



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 16 - July 2025

End of Year Celebrations

Dear Colleagues and friends,

I hope you enjoy reading through this academic years final newsletter. It brings to a close another busy but very successful year for all of our schools and Trust. All of our schools have now been inspected by Ofsted, and all have been judged as either Good or Outstanding. This is a tremendous achievement and one we should all be very proud of as it puts Our Lady of Walsingham into one of the highest achieving Trusts in the region. We have also received very positive inspections for our schools as part of the Catholic Schools Inspections (CSI). Again, it is really positive recognition of the work of the Trust and schools. I am also delighted to note that three new schools will be joining the Trust from November 2025. This will mean that we have fulfilled Bishop Peter's directive of having ensured that all of the Catholic schools within East Anglia will be part of a Catholic Trust. It is the best way to ensure that we develop together, we grow together and we protect the quality of Catholic education long into the future.



After leading Our Lady of Walsingham for the last four and a half years, I will be moving on to take up the position of Director of Education for the Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the schools here in East Anglia I know that we have all worked to ensure we deliver not only excellent outcomes, but more importantly, we work to ensure that our children and young people learn and experience life in a community founded on Christian virtues in which they encounter the living God. I have been blessed to work with so, so many talented individuals from leaders, governors, head teachers and staff across our organisation. I am blessed to count many of you as not just colleagues but as dear friends. Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust will continue to shine and will continue to have a deep and significant hold on my heart. Wishing you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Flavio Vettese
CEO



*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk

*Heavenly Father, Maker of all things,
You enable us to share in your work of creation.
Bless us in the gift and care of children,
That our homes and schools may be places of love, security and trust,
And our children grow up to know and love you
In your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen

A Message From Paul Bergin, Chair of the Board of Directors

Dear Parents and Pupils, Staff, Governors and all involved in our family of schools,



This term we see the departure of our Chief Executive Officer, Flavio Vettese, who will be joining Brentwood Diocese in September to take up a role as the Diocesan Director for Education. I would like to thank Flavio for his hard work in Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust as both Diocesan Deputy Director of Education, and more recently, as our CEO. In particular, I thank him for his warmth, bringing us all closer together as well as some fantastic achievements: growing our family of schools to the size it is today, wonderful Ofsted results in recent years and supporting and developing our teams who work together. What is our loss will be a great gain for Brentwood, and we wish him well in his new role.

In the meantime, I have asked Clare Clark, our Deputy CEO, to take over as Interim CEO until we have completed the search for a new permanent CEO. Clare has a wealth of experience in Catholic educational leadership, and has been instrumental in raising standards in our trust for many years. Please join me in congratulating Clare in her new role and wishing her every success as she steers our Trust during some very busy times as we welcome new schools to our family.

Change is normal for an organisation of our size, and is something we embrace and turn into an opportunity to grow, learn from and trust in each other as new challenges unfold. Let us see this change as a time to consolidate, look out for each other and take the opportunity to make something a little bit better for each other.

Enjoy the summer break, and a big thank you to all working in our schools, you really deserve the time off!

God Bless

*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*

Co-Chairs of Local Governors, Vicki Worsnop and Ursula Love - A Model to Consider

As the responsibilities of Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) develop, co-chairing provides many advantages for governors, schools, and Trusts. At St. Laurence Catholic Primary School, we took on the role of co-chairs in September 2024. We had been on the LGB for a number of years, so we had the advantage of knowing each other and already working together as governors.

Our first action before our September start was to produce a table of responsibilities so that together we agreed our individual responsibilities, had clear role definitions, and knew where our roles overlapped. We have complimentary skills and abilities, and this became evident as we compiled our table. It was also important to recognise flexibility in our co-chair roles. We shared our table of responsibilities with the Headteacher to ensure that she was happy with our model.

As co-chairs, we agreed that we meet regularly in person every two weeks, usually the day before we met with the Headteacher. This enables us to agree an agenda for our meeting with the Headteacher and to identify any issues that we feel need to be discussed with her. As co-chairs we also communicate via WhatsApp regarding any aspect of governance.

There are challenges to co-chairing but with a clear table of responsibilities, regular meetings, honest communication, and mutual trust, it is a model that works exceptionally well for us, our LGB and for the school and Trust.

Forewarned is forearmed so we were aware of potential challenges for us as co-chairs:

- Co-ordination issues can cause confusion, delay in decision making and communication breakdown
- Decision-making delays - co-chairing requires consensus, which can slow decision-making and responsiveness, making it challenging to address urgent issues or opportunities.

