

CEO letter Autumn 1 2026

Dear Parents and families,

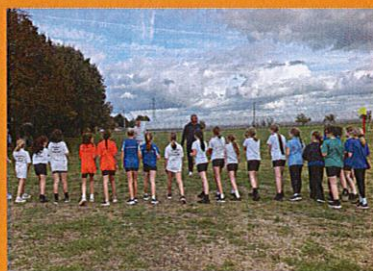
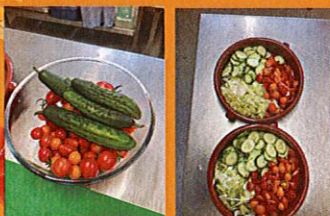
Welcome to the start of a new term! Looking back, we have so much to celebrate after a long, fun-packed term filled with achievements across our school community. Our children have been truly excellent, shining in their learning and making us proud every single day. We were delighted with our amazing data, which reflects the hard work and dedication of everyone involved, as well as our wonderfully successful SIAMS inspection at St Mary's. Alongside this, our rich extra-curricular opportunities, from exciting school visits and inspiring guest visitors to memorable residential, have brought so much joy and learning to life.

None of this would be possible without the incredible dedication and tireless hard work of our staff team, and I know you will join me in offering them our heartfelt gratitude. At the same time, as we look ahead, we recognise that life brings its challenges for many in our school family, whether navigating family pressures, illness, or the painful grief of recent bereavements. Please know that our warmth, thoughts, and prayers are with every family going through a difficult time. Together as a community, we remain committed to supporting one another with care, kindness, and partnership through every season. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to another wonderful term together.

The year began beautifully with children at Mary Howard Primary School leading a fabulous, whole trust virtual worship on the value of respect. We are so proud, it was fantastic to see the whole community in action. Well done!



I know most of our schools are using their own produce grown by the children in their lunch menus but it was super to receive photos from The Mease - 'a little haul the children gathered from the allotment / veggie patch - Zebra cucumbers and incredible looking tomatoes'. Their salad bowls look delightful.



What a magnificent time we have had - our whole Trust cross country with all 7 schools! We are proud of everyone who took part, grateful to staff for enabling the event and parents, families and friends for attending! Well done to The Howard as overall winners and everyone who took part and cheered on the sidelines.



Pig the Pug was seen travelling on his last adventure! Our journey took us all the way from All Saints to The Howard and back! Accompanied by two wonderful Reception children and a brilliant Year 6 child, we had a super day!

Our superstars did an amazing job sharing their hard work. We loved seeing our children collaborate, showcase their achievements, and bring learning to life. Well done!



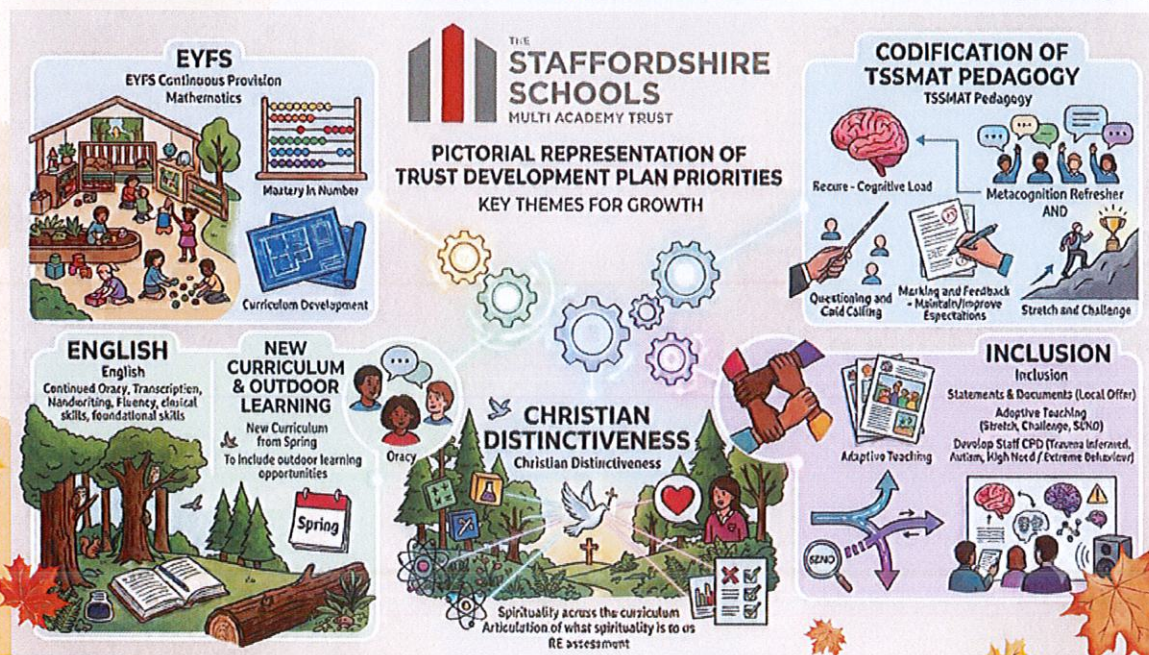
Harvest festivals were special across all of our schools and Ralph and I were blessed to attend St Mary's service - a family filled service complete with a visit from Rugeley food bank. Thank you to the children for a special afternoon.



