



All Saints  
Catholic Academy Trust  
An outstanding Catholic Education for all

Summer  
Newsletter 2024

# WELCOME

Welcome to another bumper edition of our Trust's termly newsletter. The summer term has been another exciting one for the All Saints Catholic Academy Trust, as we welcomed three new schools to our Trust family. On the 1st April St Rose's Catholic Infant School in Hemel Hempstead became the 9th school to join our Trust, quickly followed by St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School in Hemel Hempstead and St Bernadette Catholic Primary School in London Colney, our 10th and 11th school, on the 1st July. With eleven schools now in our Trust (2 Secondary Schools, 7 primary School, 1 Junior School and 1 Infant School) we are now the second largest Academy Trust in Hertfordshire (in terms of number of schools) and on the same terms, the joint largest of the Trusts in the Diocese of Westminster. Whilst this is not any sort of achievement in of itself, it is good to know that more and more schools want to be part of our ASCAT family and are seeing the benefit of working in closer collaboration with colleagues locally. Later on in this issue, the headteachers of these three schools have written their own words of introduction to you all. They join our Trust at a time of much uncertainty for the education sector widely. Despite well publicised recruitment difficulties and ever tighter finances, Education was noticeably missing from the debate, manifestos and policy pledges before the recent General Election. Against the backdrop, there is a greater assurance and support that schools receive from belonging to a strong Trust and in the year ahead, we will continue to work with all schools to ensure that we find common solutions to these challenges and, most importantly, that we retain a focus on the child at the centre of all that we do. I pray that all of the students and staff of our schools, and their families will enjoy the summer break when it gets here and use this as an opportunity to rest and recharge and to enjoy time with friends and family. To students and staff leaving our schools, I thank you for your many contributions to your school community and pray that you will find much happiness and success wherever life's journey takes you next.



Stephen Wheatley  
CEO

**This issue:**

- Welcome to the Trust
- Catholic Life and Mission
- Introducing new members of the Trust Executive Team
- Buildings and estates update
- Fond farewells
- Train to teach with ASCAT

**Getting to Know You!**

We are delighted this term to have welcomed three new schools into our ASCAT family. St Bernadette Catholic Primary School, St Rose's Catholic Infant School and St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School have been active partners with us over the past 18 months and it is wonderful to have been able to formally welcome them into the Trust before the Summer holiday. Over the next few pages, we have asked each of their headteachers to introduce themselves and their schools, so that you can find out a little more about our new friends in Hemel Hempstead and London Colney.

**St Bernadette Catholic Primary School**

*'We are a school and church community, a family, promoting core Gospel values of compassion, respect for self and others, responsibility and honesty. We share a vision for each child to be cherished and have the best opportunities for an excellent education and enjoyment in these formative years. We strive to be a place where we help to make long-lasting magical memories through a creative inspiring curriculum. Our blend of traditional values, combined with creativity and innovation, offers a rich environment for progress. Joining ASCAT was discussed at length for a long time. In the end, it was decided that joining the academy trust would bring more opportunities to the children and families at our school.'*

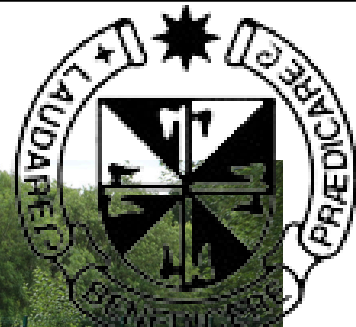
*Already, we have noted many benefits from being part of the academy. We have confidently been able to discuss future plans with the academy and look at various ways in which they would support us to create these. This strong relationship can only hold a very promising future for our school and its community.'*

' We wanted to be part of a community, that holds the same values and ethos as our school and has the same hopes and aspirations for our pupils. We want to ensure a more stable future for Catholic schools and the wonderful communities we care for. We are excited about the opportunity to work alongside other Catholic schools so that we can make a valuable contribution to Catholic Education for all of our children, and future generations.'

