



Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust

Providing an inspirational, outstanding Catholic education for all the children and young people in our schools.

December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers/Staff

Welcome

Welcome to the December 2023, and first, edition of our Trust Newsletter.

My name is Mark Mountcastle and I am the CEO of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust. This is our first 'newsletter' as a Trust and I hope you take the time to read about our schools and their achievements, here and on their school websites and social media platforms. Over the course of next year, we will be running parent consultations and I look forward to meeting more of you formally and informally.

It is always a pleasure to visit the schools within our Trust and I am so grateful to all the staff and everyone in our communities who work tirelessly for all our children and young people. It is a particular privilege to visit in Advent, observing all the Christmas activities, prayer, singing and Nativities; it is a real joy.

St Joseph's

On Friday 1st of December, we were delighted to welcome our seventh school into our Trust. Saint Joseph's Winsford are now part of the Our Lady Help of Christians family and we are very much looking forward to working with them as we all strive to work together to improve the outcomes and life chances for our young people.

Our Schools

As of December 1st we are; All Hallows Catholic College, St Albans Primary, Christ the King Primary, Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, St Joseph's, Saint Mary's and St Paul's Primary schools.

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Brooklands Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 8LB
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www.olhoc.org.uk



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Our Trust will continue to grow next year with schools from Telford, Shropshire and Cheshire East joining in February and September.

It is the vision of the Bishop of Shrewsbury that all the Roman Catholic schools in; Cheshire East and West, Chester, Ellesmere Port, Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire, join with us in the next five to eight years.

School News

Our schools continually amaze us all with the opportunities they provide for all our children and young people. I have included just a small snapshot here of some examples of the great work they have done this term – please see our website www.olhoc.org.uk for more information about all our schools.

All Hallows Catholic College

In October half term, sixth form students and staff travelled to India. It was an amazing trip, and one that they will remember for a very long time. They were able to see where all of the money raised has been spent over recent years, and the life-changing impact it has had on the communities affected. The Sixth Form students were a credit to the College & their families, as they wholeheartedly entered into this immersive experience.

They listened closely to the Presentation Sisters in Varasanadu, who explained the history of our project, the building of the clinic & community centre, and the resources that are needed annually. They also discussed what the next stage of the project should be, and where the next few years of fundraising should be spent.





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St Alban's Primary School

Our after-school gardening club have had lots to celebrate this year! They have worked through the RHS School Gardening Awards and were very proud to receive the Level 5 award to become officially recognised as an RHS Level 5 Gardening School. This summer, St. Alban's School was chosen to represent Macclesfield in the national "Britain in Bloom" competition. Our school gardens were visited by three Britain in Bloom judges, along with representatives from Macclesfield Town Council. We were very proud to hear the news that Macclesfield had won "Gold" in the small cities category and

that St. Alban's children, through all their hard work in growing, planting and maintaining the garden, had contributed to this award.

Christ the King Primary

There was good news and celebration for CTK as our Catholic and Church of England Parishes came together to donate a grant to our school to pay for our specialist music provision for a whole year. Each year group are learning a different instrument, which include cellos, violins, glocks and ukuleles. Finally we have a school choir and recorder club. We thank God and the church for this kind donation.





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Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

This is an exciting preview into the Diversity wall mural that our Mandela students are working on. All the students worked really hard on this piece of art. We discussed the story and experiences of Afghan rapper and activist Sonita Alizadah. Students said, "The students in the Mandela centre all worked together to create stencils for this piece of art. The words used are ones to describe her experience of



escaping an arranged marriage. It is very colourful and stands out."

"I really enjoyed working on this as I learned new skills. I thought the spray painting was fun as well as painting the people on the mural and its an inspirational piece to me and others".

St Joseph's Primary School

St. Joseph's Catholic RC Primary has been successful in being reassessed for the Wellbeing Award for a period of three years. The award is presented by the National Children's Bureau who recognise the outstanding work being done to promote mental health and wellbeing within school communities across England. Since their last assessment the school has been proactive and shared practice with a wide range of partners including Cheshire West and Cheshire, Winsford Education partnership and the Catholic cluster of primary and secondary schools. We are thrilled that all the hard work that the St Joseph's



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Team put into 'well-being' has been recognised and acknowledged once again. This is at the centre of St Joseph's practice and ethos and is the rhythm of our purple heart.

Saint Mary's Primary



Saint Mary's was delighted to be awarded yet another international Green Flag from Eco-schools, part of Keep Britain Tidy. This is their 7th Green Flag. This time the award was given with DISTINCTION. Thank you to all the children who as members of the school Eco Council helped on the eco projects through the year. ECO Topics were; school grounds, biodiversity and global citizenship. Their work was also recognised by Congleton Town Council at the recent Congleton in Bloom celebrations event at the town hall.

St Paul's Primary

In November we visited the Fireground Museum in Rochdale. In the morning the children completed a workshop learning about the Great Fire of London, they visited and found out about all the different fire engines over time and even pretended to put a fire out with a hose used many years ago! In the afternoon they enjoyed sitting in the fire engine, dressing up, sliding down the firefighter's pole and lots of role play activities. We were very proud of all the children as they demonstrated the 'Shine' school rules with excellent listening



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skills and participation in all the activities throughout the day. You will find lots more photos on the school website.

RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete)

You may have heard about the issues schools are facing to do with RAAC and unfortunately one of our schools, Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, have been quite badly affected.

However, the staff at the school have been amazing when dealing with the situation. Through their hard work and dedication, they have ensured that the school has remained fully open, providing face to face learning for all the young people in their care. Just this week all the mobile classrooms were delivered, and after a full weekend of working, are now ready for all the students to continue to develop and learn. I would like to thank them all for everything they have done in this tremendously difficult time.

All other schools in the Trust have been inspected several times and no others contain RAAC.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff and everyone in our schools and the central team. The Trust is growing in capacity and we look forward to even more developments and improvements that we can make together over the next twelve months.

Everyone continues to work extremely hard for all the children and young people within our schools and in our communities. The opportunities afforded to all the young people is testament to the hard work and dedication of all our school and college staff. Thank you everyone.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and we look forward to welcoming you all back in January.

Merry Christmas

“Do not be afraid.” With these beautiful words the angel of the Lord greets the



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shepherds and the heavenly host sing of peace on earth.

In our war-torn world, awash with conflict and division, many people are afraid. We see the suffering caused by conflict in countries such as Ukraine, Syria, Sudan and Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

But today we can also hope for restoration and healing, for the baby lying in the manger is the Prince of Peace.

This Christmas let us pray that that we will commit to God's vision of a just peace and seek to build a world where no one need be afraid of violence, oppression or poverty.

Yours sincerely

M Mountcastle