



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 5 - April 2022

Thank You and Focus

Dear colleagues and friends,

As we begin to approach the end of another extremely busy and at times challenging term I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to all of you for the tremendous work you continually put into our schools and Trust. The resilience and fortitude that you show day-in and day-out has meant that all of our schools have remained open. Teaching and learning has continued to focus on supporting and developing all of our learners through this arduous period in time. The well-being of our students, staff and colleagues is so important, and the continued impact of Covid-19 will have significant repercussions for quite some time. That's why within our schools, our Trust and our meetings we will continue to have a sharp focus on how we can further improve and enhance this important area.

I was reminded of the wonderful thoughts of the Holy Father Pope Francis in his writings to Young People and the Entire People of God in *Christus Vivit*. Within chapter 5 the Holy Father tells us "What does it mean to live the years of our youth in the transforming light of the Gospel? We need to raise this question, because youth, more than a source of

pride, is a gift from God: To be young is a grace, a blessing. It is a gift that we can squander meaninglessly or receive with gratitude and live to the full".



Within Chapter 6 Pope Francis considers the importance of taking risks together saying that "if we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from the history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands".

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk

Wonderful words indeed from Pope Francis, words which allow us to reflect on the importance of the journey we take together in this life.

Looking ahead to Easter, I do hope that you will all find some quite time to replenish your energy levels and be able to enjoy in peace the wonders of this beautiful time of year.

May the risen Christ bring you and your loved one's plentiful joy.

Flavio Vettese

CEO

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust.



Paul Bergin - Vice-Chair of OLOW Trust

Paul brings significant experience in strategy, innovation and transformation, and has worked extensively in a number of technology and telecoms companies serving the defence, security and wider public sectors. Educated at Oxford, he is currently the Chief Technology Officer for Sopra Steria, a leading IT transformation company. Paul also has over 15 years experience of school governance and was a founder member of the OLOW MAT board.

Be not Afraid!

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It's a wonderful time of the year, it's been a bit warmer and we're starting to see changes in nature around us, I've always enjoyed the changes in seasons more so than the seasons themselves, and as I write this, I was reflecting on the changes in the Multi-Academy Trust since we started.



I was lucky enough to be one of the founder Directors for the (very small but perfectly formed!) MAT when established in 2016, with St. Louis and St. Felix, and as our new schools have come on board and enriched us with the professionalism of the teaching and support staff, the energy of the children, the support of the parents and carers, the experience of the local governing bodies and the examples of faith we see lived out daily. I see it as a source of inspiration when I hear of the things we do differently, and how it enriches us and how we all change in our journey with a common goal.

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart

Being excited about change is something we sometimes forget as adults, and as we continue our journey in learning together, I try very hard to keep excited about the opportunities change brings. As my own family grows, I see our children grow and while it's only natural to miss what change leaves behind, we enjoyed moving near Bury St. Edmunds 18 months ago, and enjoy walking our very silly Dog, music and cooking together. I also enjoy playing Rugby and have a fondness for the electric guitar – the Dog doesn't share my enthusiasm!

In my professional life, I'm the Managing Director of a group of four technology businesses working in the Public Sector, primarily in Defence, Policing and National Security. I've always been drawn to change, innovation, doing things differently and tend to enjoy thinking in long term ways, seeing how we can solve the future, complex problems that face our Police service or Armed forces through technology. I've held various board level roles, including Chief Technology Officer and Strategy Director, and was educated at Oxford. In my early career, I worked across engineering, software development, accounting, business development, marketing, perhaps best expressed as a professional generalist! One good thing the variety of experiences has taught me is that often, one can't really plan for what happens next, and learning to accept what comes and make the best of the hand one is dealt is an important life skill. I also set up and run various mentoring schemes for empowering women in leadership and another for supporting Neurodiversity in the workplace.

This brings me back to change, and being afraid, and my own faith. I volunteer in my spare time to support the MAT, because change will happen in life, and we have to accept that, but we can choose to be a positive part of that change and influence it for the better. I care deeply about the education and life chances of all our children in the MAT, and I cannot think of a better way to support such great work as we see in our schools, and our future schools yet to join us.