**Jodie Reilly and Sandra Lavelle Murphy Co-Headteachers**



## St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School



## St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School

St Cuthbert Mayne is a school with a strong tradition of hospitality, high standards and good humour. As a staff group, we see ourselves as custodians of this tradition that began with the Dominican Sister back in the 1950s. Links to the wider community are strengthening all the time. We share many of our families with other schools within the Trust in particular St Rose's and JFK and therefore ASCAT's vision for our St Mark's Hub of local Dacorum Catholic Schools to provide an all through Catholic experience is as necessary as it is exciting. Past pupils, parents, grandparents and other family members are drawn back to the community - several generations of Catholic families have been through the school and are represented in the pupils in school today - we even have two staff members who are also past pupils.

In school, we focus on developing pupils' ability to self-regulate, to build their resilience and empathy and to take responsibility for their actions. We encourage parents to support us with this work. Our 'PRAY' curriculum drivers underpin our curriculum: Protection of Planet, Resilience, Aspiration, Yes to Equality and we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every child can thrive.

We are proud to be striving every day to live by our mission statement: Growing together in love and learning as followers of Jesus.



*'It feels like a win-win for us: we retain our distinctive character both as an individual school and as a member of a group of schools within our geographical area while also benefiting from enhanced support and opportunities across multiple schools and from a strong central team.'*

*All in all, we are really excited to be part of a trust that is ambitious and has high aspirations for all.'*

Alex Sallis Headteacher

**St Rose's Catholic Infant School**



**St Rose's Catholic Infant School**

St Rose's is an Infant School based in the Catholic Parish of St Mary and St Joseph. We are two forms of entry with a nursery class that offers 30 hours provision. Our curriculum vision is of the Head (knowledge) Hands (skills and vocabulary) and Heart (Gospel values at the center of all we do) and we strive to teach our pupils to become more effective learners.

We pride ourselves on the strength of our school community and our aim is that every child should feel happy and safe in our school. Our school environment promotes independence and we work together to help our pupils achieve the best that they can. We develop inquisitive young minds through our inspiring curriculum and encourage our pupils to make a positive contribution within the community.

Michelle Anderton Headteacher

*'We are delighted to be part of ASCAT and the St Mark's Dacorum Hub and are proud to be the only Infant School within the Trust. The values of the trust match with those of our school and we are excited at what the future will bring. We have found the support we have already received extremely beneficial and look forward to continuing to work as part of a like-minded group of schools.'*



## New Appointments

In preparation for the new academic year, in recent months, the Trust has made a number of appointments to our central team, to ensure that we can continue to provide an excellent service to schools and support headteachers and governors to deliver their own vision for 'An Outstanding Catholic Education for All' in their own schools.

### Director of Catholic Life and Mission

As a Catholic Academy Trust, the Catholic mission and ethos of our schools is something that we are incredibly proud of and something that we have high expectations of. It is a source of pride that so many of our schools receive the 'Outstanding' grade for this in their S48 inspections by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI). With our Trust increasing in size, we have been keen to ensure that this important aspect of our work is reflected in the Trust central team and in the services that we can offer schools. We are delighted therefore to announce that from the 1st September 2024, Deacon Liam Lynch will be taking up the post of Director of Catholic Life and Mission. Many of you will know Liam in his current role as the School Chaplain at St Joan of Arc Catholic School. Liam has long been a champion of our Trust and its schools and has already been instrumental in beginning to develop the wider Catholic life of the Trust. In this new full time post, Deacon Liam will have the opportunity to work with all of our schools, supporting their leaders, staff and pupils and enriching the Catholic life and mission of all of our schools.

Working alongside Liam will be two Chaplaincy Apprentices, supporting the provision of chaplaincy across all of our schools. Annabelle Barton, was recruited this time last year, and has been working with the schools in our

Watford Hub over the past 12 months. We are pleased that she will be joined in September by Bethany Milnthorpe, who will be supporting the schools in our Dacorum Hub. What is particularly wonderful about Annabelle and Bethany is that they are alumni of our Trust's Catholic Schools (St Joan of Arc and John F Kennedy respectively). It is great to have them now sharing their talents, developed in our schools, with future generations of ASCAT students. In time we will be looking to recruit one further Chaplaincy Apprentice who will serve the ASCAT schools in the St Albans area.



