



St Ralph Sherwin

Catholic Multi Academy Trust



Our Journey Together

- news from across the St Ralph Sherwin Trust

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ISSUE 8



As we all prepare to celebrate Christmas and look forward to being with family and friends, we

should always think of those less fortunate than ourselves. I, as we all should, take a great deal of pride in the number of charities and good causes supported by our Trust. We contacted our schools recently to determine the names of the charities they support and, overall, there are 129 separate good causes/charities supported by our St Ralph Sherwin Trust schools and communities. This is something we should all be very

proud of. On the subject of good causes, many of you will be aware that Trust Chair Jacqueline Rodden and I did a charity skydive in October in aid of our two Trust charities; Bluebell Wood and Rainbows children's hospices. We raised around £3,000 and we would like to thank you all for your support, encouragement and donations! We recently celebrated our second Trust-wide Feast Day and I hope you will agree that it was a truly joyous occasion. Our keynote speaker was David Wells, who was very well received, and it was another occasion when we came together as a family/community to celebrate as we 'Grow in Faith Together' - this being our theme for this year.

We have now officially announced our Staff Awards evening which will take place at Pride Park on Saturday 4 July 2020. This event will also act as a fundraiser for our two Trust charities. Further details will follow in the new year and more information can be found on our website.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and wish you every blessing for the coming New Year.

Sean McClafferty

FEAST DAY CELEBRATIONS



Our St Ralph Sherwin CMAT Feast Day saw hundreds of staff come together for a day of celebrations. The theme for the Trust's first year was 'Building Community', which this has been built on in the second year with the theme of 'Building Community; Growing in Faith Together'. Many of the Trust's achievements in the first year

were celebrated throughout the day including an announcement that more than £10,000 had been raised for Rainbows and Bluebell Wood, both children's hospices. The hospices, in Loughborough and Sheffield, are the Trust's current nominated charities. Please see over page for more.



Joe Hopkins
Trust
Lead Lay
Chaplain

'For on to us a child is born'
Isaiah 9:6

I absolutely love Advent, I love the growing excitement that builds to Christmas. I also love the Christmas Masses. Each of the four Masses for Christmas (the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass, Mass at dawn and Mass during the day), have different readings. It is the only time in the year when the readings are different despite the Mass being for the same celebration and unlike other feasts it is not down to the year rotation of readings. The quote at the beginning of this reflection is taken from the first reading of Midnight Mass which prophesises the birth of the saviour. This year this quote has a completely new meaning for my wife and I, as last month we were blessed with the birth of our first child, Esther Rose Hopkins. She is a beautiful, life-changing gift. Her birth has transformed our daily (and mainly nightly) lives. I hope I never forget that moment she burst into the world, the moment our world was changed. We were entrusted with the care of this vulnerable and precious little lady. Christmas is the celebration of a birth, of a change of the world and lives; and this was not just for Mary and Joseph, this is for

all of us. Christmas is not the celebration of a new life for a little family in the middle east. It is so much more. God the Son is the fullness of life, He is the Word of God and it is through Him that all things came into being. When he took human flesh and a human soul, in the person of Jesus fully human and fully divine; a new life was not just given to a married couple, but to all of humanity. In the person of Jesus, the power of God encounters the fragility of humanity.

Since Esther's birth I've experienced a deepening of love,

"Christmas is the celebration of a birth, of a change of the world and lives; and this was not just for Mary and Joseph, this is for all of us."

for her and for my wife. It has helped me further know God's love for me, but above all to love like a Father. The love that will do everything and anything to protect others. No matter how much we love, we can't run out of love, it isn't a finite resource to be treated with temperance. The more we love, the deeper we love, the more we are able to love.

Christmas is a call, a call that requires a response. For on to us a child is born. For on to us is given the opportunity to love and be loved beyond our imagination. We celebrate this day as a sign that God loves us so much. He

comes to live amongst us (to pitch His tent amongst us for literally a translation of the Gospel from the Mass during the day). He comes not in power, or glory, or by the power of a sword. He comes in the most natural, simple and ordinary way; as a baby that is dependant, that is in need. Why? Because humanity is in need. I never knew how much I was in need of Esther until she was born, already I feel the change she has brought to me, to be less selfish, more loving, more kind and patient. She has changed me. The baby Jesus has the power to change us even more.

