



21st July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to thank you all for your support this year. It has been a challenge getting back on track so to speak, but schools have generally felt as though they have largely recovered from the disruption of the past 2-3 years.

I was delighted for example, by the outcomes achieved by Year 6 in their SATs. The results were deeply impressive across all schools and well above the 2022 national averages and indeed above national scores from 2019. Schools did a great job during the lockdown and parents and carers also helped to ensure their children remained on course to do well in the three key areas of reading, writing and maths. Overall, the Trust had nearly 63% of children achieving or exceeding age related expectations in reading, writing and maths, compared to a national figure of 59%. A stunning outcome and actually similar to the national rate for 2019, before anyone had heard of COVID-19!

In the younger years, we saw strong outcomes in reading, with 82% of children passing the phonics screening test and 79% of children achieving a 'Good Level of Development' in Reception. These outcomes are at or above national rates pre-pandemic. In other year groups, outcomes are in-line with expectations, with standards in writing remaining the key area of focus for improvement going forward.

In other good news, Somervale Secondary School secured a very positive Ofsted outcome, demonstrating that the excellent provision at this school has been sustained over a very long period. Critchill School achieved a prestigious careers award recognising the great work they do for their children around employability. High Littleton were awarded Green Flag status in recognition of their work to reduce energy consumption and protect the environment and Buckler's Mead have been awarded the Rainbow Flag status recognising their work in driving out prejudice in schools and wider society. Naturally, I could go on, but these are some of the highlights that demonstrate how schools in the Trust continue to move forward, despite the difficulties they have encountered.

We have recently secured permission from the DFE to enable two existing nursery provisions - St Mary's in Timsbury and Welton in Midsomer Norton - to join the Trust. Despite being secondary trained, I now regularly see high quality Early Years provision making a significant difference to the outcomes and progress of children. We know that when we work closely with nursery providers or run our own nurseries, children receive a better start to schooling and achieve better outcomes longer-term at secondary school.

In Bath, the three secondary schools have worked well together and continue to create links so that education across the city is excellent for all. The Ofsted 'good' judgement at St Mark's was further evidence of the strength and impact of this partnership. Going forward, we are focussing our efforts once again to support Beechen Cliff, so that when it is re-inspected it is graded at least 'good' for the main school, as well as the boarding provision that climbed to 'good' overall in the March 2020 inspection.

Our newest addition to the Trust is, of course, Preston Academy in Yeovil. I have visited Preston on a number of occasions and undertaken a review at the school and found it to be a delightful secondary provision, with fantastic teaching and lovely children. Buckler's Mead, also in Yeovil, has a similar feel to it and I know that the two schools have a great future working together to ensure education in Yeovil goes from strength to strength.





Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership
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St Dunstan's Secondary School in Glastonbury has an exciting few months ahead, as building work for the new Resource Base starts in July. This facility will ensure outstanding provision for children who are diagnosed with Autism. Pupils will work in the base and experience mainstream learning as well.

In September, Mendip Studio School will be re-named 'Somerset Studio School' to avoid confusion with two other local schools that also have 'Mendip' in the title. For those that do not know about studio schools, they are a unique educational offer, where the focus is on vocational experiences for children. There is a greater emphasis on work in the real world and other key differences to the other provisions across the secondary school offer in the Trust. For example, pupils do not have to wear a school uniform and the school day is a little more flexible to accommodate the curriculum offer. Mendip Studio School has been the saviour of many pupils who want to really focus on maths, science and engineering, as well as some other more vocational pathways.

A number of schools will see additions to their facilities over the coming months. The Trust has secured £400,000 of funding for Longvernal School to have an additional classroom, a new reception area and office space. The Trust will also be funding an additional classroom at High Littleton Primary to meet the basic need requirements of growth in numbers. At Norton Hill Secondary, we hope to improve and extend facilities for teaching Technology and we have also begun a feasibility study for a sports hall at Somervale School. Preston Academy have had a contribution of £250,000 from the Trust to support the construction of their new all-weather pitch and Buckler's Mead sports hall will be re-floored over the holidays. Most schools will see improvement works over the Summer period and into next year, as the Trust spends close to £3 million of condition money on ensuring buildings and facilities are enhanced for children and their learning.

We now look forward to the examination results of Year 11 and Year 13. These results are predicted to be strong this year, as pupils and staff across all of our secondary schools have worked exceptionally hard to catch up on any missed learning due to Covid-19. I am sure all of our efforts will be rewarded and we look forward to welcoming record numbers back to our sixth forms, while wishing pupils who are embarking on apprenticeships and college, etc. the very best of luck for their future.

I hope you all manage to have a restful break in the Summer months and I look forward to writing to you all again with more good news in September.

Best regards

Alun Williams
CEO