Our autumn school reviews were so positive - these are Trust-wide, peer, school reviews across our classrooms to ensure our teaching and learning environments remain at the highest standard. These reviews show that our classrooms are vibrant, orderly, and joyful places where children demonstrate great focus and confidence. We are seeing fantastic strengths in structured classroom talk, strong vocabulary, and wonderful support staff who help every child thrive. As part of our continuous growth, our shared priority across all schools is to fine-tune how we present learning materials so children never feel overwhelmed (called cognitive load), alongside giving pupils even clearer opportunities to respond directly to their teachers' feedback.

(Pupil voice at All Saints)

Leaders across our schools have worked together and produced our 2026/2027 development plan. Each school has their own. Our Trust has a three year strategic plan but this forms the plan for this year - of course robust strategies and documentation sit behind these pictorial representations.



Achievements - We are so proud of the achievements of all our children at all times in a variety of ways, not just academic achievement but, it is important to take a moment to share the trust averages across all our schools

Metric	TSSMAT Performance	National Benchmark (some are against 2025 as	Variance
EYFS Good level of development	77.37%	68.30%	9.07%
Y1 Phonics	92.40%	80.00%	12.40%
Y4 Multiplication check Average Score	22.2	21	+1.20 pts
KS2 Reading age related expectation	82.12%	75.00%	7.12%
KS2 Writing age related expectation	81.20%	73.00%	8.20%
KS2 Mathematics age related expectation	81.90%	75.00%	6.90%
KS2 Spelling Punctuation and	85.27%	74.00%	11.27%
KS2 Reading , writing and maths Combined	68.60%	63.30%	5.30%



Attendance

All Trust schools attendance measures were in line with or better than national standards. Our MAT average was 96.3% which is above National. All schools reduced the proportions of persistent absence across the year and PA measures improved. That does not mean we can be complacent and attendance can still be improved in all of our schools.

SIAMS SUCCESS

We are immensely proud as a trust to celebrate the fantastic outcome of **St Mary's Church of England Primary School's** recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) report! Please view St Marys website to read the full report. A huge congratulations goes to Executive Headteacher Jon Wynn and his team. The inspector, Anne Collins, conducted a thorough and fair evaluation, resulting in a truly celebratory day for the entire school community. The report highlights how effectively the school enables both pupils and adults to flourish under its Christian vision inspired by Isaiah 40:31 to "fly like eagles and believe and achieve". Here is a summary of the key highlights from the inspection report:





Key Strengths

- **Inspirational Vision & Ethos:** The school's vision and core values of love, friendship, and respect actively guide daily decisions, relationships, and leadership. Morale across the staff team is high, with leaders heavily investing in staff well-being and professional growth.
- **Inclusive & Vibrant Worship:** Collective worship is a joyous, welcoming highlight. The creative use of Makaton signing, prayer, drama, and singing ensures all children including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can fully participate and lead.
- **Nurturing Environment:** Every pupil is cherished as an individual. Targeted support for SEND and vulnerable pupils, alongside unique pastoral touches like caring for school animals (chickens, rabbits, and guinea pigs), directly supports pupil well-being, confidence, and strong attendance.
- **Rich, Experiential Curriculum:** Learning extends beyond the classroom with forest school, hands-on projects (such as building and racing a green-powered car), and a newly developed Key Stage 1 outdoor practical area.
- **Exceptional RE Teaching:** Religious Education engages children deeply with big life questions. Staff deliver creative lessons, using poetry, drama, and art, that allow pupils to make strong progress and build a thoughtful understanding of diverse worldviews.

Next Steps for Development

To build on this strong foundation, the school will be working on Empowering Pupil-Led Action: Creating more opportunities for pupils to independently identify injustice and lead their own social action initiatives to positively impact others beyond the school. Which is a similar target to some of our other schools and will form part of our Trust development plan but for 2027/2028 as spirituality development is our predominant development this year.

