



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

26.6.26

Dear parents, carers and families

I wanted to write to you this afternoon to give you some feedback pertaining to progress in our trust.

Firstly, I continue to work tirelessly, as you would expect of me, to seek a resolution with the trade unions who are in dispute with the trust, namely UNISON, the NEU and the NASUWT. This affects some and not all of our schools. I am motivated by one desire: to see children back in affected schools, uninterrupted, with their brilliant staff, partaking in an outstanding Catholic Education.

Talks with the named trade unions are regular and productive. All three now have had an offer to put to their members based in schools. This is a significant step forwards and offers detail significant concessions made to all three unions. However, I must continue to reiterate that in order to build a financially stable and thriving trust, where we all feel that we belong and that we can grow, I cannot be reckless with finances. Education trusts are charities, financed through public money and part of our journey moving forward is to ensure that our finances are strong so that we can prove excellent value for money to the taxpayer and re-invest in our schools. This is why I have a strict financial recovery plan to adhere to. We are currently making very good progress with this plan.

The NEU have taken an offer to members just today for a ballot. I am grateful for the time that the NEU have taken with me to get us to a position where they have been able to present an offer to members. I have offered everything that I am able to from the requests that I was presented with from the outset.

Talks with UNISON have progressed well. I am grateful here too for the extremely productive working relationships that have been established.

The NASUWT took my offer to their members earlier this week and I understand that a ballot has taken place amongst members. I am awaiting contact from the regional NASUWT representative to inform me of the outcome of the ballot which, regrettably, has not been communicated to me as I write this letter.

Whilst I appreciate that this is a hugely frustrating time for families, I hope that this update serves to reassure you that I continue to engage productively and meaningfully with the trade unions in order to create the best conditions that we can for our staff and the very best Catholic education for your children.

Visits to schools

I continued with my programme of school visits this week. I went to St Mary's in New Mills, St Mary's in Marple Bridge, St Anne's in Buxton and St Joseph's in Derby. What a joy this was. I loved visiting the wonderful schools, seeing the children hard at work (despite the heat) and meeting with staff, including Headteachers. From each of the visits, I have been given a piece of artwork from the children. These inspiring pieces will be proudly exhibited in our central offices so that we can be reminded that every decision we make, every action that we take, is about your children. I have a truly spectacular piece from St John Houghton School which sits just behind my desk which lifts me every morning when I get to work.



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Meeting people

In addition to school visits, this week, I have met with our clergy and our Chairs of Governors. These meetings have taken place online, but I am sure that there will be plenty of opportunities to meet in person over the coming weeks and months. I have asked Parish Priests if I could attend a Mass over the next year in your parishes in order to walk with each other in our faith.

Following my last letter, some parents have fed back to me that would like to meet with me before my planned parent and carer 'roadshow' in the Advent term. I understand that this it is important to offer early reassurance given the disruption that some of the schools have had this year. Of course, I cannot meet you all in the little time that remains of this term, but I will endeavour to find an opportunity to introduce myself to you, online, before we break for the summer.

Award!

A huge congratulations to the SRSCMAT IT team who won a prestigious national award this week for being an 'outstanding IT professional team.' The judges thought that it was rare to see a team with such initiative. I am thrilled for our SRSCMAT IT colleagues.

Thank you

I continue to be grateful for the messages of support that I have received from you as I begin my new role. I truly believe that, with God's help, we can create an exemplar Catholic education trust that serves our schools into the future.

'And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm' Mark 4: 29

With my very best wishes for a wonderful weekend,

lswalton

Lisa Walton
Chief Executive Officer