



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust



Our Journey Together - news from across the St Ralph Sherwin Trust

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This feels like more than just the start of a new term. With the rollout of the vaccine and the return to schools back in March, optimism and excitement are two of the emotions that many will be feeling at the moment. Clearly, we are still all being cautious and testing regimes are in place help to reassure parents, staff and pupils that our school settings are safe, but I think we can all now see light at the end of the tunnel.

There is much to look forward to this term and this newsletter highlights some of the many notable events that have already

taken place.

We are all genuinely excited about St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy moving to their new temporary site and you can read more about that below. One of the highlights in the coming term will be our 'Stronger Together' concert which is planned for late June/July. Colleagues have been working with pupils from across our 25 schools on drama, music and dance pieces throughout lockdown, and we hope this will culminate in a concert which will be streamed to all our schools and communities.

I would like to highlight the resilience shown by our pupils and staff during this difficult period. Of course, although not

everything has always gone as we would have liked, we can still all feel immensely proud at how our communities have worked together to ensure the best learning in the circumstances. Just one of the positives during the lockdown period saw the Trust provide around 2,500 devices for our pupils to ensure no child was left disadvantaged.

I wish you every blessing for the coming term and hope to see you all in the not too distant future.

Sean McClafferty
Chief Executive

St Mary's reunited under one roof



The St Mary's CVA community in Derby has been reunited for the first time just over six months after a fire destroyed their school. Pupils and staff have moved into St James's House in the city after being split across two sites since the fire at the school's Broadway site on October 3rd 2020. It is anticipated that St Mary's will be based at St James's House for up to two years while a new building is constructed

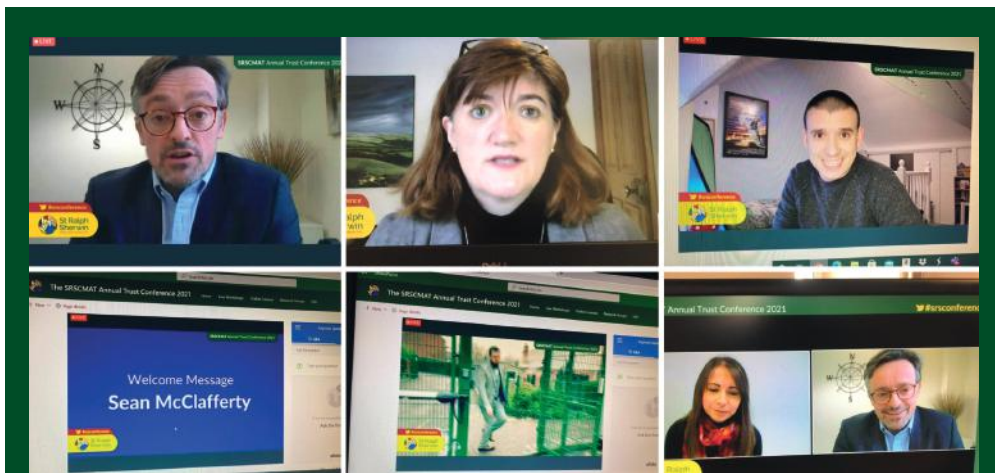
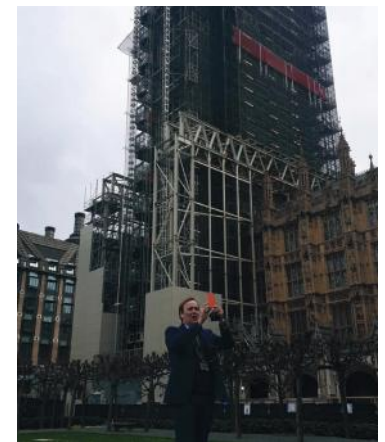
on the Broadway site. Amanda Greaves, Executive Headteacher at St Mary's, said everyone was settling in. She said: "We appreciate pupils, staff and parents have endured many changes over the past year but we are extremely thankful for the support we continue to receive from the school, Trust and wider community and look forward to this next exciting phase."