### Strategic Hub Leads

Co-ordinating the collaborative work between the schools in each of our hubs and providing school improvement support across the Trust are our Executive Strategic Leads. For the Dacorum Hub, which is named after St Mark, Mr Paul Neves, the Headteacher at John F Kennedy Catholic School, holds this position. Earlier this term, the Trust Board were pleased to appoint Mrs Emma Braund, the Headteacher at Holy Rood Catholic Primary School, to the same position for the schools in our Watford Hub, named after St Ursula. Both Mr Neves and Mrs Braund are headteachers of successful Catholic schools with a strong track record of excellence in Catholic Education. They will work alongside our CEO, Stephen Wheatley in the coming year to ensure that all of our schools continue to receive robust and effective support and challenge so that they can be the best Catholic schools that they can be.

Emma Braund:

*'I am very much looking forward to beginning my role as EHL in September 2024 for the St. Ursula hub of ASCAT. I respect and value the work of the Headteachers and Executive Headteachers in our hub, and want to do all I can to support them in their ongoing mission to provide the very best Catholic education for every pupil in their care.'*



## Executive Headteacher St Thomas More and St Albert the Great

Our Headteachers are a vital and key part of the wider leadership team of the Trust. As well as leading their own schools, the Headteachers of our schools are regular collaborators with one another, the Trust central Team and our Directors, helping to shape the future direction of the Trust and our strategic plans. The recruitment of a new headteacher for one of our schools therefore is an important responsibility that the Trust take very seriously.

Following the announcement that Mrs Kathy Little, Executive Headteacher at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School (Berkhamsted) and St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School (Hemel Hempstead) was to retire at the end of the current academic year, the Trust and the Local Governing Bodies of both schools worked together to ensure that a suitably experienced and skilled Executive Headteacher could be recruited to lead both schools forward and build on Mrs Little's achievements in the role. The Trust and Local Governors were delighted to see that there was quite a high level of interest in the post and following a thorough recruitment process are pleased that Mr Daniel Hewitt will be joining the Trust from the 1st September as the new Executive Headteacher for both schools. Mr Hewitt will be joining us following a successful headship at Abel Smith Primary School, an Outstanding Primary School in Hertford.

## Leadership Support for other schools

As well as the appointments we have made within our Trust, we wish to congratulate the following colleagues who have been chosen for secondments and leadership opportunities outside of the Trust, as part of our wider collaborative relationships and networks.

Helen Wilson, the Headteacher at Divine Saviour Catholic Primary School, will be providing Executive Headship support for St Alban and St Stephen's Catholic Primary School in St Albans. The Governors of St Alban and St Stephen's are currently in the process of exploring academisation as part of ASCAT and we are delighted that Mrs Wilson will be able to share her many skills and talents in Catholic Leadership with another Catholic school community next year.

Lynn Wilson, the Head of School at St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School in Hemel Hempstead has been seconded to St Dominic Catholic Primary school in Harpenden, as their Interim Headteacher for the coming academic year. St Dominic are another school that is currently actively in the process of joining our Trust. Mrs Wilson is a highly regarded Catholic school leader from within our Trust; we are all delighted to see her receiving such recognition through this well deserved opportunity.

Stephanie Gavin, the Deputy Headteacher at St Rose's Catholic Infant School has been appointed to the position of Headteacher at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Letchworth. Although a school in another of the Westminster Trusts, we are delighted for Mrs Gavin and wish her every happiness and success in this next stage of her career.

Please keep these leaders in your prayers as they embark upon these new and exciting opportunities next year. Part of the role of any Trust is succession planning and the growth and development of future leaders. It is wonderful therefore to see so many within our Trust ready and willing to step up to these new challenges.



