



# St Ralph Sherwin

Catholic Multi Academy Trust



## Our Journey Together

- news from across the St Ralph Sherwin Trust

MARCH 2020

ISSUE 10



Our school leaders, teachers and support staff are having to work in new ways in order to meet the challenges

they are facing each day.

The weeks and months ahead will undoubtedly be testing for everyone in our schools, indeed

these are anxious and stressful times for all of us.

Having said this however, there has been a strong sense of us working as a community within the Trust; colleagues, pupils and parents have been so supportive of one another, everyone wanting to play their part.

We shall come out of the other side of this and when we do I believe we will be stronger as a Trust. In this edition of the

newsletter you will find some of the 'good news' stories that have taken place over the last few weeks.

Can I thank you for your continuing dedication and commitment to our young people.

**Sean McClafferty**  
Chief Executive

## SCHOOLS RALLY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

Staff and students across our Trust have been rallying around to support each other and their own communities.

Lots of schools have been sending cards to care homes and hospitals including **St Mary's CVA** in Glossop. Pupils from Year Two created pieces of artwork which were posted to the residents of Whitfield House Care home, where the children sang carols at Christmas.

At **St George's CVA** in Derby pupils still attending school made banners, pictures and cards for the unsung heroes working for the NHS. They were sent to wards at Royal Derby Hospital, a hospital in the north and also to local nursing homes including Cedar Trees. A teacher at the school has a relatives who works on Ward 402 at the Royal Derby Hospital, which is one of the COVID-19 wards. They were absolutely delighted to receive the letters. The Sister of the ward said they were in tears



Letters from pupils at St Mary's Glossop

and so touched at the cards and they now had pride of place on the ward wall.

Sister Helen said: "We were in tears when we opened them.

At such an awful time it was wonderful to have a little bit of sunshine in our day."

Pupils even recorded a few songs to send to them to lift their spirits.

Students at **St Philip Howard**

**CVA** in Glossop wrote letters to the residents of local care homes. One student, Gabi, wrote a heart-warming letter expressing how she wanted to be 'generous... and help the community by supporting those who may need a friend' so that they want to 'keep going'.

At **St Mary's CVA** in New Mills, one of the children sang a song... **story continues on page three.**





**Joe Hopkins**  
**Trust**  
**Lead Lay**  
**Chaplain**

**The Lentiest**  
**of Lents**

This must be the most unusual end of half term that I've ever known. Like many of you reading this I am working from home. Though unlike many of you, you probably haven't set up two screens, a headset with mic and refer to it as the command centre... This time of lockdown/self-isolation/social distancing has definitely made this the lentiest Lent ever.

In Lent we are invited to pull back from our usual activities, to give up some of the good things in life, to make more time for prayer, to review our lives and to put others ahead of ourselves. Sounds a lot like the effect Coronavirus has had on society. Though when Ash Wednesday started I thought I'd be missing biscuits not Mass! I can't imagine how hard it was for the Bishops to decide to stop public worship and then close our churches to private prayer. I'm also really dreading facing a Holy Week without being able to go to the beautiful and moving liturgies that make us present at Jesus' entry to Jerusalem, the Last Supper, his passion, his death and then his resurrection. The Bishops have done this not to deny us the experience, many are pushing well outside their comfort zones trying to reach the people through the

internet; but to protect us from a virus that is extremely contagious. We have all been forced to embrace a simpler way of life and like Lent I hope it has instilled a renewed hunger in you. I don't mean for chocolate or a coffee, but what you've taken for granted. During the Mass of the Easter Vigil there is an extravagant return of the Alleluia which has been absent through Lent. This is a moment of wonderful joy. We have overcome it, Jesus has overcome death, there is a future and a hope, and a great reason to rejoice. This is

**'We have all been forced to embrace a simpler way of life and like Lent I hope it has instilled a renewed hunger in you.'**

what I look forward to when our current situation changes. When we can embrace our friends and family, when we can enter the Church, when we can receive the Eucharist at Mass, when we can go to the pub! When we know that because of our sacrifice there are people who are alive who may not have been.

There are two points that I want to present before I finish. The first is there will be some people who won't be here when we come to the end of this lockdown. There will be some, despite the amazing work of our care givers, who will not be able to win their battle with the virus. This is when our world is going to need us, the

Church even more; we are not Lent people, we are not even Good Friday people, we are Easter People and Alleluia is our song. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, we believe that our God knows what it feels like to suffer and to die, and he has guaranteed for us that this is not the end. That death is only the gateway to eternal joy. We need to offer our world this hope and pray continuously.

The final point is for many Catholics around the world, what we are experiencing is their normality. They may only get to Mass and Confession once a year. We need to pray for vocations – to the priesthood and religious life, but also to the laity. That each one of us having experienced that practicing our faith has to be more than showing up to Mass on Sunday; without this what do we have? Of course the Sunday Mass is the source and the summit of our faith, but what are we making of the journey between the source and summit? When our parish doors open again, will our focus solely be on going in and closing them behind us? Or will we seek to keep them open and bring others with us? And when we are sent out to do the Lord's work, what will that work be? How will us being a member of our parish be a benefit to the communities we live in?

Please visit our CMAT website <https://www.srscmat.co.uk/> where there are lots of resources aimed at helping us remain united in prayer or to pray from home.

