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28th November 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am delighted to be writing to you again with a great deal of positive news regarding schools in the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership Trust. Firstly, our secondary schools have again seen excellent outcomes confirmed by the DFE in 2024 both at GCSE and A level. At GCSE the Trust had a progress 8 score of +0.28 which means that for every examination sat, for every pupil, in every subject - pupils in MNSP schools scored a ¼ of grade higher than similar children nationally. That might not sound impressive, but it places the Trust again in the top few groups of schools nationally for progress made.

At post 16, we have nearly 1500 students across the Trust. They performed extremely well and overall, the average grade across the Trust was a B. Additionally, over 80% of grades were A\*-C and almost without exception, pupils secured the university place they had applied for, or went on to apprenticeships. Well done to all GCSE and A level pupils and their teachers.

In recent Ofsted inspections, the Trust schools continue to improve. Norton Hill Secondary was graded Outstanding in 3 out of 5 key areas. St Mary's in Timsbury was graded Outstanding in all areas and Critchill Special School in Frome was also graded Outstanding for all areas. All three schools have continued to improve and these inspection gradings are testament to the work of the school staff, the Trust, pupils and parents.

In Bristol and Bath, we have seen further Ofsted success. St Matthias Academy - an Alternative Provision School in the Trust, was graded 'Good' in all areas, up from Requires Improvement. Notton House School in Wiltshire was also graded Good with Outstanding for Leadership and Management for their boarding provision. Both incredible outcomes and the result of the superb leadership at both schools.

As you will all know, improving attendance has been a really important target for the Trust schools this year. Whilst our attendance is generally strong, there were some schools that needed to improve. Since September, we have seen attendance improve quite considerably at a number of secondary schools – Beechen Cliff, Hayesfield, Somervale, Norton Hill, Buckler's Mead and Preston. Our Special schools have also seen strong improvements too so well done to pupils, families and staff at Soundwell, Knowle, Notton House, Critchill and St Matthias. Our primary schools remain well above national average rates once again. Thank you to parents for supporting the Trust schools and their children to improve their attendance.

Having children in school as much as possible, as demonstrated through research, helps them be well-rounded and self-sufficient adults. Pupils who miss 10% of their schooling fare less well in primary school testing and later on at GCSEs. In some cases, of course, children have medical needs which explain why their attendance might be lower. However, for most pupils across all of our schools – special, AP, primary and secondary, there should be few excuses for low attendance.

As a very successful Trust, we continue to have schools that wish to join us. Ansford Academy in Castle Cary is the next secondary school that wishes to be part of Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership. At this point, I would like to formally welcome Trinity First School to the Partnership. Trinity is a very impressive First School in Frome and we are extremely excited that they are now part of MNSP.

In other news, we plan to change our Management Information System next year. From April we will stop using a product called SIMS and move to a product called Arbor. For many parents and carers this may mean very little, but it will impact the way we communicate with you, store data and so on. The new product was chosen after a thorough procurement process and I will write with more details about these changes in early 2025.

I am sure you will all appreciate that with 3000 or so staff, there will be a tremendous amount of talent across a wide range of sports and other interests. One member of staff, Miss Derrick at Hemington Primary, has recently competed in the World Championships as a member of Team England in Kick Boxing. At the event in Vienna, Miss Derrick won 2 gold medals and a silver medal. A fantastic performance, watched by the children and staff of her school. Congratulations to Miss Derrick, who is also a former pupil of Norton Hill and before that High Littleton Primary.

Thank you again to all Parents and Carers for your support across our schools. I hope the final 4 weeks of school term are not too stressful as we move into the festive season.

Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alun Williams - CEO