## So long, farewell...

As is often the way at this time of year, this summer we will be saying a fond farewell to a number of colleagues from within our school communities as they leave us for new challenges and opportunities in their life's journeys. We want to make a special mention of a number of colleagues who are stepping away from Trust schools this summer, after particularly long service to their communities.

**Kathy Little:** As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, this summer Mrs Little is retiring following a very long and successful career in education, which has involved time spent as a classroom teacher, an English advisor for Hertfordshire Local Authority, a Headteacher and in recent years and Executive Headteacher. Mrs Little is retiring following a 40 year career in education which has even included a stint teaching on a native reserve in Canada! She joined St Albert the Great as Headteacher in 2015 and has been the Executive Headteacher of St Albert the Great and St Thomas More Berkhamsted since 2018.

**Mandy O'Shea:** Mrs O'Shea is retiring this summer following a very long and happy career in education which has included, most recently 16 years of dedicated service to Holy Rood Catholic Primary School in Watford.

**Rosemary Simpson:** Mrs Simpson will be saying goodbye to pupils and colleagues at St Thomas More Berkhamsted, following a very dedicated 34 years of service to the school. This level of service to one school in the course of a career is not something that one comes across very often and is rightly being celebrated by the St Thomas More Community!

**Dr Julian Keenlyside:** Dr Keenlyside retires from teaching this summer following 13 years as a science teacher at St Joan of Arc Catholic School, having moved into the teaching profession from the world of Forensic Science later on in his career. Most recently Dr Keenlyside has been the school's Curriculum Leader for Biology and has been part of the team that has overseen the move into the new science centre (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

*In addition to these long serving members of staff, we also say thank you and farewell to the following long serving governors from our school communities:*

**David Swarbrick:** David has been a Foundation Governor at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Berkhamsted for 13 years, spending 5 of these as the school's Chair of Governors. This year, David took a lead in the successful recruitment of the school's new Executive Headteacher.

**Sarah Kelly:** Sarah will be standing down this year after service on the Board at St Rose's in Hemel Hempstead. Having supported the onboarding of the school into the Trust and previously chairing the Governing Board we would like to thank Sarah for her service to the school.

**Stephen Wheatley, ASCAT CEO:**

*'Our wonderful Catholic schools do not run by themselves. It takes hundreds of dedicated staff as well a further hundred or so dedicated governance volunteers to make our schools the happy and successful places of learning in which our children and young people can grow, learn and develop. Particularly in the modern world, this is sadly something that less and less people feel the calling to do. It is important therefore that we take time to thank and celebrate the commitment and achievements of all those who leave our schools after long and dedicated careers of service to them. I pray for each of them, that life will be kind to them in whatever they go on to next and that they find time in these next few weeks to celebrate their many achievements.'*



## School Site Developments: St John's



This summer term has seen some significant developments for a number of our schools with regard to important developments to schools sites and facilities. The first of these has been the commencement of work on the demolition of the old school building at St John's Catholic Primary School in Rickmansworth. Many of you will know that this was the school that was found in February 2022 to have significant structural defects caused by RAAC - a type of 'bubbly' aerated concrete. As a result the school has been housed in (very substantial) temporary accommodation on part of the school playing field for the past two years. The demolition work will then continue throughout the summer holiday and is scheduled to be completed before pupils and staff return to school in September. Work then be taking place, throughout the 2024-25 academic year to construct a brand new school building, on the existing school site, provided through the DfE's 'School Rebuilding Programme'. Pupils and staff have enjoyed seeing the preparatory work for the demolition taking place over the past few weeks and are looking forward to seeing their new school rising from the ground up from September onwards!

