



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust



OUR MISSION

'Growing in faith, serving with love, transforming our world; together in Christ.'

Serving 25 schools in the Nottingham Diocese

LENT 2024 NEWSLETTER



As we approach Easter through the season of Lent, I'm sure all of our schools will be preparing activities and events for our students to help them deepen their faith.

This builds on our Feast Day, a whole Trust event which was held in December, and during which we shared the theme of Mission and Virtues. We looked at ways in which we live out the Trust Mission of 'Growing in faith, serving with love, transforming our world; together in Christ' as well as reflecting on our Virtues of Trust, Togetherness and Kindness. Each of our schools also reflected on their own Mission and Virtues, sharing the work

the pupils created with us centrally. Congratulations to the pupils and staff at St Mary's in Derby on the opening of their new building. The St Mary's community has been on such a challenging journey, it has been fantastic to see them settling into their new school which will only improve over time and as spring approaches, particularly the outdoor areas.

Well done to St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby which received an Outstanding grading from the Catholic Schools' Inspectorate. It was a glowing report and a testament to all of the hard work done by staff at the school to ensure that every child receives the very best Catholic education.

A lot of work has been going on behind

the scenes to support St Edward's Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Swadlincote, which had to split pupils across two sites due to RAAC. The staff there, and at St Elizabeth's, in Belper, have done an incredible job in coping with an incredibly challenging time. The good news is that pupils and staff at St Edward's will be back at St Edward's after half-term, with mitigation measures in place. Thank you to everyone there, and centrally, for all of the work that has been done, and to the whole school community for all of their support.

Kevin Gritton
Chief Executive

UK's greenest school opens

Pupils and staff have moved into the UK's greenest primary school three years after their original building was devastated by fire.

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Derby, is the country's first biophilic school and has been built as part of a pilot project by the Department for Education. Biophilic design focuses on connecting those inside with nature, with the goal of promoting physical and mental health. The school's original building burnt down in October 2020 and pupils and staff

were based at St James' House, in Mansfield Road, Derby, from April 2021. Amanda Greaves, Executive Headteacher at St Mary's, said: "I can't quite believe this day is finally here. I am so delighted for the children, staff, parents and wider community as we begin the next chapter in the new St Mary's, the greenest school in the UK.

"It has been an absolute privilege to be part of this incredible pathway project. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has played a part in supporting us during the most challenging 3 years; our dedicated staff, our loyal parents/carers, the St Ralph Sherwin Trust, Diocese of Nottingham and the people of Derby."



Schools bring learning to life

Learning was brought to life for pupils at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy. Pupils and staff at the school in New Mills dressed up and took part in practical lessons themed around history and

science topics that they have been studying, including the early Islamic Empire, Ancient Egypt and Space. Pupils ate space food, learnt how to be an astronaut, tested perfume, learnt about trade routes and took part in fun Egyptian themed activities.

Pupils and staff at St Anne's Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Buxton, travelled back in time to bring their learning about the Victorian era to life. Children in Year One and Year Two had been learning about Victorians and this culminated in a Victorian Day complete with chalk boards, a Victorian PE lesson and gruel.



A new member of staff at Saint Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Matlock, played a vital part in Children's Mental Health Week - Arthur the school dog. Labrador Arthur is well and truly part of the Saint Joseph's family and he even has his photo displayed on the staff board, as well as his own page on the school website. He also played his part in Children's Mental Health Week (Feb 5-9) as he is instrumental in the school's approach to wellbeing; he provides a calming influence and children are allowed to walk him as a reward for good behaviour. Children also learn what is involved in caring for a pet.



Two schools graded 'Good' by Ofsted

St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby is celebrating after being rated 'Good' in all areas by Ofsted.

Ofsted also visited Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy, in Derby, and inspectors said it continued to be a Good school.

Inspectors said about St John Fisher (pupils are pictured right): "St John Fisher is a warm and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy their learning and are happy. They feel safe.

"Pupils behave sensibly in class and around the school. Children learn the routines they need to follow as soon as they join the school."

Inspectors who visited Saint Benedict said: "Pupils feel safe and cared for at this school. They know who they can talk to if they have a problem. Most parents speak positively about the pastoral and academic care that pupils receive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive a high level of support."



Reflection from our **Lead Lay Chaplain,** Jamie Agius.

Whenever Lent comes around, most Catholics will ask themselves the perennial question, 'what shall I give up this Lent?'

Maybe the simplicity of this question exposes my own misunderstanding of just how profound Lent could and should be. Maybe it's the legacy

of being a cradle Catholic and the parental expectation that giving up sweets for Lent was about as much as children could handle. Either way, it reduces Lent down to a list of negatives, of things we shouldn't do, eat or drink. However, if it is holiness that we are aspiring to deepen at this time of year, then surely it should be more than not doing things.

Two of the three foci in Lent, almsgiving and prayer, are by their very nature, positives, and require us to do things as opposed to giving them

up.

They ask us to actively participate in relationships, with God and with others, and therefore remind us of the greatest commandment, 'To love God with all our hearts, with all our soul and with all our minds and to love our neighbours as ourselves.'

So, maybe a more engaged seeking of those things that make us holy should be pursued this Lent, a seeking stirred by the desire to interact with God and with others through prayer and acts of kindness.



