



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

18.9.26

Dear parents, carers and families

I am delighted to be writing to you as we start a new academic year. May I take this opportunity to congratulate all of our pupils who achieved such wonderful outcomes in their KS2, KS4 and KS5 results. I was thrilled to note improvements in results across our schools, with particular success at Saint Benedict Sixth Form. That said, the partnership that our schools have with you, with your communities and with your parishes makes the child's experience complete. Catholic education puts the development of whole child at the centre of the school's mission and this can only be done by bringing home, parish and school together.

Trust Progress Update

The Diocese are currently strengthening **governance** by appointing new Directors to our Trust Board who will have the skills, experiences and business acumen to set the strategic direction of the trust and, crucially, to hold me to account for the delivery of this. Once these have been finalised, pen portraits of the renewed board will be available on our trust website so that you can be assured of exceptionally robust governance at board level.

Our **finances** continue to improve after such a difficult year resetting our school budgets and financial trajectory. We are meeting all the conditions of the DfE 'Notice to Improve' and indeed, in a recent external financial health check, feedback was positive about the progress that the trust had made. This means that, in time, we can begin to plan to invest in our schools. For example, we are now able to invest in improving the condition of our **estates** through the DfE's capital grant. We have also invested in upgrading some extremely old laptops that are used by staff and pupils through this same grant. So, whilst I recognise that there are significant budgetary restrictions in some schools, you should also begin to see investment in our schools' critical infrastructure: we have to get the balance right between recovering from the past but also building for now and the future.

Chaplaincy continues to be central to our Catholic Life and Mission, and we now have three full-time lay chaplains in our structure, who will work with groups of schools and school chaplaincy leaders. I am grateful for the enhanced support that the Diocese will be providing in our new structure. This will ensure that all adults who lead chaplaincy across our schools will have access to high-quality resources, training and development.

School Visits

So far this term, I have had the joy of attending a Year 7 and Year 12 Mass at **Saint Benedict** school and a KS4 Celebration of the Word at **Saint John Houghton** school. I was hugely impressed by the start of the term at both of these schools where the highest expectations were clearly evidence in uniform, behaviour and attitudes. At both events, it was wonderful to note that Year 7 pupils were leading prayer for the first time in their school communities. I also attended the open evening at **Blessed Robert Sutton** school; it was a really well attended and inspirational evening.



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Year 7 2027: applying for a place at one of our schools

If you have a child in Year 6, please remember that the closing date for applications for Year 7 places is **31 October 2026**. Applications must be made through your home Local Authority. To find the link to the application information form, please look on the website of the school you would like your child to attend.

If your child is a Baptised Catholic, please ensure that evidence of your child's Baptism is sent directly to the school to which you are applying for a Year 7 place, together with a completed **Supplementary Information Form (SIF)**. The SIF can be obtained from the school (or parish).

However, please do spread the word that our Catholic schools are there to serve all children, those who are baptised Catholic, those from other faiths and those of no faith. If you know of a family who may need support in applying for a place in one of our Catholic schools, at any key stage, please advise them to contact the admissions manager, Sarah Hand at the Diocese of Nottingham at sarah.hand@nottingham-des.org.uk.

Reflection

Last Sunday was Education Sunday and it gave me an opportunity to pray with my parish for all of our St Ralph Sherwin Trust family. Our work across the trust is to be uncompromising in creating the right climate in all of our schools so that every child's God-given gift can be discovered, nurtured and celebrated. I give you my pledge that this remains at the core of my vision.

With my very best wishes,

Lisa Walton
Chief Executive Officer