



A Celebration of Catholic Life in the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

It has been a tremendous privilege to serve the schools of St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust during my first year as Chief Executive Officer. Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to spend time in every school across our Trust, meeting children, staff, governors, clergy and families. Everywhere I have gone, I have been inspired by the commitment, faith and sense of community that exists within our schools.



When entering our schools, people often say that our schools 'feel' different, that there is something special about them. These people often attribute this to a sense of welcome or the kindness of the people they meet or the children that they interact with. This positive feeling doesn't happen by accident; it is the result of our commitment to Catholic life and the promotion of Catholic Social Teaching within our schools. Throughout the year, our schools have continued to live out our mission through prayer, service, learning and witness.

Perhaps no event demonstrated this more powerfully than our first Trust-wide 'One Hope Day'. It was a bringing together of staff, governors, clergy and communities from across our family of schools; it was a remarkable celebration of our shared faith and mission.

At St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, our values of Faith, Hope and Love are not simply words; they shape the people we become. They inspire us to serve others, to recognise the dignity of every person and to work together for the common good. Our 'One Hope Day' provided a visible expression of these values in action, reminding us that whilst our schools are unique, we are united by a common purpose and a shared hope in Christ.

As you read the stories within this newsletter, you will see countless examples of children and adults living out that hope. Through acts of service, leadership, compassion and faith, they continue to demonstrate what it means for 'the glory of God to be a human being fully alive'.

I am immensely proud of the remarkable children, staff, governors, parents and clergy who make up our Trust family. Thank you for all that you do to ensure that our schools remain places where faith is nurtured, hope is strengthened and love is lived each day.

MARK MCLAUGHLIN

Chief Executive Officer

St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

STCAT One Hope

Fully Alive Conference

On Monday 13 April 2026, 900 staff from our St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust arrived at the Wycombe Swan Theatre for a day exploring our mission as Catholic Schools. The idea was conceived as part of a bigger two-year project, facilitated by renowned speaker and author, David Wells, to provide our Trust schools with the opportunity to reflect on our Catholic identity, and the hope we have for the future in the context of Catholic education.

Our aim was to create a day with plenty of variety, where staff could experience a sense of belonging and find space to reflect on their part in our mission, 'The glory of God is a human being fully alive', and our values of Faith, Hope and Love.



It was important from the start that all staff would be invited and invested in on this day of celebration—both teaching and support staff—because it takes every member of staff in a school to build the culture and ethos that make our schools authentically Catholic.



The three keynote talks by David Wells were a highlight of the day for many, variously described as 'engaging', 'humorous' and 'truly inspiring'. We were delighted to be joined by CJM Music to facilitate our times of prayer, and RISE Theatre who provided reflection points throughout the day.

Harry Clark, a former student of two of our schools—and winner of Season 2 of the popular TV show, 'The Traitors',—was invited to take part in the conference based on his work for CAFOD. Harry also featured in a BBC programme where he met Pope Leo XIV, which aired just over a week before the conference took place.

Juhaim Rasul Choudhury, another former student, currently appearing in EastEnders, was also invited to speak about how his experience at school had shaped him. One member of staff said, 'It was lovely to hear two young people speak so passionately and confidently about their faith.'

All in all, the day was a resounding success. We are sure that the effects of the conference will be felt by pupils in every school, as staff left feeling enthused by what they had seen and heard: fully alive!

JANE PORTER

Trust Leader of Chaplaincy



Cardinal Newman Catholic School

Luton

Our school community has been blessed with many joyful opportunities to gather in faith, celebrate our young people and give thanks for all that God has done amongst us.

We were delighted to celebrate our three St John Henry Newman Day Masses. Despite the summer heat, it was wonderful to welcome more than 800 students to celebrate the Eucharist together. The Masses provided a fitting opportunity to give thanks for the many blessings of the year and to reflect on our shared mission as a Catholic school: to grow in faith, pursue excellence and serve others with love and compassion. We are deeply grateful to our clergy who gave so generously of their time to celebrate Mass with us.