Year 5 pupils from St Mary's, Marple Bridge, 'virtually' visited their local MP William Wragg at Westminster.

The children were given a tour of the Palace of Westminster. The Year 5 students, who were studying Manchester's pivotal role in the campaign for female suffrage, then asked William (pictured below) a series of questions relating to his work as a Member of Parliament. He said: "The pupils asked a series of fantastic questions – they are a credit to the school, teachers and their parents."



Staff gathered virtually for the Trust Annual Conference with keynote speeches from former Secretary of State for Education, Baroness Nicky Morgan, and Andrew Hammond, Senior Director of Learning at Discovery Education. There were also over 40 live and recorded workshops on offer for staff throughout the day.



St Mary's CVA in New Mills is celebrating after achieving the CAFOD Livesimply Award.

The Livesimply Award is an opportunity for Catholic communities to respond to Pope Francis' invitation in *Laudato Si'* to "work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us." The Livesimply Award is granted to communities who can show how

they have been living simply, in solidarity with people in poverty and sustainably with creation. St Mary's has established Eco-warrior newspaper reporters, an Eco-art after school club, used Pupil Voice, written to Marcus Rashford and set up a link with Bushwangna school in Uganda. The school said its actions had ensured that all pupils had a clear understanding of stewardship in looking after the planet and supporting those most in need had helped to develop character and empathy.



All Saints' pupil spreads cheer

A four-year-old pupil at All Saints Catholic Voluntary Academy

decided to spread some cheer in her community as part of a Captain Tom Moore-inspired challenge set by her teachers. Autumn Place and mum Danielle Eyre made 50 bookmarks and 50 keyrings and posted them to members of their community in Old Glossop who might be feeling lonely.

Their efforts were in response to a challenge set by teachers at All Saints CVA, to do something 100 times to honour Captain Tom and raise awareness of something they cared about.

Danielle said they loved crafting

as a family and wanted to raise awareness about loneliness during lockdown.



She said: "The keyrings were a rainbow with inspirational quotes on them and the bookmarks had the words 'just for you' stamped on them. We posted them through people's doors in envelopes with a message on them. No-one knew it was us but I did have a message from one of the mums at school asking if it was us who had posted them through.

"We live in Old Glossop and there are quite a lot of elderly people there so we just posted the bookmarks and keyrings through doors at random houses.

"Autumn loved it; she knew why we were doing it. We are actually still making them."

Pupil Premium Award for St Philip Howard



PTA relaunch at SJHCVA

St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy in Glossop has received an award in recognition of the work it is doing to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students.

The school has gained the Pupil Premium Award from the Achievement for All organisation. St Philip Howard has been working with Achievement for All for two years to narrow the gap in education between Pupil Premium (PP) - disadvantaged students - and non-Pupil Premium pupils. A curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of PP pupils, meetings have been held with families to engage parents at home and bring them into school and one member of staff is responsible for overseeing the work done with PP pupils.

The school has been working with a pilot group of 35 students and,

following the success of the two-year programme, the plan is to roll the initiative out to even more pupils and become a leading school in this area.

Mike Kays, Deputy Headteacher at St Philip Howard, (pictured with the award) said everyone was pleased to see their efforts recognised.

He said: "We worked with Achievement for All to raise outcomes for Pupil Premium pupils, improve their personal development, behaviour and aspirations and increase parental engagement."



Saint John Houghton CVA is happy to announce that we are launching our all new PTA with new officers.

So please welcome new officers: Nel Smith (Chair), Jo Drury (Vice Chair), Kerry Horsley (Treasurer), and Jillian Hinds-Williams (Secretary).

As their first official project the PTA distributed a chocolate bonanza to all pupils at Saint John Houghton CVA before the Easter break. Most parents probably never noticed, as it's doubtful that any chocolate made it home!

You'll be hearing more from the SJH CVA PTA throughout the rest of the year, as they get active in the school, so watch this space for more PTA news, and follow them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SJHPTA/> Mrs J Drury



Schools welcome back all pupils

All pupils returned to our family of 25 schools last month following a partial closure due to lockdown. There were lots of smiling faces as our young people were welcomed back by staff.



