

FROM THE CEO

Dear Colleagues

Four times a year we intend to produce a Trust newsletter, this is the first edition. We would like to use this as a conduit to share information about the growth of the Trust and highlight some of the outstanding work being undertaken in our schools.

Since February I have met with a large number of you, either individually, with your Governing Body or as groups of schools; thank you for the hospitality you have shown. A number of schools have already made contact with the Trust to organise meetings in the Autumn term. I look forward to working with you as we collectively move towards realising the Bishop's vision for the structure of schools in this area.

As we journey together there will be obstacles to overcome; we all know that school funding remains one of the most significant challenges we all face. However, I sense a willingness to work together to provide the very best Catholic education and pastoral care for our pupils. We all aspire to provide a rich curriculum that results in best outcomes. I am also thankful for the strong sense of collaboration and teamwork that permeates in the South of the Diocese, this provides a solid base on which to build the Trust Hub Structure. Your willingness to support each other, share best practice, and collaborate will create a vibrant environment for us all.

For some of you the academic year comes to a close on Friday, for others early next week. When it comes have a peaceful, happy and fulfilling holiday. I look forward to seeing you in the Autumn term.

Matt Quinn - CEO

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Success at Corpus Christi Portsmouth

Since 1904, Corpus Christi has served the Parish of Corpus Christi in North End, Portsmouth. Throughout that time there have been the inevitable highs and lows.

The recent history has seen challenges which led to the school joining ESCAT in April 2021. A strong partnership has been forged in the last three years which has led to much success and much to celebrate.

The school has continued to grow and is a rich, diverse community, providing a window on the world, with families from all continents. I joined Corpus Christi, knowing it was under an academy order and was concerned what this might bring; however, the experience has been far more positive than could have been imagined. School leaders have had full autonomy in the day to day and strategic running of the school. They have led the school improvement agenda through robust evaluation, action planning and implementation.

The Trust has monitored the progress of the school and been active in its support, offering practical solutions to issues that have arisen. Trust Directors have been totally committed to ensuring the school has had the staffing structure that was needed to bring about improvement, supporting staff workload and benefitting

the children, even though this was financially challenging.

I have appreciated the professional respect and trust where we have set the direction of travel, ensured actions are embedded and therefore improvements and progress are sustainable and not just quick fixes or sticking plasters. Corpus Christi has had a voice in setting the Trust's vision and are seen as equal partners in the ESCAT family.

We are anticipating a new building, due to start in April 2025. The success of the planning application was down to the Trust's CFO developing the plans and application - another example of how we have benefited from the ESCAT partnership.

In May 2024, the OFSTED Inspection confirmed that the school was doing well and children thrived. The report provides a useful benchmark as to the success of the improvement journey and means we can look forward in confidence to the future of Corpus Christi!

Ursula Clark - Headteacher



FROM THE TRUST CHAIR

I would like to add my congratulations to Corpus Christi School and the team led by Ursula Clark.

When the Diocese and DfE approached ESCAT to work with Corpus Christi we were very pleased to be able to reach out and offer support. However, for both parties it was a little like St Peter stepping out of the boat into the unknown.

That said, the drive and determination that accompanied the journey Corpus Christi has been on over the last few years led to substantial improvements in the school being recognised in the recent Ofsted judgement. An excellent result. Well done once again.

Over the last few weeks and months I have kept an eye on many of the school websites and newsletters of schools in the South of the Diocese. It's clear that your school communities thrive on the active involvement and collaboration of parents, staff, and students. The various events and activities that your communities have enjoyed together, be it the celebration of Mass, engaging parent student induction, or the heart-warming performances and sports days, have all played a significant role in strengthening the position of your school in the community, something the Trust will want to support at it grows.

Although this term is not quite over we all have half an eye on September. There are already dates in the diary to meet a number of schools, I very much look forward to this.

As we enter the summer break, I speak on behalf of all at ESCAT and encourage everyone to take this time to relax, recharge, and enjoy quality time with loved ones. I wish you all a safe, joyful, and restful holiday.

Marc Evans - Chair of the Trust

KEEPING ACADEMISATION ON THE GOVERNORS' AGENDA

The process towards Academisation is often a long one for maintained and voluntary aided schools, and being aware of this the Governors at St Peter's Catholic Primary School in Waterlooville were keen to have as much lead-in time as possible to prepare for conversion.



To that end, Academisation has been a standing item on the agenda of every FGB meeting for the past year. This means that any new information or updated material

provided by the Diocese or issued by the Department for Education can be shared openly and formally with Governors in the correct manner. Keeping Academisation on the school's theoretical, as well as Governors' actual, agenda means that an open spirit of transparency and scrutiny allows for questions to be raised and discussions to be held.

Furthermore, a lot of the regular and routine business of school leadership and governance has this year been carried out with a consideration of how it would either influence or be affected by academisation. As well as budgets, numbers on roll and staffing plans, a recent condition survey of St Peter's buildings for example was considered through the lens of academisation with regard to risk and liability within future membership of a Multi-Academy Trust.

Richard Cunningham - Headteacher

EPM WIN TENDER TO PROVIDE PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

EPM are an Education Support company who have provided project management support to over 400 converter Academies across the country. In total they work with over 200 Multi Academy Trusts, including 40 approved sponsors. They will draw on the experience of their dedicated educational professionals in the MAT Development team, to ensure that they add experience, value, and capacity to Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

For the transfer of Academies, closure of respective Trusts, and Academy conversions, there are a range of issues to consider in terms of DfE approval, managing the process, undertaking due diligence, closing an existing Academy Trust/s, securing the Executive Leadership model, managing the communications/TUPE, and transferring the assets and liabilities. EPM aim to provide their full support with this process, working closely alongside Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust's senior leaders and Trustees.

Suzanne Chell is a Senior Partner with EPM and will be supporting ESCAT. Suzanne has 29 years' experience working in Finance and Audit within the public sector. Suzanne's role at EPM includes managing and supporting a range of complex projects including Trust mergers and Academy conversions. Collaboratively working with CEOs, COO's and CFO's gives her an excellent insight into the benefits of partnership working and pooling resources to give the best possible education to the pupils.