I always found Pope John Paul II inspirational, with him opening his papacy with the cry 'Be Not Afraid!'. It's so powerful, and very directive, put your faith in God and be not afraid.

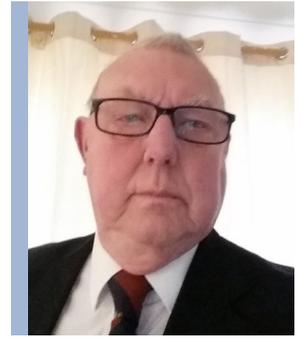
As we face change at home, in work, in school, in our health, our relationships, our play, in the seasons and in our lives in general, let's think to that most powerful of phrases 'Be not afraid!' and smile as we step into our future.

I hope you all have a blessed and peaceful Easter and I look forward to meeting some more of you soon.

Paul Bergin

Michael Bradshaw - Co-Chair of Governors, St Felix Primary School, Haverhill

I have been a Governor of St Felix Catholic Primary School since 1st November 2015 during which time I have been Governor, Chair and Co-Chair. I have been part of the successful transition into Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust.



When I was first requested to be a Governor by the then Parish Priest, I was rather concerned that I would not possess the necessary skills or qualifications for such an important role in the school and local community. However, I soon realised that with the training opportunities through Schools Choice and the support of my fellow governors and head of school I was able to understand the various aspects of the schools learning and teaching processes.

This process is one of continual learning and understanding.

With over 250 children each one an individual, it has been and continues to be a very special rewarding experience to be part of the children's growth within the school as they move through the various educational levels.

I see some of the reasons why I became a governor as:

- Caring about the education and wellbeing of the children at St Felix school.
- Helping to ensure that all the children have the best opportunity to learn, grow and reach their best potential.
- To have been part of the process that has helped to improve the education and wellbeing of pupils and to have supported the school staff in their endeavours to achieve that improvement.
- I enjoy new challenges.
- Provided myself with the opportunity to developed new skills and rekindle old ones.
- Working with the other members of the local governing board to monitor, question and examine effectively.

My role and that of my colleagues on the local governing board is to be a critical friend to the school executive helping to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential both in learning and becoming rounded individuals to prepare them for their journey to the next school and life after school.

Part of that process is to ensure that the agreed school development plan and the schools financial management of funds are monitored regularly to ensure this is in place to ensure that educational and wellbeing of the children is achieved. This will be in keeping with the school's and Trust's Mission Statement which is clearly defined.

At local governor board meetings, we are presented with various documents on the school's pupil and financial performance which, we as governors need to be satisfied are true representations.

We can do this by:

- Examining data against national statistics for comparison.
- Questioning the school executive on any issue of note.
- Attending school in person/group for monitoring various aspects of the curriculum, which may have been highlighted in the school's development plan / improvement plan.

There are numerous Government documents available on gov.uk, particularly The Governance Handbook.

From which we have the three aspects of effective governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

We endeavour to the best of our ability to adhere to the above for the children, staff and to ensure we meet with our statutory obligations under OFSTED.

"I Can honestly say that for anyone to be involved in the local governing board of a school, it will be one of the most rewarding passages of time they could spend with the exception of time with their own children."

Michael Bradshaw

Foundation Governor Recruitment

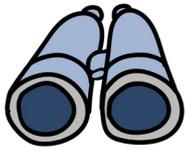
If you are interested in becoming a school governor or would like to find out more about the fantastic impact that you could make within our Trust schools then please visit the Trust website by scanning the following QR code.



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

*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



This Edition of our Newsletter brings STEM subjects across the Trust into the spotlight.



Year 1 in Numbers

In maths Year 1 have been thinking about numbers to 50. We have used numicon, 10s frames and base 10 to represent these numbers.



