

17 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that this letter finds you and your families well. I think it is fair to say that if we were to rewind to this time last year, none of us would have predicted the year that we have all endured. We have found ourselves wrestling with lockdown, isolation and uncertainty. For many, it has been both physically and mentally exhausting. As parents and carers, we have juggled our own personal circumstances, caring for our children and families, whilst attempting to maintain some sense of normality.

I want to thank all parents and carers for the support that you have given our school leaders, teachers and support staff since the beginning of the pandemic. I know for a fact that the warm messages and supportive emails that we have received over the year are genuinely appreciated by staff across the Trust. Our parents and carers play such an essential role in the life of the Trust. The support we receive enables us to offer the best education we can to the 3,800 children across our family of eight schools in the town. I am writing to express my personal thanks; it means a great deal.

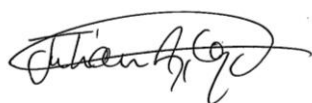
This term, in particular, has been a challenge; making sure that our schools opened as safely as possible, whilst delivering the curriculum our pupils deserve. The continuity of our children's education has remained at the forefront of our work since September with some new vocabulary to go with it; remote learning, a new normal, bubbles, you are on mute and face masks, to name just a few well-worn phrases that would not have been in the top 10 most used phrases this time last year! We have all had to adjust.

I want to pay tribute to our children and young people for the way that they have adapted so quickly to new routines and protocols this term. Such resilience is excellent to see. It is heart-warming to see that despite the difficulties faced since March, our children and young people continue to impress us with outstanding outcomes and enthusiasm that is second to none. Even with the unavoidable interruptions to school life, our attendance levels across the schools in the Trust have been well above the national average - strong evidence of how the schools and families have worked together.

Despite the roller coaster that is 2020, the year ahead is showing more promise with the vaccine giving hope to so many. The Trust continues to go from strength to strength, and I would expect this to be the case as we continue into 2021. There has been some fantastic work carried out this year both inside and outside of the classroom, and our termly magazine [Achieve](#) highlights some of this work. Additionally, the [Trust Strategic Plan](#) sets out the flight path as we see it for the next three years. We aim to build on the significant progress that our schools have made over the last few years. As CEO of the Trust, I know that our improvement journey never ends as we can always do more. I do hope that we can count on your support on our journey to deliver on our plan.

Finally, I would like to extend my best wishes to you and your loved ones and wish you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy New Year.

Yours faithfully,



Julian Appleyard OBE
Chief Executive Officer