This glowing report is a testament to the dedication of Mr Jon Wynn, all the staff, governors, volunteers, our Trust leader for RE and Worship, Miss Harriett Jennings, Jordan Lambert, a Christian youth worker, our Christian distinctiveness advisor, Helen Robertson and, of course, the fantastic children at St Mary's. Thank you to everyone across the trust for your continued support as we celebrate this wonderful achievement together!

A little note from our team.



While you see the day-to-day magic happening in our classrooms, the fantastic lessons, enrichment and creative projects, there is also a huge amount of work happening quietly in the background to keep our family of schools safe, strong, and thriving. I wanted to share a quick "smattering" of the essential behind-the-scenes work that you might not normally hear about, but that makes a world of difference to our children's everyday environment.

- **Strong Financial Health & Successful Audits:** Behind our educational success is a sound and well-managed budget. Independent external auditors and internal scrutineers regularly examine our financial controls, reporting a clean bill of health and confirming that our Trust is operating on a secure, sustainable footing. This financial strength means we can confidently invest in our pupils' learning, retain quality resources, and safeguard the future of our small rural schools.
- **Keeping Our Built Environment Safe & Modern (Estates & Audits):** Behind every great school is a safe building! Our central team works tirelessly behind the scenes to secure national capital funding (CIF). Thanks to these successful bids, we've been able to complete crucial upgrades across our sites, including new fire doors at St Mary's, replacement windows at Richard Crosse, and updated fire alarms and emergency lighting at The Howard. We also carry out hundreds of regular health, safety, and cleaning audits every term to ensure our environments remain pristine and secure.
- **Business Continuity & Risk Management (Internal Audits):** To ensure our Trust remains resilient, we regularly bring in independent internal scrutineers. Recently, we've undergone thorough reviews on business continuity and risk management—checking everything from our emergency plans to asset tracking—giving us a positive bill of health and making sure we are well-prepared for any situation.

- **Strengthening Cyber Security & IT Infrastructure:** Protecting our data and online systems is a huge priority. Over the summer, we successfully completed major server migrations and upgraded our Google systems across the Trust. We've also updated our cyber security protocols and are undergoing external vulnerability testing to ensure our systems and school data remain protected against emerging online risks.
- **Supporting Our Exceptional Team (HR & Recruitment):** Our staff are at the heart of our Trust, and we are constantly looking for ways to support their wellbeing and streamline their work. We've introduced streamlined recruitment tools like My New Term to reduce admin time, rolled out staff wellbeing surveys, and introduced new employee benefits, including a will-writing service and exploring eco-friendly electric car salary sacrifice options.
- **Sustainability & Decarbonisation:** We are deeply committed to looking after our planet for our children's future. Alongside simple energy tracking in our schools, we are updating our Trust-wide decarbonisation plans and exploring energy efficiency reviews (such as solar panel potential and energy-saving measures) across our sites.
- **Up-to-Date Governance & Legal Frameworks:** Behind the scenes, we've been working with our legal teams and the Department for Education (DfE) to complete formal updates to our key governance documents, including our Deed of Variation and Supplemental Funding Agreements. By ensuring our Articles of Association reflect the very latest national guidance and modern governance standards, we protect the unique identity of each of our local schools while keeping our Trust strong, compliant, and well-positioned for the future.
- **Nutritious School Meals (Kitchens & Catering):** Running our school kitchens takes constant logistical care. From rolling out fresh new menus to preparing for updated national School Food Standards (bringing in even more fresh fruit, vegetables, and high-fibre options), our catering supervisor and kitchen teams work extremely hard behind the scenes to keep our pupils energised and ready to learn.

How do we keep track of all these moving parts? A huge amount of this vital work is brought together in our regular "Team Around the School" (TAS) meetings. These sessions bring our Headteachers, central Trust team, link directors, and local governors around one table to look closely at each school's unique needs, financial health, and educational priorities. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our Headteachers, our central office team, and our dedicated link Directors and Governors for their tireless commitment and collaboration in these important sessions—their hard work behind the scenes ensures every single one of our schools receives the precise support it needs to thrive. If you fancy being a Director or Governor please do contact me!

None of these operations make the daily news, but they form the solid foundation that allows our teachers to focus on what they do best: helping your children flourish! Thank you as always for your continued support of our schools and community.

Thanks for reading! Do contact me if you wish to discuss anything further and I hope you carve out some family time this Autumn half term.



Regards,
Mrs Charlene Gethin (CEO), Ralph, our
central team and our whole Trust!