D&T in Year 4

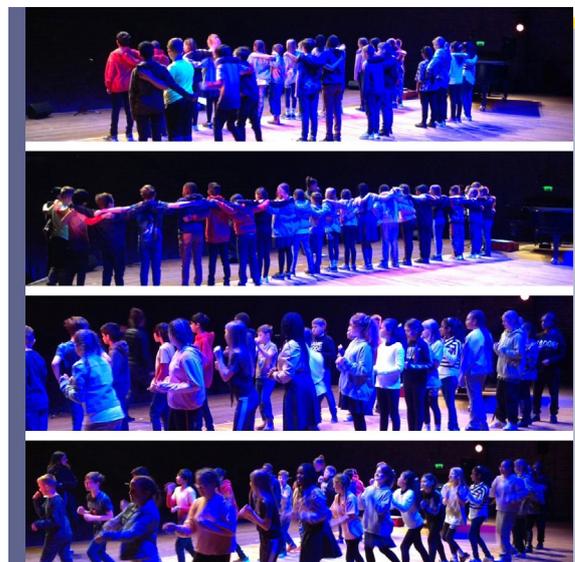
Year 4 did a great job in DT learning the skills of peeling, grating and following a recipe to make some delicious carrot cookies. They worked safely and hygienically and showing great teamwork. Well done everyone!



In Other News...

Year 6 danced, sung and played their instruments at Snape on Tuesday. What a day it was. The children were amazing: we were told by everyone what life and exuberance you brought to the evening.

Thank you so much parents and friends for coming to support us. I hope you are as proud as we are of your wonderful children, their enthusiasm and energy.





St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

British Science Week

The theme for Science week this year was 'growth'. The children rotated between Key Stage classes throughout the day and took part in a range of fun and practical activities where they used their scientific, technical, engineering and mathematical skills.

With Mrs Rafferty, the children made stretchy slime, following the instructions and working together to create their own slime. In this activity, the children used their engineering skills to investigate what factors affect how stretchy slime is. The children also used their mathematical findings to compare how stretchy their slime was compared to other stretchy items such as an elastic band. Freya said the texture of the slime felt "gooey and soft".



Ms Hughes' group focused on 'surviving on Mars'. Growth is one of the signs of life. Mars rovers are being used to explore the possibilities of life on Mars, also known as the red planet. In this activity, the children used plasticine to create an animal that could survive on Mars. They used their imagination well to consider what it would look like and the materials they wanted to use. Whilst designing her model, Grace-Lily said "this is the best day ever"!

With Mr McGill and Miss Borley, the children investigated questions about how their bodies grow and considered whether all body parts grow, as they get older. They measured hands, feet, arm length and the circumference of their heads and compared these findings to all three classes. The children then used their mathematical skills to calculate the averages across the class. The evidence revealed that our bodies do grow, as we get older. James said, "It was really interesting to see 2cm growth between Year 4



and Year 5". All children did incredibly well and it was an engaging investigation. Mr McGill was very impressed!

Well done to all of the children and staff for a fantastic and memorable Science day!

11-20 March
British
Science
Week
2022



We are Loving and kind,

We Pray and we Play



Special Guests and Science Projects

Mrs Hodson, our science subject leader, led an amazing week of science across the school.

On Monday Professor Georgina King spoke to us live from Switzerland at the foot of the Alps about her team's work examining glaciers.

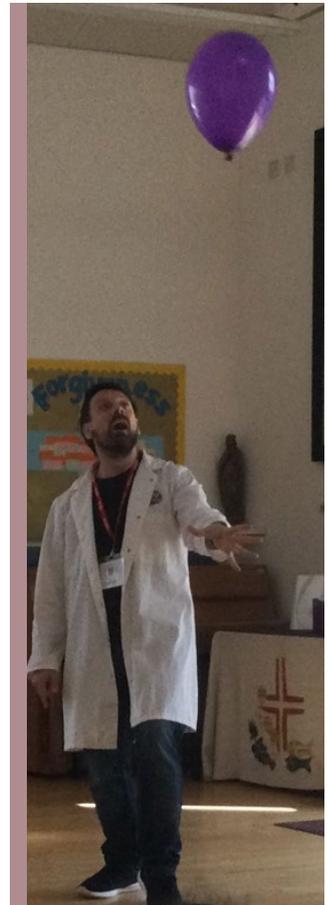
On Tuesday Marta Richardson and her husband explained to us about the research as chemists to decode and understand DNA.