Thankfully, we have not had to deal with these potential difficulties because we agreed our responsibilities and roles from the start and set up our regular meeting times.

From our perspective, the advantages of co-chairing far outweigh the possible negatives. The advantages we have seen include:

- An added focus on governance practices
- A second perspective on working with other local governors
- Better decision making - co-chairing provides boards with access to broader perspectives. With two people contributing different experiences and perspectives, decisions are tested more thoroughly and bias can be recognised and avoided
- The ability to compliment one another's skills
- Shared responsibility and accountability
- Continuity, resilience, and succession planning - a co-chairing model helps boards maintain continuity. If one chair steps away, whether temporarily or permanently, the other can maintain stability, reducing disruption and helping the board stay on course
- A more manageable workload for the two people in role

Our experience of co-chairing enables leadership to be more balanced and sustainable. It has brought flexibility, can ease pressure, improve governance, and support succession, without placing the burden on a single person working as all our governors do in a voluntary capacity. It is certainly a model worth considering as we come back to the start of the new school year.

Introducing Our Trust Staff Charter: A Commitment to Wellbeing - Jo Berry, Headteacher, St Marys

We are delighted to share that, as a group of schools, we have developed a Staff Charter that sets out our clear commitments to support and enhance the wellbeing, work life balance and mental health of everyone working in our Trust.



Leaders from across Trust primary and secondary schools met first to discuss and shape the charter. They then took these initial ideas back to their wider teams in school, where further discussion and collaboration took place. After gathering feedback and refining the commitments, we agreed on a final Staff Charter that we believe truly reflects the Catholic ethos and values underpinning our Trust schools.

Our Staff Charter is more than words on a page; it is a promise to create a culture of care, respect, and support for every colleague based on our shared Catholic values and ethos. We look forward to working together to continue to make these commitments the lived reality in all our schools.

Trust SEND Conference June 2025 - Caroline Clarke, Trust Lead SENDCo

On June 10th 2025 Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT hosted our very first SEND Conference at Meadows Community Centre in Cambridge. There were 20 delegates including SENDCos, Headteachers and Inclusion Leads from Trust schools, schools in the St John the Baptist Catholic MAT and a range of Cambridgeshire schools.



We were delighted to welcome an excellent range of speakers who presented on an exciting range of topics. Abigail Hawkins, known and recognised nationally as 'Sensible SENCo', opened the Conference by sharing her ideas for measuring and mapping the progress of pupils with SEND, looking in particular at the GAS Model. All delegates received a free copy of her book, 'Approach it, Map it, Manage it' for further reading.

Our second keynote speaker, Amy Moore, SEND Consultant for Reed and ADHD Ambassador, talked with honesty and openness about her journey through school and into adulthood, as a person with undiagnosed neurodiversity. At 24 years old Amy was finally diagnosed with ADHD and it was a privilege to hear first hand how it feels from her perspective and all that she has achieved.

After lunch delegates attended two workshops of their choice. Speakers included Emma Ferris, Specialist SALT from Communicate who talked about receptive language difficulties and behaviour problems, Tom Emmett, Education Law Associate, who talked about a range of topics including Consultations and Tribunals and Jenny McGhee Wallace, Executive Headteacher from OLOW, who spoke about one school's journey of harnessing the power of consistency, kindness, and adult authority in shaping student behaviour.

There were also opportunities to network with colleagues throughout the day and to browse the trade stands provided by Reed Education and Communicate.

We have received very positive feedback from attendees who rated all speakers very highly and said that there were lots of practical ideas and tips shared that they could take away and use straightaway back in their schools.

An enormous thank you to all our speakers and delegates for making it such an exciting, interesting and worthwhile event. Huge thanks must also go to schools for allowing staff to attend the conference and the administrative support that enabled me to organise such a successful day. We look forward to organising similar events in the future.

OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM CATHOLIC MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

We work in faith and love to fulfil the Church's mission

Staff Charter

Community & Culture

- Gospel values are lived out in our schools
- We are a family of schools who share core values
- Staff voice is valued and acted upon
- Innovative ways of working are promoted
- We support each other and lead by example

Growing Professionally

- We are committed to staff formation in all its richness
- Our inclusive culture promotes lifelong learning
- All staff access high-quality induction and ongoing professional development
- Well established Trust teaching and learning networks, foster purposeful connections and collaboration

Wellbeing

- Leaders have the tools, resources and training to support staff
- All staff have access to a high-quality employee assistance programme
- Each school has a dedicated wellbeing working party
- An annual wellbeing survey is conducted for all staff
- Every school has trained mental health first aiders

Workload

- We focus on reducing unnecessary workload
- We carefully consider the impact and value of new initiatives
- All meetings are organised and run efficiently
- Teachers' directed time is carefully planned and evaluated





St Mary's Primary, Ipswich

Jubilee Baking Competition - A sweet Celebration

To mark this year's Jubilee and raise funds for new play equipment, the School Council at St Mary's organised a special baking competition with the inspiring theme Pilgrims of Hope.

