



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

17.7.26

Dear parents, carers and families

This will be the last letter of the academic year as some of our schools will now break up for the summer term. From September, I will write to you with a summary of trust progress on a half-termly basis. Furthermore, during the Advent term, I look forward to attending school open day/evening events, to speaking to staff and indeed, to meeting with you.

Strategic plan 2026-2030

The board of directors set the strategic plan for the trust, and I am currently writing this with them for next year through to 2030. This plan will see our charitable aim, 'the advancement of education for public benefit' is at the centre of our public purpose and where our commitment to Catholic education is living and breathing in our organisation. I have a vision whereby the trust and the family of schools evolve into one entity where we are all working together for a common purpose: the delivery of an outstanding Catholic education for every single child. The plan flows from the Diocesan vision of 'Encounter, Discipleship and Mission,' and will be based on six key development priorities:

1. Catholic Life
2. Servant Leadership
3. An outstanding Catholic education for all children
4. Governance and compliance
5. Financial stability
6. Estates

During the next academic year, I will be inviting key stakeholder groups to contribute to one or more of these strands. I hope that this will give parents, carers and families an opportunity to contribute to the future development of the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT and our wonderful schools.

School Visits

This week, I visited Christ The King in Alfreton, St Alban's in Derby, English Martyrs' in Long Eaton and St Joseph's in Matlock. At Christ The King, a highly enthusiastic group of children took me on a tour of their school which they did with such pride. I especially loved the outdoor space and the art event that was taking place. At St Alban's, I received a wonderful picture of Saint Alban, designed by Year 6, and I spoke to students about their school. They clearly enjoy an array of subjects, but it seemed that PE was a firm favourite for everyone.



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At English Martyrs', I spoke to the Headteacher about the school's glowing Ofsted report from this year. The school achieved six 'strong' judgements which, under the renewed Ofsted framework, is exceptionally rare. Upon visiting the school, where I was shown around by two Year 6 pupils, I could see why inspectors were so very impressed. In the report, Ofsted commented, *'Pupils thrive in the school's caring and supportive environment. This creates a deep sense of belonging and helps pupils to enjoy school life'*. I could see this everywhere in the school. It was a joyous visit.

At St Joseph's in Matlock, I was hugely impressed with the facilities; large, airy classrooms and several well-equipped outdoor areas. The teaching and learning environment was exceptional.

Next week, I shall conclude my school visits by going to The Priory in Eastwood, St Elizabeth's in Belper and St Mary's in Derby. St Elizabeth's is the school in my parish and so I am looking forward to seeing the links that they have with the church. I will also attend the Year 6 leavers' mass at St Mary's and the end of year mass at Saint Benedict.

Primary Standards: Excellent results for 2026

Many congratulations to pupils across our Primary schools who have achieved excellent outcomes in key statutory tests this year.

I am delighted to celebrate our trust headlines which confirm a very strong performance when compared to year-on-year improvement and against national outcomes:

The trust average for Reading, Writing and Mathematics (expected standard) for 2026 is 66% (against a national average of 63%). For this measure, this is an increase of four percentage points from 2025.

The trust average for Reading, Writing and Mathematics (higher standard) for 2026 is 9% (national 8%). For this measure, we have sustained our above national standards from 2025.

Additionally, Year 1 and Year 2 Phonics outcomes have improved to above national standards and in early years, the measure for 'Good Level of Development' improved by 5 percentage points from 2025 to 76% (national 72%).

Clearly, the children have worked very hard this year, but I would also like to recognise the extraordinary work that all staff continue to do in our schools to ensure that the teaching and learning strategies deliver excellent outcomes for all children. This, of course, is made possible by the highest expectations of standards, effort, behaviour and attendance, driven by school leaders. Please also do remember our context: as a Catholic trust we are committed to a fully inclusive education and therefore inclusion and support for all pupils is at the heart of what we do



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Department for Education – update

I continue to meet regularly with the Department for Education who confirm that we are making good progress with the conditions of our financial notice to improve. Additionally, the trust continues to work closely with the Department to secure a solution to the school building issues at St Edward's Primary school in Swadlincote. The trust remains committed to securing a long-term solution at St Edward's, alongside the tenacious senior leadership team, staff and governors. I extend my sincere thanks to Headteacher Mrs Methven, the staff, pupils, families and governors of the school for their extraordinary resilience and teamwork during what has been a particularly challenging period with their building.

Reflection

I continue to acknowledge the difficulties that have beset the trust over the past year. I know that loved colleagues will be leaving this summer, and I shall continue to offer my prayers for all of them along with my deepest thanks for their service. I know that we can chart a positive path ahead and that we will live out our trust mission of 'growing in faith, serving with love, transforming our world; together in Christ.'

With my very best wishes,

l.walton

Lisa Walton
Chief Executive Officer