### Stephen Wheatley CEO:

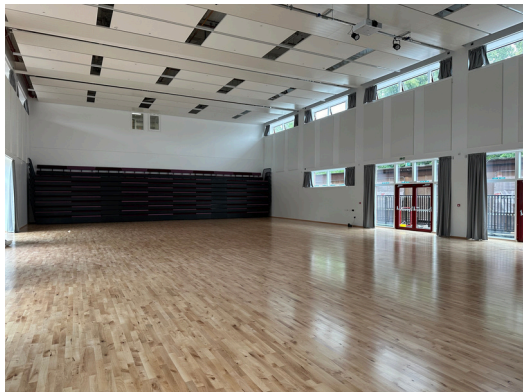
*'The arrival of the demolition teams on site at St John's has been a sight that has been a cause for excitement - a sign that the new school building, that the whole school community have been waiting for so patiently, is finally on its way! My thanks to Ms O'Donnell, Ms Hassell and the team for their amazing work in leading their community in such a positive manner through what has been, at times, a very difficult few years. I am so excited for the community to see its new home taking shape over the coming year! I had the privilege of joining the school for its recent S48 inspection by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate. During the visit, when asked about the building project by the inspectors, one student commented that 'The school is not the building, but it is the teachers and the children who live and work there'. With this same spirit and strength of the Catholic school community, I know that St John's has a very bright future ahead of it!'*



# School Site Developments: St Joan of Arc



After a much delayed building project, with a number of setbacks along the way, in recent weeks the Trust has been delighted to finally take on the responsibility of St Joan of Arc Catholic School's brand new, state-of-the-art Science Centre and school hall. As you will see from the Photographs, this beautiful new addition to the St Joan of Arc site is a resource that will enhance the teaching of science to generations of students in the years to come. In addition to the science laboratories and classrooms, the new block contains a brand new school hall, complete with bleacher style seating and all the audio-visual resources necessary for high quality school productions and performances.



**Bernadette O'Hanlon Headteacher:**

*'Seeing pupils from all year groups walking into the new hall and Science Centre with eyes and mouths wide open, with several commenting how "sick" [cool or excellent] everything is has been energising for us all. It has been a long wait, but the end result is fantastic. We look forward to sharing our facilities with our parents and the wider Trust community in the coming academic year.'*

# Calling all future teachers!

Much has been made in the national press about the current shortage of teachers coming into the profession, indeed it was one of the only issues in relation to education to receive any attention in the recent General Election campaigns. As a Trust, we have always been determined to do everything that we can to recruit and retain the best teachers for our schools. In the coming academic year, we will be launching a new partnership with St Mary's University to recruit and train teachers too. As part of this partnership, ASCAT will be recruiting initially to both Primary and Secondary PGCE Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses. These are one year, post-graduate courses that result in a teaching qualification. The recruitment window for these courses will open in October 2024 and the courses will begin in September 2025.

## What is a PGCE?

A Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is a one-year full time teaching qualification. We will be delivering this in partnership with St Mary's University. A significant proportion of the course will be spent on placement in our ASCAT schools. The Primary PGCE will qualify you to teach all the full primary age range from 3- 11 years of age. The Secondary PGCEs are subject specific, qualifying you to teach in a specialist area for the full secondary range 11- 16 years of age and post 16 also.

## Who are St Mary's?

St Mary's University is located in Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. Established in 1850, it is the oldest of the UK's Catholic Teacher Training Institutions. It is one of four Catholic Universities in the UK and takes students from all over the country and internationally. It has a particular remit for the Dioceses in the South East of the country, including our own Westminster Diocese. Ofsted have recently graded its provision of both Primary and Secondary ITE as 'Outstanding' for the third successive time making it one of the country's leading providers of Teacher Training. There are many St Mary's Alumni who have gone on to successful careers throughout our Trust and Trust schools, including our CEO, one of our Strategic Hub Leads, a number of our headteachers and a large number of our teachers. Those recruited to train teach through this new partnership will be following in successful footsteps!

## Who can apply?

Applications will be welcome from all those who already have an Undergraduate degree and fulfill the course entry requirements. ITE routes are suitable for those who have just or recently graduated from university as well as those who may be looking to make a career change.

Further information about our ASCAT and St Mary's University partnership will be available in the Autumn Term. By scanning the QR code on the following page and registering your details, we can ensure that you received these directly.