We held our Confirmation Celebration Breakfast, recognising and celebrating those students who have recently received the Sacrament of Confirmation within their parishes. It was a joyful occasion and an opportunity for us to affirm these young people as they continue their journey as committed witnesses to Christ. We are proud of their faith, courage and commitment to deepening their relationship with God.

Our strong partnership with local parishes continues to flourish through our popular 'Meet the Priest' sessions. These informal gatherings provide students with valuable opportunities to engage with clergy, ask questions about faith and vocation, and deepen their understanding

of the Church. The sessions have been hugely successful and are helping to strengthen the bonds between school, parish and family life.



We give thanks for the many ways in which Christ is present within our school community and thank our clergy, parish communities, staff and families for their continued support in helping us fulfil our mission as a Catholic school inspired by the example of St John Henry Newman.



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Langley



What a wonderful morning of prayer and togetherness! Our annual May Procession and Crowning of Our Lady was truly a moment to treasure; a joyful act of faith that brought our whole school family together in devotion and love.

Every child was warmly invited to bring a flower to school, and in true community spirit, generous families arrived with beautiful bunches to share, ensuring that every single child could take part. It was a small but powerful reminder of the inclusive, caring community at the heart of our school.



At the centre of this celebration was our wonderful Year 6 Mission Team who took great pride in preparing and leading a beautiful, thoughtful liturgy. Their attention to detail, from the hymns chosen and the prayerful words they shared, to the carefully arranged flowers placed before Our Lady, was truly inspiring. They led with confidence, reverence and real spiritual maturity, and they deserve to feel enormously proud.

The procession itself was a joy to behold. Older children gently accompanied their younger classmates, walking together from the hall, through the Nursery gate, and across the front of the school grounds before placing their flowers before Our Lady.



Watching our eldest pupils guide and support the youngest members of our community was a beautiful expression of our school values in action.

Blessed with glorious sunshine, the whole school processed, prayed and celebrated together witnessing our shared Catholic faith. Moments like these remind us why Mary holds such a special place in our hearts, in the life of our school and in the most Holy Family.





Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Chesham

The partnership between Our Lady's Primary School and the local parishes continues to bear wonderful fruit, strengthening our shared sense of community and belonging.

In May, the Mini Vinnies from Year 5 organised a fundraising event for Helen & Douglas House, a children's hospice close to the hearts of one of our school families, in memory of their son, Max. The children dedicated their break times and lunch hours to crafting beautiful items to sell after the Youth Mass; these included handmade cards, pots of felt flowers, St Carlo Acutis keyrings, and stones painted with messages of hope, faith and love.



The church was packed with school families, and the sound of the children singing truly raised the roof—just as it does during our school Masses in the hall. In a wonderful surprise, many parishioners joined forces with the children, generously donating the proceeds from a cake and jam sale held earlier that morning to the same cause.

This magnificent joint effort resulted in over £600 raised for such a worthy charity. The celebrations continued a few days later at school, where the children, parishioners and parents processed together to Our Lady's grotto, with each person offering a flower to Mary.

Mary, Queen of Heaven: pray for us.



Sacred Heart Primary School

Luton

At Sacred Heart every year group has the chance to take part in our retreats, supporting the children's spiritual development and deepening their understanding of faith. Each retreat provides children with the opportunity to step away from the busy-ness of the classroom and engage in prayer, reflection and creative activities.

In Reception, pupils explored God's love through simple storytelling, sensory experiences and quiet moments of prayer, helping them to understand that they are uniquely created and cherished.

Year 1 focused on the theme of belonging and friendship, reflecting on how we are all part of God's family. Through stories, discussion and creative activities, children considered how they can show kindness, forgiveness and care for others in their daily lives.

In Year 3, pupils explored the titles given to Jesus and how these help us understand love, guidance and his presence in our lives. The children engaged thoughtfully in reflection, discussion and creative responses, considering how Jesus guides, cares and leads the way.

