wellbeing. This was an opportunity to work with multi-agencies to share with staff the information being gleaned by Children's Services in the Derbyshire area. From this, staff were able to consider how best to support our most vulnerable pupils on their return to school.

The follow-on sessions were focused on a Trust-wide priority: metacognition. We were delighted to have two high-profile educational specialists:

Oliver Caviglioli and Daisy Christodolou (pictured right), who shared with us their work on Dual Coding, interrupting the forgetting and spaced repetition.

The sessions, being live, were a new approach for us as a Trust and although at times we experienced a few technical challenges the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have appreciated the opportunity to have short, sharp pieces of information that they can apply to their practice in schools and have also been delighted by the quality of speakers that we have been able to attract. Moving forwards, the Trust will be building on this momentum, drawing together the videos of previous training and engaging further with high-quality educational specialists to create a world-class CPD offer for our staff.

Kate Mann
Director of Performance and Standards



Like many of our Trust schools, St George's is renowned for producing a top notch sound. The children and the staff love a good singalong and we are fortunate enough to have some very talented musicians!

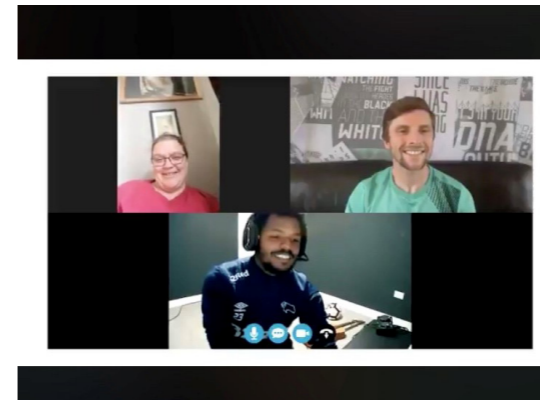
The members of St George's Worship Band decided early on in lockdown that putting some of our favourite praise songs and hymns on the website would be a great way for children to

keep connected through song. Each week, we add a new song with a video and lyrics so that we can all sing along together. We felt it was important that the children could see our faces too, just to make it a little more meaningful to them and so that they can see how much we love doing what we do. Thankfully, we have the super talented Mr Holmes who synchronises us all and has the expertise to put together the videos.

Here is the link to our Praise Act of Worship page if you fancy watching, listening or even making use of them – we currently have a church as far away as Milton Keynes using some of our songs for their online worship!

There are versions of each song without videos (with just karaoke style lyrics). Feel free to make use of them!

<https://stgeorgescva.secure-primariesite.net/praise-act-of-worship/>



A parent at St Thomas' CVA in Ilkeston, Heather Gascoigne, had a Zoom chat with Derby County TV presenter Owen Bradley and player Duane Holmes, paying tribute to her hard work as a nurse at the Royal Derby Hospital.

St Elizabeth's CVA student Freddie has raised over £650 for charity. Freddie, who is in Year One, has been learning about charities and the work they do during his home learning time. As a result he decided to run a marathon! He has run 1.5 miles a day and all money raised is going towards Water Aid and the NSPCC.



A day in the life of St Mary's CVA New Mills

Send your good news stories to NAllen@srscomat.co.uk