# What is it like to be a Trainee Teacher with ASCAT?

## What is like being a Trainee Teacher?

We asked Cian Hallahan, a current PGCE trainee with, whose placement has been at one of our Trust schools, Holy Rood Catholic Primary School, to share his thoughts on reflections on the life of a Trainee Teacher.

*'After graduating from St Mary's University, I had no intention of working in education. Out of the blue, an opportunity to support a pupil with additional needs as a '1 to 1' support assistant became available, it was here I felt my passion for teaching begin to grow.*

*Throughout my experiences as a teaching assistant, both working one to one with students and supporting entire classes, I was privileged to witness the daily spark of joy in children as they grasped new concepts, found their talents and became their own unique characters.*

*I soon realised that there is something truly magical about nurturing young minds and fostering a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. It was at this point I made the decision to complete a PGCE qualification, working predominantly within the ASCAT Trust.*

*This has proven to be invaluable as not only was I surrounded by inspiring colleagues within my own school, but embraced by a wider educational network which supports opportunities for teachers across different schools to share their advice, ideas, innovative teaching styles and overall best practices.*

*There's no getting round the fact the PGCE training year is intense. Balancing the workload can at times be tricky, even more so with an Ofsted inspection two weeks into the year! I am extremely grateful for the wonderful team at Holy Rood School at cannot thank them enough. Every member of staff has played their own individual role in supporting me through the year. Having a team around you who all share the patience of a saint is extremely rare. But I suppose that's what makes ASCAT so special.*

*I now look ahead to September as I continue this unexpected career in education as a class teacher within the trust! '*

### **Stephen Wheatley CEO:**

*'We are delighted that following his training year, Cian will be continuing his employment with ASCAT as an Early Career Teacher (ECT), teaching at Holy Rood next year! We encourage all those who may be interested in a career in teaching to get in touch with us via the ASCAT website so that we can talk to you more about the opportunities that exist within our Trust to support aspiring future teachers!'*



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London



# Governance

Once again as we come to the end of the academic year I am amazed at the various opportunities and initiatives that are being implemented across the Trust. We are incredibly lucky to have such committed staff, volunteers and families in our school communities.

One of the highlights for me, this year, was our Governance Conference where we hosted Governors and Senior Leaders from all of our schools and where there was the opportunity to network and attend training workshops, focusing on some of the challenges facing schools at the moment. What makes the day so special though is the students who attend, to showcase their gifts and talents that have been developed through the support of their families and their school. I think this is the most essential part of the event because it demonstrates to our Governors, who are volunteers, what all their hard work is for and how they also contribute to the development and future of the children within the ASCAT family.

As ASCAT continues to grow I am delighted to welcome the staff, governors and school community at St Rose's Catholic Infant School; St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School; and St Bernadette Catholic Primary School, who joined the Trust this term. With every new school coming into the Trust, I am acutely aware that there is a new pool of talented governors that we can draw expertise and experience from and so our own strength of governance is enhanced to take on the challenges and make the most of opportunities in the year ahead.

Whilst our network of governors continues to grow we are still looking to recruit individuals to our school boards and would welcome the opportunity to speak to parents; governors; staff; former pupils; aspiring teachers and leaders; or members of the local school and parish communities. about the benefits, rewards and opportunities that governance offers.

In addition to this the Trust Board is seeking to appoint two Foundation Directors to support with strategic decision making and overall governance of the Trust. For more information on the roles of Foundation Governors and Foundation Directors, please visit our website or contact [governance@ascat.co.uk](mailto:governance@ascat.co.uk) Finally, I would like to thank all our Governors for their continued work and support this year.

*Christina Reffold*

Director of Governance & Compliance  
[governance@ascat.co.uk](mailto:governance@ascat.co.uk)



We are delighted to announce the recent appointment of Jo Cosgrove to the Trust Board. Jo previously served on the Governing Board at St Thomas More and has a professional background in Finance & Accountancy.



## Connect with us

At ASCAT we are keen to engage with stakeholders across our Trust on multiple platforms to share our news and build the Trust network. Follow us on LinkedIn to stay informed of opportunities and our latest updates.