These retreats are a valuable opportunity for pupils to grow in faith, strengthen their sense of community and live out Gospel values each day.





St Anthony's Catholic Primary School Slough

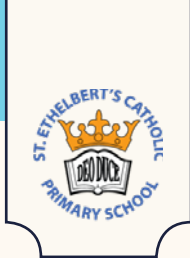
Year 5 have enjoyed coming together in prayer to say the Rosary. As a year group, they have reflected on the Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries, taking time to think about the life of Jesus and the important role of Mary, the Mother of God.

After each decade, the children have had the opportunity to create prayer cards and reflect on the mystery, helping them to deepen their understanding and respond thoughtfully through prayer. They have shown great respect and reverence as they joined together in the hall and outside, offering thanks and praise to Mary and Jesus. It has been a lovely opportunity for Year 5 to share their faith, pray as a community and reflect peacefully together.

Year 4 were delighted to help host a special afternoon tea for members of our parish church. The children enjoyed welcoming our guests, helping to serve refreshments and spending time with them in a warm and friendly setting. It was a lovely opportunity to celebrate the ever-growing relationship between our school and parish community, showing how important it is to come together, share kindness and build meaningful connections across generations.

Our whole school came together for a beautiful May Procession, ending with the special moment of one child crowning Mary. It was a wonderful afternoon of worship, praise and reflection, as pupils and staff gathered together as one school family. This meaningful celebration was a perfect way to end the half term, giving thanks and honouring Mary in a peaceful and joyful way.





St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

Slough

This year we enjoyed completing the Jubilee Year of Hope. We held a Jubilee Day of Celebration on Monday 21 November 2025 where we all participated in a Celebration of the Word, reflecting on all the activities we had completed as part of our Jubilee Year. We finished with a photo of the school spelling out the word HOPE on the playground. Mr Byfield cleverly used his drone to take the photo, and we even ended up in the Slough Observer!

Our Jubilee Pledge was to support the children in Udayan, an orphanage in Kolkata, India, whose families are devastated by leprosy. The school raised a lot of money through a non-uniform day, and this was sent to Udayan to buy new bedding for the children. We had many photos back showing how pleased the children were with their new bedding! We will continue to support Udayan this year.

In February 2026 we celebrated St Ethelbert's Feast Day. The children learnt how St Ethelbert was the first Christian king of England and our Early Years children made crowns in honour of him. Years 1-6 designed their own St Ethelbert badge which they wore to a special Feast Day Mass.



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

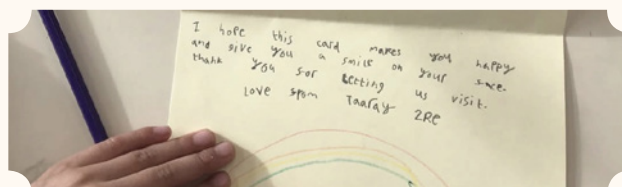
Chalfont

At St Joseph's, our Faith Leaders live out the Gospel call to love and serve others through their meaningful partnership with our local Dementia Café. With compassion and kindness, the children attend these sessions to support those living with dementia and their carers, engaging warmly in activities such as quizzes, crafts and singing. Their presence helps to create a welcoming and joyful atmosphere, offering companionship and encouragement to all who attend.

This outreach extends further through regular visits to the local care home, where pupils read stories, sing songs and spend time with residents. These gentle interactions bring comfort and happiness, fostering strong bonds across generations and reminding everyone of the value of human connection.



Our work reflects key principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Through 'Human Dignity', pupils recognise the inherent worth of every individual, regardless of age or illness. 'Solidarity' is lived out as they walk alongside those who may feel vulnerable or isolated, offering friendship and care. By supporting others in this way, our Faith Leaders put their faith into action, modelling Christ's love and helping to build a community where all are respected, included and cherished.





St Joseph's Catholic High School

Slough

St Joseph's Catholic High School recently came together to celebrate our annual Multicultural Day, a vibrant occasion that showcased the rich diversity within our school community. We marked this at the same time as Pentecost to highlight the unity of the Church for all.

