



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust



End of First Year Review From The Trust Board Sept 2018 – Aug 2019

Over the past three years many people have brought their talents to bear to create the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust,

A Catholic family of schools providing service and witness to children, their families and the communities they serve. Stronger together, united in faith and working as one to enrich the learning experience of all our young people so that they fulfil their God-given potential.

As one of four Catholic Multi Academy Trusts in the Diocese of Nottingham, implementing the Bishop's plan for Catholic schools in the Diocese, our aim is to secure Catholic education for the children in our care as well as those who will follow them in future.

Bringing together 25 different schools to create one Catholic community has been both exciting and challenging as we broadened our thinking from my one academy to our many academies. As a Trust Board, we understand the huge responsibility placed upon us as guardians of the Trust to ensure that every young person benefits from the work of our Trust. We feel both humbled and privileged to have been appointed by the Bishop as Foundation Directors and are dedicated to preserving and developing Catholic education in the areas served by our academies.

At our first meeting of the Trust Board on 9th June 2018, we set out our Strategic Plan for the Trust. This incorporated ideas from our Visioning Day with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors on 16th March 2018 which was also when we created our St Ralph Sherwin Wheel (see above right).



One year later, on 8th June 2019 we reviewed how the first year has gone and would like to share some highlights with you from each of the five Strategic Aims which we are continuing with into year two, as through our Catholic faith, we promote the academic, spiritual, emotional and social growth of around 8000 pupils.

Firstly, we are a Catholic Trust playing an active part in supporting the Diocese of Nottingham's pastoral priority for children. Our first aim is To enable young people to discover their personal relationship with the Lord, an openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and their role within the life of their parish or chaplaincy.

Our decision to appoint a full time Lead Lay Chaplain has supported this aim considerably throughout this first year, with all schools receiving support as well as sharing talents and experience with others across the Trust and Diocese. Eleven schools have been supported with their preparation for a much more challenging Diocesan Canonical Inspection framework where inspection and monitoring visits have fallen due this year.

Pupils had the opportunity to attend the special youth congress Adoremus

in Liverpool in September and our Trust had the first primary school to join the Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. We also brought the largest contingent from the Diocese to the Flame youth Conference in March with 52 representatives from our Trust kindly sponsored by their parishes.



Celebrating the Feast Day of our patron St Ralph Sherwin with 800 colleagues in November was a great highlight of the year. Each of our schools was presented with an image of St Ralph Sherwin blessed by the Bishop. These pictures now hang in each of our schools as a reminder that we are all part of one St Ralph Sherwin community.

Christmas celebrations included our first Trust-wide Christmas card competition.





and in June a **Missionary Discipleship Pupil Event** for over 300 children at Pride Park included a much anticipated and enjoyed **Grill The Bishop** session.

We have been keen to reach out to



others outside our Trust. On a sunny summer day in June we joined the St Ralph Sherwin Society for their annual



Mass at Rodsley, birthplace of St Ralph Sherwin. Forty representatives from our school communities took part in a five mile Pilgrimage walk from All Saints Parish Church in Ashbourne before the Mass. It was a pleasure to be able to present the St Ralph Sherwin Society with the same St Ralph Sherwin picture which is in each of our schools. As we move into year two we aim to strengthen the links we have between our schools and the parishes we serve.

Partnering with the **Schools Library**

Association from September 2019 is another element of our outward looking approach as a Trust, drawing on what is appropriate to support our schools.

Our second strategic aim is **To ensure that all our**

future. The introduction of **Cluster Leads** for English, Maths Science and RE at Secondary and Early Years, English, Maths and Inclusion at Primary is another approach which recognises that being part of a wider Trust family of schools can provide broader opportunities for staff and

We have been clear from the outset that, regardless of a school's Ofsted rating, everyone has something to offer and **all will be both a giver and receiver of support. Teaching and Learning Reviews (TLRs)** have been introduced where a group of Headteachers visits another school to review their approaches and give feedback on how to improve further. All schools will have received a TLR in the first two years. Looking ahead to the **new Ofsted Framework** which comes into force from September 2019, two of our schools volunteered to trial and give feedback on the draft framework earlier this year.

All of this is underpinned by the work of our **Data Manager** who over the course of the year has worked with leaders across the Trust to identify and refine the ways of recording and reporting data so that it can be used effectively to inform discussions on school improvement.

Effective organisations have strong leadership and governance and it is our aim

To ensure high quality leadership and governance at Trust Board, Local Governing Body and individual academy level.

Our Trust Board of six **Foundation Directors**, all appointed by the Bishop, has a wide range of skills in primary, secondary and tertiary education, finance, industry and Catholic life. During the course of the year there have been **termly training days** for all four CMAT Boards in the Diocese and this is continuing throughout year two. The **first annual governor conference** took place in June bringing together over 100 governors from across the Diocese. Responding to feedback, the twice termly **Symposiums for Local Chairs of Governors** were opened to other local governors to attend from January.

children can benefit from the sharing of good practice.

To establish a self-sustaining, system-led, collaborative approach to improvement that enables rapid improvement where required is our third strategic aim.

Where schools are currently rated as less than Good by Ofsted, or where the Trust considers a school to be at risk owing to concerns evident in progress, attainment or other data, a twice termly Ofsted Executive Board meets to ensure focus and pace in the changes needed to bring each school to at least Good.