I invite you as we prepare for/celebrate Christmas (depending when you read this) to spend some time looking at a picture or statue of the crib. Please know this: you need Him and He needs you. You need Him to fill your heart and your life with love, with more love, with a love that shakes your way of living. He needs you to firstly be like Him – to be vulnerable and helpless before Him, as He is before you, so that you can bring the love that He is offering the world into flesh. The incarnation, God becoming present in the flesh, is the heart of everything we do and believe as a Church. It is also the core of who we are meant to be. Love in action.

For on to us a child is born... for on to us love has a face... for on to others we are born... for onto others love must be our face. Have a happy and holy Christmas.

Have a happy and holy Christmas.



Continued from page one. Trust CEO Sean McClafferty told staff that together, schools throughout the Trust have supported 129 charities and he also announced that the Yorkshire Three Peaks would be next year's fundraising challenge. Mr McClafferty talked about other highlights of the Trust's first year including the day he became a teaching assistant at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby He said: "I had the opportunity this year to spend the day in one of our schools as a teaching assistant. "I think the risk in my position is that I can become distant

so once a term I think it's important that we go into your schools and I would like to thank all of the staff at St Mary's for looking after me." Positive Ofsted inspections at St Joseph's CVA, in Matlock, and St Edward's CVA, in Swadlincote, were also highlighted with staff at the schools being congratulated for achieving 'Good' ratings. Other speakers on the day included the Trust's Lead Lay Chaplain, Joe Hopkins, and motivational speaker David Wells, who urged staff to remember why they came into teaching and to leave each child they teach with a memory of themselves smiling.

FIND YOUR MARIGOLD

A member of staff at Blessed Robert Sutton CVA recently shared the concept of being a Marigold at the school's half-termly Teaching and Learning Community meeting. If you are not familiar with the concept as many people weren't here at Blessed Robert Sutton this should explain it a little. Find your Marigold: The one essential rule for any teacher....

THE MARIGOLD EFFECT
Many experienced gardeners follow a concept called companion planting: placing certain vegetables and plants near each other to improve growth for one or both plants. For example, rose growers plant garlic near their roses because it repels bugs and prevents fungal diseases. Among companion plants, the marigold is one of the best: It protects a wide variety of plants from pests and harmful weeds. If you plant a marigold beside most any garden vegetable, that vegetable will grow big and strong and healthy, protected and encouraged by its marigold. Jennifer Gonzalez 2013 <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/marigolds/> for further reading



We have so many amazing people working here at Robert Sutton that we felt we needed to ask staff to identify who our marigolds were in order to promote the effect. As part of our T&L community we asked staff to identify the marigolds at Blessed Robert Sutton. Once our marigolds had been identified staff were informed (and a display placed in the staff room) and our marigolds were given a pin badge to wear on their lanyard so that all staff can identify them. Staff are encouraged to make an effort to spend time with these people.



Student wellbeing ambassadors have been appointed at Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy to raise awareness of mental health. The whole of Year 9 and 10 was invited to apply for the roles and 25 students were successful. So far, the school has conducted an emotional, mental health and wellbeing audit to see what support already exists for pupils and to assess the whole school approach to mental health. Six members of staff have received specialist training along with the ambassadors and ultimately a mental health policy will be drawn up.

In each edition we will run a profile on a member of our Trust. In this edition we focus on Trust Vice Chair, Izzy Winton.



Personal

I am 37 years old and have always lived locally; I was born and raised in Nottinghamshire, work in Leicestershire and live in Derbyshire. I left the Midlands briefly - studying History in Hull and, after a year as a Teaching Assistant, completing my PGCE in Oxford. I have worked in the Primary sector as a teacher in Catholic Schools since 2006. In that time, I have taught across ages and phases, led many subjects and completed the National Award for Special Educational Needs. I have also led on Pupil Premium and work as a Senior Leader of Education with a focus on data and assessment. Catholic Schools have played a very important role in my life; raised as an Anglican, I was received as a full member of the Catholic Church in 2014. I work full time and approximately 18 months ago, I became the Head of

a Preparatory School at one of the independent schools within the Diocese.

Where are you based?

I work in Loughborough, Leicestershire and live in Melbourne, Derbyshire.

What is your vision for the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT and the children within it?