This year's theme, 'Together We Celebrate', reminded us that diversity is one of our greatest strengths and that every member of our community is valued and respected. Throughout the day, students and staff celebrated the many cultures, languages, traditions and experiences that make St Joseph's such a welcoming and inclusive school. All assemblies for that week linked Pentecost with Multicultural Day.



The celebration featured a colourful flag parade, cultural performances, music and opportunities for students to share aspects of their heritage with one another. Students proudly represented countries from across the world, reflecting the wonderfully diverse backgrounds that enrich our school community every day.

The atmosphere across the school reflected unity, inclusion and shared celebration. It was inspiring to see students learning from one another, embracing different perspectives and

recognising the importance of respect and belonging.

Multicultural Day continues to be a highlight of our school calendar, reinforcing our commitment to Catholic values of dignity, community and inclusion. We are incredibly proud of our students and staff for making the day such a success and for continuing to foster a culture where everyone feels welcomed, valued and celebrated.





St Joseph's & St Edward's
Catholic Schools

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School

St Edward's Catholic Junior School

Aylesbury

In September 2025, I attended the Prayer Space Training in Northampton. It was an excellent event, at which I learnt a lot about how to create interactive prayer spaces. Since then we have created a Remembrance prayer space, in which members of our community could write the name of someone who they wanted to remember and pin it on the display. The children have taken part in an Advent prayer space (involving the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Light) at which they were able to, for example, write what brings them joy and peg it on to our 'Joy' washing line.

As St Joseph's and St Edward's are now under the leadership of one Senior Management Team, we needed to decide on a joint Mission. As a community, we focussed on

the word 'Love', taken from 1 John 4:19–'We love because God first loved us', each letter of 'Love' standing for one of four core values. As part of the process, we organised a 'Love' Prayer Space, at which children could, for example, write a thank you card to someone they love.

The children have really enjoyed the interactive and inclusive nature of our pop-up prayer spaces (they are hands-on and accessible to Christians and non-Christians) and they complement our more formal prayer times such as our lunchtime Rosary prayer sessions. Therefore, we will continue to have them pop up in the future.





St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Luton

Each month, our Year 5 children visit the 'Young@Heart Café', a wonderful community space for elderly people, those living with dementia, and their carers. During these visits, the children help participants relive happy memories through music, dancing, conversation and crafts, creating a warm, joyful atmosphere.

By building these meaningful intergenerational connections, our pupils directly live out Catholic Social Teaching. They honour 'Human Dignity' by showing deep respect to our elders and express 'Solidarity' by actively accompanying those who may feel isolated.

The children who attend fully embody our school values and live out St Joseph's mission statement. Through their kindness and compassion, they truly make a difference, representing our school community with immense pride.

Christine Boyd, founder of Young@Heart, expressed, 'Having the children come to our café each month is truly wonderful. It is such an invaluable opportunity for our guests and carers to reconnect with their childhoods, to laugh, smile and simply become children again through the conversations and time they share together. There is something special and magical about watching the children interact with our guests. Their kindness, warmth, and caring nature shine through every visit, and they bring so much joy and happiness to everyone they meet.'



St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary

Luton

Throughout May, the Catholic Church dedicates this special time to celebrating and honouring Mary, the mother of Jesus. At St. Margaret's, we are proudly continuing this beautiful tradition each year as part of our Catholic school life.



This May, our Faith Ambassadors led a whole-school assembly to mark this special occasion, with the children and teachers gathering together to celebrate our mother, Mary. As a whole school we took part in prayers and hymns, reflecting on Mary's importance in our lives.

A highlight of the assembly was the traditional 'May Crowning', where the statue of Mary was crowned with flowers. This symbolic act reminds us of our love and respect for Mary, and her role as a model of kindness, faith and obedience to God.

This special whole school assembly provided a meaningful opportunity for our school community to come together in worship and reflection. We are grateful to our Faith Ambassadors for leading such thoughtful and prayerful celebrations, helping us to follow Mary's example in our lives and grow closer to God.