Dan and Sam, spoke live from Addenbrookes about their work in the Genetic Diagnostic Laboratory on Wednesday.

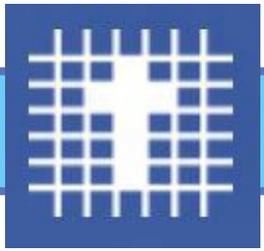
We were joined at school on Friday by Dangerous Dan who led science shows for the whole school.

During the week, the children had so many exciting and challenging talks about science and hopefully this will inspire them to be pioneering scientists in the future. We are so grateful for the speakers who gave their time and fielded some brilliant questions from our children.

Many children also took part in a Skillsbuilder Moonbase Challenge to build a future world.



St Laurence Primary, Cambridge



GROWTH

Children at St Laurence took part in British Science Week with a focus on Growth!

Growth was chosen as the theme this year as a way of reflecting our experiences during the Pandemic. The recommended activities included exploring plant growth, discussing the impact of economic growth on our society and our own personal growth!



Fitting in nicely with the theme of Growth are our Easter gardens. The children prepare these during the season of Lent and tend to the grass and plant flowers after Good Friday to celebrate the Risen Lord.



We have also planted Sunflowers. Once they have grown stronger and the last of the frosts have gone, we will plant them out the front of the school. They are also a sign of solidarity towards Ukraine as the sunflower is the national flower.

We have also prepared the front of the school to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee! St Laurence are part of the Super Bloom project. Schools across the UK are joining the celebrations by creating their own Jubilee flower gardens, to coincide with the Tower of London's Super Bloom. The flower bed will be filled with blue and yellow flowers.



*Through God's grace,
a community growing in
knowledge and understanding*

We also have seen growth in our local area, with a new Community centre being built across the road from our school. KS1 were invited as special guests to see behind the scenes and to find out what it is like to be an architect, builder, site manager and who is in charge of "driving" the very large crane!



Growth and the Great Outdoors

St Felix have taken the opportunity to accept some trees to plant on our grounds and have added a further 6 cherry trees, kindly provided by a local tree warden for the parish, Angela Wilson. The Eco Council rolled up their sleeves and set to work. They dug, hammered in stakes and added protection with minimal support from Father John and Mrs Dodds.



Science Week was celebrated at St Felix with theme of growth. Pupils were encouraged to consider growth in many different ways – their own growth, the growing stages of plants or the apparent growth of inorganic materials. As you can see they were very creative.



We are keen supporters of CAFOD and launched our Walk Against Hunger with a Wide Welly Walk on the 16th March. Having a huge playing field has its advantages but this time of year it can be very wet and muddy.

However, St Felix are resilient so the school put on their wellies and linked arms and we marched side by side in solidarity with those for whom hunger is a daily challenge. It was great fun despite the rain and there was a strong sense of the power of community. We raised £289 through the generosity of the St Felix parents and staff.