As you will have already read from other members of the Executive Team and Board, we see our role as securing Catholic education in our area of the Diocese of Nottingham for the children of today and tomorrow. We want to ensure the pupils in our schools are experiencing the very best education and spiritual development that we can possibly provide. This means that we also need to ensure that the staff (by which I mean everyone employed in the schools across the Trust not just the teachers) are provided with professional development that enables them to become their best as well as recognise their dedication, talents and achievements. We are also working with Local Governing Bodies to ensure that they, who give their time so generously, can fulfil their duties effectively. By providing these things (and many more), it is our hope that the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT becomes renowned for the positive work it does with all members of the local communities and the joy with which it does it. Like I did, I hope that by interacting with the CMAT, as a pupil, parent, governor, member of staff or visitor, people can begin

or deepen their own relationship with Christ.

Tell us about your role day to day.

I was elected as the Vice Chair of the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust in September. Within the Trust, I chair the Curriculum and Standards Committee and am the lead Foundation Director for SEND.

As volunteers, our job is to ensure that the Trust is working towards delivering our vision underpinned by the Strategic Plan. This sees us doing a variety of different things at different times from attending meetings, training, reading papers and policies, to attending Local Governing Body Meetings across the Trust's locations. With the Executive Team, our role is to provide challenge and support asking questions as appropriate and reassuring when needed, keeping minds on the strategic plan and ensuring our mission is firmly at the heart of what we are trying to achieve. There are also legal requirements we have to fulfil such as signing off financial returns.

The first time we ever met as a board was on a Strategy Day, organised by Jacqueline, before the CMAT officially existed. We now do this annually to reflect on how we feel we are progressing towards meeting our vision. So far, it has been an exciting time to be part of the journey of the Trust and I feel fortunate to have met people who are inspired to do great work for Catholic education; I feel privileged to be part of the story of St Ralph Sherwin CMAT.

COMMITMENT TO CPD

Last month saw Andrew Monaghan, HT at St Alban's, our CEO Sean and Chair of the Trust Jacqueline embark on a one-year programme with the National School of Formation, designed specifically for leaders in Catholic education.

The opening days of the programme, called the Immersion Event, had one impressive speaker after another including Fr Denis McBride (Director of Redemptorist Press), Dr John McDade (former Principal of Heythrop College) and Louise Carter (Formation Director for L' Arche UK), each sharing their knowledge and experience as well as posing thought provoking questions to the group. The programme will include further sessions with the whole cohort together as well as study visits (each delegate chooses those of most relevance to them) to a wide range of places where work is done to help those who are homeless; people escaping violent relationships; people caught up in a world of knife crime and many others.

"I am delighted that our Trust is taking part in this

programme.

"I know of colleagues who have been in earlier cohorts and found the whole experience to be very beneficial in helping their formation as Catholic leaders," said Sean McClafferty.

Having spent the majority of her career in learning and change within large organisations, Jacqueline observed that, "It is interesting to see both the similarities and differences in the types of conversations between delegates compared to those in the corporate world.

"Another benefit is meeting executive leaders, as well as those volunteering in governance roles in other MATs, sharing what we have learnt in our Trust as well as hearing from them about their experiences." The style of the programme with presentations, discussions and time for personal reflection works well and according to Andrew, "Having time away from the busyness of school life has allowed me time to reflect on my own practice of leadership, which is a rare opportunity that I made the most of."

**"It is great to see the degree of importance placed on CPD by leaders in our Trust that they are prepared to make the time to take part in this programme."
- Andrew Monaghan.**



SKYDIVE RAISES OVER £3,000 FOR CHARITIES

The Chief Executive Officer and Chair of St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust raised more than £3,000 for charity by jumping 13,500ft from a plane.

CEO Sean McClafferty raised £1,508, including Gift Aid, for Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People, one of the Trust's nominated charities, beating his target of £1,000.

Trust Chair Jacqueline Rodden also surpassed her £1,000 target and raised £1,413, including Gift Aid, for Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice, another

of the Trust's nominated charities. There were also cheques and cash donations totalling more than £250.

Both Sean and Jacqueline completed their jumps at Langar Airfield, near Nottingham, and were delighted with the amounts raised which put them in the top 5% of 50,000 JustGiving pages. Sean said: "It was terrifying. However, knowing that so much money had been raised for two such worthy causes gave me the courage to jump out of that plane!"

As part of our theme on Encounter and 'Homelessness', the senior chaplaincy team visited the Well Centre to hand over all our food donations.

The Well Spring representative informed the children that the food we donated would feed the people they saw for a week. The children reflected on their visit and have written some of their thoughts on our liturgical wheel. Here are some of their thoughts, 'I felt sad to see so many homeless people but also grateful for all that I have, I felt happy in helping people to have a warm meal, it made me think how lucky I am and that I shouldn't take what I have for granted.'

