



Newsletter for Staff

Autumn 2024

CEO's Welcome

A warm welcome to the start of a new school year!

We're really pleased to launch our first newsletter for staff across our Trust. We anticipate that it will grow and develop over time, keeping you informed and up to date with what's going on across the Trust and celebrating our collective achievements.

I hope the start of the year finds you feeling renewed and ready for the year ahead. As we embark on this new chapter, we are reminded of our shared mission – rooted in faith, service and a commitment to nurturing the academic and spiritual growth of the children and young people entrusted to our care. Together, as a community of teachers, support staff, and leaders, we have the unique opportunity to make a profound impact on our pupils' lives, shaping not only their minds but also their hearts. I have every confidence that, with your dedication and passion, this year will be filled with growth, achievement, and shared purpose.

Let's embrace this year as a chance to support one another, deepen our sense of community, and continue building an environment where our children and young people flourish academically, spiritually, and personally.

Thank you for all you do. I look forward to visiting you in your schools and working with you as we continue our journey together.

(Kim Payne)

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

1 Corinthians 12:12-2

St Paul calls us to reflect on the value of community, collaboration and unity in our work and mission.

In his letter, St. Paul speaks of each person as a vital part of the whole body. Each one of us - whether teaching in classrooms, supporting students, leading initiatives, or working behind the scenes - plays a unique and indispensable role in the success of our schools and our Trust. Just as a body cannot function well without all of its parts, our Trust will not flourish without the unique gifts, perspectives and skills that each person brings. By working together, united in purpose, we can achieve far more than we can on our own.

By embracing St. Paul's vision, let us continue to work together with mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a spirit of unity, knowing that every role, no matter how big or small, is essential to the well-being of our community.



Community Engagement

Diocesan Schools' Mass

Representatives from our schools gathered in St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich on Friday 27 September, together with Catholic schools from across the Diocese, to celebrate the start of the academic year with a special Mass led by Bishop Peter. It was wonderful to see so many young people filling the Cathedral with their singing, praying and worshipping together - a very fitting way to start the school year. Bishop Peter inspired us to follow the example of St. Vincent de Paul, known for his deep compassion and dedication to serving the poor, integrating the principles of Catholic Social Teaching into our schools and urging us to put our faith into action.



(Photo by Michal & Tobi Y8 NDHS)

Spotlight on a School



In the next edition of this newsletter we hope to share news from all of our schools.

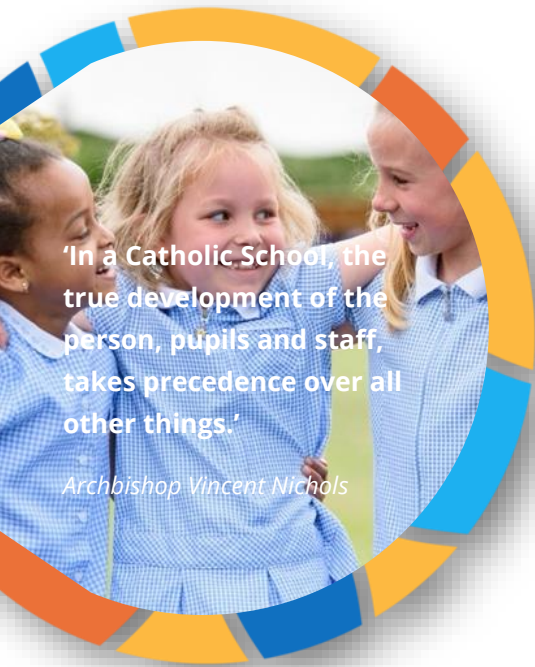
For this first issue we are proud to shine a light on Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School in Peterborough. September 1st marked the official opening of their SEND Hub, catering for children with autism. When full, the hub will support with children from within the local authority who require specialist provision. Headteacher Tom Claxton said, "We are proud to have been awarded 'Centre of Expertise' status. The decision for us to bid for the hub was simple; it is the fulfilment of our Catholic mission." Part of the remit of the hub is to share expertise and support with other schools in the local authority and the Trust.