We were thrilled to see such enthusiastic participation from across the school, with so many talented bakers rising to the challenge. The creativity and effort that went into the cakes were truly impressive, with a wonderful variety of flavours and imaginative designs on display.



Judging was no easy task! A huge thank you to Father Jude, Mrs Berry, Mr Bentley, and Miss Southgate, who carefully sampled and scored the entries. Their job was made very difficult by the high standard of baking from all our participants.

Well done to everyone who took part, and thank you to all who supported the event. A true team effort and a wonderful way to celebrate together!

Jubilee Pledge Day - Worship Council

To mark our Jubilee Pledge Day, we came together as a school community to march for hope around our local area. It was a powerful symbol of unity, action, and our shared commitment to positive change.

We gathered for a special Jubilee Pledge liturgy, where we reflected on the values of justice, compassion, and renewal. Each class then shared their heartfelt Jubilee Pledges, expressing how they will contribute to building a fairer, more hopeful world.





St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Father Figure Day

We welcomed over 100 Father figures in for our now-annual Father figure morning in June. This was a fantastic opportunity to engage with our parents and welcome them into classrooms to work with their children. We started the morning with an assembly, where we played a round of Guess the Teacher's Dad with some members of staff, before sharing some lovely memories and anecdotes from the children. We then watched the story of Rick and Richard Hoyt together, which shows the dedication of fathers and the lengths they will go to, to support their children. This was an emotional watch, but very much enjoyed.



Father figures then went to class to complete some craft activities with their children, which included some intricately designed Father's Day cards, wooden picture frames, hanging cards and Father's Day art.

Feedback for the day was overwhelmingly positive and we shared some of our artwork on social media.

Geography Day

One of our focuses this year has been highlighting foundation subjects and giving them more prominence within the curriculum. We have had dedicated days for key subjects, allowing children to work on key skills and carry out activities that there is not always the time for in class.



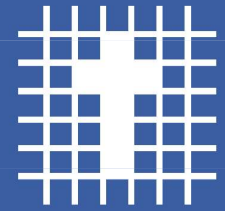
Geography day was planned to give children the opportunity to conduct local field work in the community and the theme for the day was 'Noise and Pollution.'

Each class went on a local trip to monitor a key aspect of traffic within surrounding roads. Reception and KS1 focused on the volume and type of traffic, completing pictograms when they returned. Key stage 2 then delved a bit deeper into the statistics and used dataloggers to measure the noise in key areas around the school, as well as the potential pollution levels.



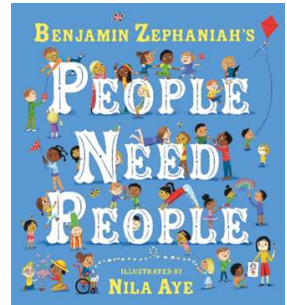
*We are Loving and kind,
We Pray and we Play*





Equalities Week

It was Equalities Week, in St. Laurence, from 14th March. We started the week with our pupils coming to school in their national dress or the colours of their flag. To support their understanding of equality, each class read a beautiful book by Benjamin Zephaniah - People Need People. We finished the week by having 'bread day'. The children were encouraged to share the bread which is common to their culture.



Here is an account from Y5 teacher, Mrs. Prokop:

It was an amazing opportunity for the children to celebrate our diverse school community, and they truly enjoyed the experience.

The bread tasting sparked fantastic conversations! The children spoke confidently about the origins and flavours of the different types of bread, and it was wonderful to see their enthusiasm for learning in such a hands-on way.



Pentecost for the Jubilee of Hope

Just as the disciples were sent forth at Pentecost to spread the good news, St Felix took the opportunity as part of our Pentecost celebrations to make our Cafod Jubilee of Hope Pledge. By walking in solidarity with our brother and sisters worldwide, sharing challenges and celebrating joys, our pledge could then extend beyond the confines of our school.

Across the year pupils have learnt about the importance of doors during the Jubilee of Hope and that crossing the threshold symbolises entry into a new life in Christ and the beginning of a journey of conversion.

