



The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust

# Newsletter

Issue 01



**The Rivers**  
C.of E. Academy Trust

# Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer of Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust

Welcome to our first annual newsletter for parents and carers. During my visits to schools last year, I held parent focus groups to gather views and build a deeper understanding of our communities. One of the key themes of parents' feedback was to hear about how our trust supports schools and the collaboration that takes place. In response, we are launching this annual newsletter for parents and carers.

I hope that you find it insightful and that it enables you to see the great work that our family of schools and central services are doing to provide

**'an extraordinary education for every pupil'.**



**Matt Meckin**  
CEO



INSET Day - Rivers Choir



INSET Day



Box Car Rally



## Who Are We?

The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust is a collaborative community of fourteen 'good' and 'outstanding' primary and first schools, an 'outstanding' independent nursery, an alternative provision, and a thriving teaching alliance across Worcestershire, Sandwell, and Dudley.

We are a family of schools with a 'Christian ethos'. We have Church of England and community schools and welcome families from all faiths and no faiths.

**With over 5,500 pupils and more than 850 staff, The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust is one of the largest primary multi-academy trusts in the West Midlands.**

A multi-academy trust (MAT) is a not-for-profit organisation that runs more than one academy (school). MATs cannot be run for financial profit and any surplus money must be reinvested in the trust and its schools.

In September 2022, after two years of planning and consultation, The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust adopted an innovative governance model to meet the needs of a growing and thriving multi-academy trust.

As a successful multi-academy trust, The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust has a strong track record of improving schools; our focus is to provide an extraordinary education for every pupil.

While each school's unique character and local community are celebrated, we are united through our shared mission, vision and values.





## Mission

After consulting all stakeholders, we have refined our mission to truly reflect the aspirations of our pupils and staff.

The words

**Extraordinary Education,  
Extraordinary People,  
Extraordinary Futures,**

encapsulate the trust's purpose and future direction by defining what we do and why.

# Vision Statement

Through an **extraordinary education**, we empower pupils to be life-long learners and see their limitless potential. Respectful relationships and an unwavering focus on discovering talents and interests enable pupils to flourish and be **extraordinary people**. Together, we spark aspiration and drive achievement, so that pupils contribute positively to society and to their **extraordinary futures** in an ever-changing world.

## Values

We are united by our STARS values – **Sharing, Trust, Achievement, Respect, Safety** – which are the characteristics and behaviours that we all share.





## Celebrating the First Ten Years

This year, the trust celebrated its first ten years of existence. Since 2014, we have grown to become a primary-specialist trust of choice in the West Midlands. Specific recent highlights include opening two free schools, winning Large MAT of the Year and MAT Leadership Team of the Year at the National MAT Awards 2023 and implementing our cutting-edge governance structure, which has been praised by Ofsted during recent inspections. Under the leadership of our new CEO, we are now ready to build on the success of our first ten years and look to the future with our revised mission and vision statement and the launch of our 2030 strategy.



# Achievements

## Curriculum

Staff from our schools have worked collaboratively over the years to develop an ambitious 'Rivers Curriculum'. Ongoing developments include giving pupils a sense of belonging within their school, local community and in the world through the enhanced geography and history curriculum, as well as additional opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to think and act sustainably, creatively, fairly and collaboratively.

In recent Ofsted inspections, the Rivers Curriculum has been found to be a significant strength.

## Pupil Collaboration

A personal development working party, with representatives from all schools, has designed a series of collaborative events for pupils from across the trust, ranging from a maths championship and the box car rally (a project involving engineering, technology, art and design and annual event for all Year 6 pupils) to an art project supported by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.



## Outcomes for Pupils

**Our trust average attainment compares well to national averages.**

**Our trust averages are as follows:**

- Reception Good Level of Development = 73% (above national average)
- Year 1 Phonics Check = 87% (above national average)
- Year 4 Multiplication Check (above national average)
- Year 6 pupils at the expected standard in reading, writing, and mathematics = 59% (similar to national average)

One of our trust priorities is to ensure that end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above national average. A key part of achieving this will involve a focus on mathematics.