St Mary's CVA, New Mills.



'GOOD' OFSTED RATINGS FOR TWO TRUST SCHOOLS

Two schools in the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust are celebrating after being rated 'Good' in all areas by Ofsted.

Inspectors visited St Edward's Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Swadlincote, and St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Matlock, for two days in September 2019.

They assessed areas including: the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; leadership and management and early years provision. Prior to becoming academies, both schools were graded by Ofsted as being in 'special measures'.

Inspectors said that leaders and staff at St Edward's shared the same high aspirations for all pupils to do well and that pupils enjoyed coming to the school. At St Joseph's Matlock, inspectors praised the "warm, welcoming and caring atmosphere throughout the school."

Lead inspector Christine Watkins wrote: "The staff encourage all pupils to aim high and do their best, both in lessons and in their personal development."



St Edward's

Pupils do well in English and mathematics and support is readily available to those who need it." Sean McClafferty, chief executive of the St Ralph Sherwin CMAT, congratulated both schools. He said: "We are so proud of everyone at both schools. They both thoroughly deserve this fantastic grade in recognition of the hard work and dedication from staff, pupils and governors."



St Joseph's

GAELIC FOOTBALL AND CEILIDH ON TIMETABLE FOR SPANISH STUDENTS

Gaelic football, afternoon tea and a Ceilidh were just some of the activities enjoyed by Spanish students visiting Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby.

Twenty-one Year 8 students and two teachers from Saint Benedict's partner school, Colexio Guillelme Brown in Spain, came to Derby as part of an exchange trip.

They partnered up with Year 8 students from Saint Benedict and took part in a fun-filled week of activities and lessons.

The group enjoyed afternoon tea, a Gaelic football session, a Ceilidh and trips to the University of Derby, Pride Park Stadium, Matlock Bath and Alton Towers.

They also toured Saint Benedict and took part in

lessons before rounding off the week by working with Saint Benedict students on an idea for a new app. They created posters

detailing their designs and these were displayed as part of an exhibition. Kevin Orme, languages teacher, organised the week. He said: "Everyone really enjoyed the week and we've had some fantastic feedback from the Spanish students and their teachers."



Thankyou to all of the students in our schools who submitted entries into our Christmas Card competition this year. The entries were of a very high standard which made it very difficult for our judges to decide.

The winners came from Blessed Robert Sutton, St Thomas', and the whole reception class at St Mary's Marple Bridge. Well done everyone!

The Gratitude Club at St Philip Howard CVA has been extremely busy! The students have chosen Manchester Children's Hospital as a charity focus this year. They will be supporting

the Galaxy House, which is a ward in the hospital supporting young people with mental health needs. Gratitude Club's target is to raise at least £1,000.

This club is also supporting Unity Outreach Glossop by filling rucksacks for the homeless. - Glossop Unity Outreach go into Manchester weekly with food and supplies for the homeless community. Each form has been asked to donate items from the following list: socks,

underwear, hat, gloves, wipes, hand sanitiser, a chocolate treat or even a voucher for Greggs!

We are very excited to be helping the wonderful work of this local charity and The

Gratitude Club's target is to pack 50 rucksacks.

Students in the club also arranged a non-uniform day to raise funds for Breast Cancer Now. Pupils were asked to make a £1 donation for full non uniform

BUT one item of clothing needed to be pink!