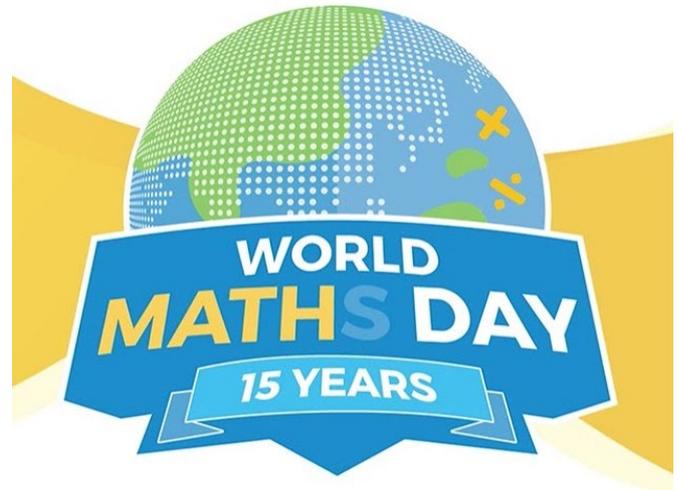
World Maths Day 2022

On Wednesday March 23rd, students from Years 7 to 9 competed against other schools across the globe in celebration of world maths day. Students enthusiastically completed Mathletics exercises online with the following students scoring highest in each year group, well done!

Year 7 - Ben Ramos Watts

Year 8 – Malcolm Loggie

Year 9 – Nicole Smith & Leo Fordham-Baigue



Science Week at St Alban's

The month of March saw the annual Science week take place from 11th to 20th. Usually we take our students to BT to see the amazing work taking place in communications and to The Big Bang Fair at the NEC Birmingham, but due to COVID restrictions, unfortunately these events were not running. Luckily, The Big Bang Fair has been moved to June and we are hoping to take our Year 9 cohort to see what the exciting world of STEM can offer them. This event showcases the amazing careers that are on offer and gives the students a chance to take part in a wide variety of activities, plus the old freebie!

Despite this, we instead celebrated by having St Mark's Catholic Primary School (one of our Ipswich feeder schools) Year 5 and 6 students join us for a morning of Science! They were introduced to lighting a Bunsen burner and gained their Bunsen burner licences, ready for when they join us in September.

The next part of the morning was spent making periscopes, where they utilise many skills from Maths to Art! Our Sixth Form students were also fantastic in supporting us in running this event. A fantastic time was had by all!



Learning... Respecting... Caring...



Problem Solving Conference

On Thursday 31st March, 15 students from Year 12 enjoyed a day at the Problem Solving Conference at the University of Essex in Southend. This involved students attending a series of workshops to help improve mathematical thinking and problem solving, aimed at students thinking of applying to study mathematics, engineering or related university courses. The students represented St Alban's superbly and had a superb day out.



Chemistry Olympiad

In January, our Year 12 and 13 Chemistry students took part in the annual Chemistry Olympiad. The competition is run every year by the Royal Society of Chemistry. It is designed to challenge and inspire the next generation of chemists. The students take part in a 2 hour exam where they utilise their critical problem-solving skills, they are challenged to think creatively and a chance to apply their knowledge to real-world situations.



Of the 8668 students that took part nationally, Ewan Kane, a Year 13 Chemist was awarded the gold award and was one of 34 students to be selected to take part in the next round, which will take place in early April. If successful, he could be selected to represent the UK in the prestigious International Chemistry Olympiad, which will be held later this year in China. Fingers are crossed!



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust

Fred Corbett - Member of OLOW Trust

The Members for Our Lady of Walsingham Trust are the Right Reverend Alan Hopes Bishop of East Anglia, Monsignor Tony Rogers, Father David Bagstaff, John Tuttle your Chair and me, Fred Corbett. The Members of the Trust are appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and aim to ensure that the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT is run in accordance with its aims and objects and Members appoint the Trustees.



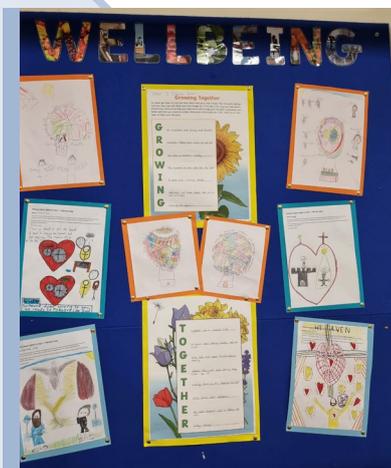
Each year at the Trust's Annual General Meeting we meet the Chair and the senior officers of the Trust to reflect on how things have been going and what the plans are for the future. It is no surprise that much of our reflection has been on the way the COVID pandemic has affected everyone in our Trust; the governors, all of the staff (no matter what their role) and every child and young person. At our meeting this term Flavio took us through a review of how you have all been coping and told us about many of the fantastic things you have done to make the education of our children as rich and supportive as possible. In the early stages of lockdown the word 'unprecedented' was probably the most used descriptor. However, despite the horrors of what is happening to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine we must not let the last couple of years drift away without the most heartfelt thanks, deep gratitude and real sense of awe for the way you have all dealt with the most unprecedented challenges any of us have ever experienced or imagined.