## RESOURCES FOR CHAPLAINCY

Search SRS Chaplaincy on YouTube or visit <https://bit.ly/39uZzp6>

The NDCYS YouTube page (<https://bit.ly/2w4UkPq>) and the Bishop's YouTube page (<https://bit.ly/3ayRTUb>)



Letters from St George's CVA pupils



The Priory's Nurture Caravan

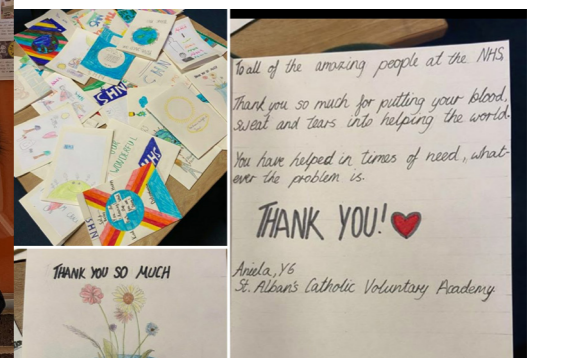


Pupils records a song for her mum



Gabi from St Philip Howard

**cont'd from page one...**which was set to be played in the staff room at Stepping Hill Hospital where her mum works. Pupils also made rainbow salt dough hearts to send to hospitals to hang up. Teaching assistant Matt Stone even had his head shaved to Support the NHS- hearts for heroes campaign. Pupils at **St Alban's CVA** in Derby wrote letters of thanks to the emergency services and they were gratefully received by staff at East Midlands Ambulance Service. At **The Priory CVA** in Eastwood pupils who have still been attending school have been kept busy. Mr Harlow, from The Priory, wrote: "We have been creating a garden around our caravan (Nurture Nest). The caravan was donated to us by Kimberley Caravans after Mrs Mucha (she runs nurture) had sent out emails and letter requesting a caravan. "The children have been planting hedges around the caravan to create a safe haven that will be used by the children who attend our nurture sessions. "This area, once finished, aims to create a space where the children can feel calm and enjoy the wildlife that nest there. We hope to add a shallow pond and a bird bath to further encourage the wildlife to visit our Nurture Nest. "The children and the staff (big thanks to Mrs Mucha) have been hard at work creating this area." And finally Kate in the **Trust's HR Team** made it her mission to use her contacts at Sainsbury's to source UHT milk for Nottingham City Hospital and also arranged for leftover sandwiches to be sent there for staff. Well done to everyone, what an incredible effort!



Messages from St Alban's pupils



**In each edition we run a profile on a member of our Trust. This edition we focus on Tim Ward, Year 2 teacher at The Priory CVA in Eastwood, who stepped in for the Headteacher last week.**



#### Current role

I am currently the Year 2 teacher and this is my seventh year at the school. I've been on the SLT for the past two academic years in my role as RE Co-ordinator.

On Wednesday evening last week we obviously all heard the news of school closures; about which all members of staff were naturally anxious. On the Thursday morning we learnt that our Headteacher needed to self-isolate with his family.

#### What were your duties/responsibilities last week?

- Daily contact with CMAT Heads and DoPS through Microsoft Teams
- Communicating with parents about key worker roles and queries about this

- Updating staff daily about what would be happening
- Reassuring pupils about what was happening
- Assessing which pupils would fit into the criteria
- Liaising with kitchen staff about catering and provision
- Creating a staff rota
- Contacting families to keep in touch on wellbeing and home-learning set

#### How did you feel about having to step up?

At first there was definitely a feeling of disbelief about the in which I found myself. Really, since then I've not had time to think about it. It was just a case of a lot needing to be done and having to crack on and do it. Fortunately, I'm surrounded by an amazing team and support network - both in school and across the CMAT.

#### Did you learn anything?

The most pertinent thing I've learnt in this situation is the importance of teamwork and communication. As I've said above, I could not have managed without the amazing team of colleagues around me - all willing to do what was required and support me, the school and their community.

I've also learnt the need to be decisive under time pressure, particularly when facing difficult decisions. I've learnt the importance of being resilient and

staying calm.

#### What has the support been like from your staff and school community?

As I've said above, the whole school community rallied together. The support I've had from staff has been overwhelming. I've got to mention in particular our office manager (Sophia Cottrell), who has been able to support me in communicating with parents, distributing vouchers for pupils receiving free school meals and completing administration tasks for the DfE.

I've also relied heavily on our Year 5 teacher (Sarah Fisher) and our Family Liaison Officer (Helen Smith), who have been my sounding boards over the past couple of weeks. The wider school community has also been very supportive.

The support that we, as a school, have received from the Trust has been incredible.

#### Do you have a message for the school community going forward?

The key message I have is: the most important thing at this moment in time is that we all stay safe and well.

In these difficult times, we ask our wonderful pupils to continue to live out our mission statement - grow and develop in the light and love of Christ by looking out for others who might need your help at this time.

## PPE DONATIONS - CAN YOU HELP?

A new campaign has been launched, calling on businesses in the East Midlands to donate personal protective equipment (PPE) to support NHS staff dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Launched by Martin Rigley MBE, Managing Director of Lindhurst Engineering Ltd, the #ppe4nhs campaign is seeking donations of unused PPE from local businesses,

including schools. There is a need for:

- Any fluid resistant surgical masks including, although not exclusively, FFP2 or FFP3 rated (the rating is marked on each mask).
- Nitrile gloves
- Visors or goggles

Mr Rigley said: "I know there will now be cupboards and storerooms

in manufacturing, engineering, construction and science-based businesses, full of brand-new PPE. "Our NHS desperately needs this PPE and, as a business community, we have a duty to get it to them, if possible, without putting people at risk." **Any donations from Trust schools will be co-ordinated through Danielle Hall and you can contact her via [dhall@srsrsmat](mailto:dhall@srsrsmat).**

**Send your good news stories to [nicola@allenpr.co.uk](mailto:nicola@allenpr.co.uk)**