

7<sup>th</sup> July 2026

Dear All,

As we reach the end of another academic year, there is much for us to celebrate and give thanks for across the Xavier Catholic Education Trust.

We begin by extending a warm welcome to everyone at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dorking, as they join the Xavier family. Although we have been working closely together throughout the year, it is a joy to now welcome St Joseph's fully into the Trust. We are delighted to be joined by such wonderful children, dedicated staff and supportive governors and, as their mission proclaims, we look forward to "learning and growing together in the light of God's love".

Last week also brought joyful news for our Diocese with the appointment of Fr Stephen Wang as the next Bishop of Arundel & Brighton. His reputation as a wise, compassionate and inspiring spiritual leader goes before him, and we look forward to welcoming him in the months ahead. Bishop-elect Stephen has already recorded a special message for schools across the Diocese, which can be viewed [here](#).

On the same day that we received this good news, staff and governors from across the Diocese gathered at the Cathedral in Arundel for the annual Mass of Thanksgiving, where we gave thanks for the significant contribution made to Catholic education by particularly committed individuals. This number includes several notable members of the Xavier family: Catherine Grace, Headteacher at St Hugh of Lincoln, Knaphill, retires this year after leading the school with distinction in recent years, building on its already strong foundation and securing its reputation for delivering outstanding Catholic education. Kate Licence, Local Director of Primary Education and former Headteacher at The Marist, West Byfleet, is taking up a post with our friends at WMAT, leading their primary education provision. Mrs Licence proved to be a highly effective and much-loved Headteacher at The Marist and has made a significant contribution to the wider development of the Trust since joining the central team. This summer also marks the end of an era as Toby Miller and Alan Mitchell step away from headship. Between them, they have devoted almost fifty years of leadership service to Xavier schools. Having first worked together at SJB in Woking, they went on to become inspirational Headteachers at St Peter's Catholic School, Guildford, and St Andrew's Catholic School, Leatherhead, respectively. Under their leadership, both schools have become nationally recognised examples of educational excellence. We are delighted that both will remain involved in Catholic education and, indeed, within Xavier in different capacities next year.

I would also like to acknowledge two colleagues whose work has often taken place behind the scenes, but whose impact has been profound. Jan Keating and Alex Ojakovoh have supported, trained and inspired hundreds of teachers at the beginning of their careers. Their contribution has strengthened not only individual teachers but entire school communities. We thank them for all they have given and wish them every happiness and success for the future.

A further moment of pride during the Mass of Thanksgiving was the recognition of Peter O'Brien, founding Chair of Xavier's Trust Board. For almost thirty years, Peter has served Catholic education in a variety of governance roles, providing both unwavering support and thoughtful challenge to school and Trust leaders. His steadfast commitment has helped ensure that countless children have benefited from an outstanding Catholic education. We are delighted that his contribution has been recognised through the award of the Benemerenti, bestowed by Pope Leo XIV in recognition of distinguished service to the Church. It is a richly deserved honour.

We give thanks not only for those mentioned above, but for all those colleagues who are moving on from Xavier this summer, and we wish them and their families every happiness for the future. As we reflect on these individuals, and on so many others across our Trust, we are reminded of the extraordinary generosity that characterises Catholic education. Every day, staff, governors and volunteers give of themselves in service of children and families. Much of this work takes place quietly and without recognition. It requires patience, resilience, courage and a deep commitment to the common good.



For school leaders in particular, the vocation can sometimes feel challenging. In a world where criticism can travel quickly and negativity often attracts the greatest attention, it is easy to overlook the countless lives that are transformed through faithful service. Yet the fruits of our work are visible every day in the children who flourish academically, socially and spiritually because of the care they receive in our schools.

Thank you to everyone who responds to the call to serve in some way across the Xavier Trust. Thank you for your commitment, your sacrifice, your support for one another and your steadfast belief in the power of Catholic education to transform lives. This includes all the parents and families who continue to support us in delivering our mission, even when its hard to do.

Most importantly, we thank and celebrate the children and young people whom we serve. Their enthusiasm, kindness, resilience, faith and achievements continue to inspire us. Whether in classrooms, on sports fields, on the stage, through acts of service, or in their daily interactions with one another, they demonstrate the values that lie at the heart of our Catholic schools. They are the reason we do what we do and the greatest sign of hope for the future. Thank you for entrusting them to us.

We look forward with hope and confidence to the new academic year and to continuing our shared mission of helping every child flourish and become the person God created them to be.

With every good wish for a happy and restful summer.

God bless,

James Kibble  
CEO

