



Update from Nikki Edwards, Trust CEO

The importance of looking after each other

As we enter yet more unprecedented times, let me first say thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do for our children, their families, and the communities which we serve. Schools have possibly never had such an important role to play in offering some certainty in a world of uncertainty. We serve varied communities but we know every family will be touched by Covid, whether directly with the virus or as a result of hardship and, for many, the school will be a single beacon of reassurance and they will know they can rely on us – every single time.

Our Trust is unlike most others. We have the common bond of being primary educators, but each school is unique. That sounds like a cliché, but it is true, and it is this individual uniqueness, existing in a group of 33, which is our strength. While we extend reassurance to our families, our 1,500 colleagues offer reassurance to each other, bringing different, varied, and imaginative solutions to problems. It is vital we communicate and learn from each other at this time.

Consequently, it is incumbent on me, as the Trust CEO, to ensure that you have all the resources which you need to allow you to do your job and also to support others when they need help. The daily challenges you face require strength, resilience, and determination. I have said before your own health and well-being is crucial. We have a 'Health and Well-being fortnight' planned for week commencing 23rd November, more to follow soon. This will hopefully remind and further support the great work already happening across our Trust.

Our Trust values are underpinned by a Christian ethos which, at a time like this and whatever the faith of our families or communities, has never had more resonance.

I have spoken before about kindness, respect, forgiveness, perseverance, and love being central to our school life. Coupled with the outstanding education we deliver, these values will support everything we do with children and families and they will all benefit considerably, of that I am sure.

I was delighted to receive news of school celebrations as regards a local carnival event in Bridgwater. Staff and children collaborated to design giant face masks celebrating the theme 'thank you'.

Behind the scenes here in Wells, we are continually reviewing better ways of ensuring we all understand the changes which are happening and implementing more effective ways of communicating with every one of you.

I have already had the privilege of meeting our Trust Headteachers, their teams when I have visited school sites, also via online teams calls. I have also met all our dedicated Central team. Currently I am completing Headteacher, Chairs of Governors and Trustee meetings, unfortunately all remote due to the most recent lockdown arrangements. During these sessions I have taken on board your feedback about communications; style, frequency and what makes the greatest difference to you. Over the next few weeks, you will see some changes. Please let me know your views.

I joined this Trust during one of the most remarkable and difficult periods most of us can remember. Words here cannot express fully my pride at your efforts and your resilience. Please know that while we work for families, we are also one large, extended family and we will continue to do what families do in hard times – support each other.

Nikki Edwards



Mask-nificent!

I thought I would share these superb carnival mask designs that have been created by St John and St Francis Church School pupils into giant masks for the Bridgwater Carnival Mask trail.

Our super talented pupils were asked to design a mask that reflected the theme of 'thank you' and the most creative designs were then combined to create a KS1 and KS2 mask to be displayed around Bridgwater as part of this year's carnival mask trail. The children worked with some of our amazing TAs to create their designs on the masks. Hope you enjoy the pictures.