St Louis Catholic Primary School

Aylesbury

We are delighted to share that our school has begun its journey towards achieving CAFOD's Live Simply Award. Over the coming year, we will complete nine meaningful actions that help us care for our common home and put our faith into action. Our Mini Vinnies, Eco Council and School Council will work together to lead these initiatives across the school.

As part of our commitment, we pledge to:

- Live simply
- Live sustainably
- Live in solidarity with others.

Inspired by the teachings of Pope Francis, this work encourages us to care for creation, support those in need and reflect on the impact our choices have on the world around us.

Our most recent action was a whole-school art competition linked to the Catholic Social Teaching focus 'Care for Creation'. KS1 children created artwork inspired by Genesis 1:31, 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good', while KS2 pupils reflected on Isaiah 55:12, 'The mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.'



We have been delighted by the fantastic response and the exceptional quality of the entries. The children produced thoughtful and creative artwork that beautifully reflected both the scripture passages and the wonder of God's creation. We were also pleased to share the entries with Mark McLaughlin, who was highly impressed by the talent on display across the school.

A judging panel consisting of a school governor, PTA representative, and parishioner from our local church will join our Eco Council to select the winning entries. With so many wonderful pieces of artwork, they certainly have a difficult decision ahead of them! We look forward to announcing the winners soon.





St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Marlow

In our penultimate year, the Catholic life of the school has continued to flourish through prayer, worship, service and strong community links. Pupils have been actively engaged in their faith journey, with monthly child-led Masses strengthening their connection with the parish. Key liturgical moments, including the Mass for the Feast of St Bernadette and celebrations for Candlemas, have provided meaningful opportunities for reflection, participation and joyful celebration.

Acts of service and outreach remain central to school life. Initiatives such as the Big Lent Walk in support of CAFOD and visits to Sir Aubrey Ward Home on World Book Day have fostered compassion, empathy and a strong sense of social responsibility. Collaborative activities across all age groups have promoted unity, teamwork and mutual respect within the community.

Prayer continues to be woven into daily life, from the creation of prayer cards inspired by St Francis to shared activities with parishioners. Parish events such as the Bluebell Run and Snowdrop Lunch have celebrated togetherness and gratitude.

We also gave thanks for the dedicated service of Jane Eaves and Dawn Dolan, who each marked an incredible 25 years in Catholic education, inspiring generations of pupils and staff alike.



St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

Luton

At St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School, this year has been guided by our commitment to living out the virtues at the heart of our faith. Throughout the autumn term, our community embraced the Virtue of Charity, as children and families generously donated a large amount of food to Luton Foodbank, supporting those most in need.

On our school's Feast Day, all pupils explored the Virtue of Justice. Inspired by the life of St Martin de Porres, they reflected on how he stood against injustice and showed dignity and compassion despite the challenges he faced because of his race.

Our Faith Ambassadors continue to lead by example, living out our Catholic virtues each day. They led a beautiful Celebration of the Word for the whole school, focusing on the Virtue of Love and encouraging all to follow Christ's example.

During Lent, our Year 5 pupils organised a wonderful afternoon of activities, centred on the virtues of Kindness and Service. They ensured every child was included and able to take part, creating a joyful and meaningful experience for all, rooted in care for one another.





St Mary's Catholic Primary School & St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Caddington & Houghton Regis

This year, both St Mary's and St Vincent's proudly took part in the Big Lent Walk. It was a wonderful opportunity for our school communities to come together in faith and solidarity, supporting CAFOD and raising awareness of the challenges faced by our brothers and sisters around the world. Throughout Lent, the children showed great enthusiasm, compassion and determination as they walked together with the shared goal of helping others. Thanks to the incredible generosity and support of our families and wider community, both schools raised a fantastic amount of money to support those most in need. The experience helped the children to understand the importance of living out Catholic Social Teaching through action, prayer and service to others.