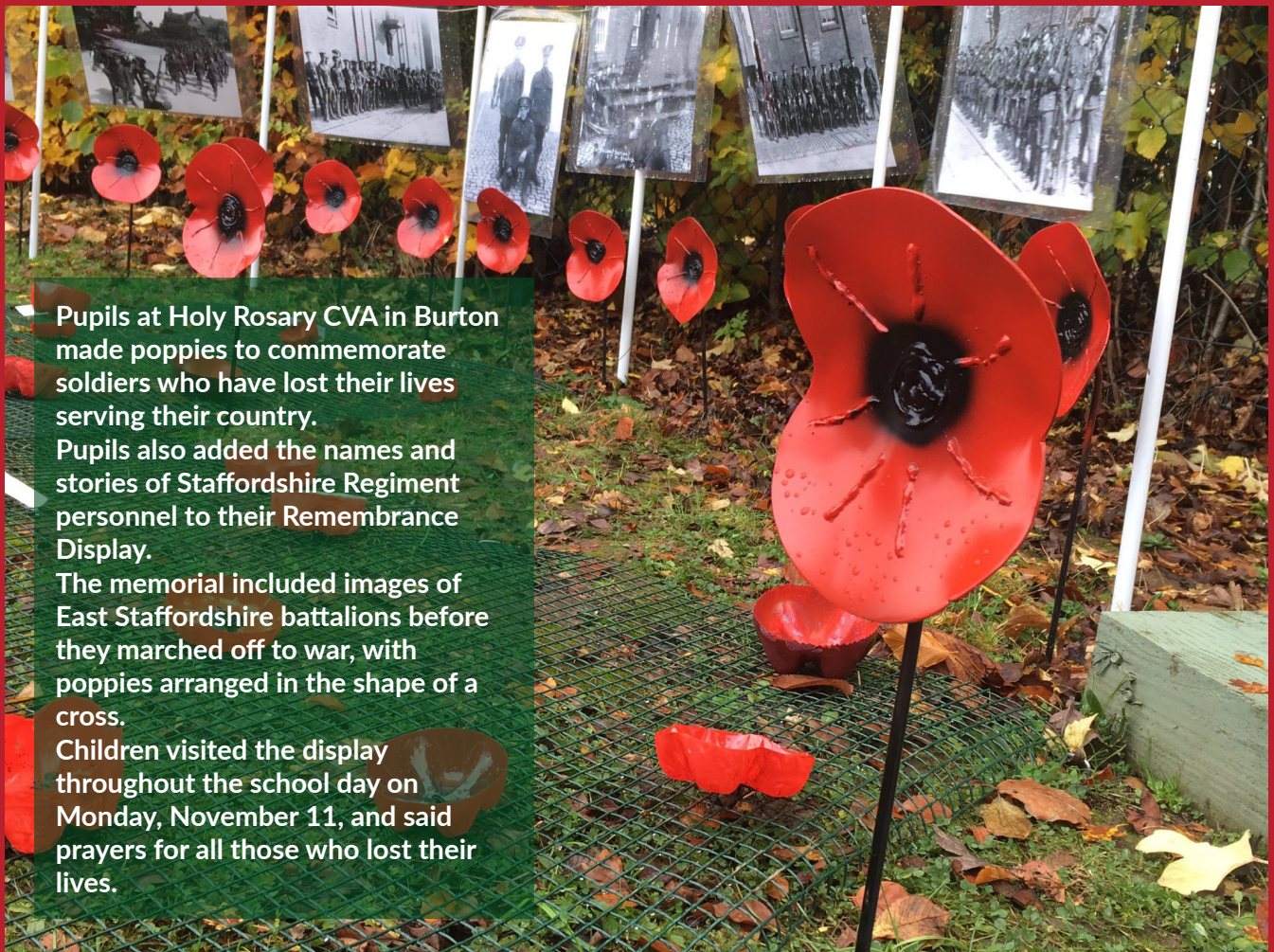
They also held a cake sale which was a huge success and many people brought in homemade cakes with a pink theme.

Students are also taking part in an 'Elf Dash' to raise money for Bluebell Wood.



Paralympic athlete Ben Watson helped to open a new cycle track at St Charles CVA in Hadfield.

Ben was this year's winner of the tour of Yorkshire and he helped to make the opening of the cycle track a very special occasion.



Pupils at Holy Rosary CVA in Burton made poppies to commemorate soldiers who have lost their lives serving their country. Pupils also added the names and stories of Staffordshire Regiment personnel to their Remembrance Display. The memorial included images of East Staffordshire battalions before they marched off to war, with poppies arranged in the shape of a cross. Children visited the display throughout the school day on Monday, November 11, and said prayers for all those who lost their lives.



Evie in Year 7 at St Thomas More in Buxton had 12 inches of her hair cut off to donate to the Little Princess Trust, which provides free real hair wigs to children who have lost their own hair through cancer treatment or other illnesses.

St Mary's CVA in Glossop is collecting donations as part of a Reverse Advent calendar. The donations recently received a welcome boost from the Amann Group who generously donated £200 worth of food for Glossop Food Bank, which is run by volunteers to provide emergency provisions to families and individuals in food crisis, across Glossopdale.



We would love to hear about what's happening at your school, please send your stories and photos to nicola@allenpr.co.uk and we will try to feature as many as we can. Thankyou!