We just wanted to say a huge thanks to every one of you and to assure you of our continuing support and prayers.

Children's Mental Health Week

It was sadly not unexpected that Government data published at the end of 2021 showed increasing mental health conditions among children and young people, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week 7th-11th February is a great initiative to shine a spotlight on the need for more focus and investment in supporting children's emotional wellbeing. This year the focus was on Growing Together.



Across our Trust schools, staff seized the opportunity to improve young people's knowledge of mental health and reduce stigma and build an environment that promotes and protects mental health in a variety of ways:

St Felix created a wellbeing vineyard. Taking the lead from Jesus' words in John 15 – I am the vine and you are the branches, each child created their own branch of the vine and these were woven together to create the vineyard. It is important to remember the value of our faith in supporting children and young people with the reassurance that "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed. Each of us is loved. Each of us is necessary." (Pope Benedict XVI)

Pupils were also given the chance to Dare to be Different with a range of non-conformist options from hair chalk to juice in their water bottle for a day to show that it is important to celebrate what makes us unique as well as what unites us.

At St Louis each phase held an assembly using the resources available from Place2Be. In PSHCE they completed an activity and delved deeper into mental health; how we can look after it and what we can do if we need to seek further help. KS1 extended their learning through different stories and how we feel when we are encountering negative emotions, and UKS2 did some role-playing of identifying different warning signs and what they could do in certain situations to help.

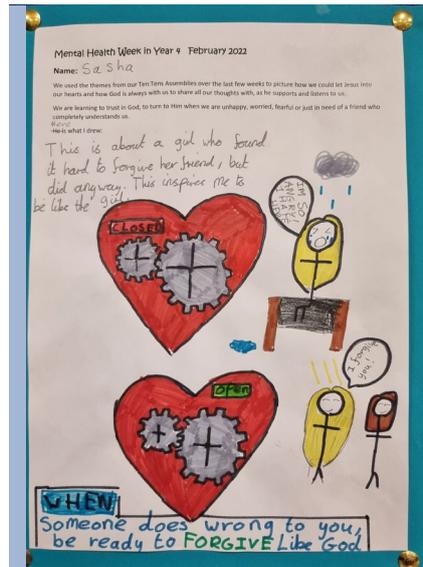


At St Pancras classes used a range of strategies to raise the profile of mental health:

The reception class took part in daily 10-minute calming activities including 'hand crawls', 'bubble wrap pop', 'sand drawing' and 'breathing techniques'. In Year One this was developed to consider how the pupils have changed and grown up. They discussed the people in their lives who help them to grow and who they could turn to when things were tough. This was complemented by drawing a support balloon which linked all the people who would support them when they needed it. In Year 2 pupils followed the iMoves mental wellbeing videos, focusing on different areas to promote resilience, an 'I can do it' attitude, growth mindset and the power of yet. These encouraged them to dance, laugh and have fun, which they definitely did!

In KS2 Year Four chose a spiritual approach and combined the TenTen* daily prayers and their RE studies about Jesus the Teacher. They practised opening their hearts to Jesus, to let him in to guide us to a calm, helpful and happy place. Year 6 took a discursive approach including the portrayal of beauty in the media and on social media platforms. The children were quick to summarise that beauty is on the inside and how we portray ourselves, not the appearance and aesthetics that magazines tend to show us. It was a very mature discussion and some incredibly confident and assuring points were put forward across the class.

It was an excellent week across the Trust and helped us all grow together in faith and understanding.



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EAST ANGLIA



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