



24th June 2017

Dear Parents

As we approach the end of the first year, I thought I would give you an update on how the year has progressed for Xavier Catholic Education Trust.

As you know we are a Multi Academy Trust of nine schools: Cardinal Newman Catholic Primary School, Salesian School, St Alban's Catholic Primary School, St Anne's Catholic Primary School, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, St Charles Borromeo Catholic Primary School, St John the Baptist School, St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School and The Holy Family Catholic Primary School. In September, will be joined by The Marist School in West Byfleet. This means we will have a total of 10 schools, over 800 staff, nearly 6000 children and a total budget of over £23 million, so lots to do!!!

I have really enjoyed my first year as CEO, mainly because I feel really blessed to work with such a great group of Directors, Headteachers and Governors. All the schools in the MAT provide a really good quality of education and I have been so impressed with the Catholic ethos of each of our schools and the quality of care shown to all the children. You may have read a few horror stories in the newspapers about some Multi Academy Trusts but I can 'hand on heart' say that your children are really fortunate to attend one of our schools.

As you know all our schools are run by their own Headteachers and maintain their individual ethos, decision making powers etc. The things we do together are those we agree will be of benefit to us all, or save us money. So here's a few examples of what have we been working on this year:

- **Central Procurement:** One of the big advantages of being part of a MAT is the buying power of nine schools together. Going forward, schools will not have to negotiate individual contracts for everything from fire extinguishers to buying computers. This will all be done by a central team and so make savings for schools. It will also enable Heads to focus on the quality of education of the children rather than checking the legionnaire testing has been done (to name one of a hundred things which takes schools away from its core purpose!!).
- **Quality of Teaching:** We have recently completed a review of the teaching in our schools. This has identified where the best practice is and how we can share that across the MAT. For example, if a new Year 2 teacher joins a one form entry school there will be a Year 2 teacher in another school who can help and support them in their planning. We saw some really exceptional practice in all our schools including "the best lesson I have ever seen" in Holy Family School (quote from consultant). We also identified a few areas where we can work together to improve, although these were far outweighed by all the great lessons observed.
- **Training and Development:** We are holding joint training days across all our schools so we can all learn from each other as we strive for excellence. The first one was on Maths mastery.
- **Policies:** We now have centralised policies across the MAT so if you need to look at one please go to our website www.xaviercet.org.uk
- **Events:** We also intend to hold Xavier events. The first one being a Sports Festival for our Primary Schools next term.

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- **Buildings:** We are now responsible for our own buildings. Before we became a MAT we had a comprehensive survey carried out in each of our schools. We have employed an Estates Manager, Paul Harte, and he has ensured that all essential works identified by our condition survey have been completed. He is also working on the five-year strategic plan for our sites. Each year we receive funding for the upkeep and development of our buildings and, this year, our allocation was 1.125million, so it's a huge job!

With regards to the organisational structure of the MAT; we have a Board of Directors who each bring a particular skill, (e.g. Finance, HR, Business acumen) you can read about all the directors on the website if you would like more information. Each school has its own local governing committee and there is a link Director to ensure we have good communication between us all. There is a scheme of delegation on the website that outlines the specific responsibilities of each group. We enjoy very good relationships with Marie Ryan (Director of Education at the Diocese) and the Trustees. Life is so much easier when you work with people with similar values and people with whom we share the same vision for our schools

The bad news is that like all schools, budgets are really being squeezed and secondly it is so difficult to recruit first class teachers in the South East. We have partnered with South Farnham to train our primary teachers (we already train secondary teachers as part of our SCITT). To address the financial situation, we have bid for various pots of money to boost our income and are continually looking for ways to work smarter and save money. If you have recently won the lottery or have lots of spare money please come and talk to me!!

Finally, at the end of this term one of our Heads Jill Keany from Cardinal Newman School is retiring. Anyone who knows or has worked with Jill will know what a wonderful job she had done leading Cardinal Newman over the last 15 years. Jill is a great role model for Catholic Headship and when people visit Cardinal Newman School they are struck by the very strong ethos of a happy, caring, Christian community. Not only has Jill done a great job at Cardinal Newman School but she has also helped other schools in difficulty and in this and all her roles, given so freely of her time. We are very sorry to lose someone of such wisdom and experience. Jill will be a great loss to the MAT but we wish her a long happy and healthy retirement. Catherine Burnham from Westfield School will be taking on the challenge of filling these big shoes and we look forward to welcoming Catherine in September.

So that's a quick round up of what we've been up to so far. I will keep you posted as the MAT progresses. Thank you so much for all the support you show to our schools. Rest assured we will continue to work together to do our very best to ensure your children are happy and successful at school and that everything we do is underpinned by our gospel values.

God Bless

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ani Magill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Ani Magill

CEO – Xavier Catholic Education Trust

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