



CE Briefing



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As I write this month's briefing in the midst of a second national lockdown, it's impossible to not think about how our way of life continues to be subject to ever changing expectations and demands as we try to live with the risks of Coronavirus. I doubt few headlines sparked such hope, on a global scale, as the news that - *possibly* - we might have a vaccine in the coming months. Whilst I think the Prime Minister's warnings on the risks of over-optimism should be heeded, I'm instead minded to share the words of Nelson Mandela, who said "Our human compassion binds us the one to the other – not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into **hope for the future.**"

It is with hope for the future in my heart that I have been moved by the efforts of our pupils to mark Armistice Day, in very different ways this year. With each generation, the memory of those who fought for our freedom naturally fades a little more. All of our pupils were born in a different millennium to the one where we suffered through two world wars, and it is remarkable that our children and young people nonetheless understand so clearly the importance of showing our respect, our recognition and our eternal gratitude.

Attendance across our academies continues to be higher than we could have hoped for, with staff continuing to provide our pupils with the normality and consistency they deserve. I talk to Headteachers every day and I know that this success is underpinned by the steely determination and courage of our workforce.

I continue to feel humbled by the inspirational humanity I witness in our schools. Our cleaners and caretakers keep our sites safe. Our cooks keep our children (and our staff!) nourished. Our office staff keep the school business running, and our teachers and teaching assistants keep our children engaged in their learning. Every day, leaders at all levels in our Trust have to bend and flex around short notice changes, re-drawing the blueprint a day at a time. Yet the biggest statement of achievement is that our pupils and their families just see what they always have: schools that are there for them, every day, to meet their needs. Amazing.

It is with far too much sadness that I finish this briefing with the heartbreaking news about a beautiful young man at Coppice, Christopher Faulkner, who unexpectedly died at school on Thursday 5 November 2020. Christopher was a much loved pupil in key stage 2, and the tragedy of his loss is something that we will all carry with us for the rest of our lives. At this time, our love and sympathies go out to Christopher's family. In his short time with us, Christopher made a huge impact on the Coppice School community. The school have been overwhelmed by the compassion and support shown by so many, and, in time, we will work with his family to create a fitting tribute to the joy Christopher brought to our lives. We will remember him, always.

Learning together, to be the best we can be

Warren Carratt