



10.7.26

Dear parents, carers and families,

I hope that you are all surviving in the heat. I have been on several school visits this week and I have been struck by the resilience of our staff, children and students as they continue to focus on achieving learning aims despite the significant temperatures.

### **Trade Union action – update**

As you know, the dispute between UNISON and the NASUWT has reached a resolution. This week, the NEU announced new strike dates, but after constructive dialogue between the Trust and the NEU these dates have now been cancelled and there will be no further disruption to schools. I am grateful to trade union colleagues for working with the trust and for being cordial and positive in talks. Thank you also to parents and other stakeholders who have been patient with me and given me space to negotiate. For those who have children in affected schools, I do not underestimate the anxiety and worry that you will have had; please be assured that we have a robust catch-up plan in place where strike action has impacted upon learning.

### **School Visits**

The very best part of my job is visiting schools in our St Ralph Sherwin family. On Wednesday, I went to St Edward's in Swadlincote and Holy Rosary in Burton. **St Edward's** have significant site issues due to RAAC concrete and a few weeks ago, there was a failure in a part of the scaffolding that was supporting some of the building. The resilience shown by the team at St Edward's, and the partnership with the trust Estates team was incredible and they very quickly swung into action ensuring that structural engineers and the Department for Education prioritised the school for support. I wish to formally thank the Headteacher of **Blessed Robert Sutton** school, Mr Gray and the school's governors for offering a section of their school for some classes from St Edward's so that their education has not been disrupted. To me, this is a wonderful example of working in a Catholic trust: one of the family needed help and so the family responded, without hesitation.

At **Holy Rosary** in Burton, I met a wonderful group of students who were 'character ambassadors.' They were so articulate and were clearly fully invested in leading their school. I heard from older pupils who were trained in supporting younger students who may have needed support in resolving a misunderstanding or disagreement. This was a hugely impressive example of pupil leadership.

On Thursday, I visited four schools in Glossop: St Margaret's, All Saints, St Charles' and St Mary's. The sensory garden area at **St Margaret's** was exceptional. Pupils told me about what they had planted and why. I was also given some beautiful artwork, designed by pupils, to display in the trust offices. At **All Saints**, pupils described their school as 'spectacular, respectful, amazing and religious.' I certainly saw all of these qualities. At **St Charles'**, students had produced a wonderful tableau for trust offices illustrating the school's motto 'Belong, Believe, Blossom.' Finally, at St Mary's, the Forest School was in full swing, and pupils were making



**St Ralph  
Sherwin**  
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

clever use of the heat by melting chocolate under the sunshine with which to coat marshmallows. I also heard all about the school's commitment to sport and the vast range of clubs that pupils can partake in.

### **Finally**

There is so much to celebrate across our trust, and I am blessed to be able to work with trust and school-based colleagues who give so much of their time, skill and energy to put children and pupils at the centre of all that we do. I hope that in the coming months that my letter to you will evolve into a regular celebration of our wonderful schools, our pupils and our staff. Pupils at St Charles' quoted from a book that they were studying, *'stars are the holes in the floor of heaven.'* Let's take this beautiful image with us through to the weekend: God's light will always guide us and show us the path.

With my very best wishes,

*lwatton*

Lisa Walton  
Chief Executive Officer