All schools regardless of Ofsted rating have at least one **Director of Performance and Standards** assigned to them who visits at least twice a term to support Headteachers in driving school improvements.

academies provide the very best teaching in order to promote and provide high quality learning for all our children and young people and ensuring that there is support in place for teachers to achieve this.

Through the effective use of secondments we have provided opportunities of over twenty leaders to develop further and experience new roles helping to shape the future of our organisation. The introduction of seven Executive Headteachers has allowed the strengths from one school to be shared with others. **Continuing Professional Development** opportunities have been opened up to all staff and take up has been encouraging. Making the best use of the Nottingham Teaching School as well as connecting with Hallam University and others is helping to identify and develop colleagues who will play key roles in our schools in



This year we said goodbye to nine governors who between them had clocked up **over 200 years of service as governors in our schools**. Each was presented with a long service award in recognition of all that they have done over those many years. We are grateful to all those who support our Trust and also took the opportunity in this first year to recognise ten volunteers who have



dedicated many years to the service of others in our schools, including one posthumous award for someone who was still volunteering until shortly before she died at the age of 95. Our first governor survey in November identified five areas for improvement which were then worked on by groups of governors. Findings from an external review of governance at the end of our first year will be used to inform further improvements for year two. Twice termly Trust Board and LGB meetings allow for formal **challenge and support for trust Leaders**, supported by **Trust subcommittees** including Local Governing Bodies in each school. Further work is planned in year two on ensuring greater clarity of roles and reporting across the governance

structure. The appointment of a full time **Governance Manager** for the Trust starting in September 2019 means that we move from relying solely on the contributions of volunteers in the coordination of governance activities to having someone dedicated full time to manage the co-ordination of governance Trust-wide.

The Trust Executive Team has been

Our Trust Sub-Committees

- **Audit & Risk**
- **Finance & Estates**
- **HR & Staffing**
- **Pay & Performance**
- **Standards**
- **24 Local Governing Bodies**

established this year and the support provided to schools will be further enhanced by our new **Senior Director of Performance and Standards** who comes to us in September from his most recent role as a Senior HMI. Other changes and adjustments to leadership roles throughout the year within the Exec Team, as well as the leadership teams within schools, put us in a stronger position to move forward as we enter year two.

The last Strategic Aim is

To ensure that the Trust has business support arrangements which are efficient and deliver value for money across all its operations.

This includes Finance, HR, Estates, Health & Safety. As we reach the end of year one many things have been learnt about the 25 schools which now form our Trust.



St Ralph Sherwin

Today Rather Than Tomorrow



Differences in reporting, expectations and understanding are being ironed out, roles are increasingly better understood and after unexpected difficulties with our new finance system, we have a different system in place which will make things much smoother in future. Reporting in a sustainable and effective way as well as using the outcomes from curriculum and planning reviews will help ensure that our school and Trust teams are appropriately staffed to deliver an excellent education for our children.

Human error brings some fun for the Finance Team including a typo which resulted in a request to purchase £1m worth of bananas. Understandably the unappealing request was declined by the Finance Director!



Our newly centralised HR function supported our schools with a full range of HR activities, including recruitment, HR administration and employee relations advice and support. **We have recruited to over 200 roles this year**, brought together over 1700 employment records into a central HR and payroll system reducing our payroll provision from five providers to two and will reduce this further in year two with in house payroll service provision. The HR

Team has advised schools on how to help employees perform at their best, supporting colleagues back to work after absence and securing Occupational Health provision across the Trust to offer **better value for money for our academies**, enabling our managers to better support our employees.

Building projects have been completed, new toilets installed, plus other critical maintenance and improvements made to school buildings including enhanced security. This coming year we will be investing over £1M in further improvements to enhance the learning environment for our pupils.

Overall as a Trust we are solvent and compliant in line with requirements of the ESFA and other agencies. With the differing ways in which information was stored in each school it has been challenging to get accurate Trust-wide views on key service costs but we are closer to being able to review provision and secure better deals for our schools going forward.

We spent the first part of 2018 **getting ready** to launch our Trust on 1st September and our first year **getting started**. As we look to year two, this is a time **for consolidating progress so far**, ensuring that it is sustainable and taking our next steps forward in all five key strategic areas.

Our Trust is a dynamic entity, which

will change over time however, one constant will always be the Catholic principles upon which our academies are founded. **'Inspired by the life, message and example of Jesus Christ'** we take the words of our patron to heart as we seek to do the Lord's will **"today rather than tomorrow"** moving forward to deliver the best for those who learn and work in our Trust as well as the governors, other volunteers, parishioners and many more people who support the work of Catholic education in our area of the Diocese of Nottingham.

We look forward with faith-filled confidence, hope and excitement to our second year.

Jacqueline Rodden,
Chair, St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust Board

If you would like to find out more about the work of the trust or want to explore how you might bring your skills to support our work as an employee or volunteer you will find more information on our website
[https:// srscmat.co.uk/](https://srscmat.co.uk/)

Prayer to St Ralph Sherwin

Most Holy Priest and Martyr, Saint Ralph Sherwin, you gave your whole life freely and earnestly, forsaking all risk to yourself, seeking to do the Lord's will "today rather than tomorrow".

You died for love of Christ and his Church, as a witness to bring others to the truth.

Pray that we might follow the Lord more earnestly, with eyes fixed firmly on his Son, never putting off till tomorrow what can be done today.

Obtain for us the grace to share your courage and conviction, to live lives transformed by love of Jesus, following His call wherever it may lead, sharing Him with all whom we meet.

Amen