Meet the Trust Board



We are delighted that two new volunteers have joined our St Ralph Sherwin Trust Board, bringing with them different experience and skills to enhance those we already have on the Board. Gillian Sewell, CEO of the YMCA in Derbyshire, and Charles Archer, Programme Manager at the NCDYS, started their roles in March this year. We now have seven Foundation Directors who, along with the support of over 150 volunteers in our 24 Local Governing Bodies, continue to work hard both supporting and challenging the leadership of our Trust

and each school. This ensures that we provide an excellent Catholic education for the children in our care and those who will follow them in future. In addition to their governor duties, many of the folk have also volunteered to take part in various working parties across the Trust over the past three years and we remain very grateful for their continued dedication and commitment to our Trust family.

Jacqueline Rodden, Chair of the Trust Board

On the anniversary of his appointment to the Trust Board, we feature a profile on Deacon Richard Walsh.



Personal

I live near Whatstandwell, in the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. It is a beautiful location, and

I am privileged to be able to live in such a place. I am an ordained Catholic Deacon and have been Catholic Chaplain at the University of Derby for the least eighteen years. I also lecture at the university but, strangely enough, not in theology or any related subject. These days my lecturing is in Business but, in the past, I have also lectured in Chemistry and in Health. This may seem a strange combination, but my original career was as a chemist in the public water supply industry, and I finished up running a bacteriology laboratory. I was very lucky that the area we covered was the Peak District of Derbyshire, so I got to see the scenery travelling around in a Land Rover. Even now, I still navigate my way around the area by the location of public houses and pumping stations! Travelling around the area was wonderful, except in winter when we had to light a fire under the Land Rover to thaw the diesel out so we could get it started. I am new to the Trust, having been appointed by the Bishop as a Director about a year ago and, soon after

my appointment, we went into the first lockdown. I can assure you that there is no connection between the two events!

Where are you based?

The short answer to this question is – behind the laptop! With the current Covid situation and the fact that Trust directors do not have an office base, everything is done from home. Full Trust Board meetings used to be held in different schools prior to lockdown, and I am looking forward to that resuming once circumstances allow.

What is your vision for the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT and the schools within it?

My vision would be for the Trust to be the best that it can be, underpinning a focus on educating children to be well rounded citizens with a thirst for knowledge as a life aim rather than just to obtain a good job. Obviously, the cornerstone of all this is the Catholic values and ethos of our schools.

As Directors, we are not involved in the day-to-day operational running of our schools but set the strategic direction of the Trust and hold the Executive Team to account for the delivery of Trust objectives.

Can you tell us about your role day-to-day?

I suppose it is fair to say that the role can be split into three parts. Firstly, there is attendance at the Trust Board meetings, but there are also committees of the Board to attend. I sit on the Finance and Estates, Audit and Risk, Curriculum and Standards

committees and I chair the Catholic Life Committee. Secondly, there is the required background reading to keep up with the Board and Committee activities. Last, and by no means least, there is the inevitable email traffic which one needs to keep on top of. Each Director also acts as a 'Link Director' with a few schools and this involves attending the Local Governing Body meetings. I always enjoy these and feel it is important to keep in touch with what is happening at the cutting edge. One of my 'link' schools is St Mary's Derby which, very sadly, was the subject of a disastrous fire in the autumn of 2020.

As a result, I now represent the Trust on the Department for Education Steering Group which is co-ordinating the rebuilding of the school. The Director role could be summed up as probing and challenging the Executive Team but also being supportive as well.

What do you enjoy most about your new role?

I enjoy all of it! There is not one aspect of the role that I do not enjoy. I am looking forward to playing my part on the Department for Education Steering Group and I am sure it will be very interesting. However, I am acutely aware that it is a big responsibility and important to do what is best for the school and its pupils. The Directors and Executive Team all work in partnership to ensure that we do the best for the children that have been entrusted to us for their education and the Catholic values we espouse.