## Evergreen

Evergreen is our innovative approach to using digital devices to enhance teaching and learning for all pupils. All pupils have access to devices, with pupils in Years 3 and above having their own device to use in school and at home.

**Evergreen aims to provide opportunities to enhance pupils' overall learning experience by:**

- Giving access to learning anywhere, anytime – both in classrooms and at home.
- Narrowing the digital divide between pupils.
- Encouraging pupils to become more independent in their learning.
- Personalising learning to suit individual pupils.
- Providing opportunities to create and share work.

This short case study video by Jigsaw24 (our digital partner) shows how we have integrated Evergreen to support diverse learning needs and enhance learning:



**See Evergreen in action**

# Ofsted Inspections

Since February 2024, the trust has had seven successful Ofsted inspections:

- In February 2024, Cherry Orchard Primary School achieved a judgement of 'good' with 'outstanding' behaviour and attitudes. In 2020, before joining the trust, the school had been judged 'inadequate'.
- During its first Ofsted inspection in February 2024, North Worcester Primary Academy achieved a 'good' judgement in all areas.
- In May 2024, Heronswood Primary School achieved a judgement of 'outstanding' in all five areas of the Ofsted framework.
- Great Witley CE Primary School achieved a 'good and improving' outcome in May 2024. The school will receive another inspection within the next one to two years to confirm if it is 'outstanding'.
- Dudley Wood Primary School, which had been judged 'requires improvement' before joining the trust, received a judgement of 'good' in all areas in July 2024.
- Cranham Primary School was judged to remain a 'good' school during its Ofsted inspection in October 2024.
- In October 2024, St Clement's CE Primary School achieved a judgement of 'good' with 'outstanding' in the area of personal development.
- All The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust schools are judged to be at least 'good', with two schools and one nursery judged to be 'outstanding'.



Our trust has invested

**£2.2  
million**

in funding to improve our  
school environments.

## Investment in Environments

Over the past year, our trust has invested £2.2 million in capital funding to improve our school environments. This includes major refurbishments like new toilets at Cherry Orchard and Dudley Wood. Cutnall Green has gained a new classroom and improved bathroom facilities, with support from the local authority, and Cranham has also received an upgraded bathroom area. We are continuing to strengthen our IT infrastructure and expanding the Evergreen project.

# Continuous Professional Learning (CPL)

## Inset Day

On Monday 2nd September, we held a whole trust training day, where all staff from our schools came together at the Worcester Arena.

This was a fantastic opportunity to get everyone in one place and was a celebration of a decade of our trust's success and a pivotal moment for unveiling our Rivers 2030 strategy. The focus of the day, 'One Family, One Journey: An Extraordinary Education for Every Pupil', gave us a chance to reflect on key aspects of our strategy as we move from strength to strength and ensure we meet our mission of 'An extraordinary education for every pupil'. Guest speakers and staff members inspired us as we started the school year.



## The Rivers Teaching Alliance

The Rivers Teaching Alliance is the trust's main adult training space. It is based on the same site as St Clement's CE Primary School and has been an integral part of our trust work since 2015. Part of our work is providing training for the schools in our trust and more widely, including first aid, National Professional Qualification and maths training.

We also train teachers through our PGCE with Worcester University. Over the years, we have trained over 100 teachers, many of whom now work in our schools. We are able to offer training that takes advantage of the expertise in our schools and are consistently praised for the standard of our training and the support our trainee teachers receive.



**Train to teach**

# 2030 Strategy

Whilst acknowledging and celebrating our many successes, we are not complacent and continue to strive for excellence in everything we do. Our 2030 strategy sets out our three key themes and the three 'anchors' within each theme, which outline our areas of focus as we move into our second decade.

## Extraordinary Education

- Excellent teaching and provision
- High-quality support for vulnerable pupils
- Exceptional enrichment

## Extraordinary People

- Empowered and valued employees
- Clear professional learning pathways
- High-quality collaboration and networks

## Extraordinary Futures

- Purposeful environments
- Digital innovation and efficiency
- Thriving growth and partnerships



[Learn more](#)



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