We also marked the end of the Jubilee Year with a special collective worship celebration focused on hope, community and faith. During this time, the children reflected on what it means to be 'Pilgrims of Hope' and celebrated the journey we have shared together throughout the year. To commemorate the occasion, pupils created beautiful banners and thoughtful postcards filled with messages of hope, kindness and encouragement, which were proudly displayed around our schools.





St Michael's Catholic Primary School

High Wycombe

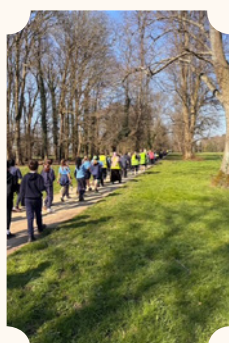
This year, the Primary Phase at St Michael's has enjoyed a wide range of exciting and meaningful events that have brought our school community together in faith, friendship and service.

One of the highlights was celebrating St Michael's Feast Day, where pupils learned more about St Michael and the important role he plays in our faith. We also celebrated our class patrons, St Raphael and St Gabriel, taking time to reflect on their guidance and example.

Another memorable experience was welcoming Rise Theatre to perform 'Treasure Within'. Through this engaging production, pupils explored Catholic Social Teaching and reflected on how we can live out these values in our everyday lives by showing kindness, fairness and compassion to others.

As part of our commitment to creating a caring school community, pupils also took part in a 'Pledge of Peace' project. Together we created a handprint banner as a symbol of our promise to work together to ensure St Michael's is a welcoming and peaceful place for everyone.

During Lent, the whole school participated in the Big Lent Walk around the local area, finishing with a lovely picnic celebration. We are proud to have raised an amazing £1,610 for charity across our three phases.



St Michael's Catholic Secondary School

High Wycombe

At St Michael's, we have joyfully celebrated the feast days of our house saints, including St John, St Luke, and St Mark, with faith, reflection and community spirit.

Each celebration began with a meaningful 30-minute liturgy in which students gathered to reflect on the lives, missions and teachings of these inspiring saints. Through scripture readings, prayers and thoughtful reflections, we deepened our understanding of their faith and considered how we can follow their examples in our own daily lives.

Following the liturgy, students took part in a range of social activities designed to further commemorate these special occasions. In the canteen, students were seated alongside peers from different classes, creating opportunities to build new friendships and strengthen our wider school community. Guided by our dedicated Sixth Form students and staff members, the activities included engaging discussion prompts that encouraged communication, teamwork and meaningful conversations across year groups.

As students enjoyed doughnuts during these interactive sessions, the Sixth Form students created a warm, lively and welcoming atmosphere that helped younger students feel included, valued and inspired.

These feast day celebrations have been a wonderful opportunity for the St Michael's community to unite in faith and friendship, making each occasion spiritually enriching, memorable and filled with joy.





St Michael's Catholic School

Aylesbury

This academic year has been a powerful witness to the living faith within our school. Just before Christmas, we had our Reverse Advent Calendar, where students expressed Christ-like love in a remarkable way. Their generosity overflowed as they donated food, toiletries and essential items to the Aylesbury Food Bank, as well as much-needed relief for communities in Jamaica following the devastating hurricane. Their compassion brought hope to people they may never meet yet chose to serve.

During the spring term, peace became our focal point for reflection and action in the school community. Guided by the Catholic Social Teaching principle of solidarity, students pledged their support for the suffering and vulnerable across the world. Their fundraising efforts, channelled through CAFOD, contributed to calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and reminded us that young people have a powerful voice for peace.

During the Lenten season, we joined our partner primary schools, St Edward's and St Louis, for our Big Lent Walk. As a St Michael's community, we raised over £1000 to support this year's CAFOD project to provide life-saving water to people in need. We were also blessed to visit the primary schools for a special Lenten workshop. Our students led activities exploring the pillars of Lent (prayer, fasting and almsgiving) and shared their faith with joy and confidence. It was a meaningful encounter that strengthened our shared mission as a Catholic family.



*The glory of
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being fully alive!*

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