On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis said,

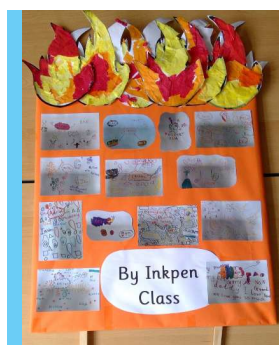
“The steps of our journey are the steps of the whole church, pilgrims in the world and witness of peace”.

At the end of the Spring term, during our Lenten Pilgrimage, the pupils took part in imaginative prayer and considered who they felt close to. Each child created a picture of someone important to them that they wished to bring closer to Christ. These were collated into class banners for our Pentecost Procession. We have been careful to forge links across the year between our acts of worship for the Pilgrimage of Hope to ensure formation has been woven throughout.

Starting our service in the school hall, the school gathered together to remind themselves of why Pentecost was important and the apostolic mission we live out in our daily lives. Having led the prayers, Father John then led the procession. Each class proudly carried their banner during our walk to church where we had the second part of our service and were joined by members of the parish.

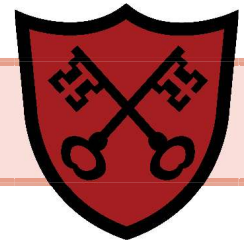
The pledge and the service were co-produced with the pupils. They relished the chance to sing the hymns they had chosen and the junior chaplains read out the pledge which the school has committed to:

- Listening and tracking people who talk to us, particularly when they ask for our help
- Reducing our carbon footprint and the amount of waste we produce
- Supporting Cafod fundraising and increasing our donations
- Creating new school traditions which protect our school environment for future pupils



The pupils at St Felix feel strongly that they have a responsibility for the future of the world and their hopes included peace and a chance for the planet to heal and become healthy again.

It was a wonderful and uplifting celebration and it is good to know that hope is alive at St Felix.



St Alban's Primary, Cambridge

The Caritas Group

"The Caritas group is made up of pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. In this year of Jubilee, the group has looked at how our school can be more active in living our faith and in following Pope Francis's call to do something special for others and for our world.

So far, we have raised over £300, through a non-uniform day at school and through individual members of the Caritas group organising jewellery sales and cake sales, to pay for a tree to be planted in Cambridge as part of the "Trees for Streets" scheme. The tree will be planted on Lammas Land or Coe Fen in the Autumn.

We are now planning to raise money to create a grotto for Our Lady in the playground. This will act as a place for prayer and reflection for the school and a focus of prayer on special feast days for both the school and the parish of OLEM.

We have received postcards and letters from another Catholic primary school in Bristol and we will be replying to them this term.

The school was already actively supporting the Cambridge Foodbank and CAFOD fund-raising initiatives and we are making sure we continue to do this as part of our Jubilee focus on helping others.

On the theme of pilgrimage, we have updated the "Footprints of Faith" walk, which was written around 10 years ago. It follows in the footsteps of important Catholic figures in the history of Cambridge and in our Catholic heritage eg St John Fisher, Lady Margaret Beaufort and Baron von Hugel.

We will be making these pilgrimage walks later this year and hope they will become a regular part of St Alban's Catholic life.



Believe, Achieve, Succeed



www.st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk/sixthform



Our New Deputy Head Prefects

Hi, I 'm Mimi and I have recently become deputy head prefect which means that I will have the responsibility of being head prefect in Y11! To get here took lots of preparation. We first had to put in our applications and had to answer a double side of questions. This included questions such as: Why do you want to prefect, what would you bring to the role of prefect? The interviews themselves were quite nerve wracking! We were invited in an office with Miss Sturman, Mrs Barber and our head of Year Mr McLellan. The interview process itself was reassuring and friendly and everyone was so nice it helped me to relax. I actually really enjoyed the process.



A few days later, we were invited to open letters which told us whether we had been successful in getting a prefect role and was pleased to discover that not only had I been accepted as prefect but that I had been invited to interview for the deputy head prefect role which was amazing. For this, I had to write and give a speech imagining that I was welcoming Y6 on transition day. When I discovered that Noah and I had been chosen after such an intensive process I was so pleased. I feel that I have already learnt so much just through the application process such as not to doubt myself and be confident in what I say. I am looking forward to taking on my role fully and I would recommend that everyone puts themselves forward for the role of prefect.