Spotlight on staff

We would like to shine a light on our Trust site team, including Katarina Blasko and Matthew White, who worked tirelessly throughout the summer holidays to ensure that we have welcoming, engaging and safe working and learning environments in our schools. Projects included redecoration and repairs, improving lighting, playground improvements, refurbishing children's toilets and installing fire doors.

This week the team responded swiftly, along with school finance and operations officer Rachel Valentine, to deal with a school emergency caused by extreme rain and flooding at Sacred Heart, Peterborough.

Please do send us your shout-outs for future newsletters!



Trust Priorities - Inclusion

This year we have a Trust-wide focus on Inclusion. For us inclusion is not only an educational priority but a reflection of our Catholic mission and identity. By making inclusion a priority, we continue to build communities where every child is valued, supported and given opportunity to succeed. In our eight Ofsted inspections last year inspectors commended how welcoming and wholly inclusive our schools are. Despite this, the growing number of pupils with significant and complex special educational needs, together with declining funding, presents us with challenges. To support schools, and to build upon our Adaptive Teaching Programme, we are running an Inclusive Teaching Programme. Later on in the school year we hope to recruit a Trust Director of Inclusion and School Improvement.

'In a Catholic School, the true development of the person, pupils and staff, takes precedence over all other things.'

Archbishop Vincent Nichols

Growing our People

The Trust's People Strategy

At the heart of our Trust's mission is a commitment to making a difference, not just in education but in the lives of the people who help shape it. Our People Strategy is the cornerstone of this vision, ensuring that we recruit, retain and develop our most valuable resource: our people. Our People Strategy is an outline, and the various systems within it need implementing carefully over time.

In 2023-24 we invested in an online recruitment platform called MyNewTerm, which increased the number of applicants for roles across our schools and the Trust, including recruiting a Head of HR. An ever-increasing number of people are registering on our Talent Pool, which bodes well for future recruitment.

We have also invested in an online Performance Development platform called Perspective. This system will not only make the appraisal process easier to navigate but will ensure that staff wellbeing and career aspirations are a key part of the process.

Induction

We have developed Trust induction for teachers new to teaching in our Trust. Following positive feedback, we are extending this to include support staff too this year. This training provides new staff with an opportunity to meet colleagues from across the Trust, gain a deeper sense of belonging to a Trust, as well as what it means to work in a Catholic school or Trust. (NB This does not replace your school-based induction)

Dates for session 1: Support Staff - 14 Oct 24, 9-10am (Zoom) or 17 Oct 24, 2.30-3.30pm (Zoom)
Teachers - 21 Oct 24, 1.30pm NDHS or 6 Nov 24 9.30am St Thomas More

Please let your Headteacher know if you are new, are not enrolled on this training and would like to be.

Staff Wellbeing

Also as part of our People Strategy, we commissioned a review of staff wellbeing. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey and / or participated in focus groups. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping our plans to create a supportive, healthy working environment for everyone.

Responses were compared to those from people in other Trusts. Results varied slightly between job roles and between schools, but we were pleased that overall your general job satisfaction and perception of Student behaviour were significantly above average compared to other Trusts.

The survey confirmed that that we need to work harder to communicate with you and build a stronger sense of connection between the central team and all colleagues in schools. We hope that these newsletters, along with other planned initiatives, will raise awareness of what is happening across the Trust. Other planned commitments include:

- A Trust [Staff Wellbeing Policy](#) setting out how we will deliver on our Staff Charter
- Regular communication and updates from the Trust
- Establishing a Wellbeing Steering Group, with reps from all schools
- More regular Trust Surgeries for school staff to meet with members of the Trust Exec Team
- Staff training, including training for line managers
- Publishing a People Directory setting out our offer and ways we can support you and support your career aspirations

People Directory & Staff Charter

Our new People Directory sets out our Professional Development offer and other support which forms part of our wider People Strategy.

Our revised Staff Charter sets out our commitment to our people – that we strive for you to be professionally, personally and spiritually fulfilled, within a culture of collaboration and belonging.

We encourage you to actively engage with these documents and let us know how we are performing against our offer.



Final Thoughts

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can improve our communication with you and support for our schools. For any questions or contributions for the next newsletter please contact us: secretary@sjbcmat.org.uk