Hello, my name is Noah. The process of becoming a prefect at St Albans was in my experience a really great opportunity to go through what it would be like to apply for a job, from the application form to the interviews. We started off with filling in an incredible application form where we had to explain what it would mean and how we would conduct ourselves as prefects. Which was then shortly followed by an interview with Miss Sturman, Mr McLellan and Mrs Barber. A week later about 8 prefects delivered a speech to see who would become Deputy Head Prefect, that ended up being me and Mimi. I really cannot explain how incredible the whole process was, and it is something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. I am so grateful that I now have an opportunity to give back and help others. I can't wait to work with the future generations of St Albans.

During May our Year 12 Geography students had the opportunity to visit Ipswich Waterfront and Woodbridge Road. This formed part of our local case study for our Changing Places unit, we compared this data to Brick Lane in London which we visited in March.



Spirit Yachts careers visit for Year 12

Natalie, our guide, was extremely knowledgeable and delivered detailed information on every aspect of manufacture alongside information about careers within the boat building industry.

Due to the confidentiality, they produce boats for high profile clients and film's such as James Bond, we were not allowed to take any photos of the yachts during construction.

Thank you to Miss Tooke and Mr Clarke for arranging this inspiring opportunity for students.



The Big Show - Buggy Malone

St Benedict's Catholic School presented Buggy Malone from Wednesday 12th to Friday 14th March 2025. We want to recognise all the hard work from those involved in school time, lunchtimes and after school rehearsals. They should feel very proud of themselves for their tremendous effort at performing the school musical. We had quite a young cast this year with the oldest actor being in Year 10 and the youngest in Year 7.



From the jaw-dropping principal actors, to lively and stylish supporting actors; the marvellous chorus; the upbeat, wonderful band; the gorgeous, professional dancers; to the incredibly quick stagehands; to the intelligent tech-crew on light and sound and to the massive audience members, we would like to say a huge THANK YOU for such an amazing show. How many people, still have splurge on their clothes, we wonder?



The Big Tea Break - Raising Money for EACH

On Wednesday 2 April, 10X invited teachers to attend their 'Afternoon Tea' in aid of EACH. All the students in the form participated - whether it be through presenting in assemblies, baking at home, crafting bunting and invites, making scones, cheese straws and more over two lunch times, and even making all the sandwiches. A fire alarm was not enough to deter the group from putting on a wonderful event for staff that was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed!

The total raised so far for EACH by 10X is over £230 and we hope it will be more once we finish collecting!



*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*



Current and Future Sixth Formers Show Their Talent During Exam Period

Our Art and Textiles students in year 11 and 13 have been busy with their art exams these last two weeks. There are some amazing year 11 outcomes we look forward to displaying later in the year including a lampshade based on the exploration of the human brain, an installation exploring the human heart and an array of amazing paintings exploring themes such as 'Flora and Fauna', 'Angles', Narrative and Remnant's.

Year 13 are currently sitting their exam in a hot art room, having have been inspired by a range of artists including painters such as Alice Neal, Joyce Rayner and land artist Richard Long. Students are exploring themes from the exam paper such as 'Tables', 'Close Up' and 'Walking'. There are some highly imaginative ideas this year in a range of media.

We wish them all the best for the completion of their final outcomes and look forward to seeing their work on display later in June.



*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*



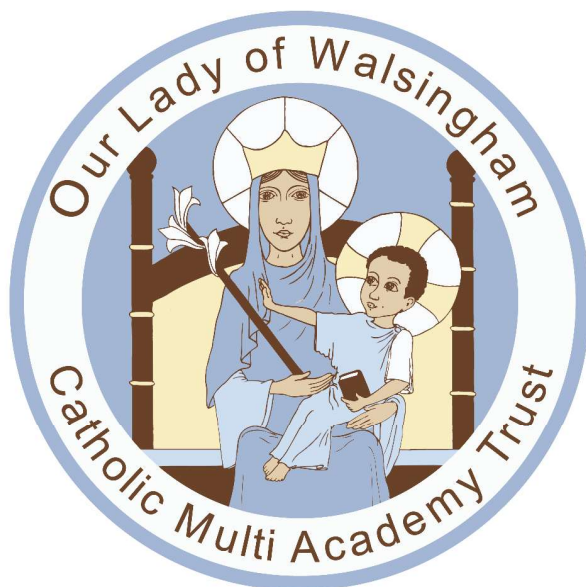
Foundation Governor Recruitment

If you are interested in becoming a school governor or would like to find out more about the fantastic impact that you could make within our Trust schools then please visit the Trust website by scanning the following QR code.



Please share with anyone who is interested in learning more about the positive impact of good governance on pupils' life chances and might be interested in joining one of our school boards.

www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk/governorrecruitment



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