

26th March 2026

Dear All,

As we approach the end of another busy, challenging but rewarding term, I wanted to share some reflections on the experience of what it can be like to work in a school in England in 2026.

There is no doubt that the landscape of education throws up more challenges year on year; the only constant in education is change! Although in many ways the Covid pandemic is a distant memory, unfortunately the ripples continue to be felt in schools across the country. Poor attendance, challenging behaviour, from pupils and parents alike, and a tsunami of well-being issues and additional “need” are all commonplace. This in turn has contributed to public institutions, especially schools, being on the receiving end of a huge uptick in complaints and litigation, often fuelled by AI. Added to this, schools in England are about to embark on huge reforms to curriculum & assessment (again!) and get to grips with a completely new system for inclusion and SEND, all of which has the potential to further trigger those who may already be anxious or angry. And all this with cuts in real-term funding year on year. Who’d be a teacher? Who’d work in education in 2026?

Well, I’m delighted to say, “I would”, and I am blessed to work with another 1,967 people who feel the same way! Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying that we don’t experience any of these issues in Xavier schools, we certainly do - there will always be a small minority of children who push the boundaries, and a handful of parents who aren’t happy (but don’t want to take their children elsewhere) – but as I’ve said in these letters many times before, the vast majority of us here feel blessed to serve in our Catholic schools.



Children and young people, on the whole, bring joy, and the sort of people who work and thrive with us, see that clearly. Our Catholic ethos, our focus on relationships, and our commitment to excellence in teaching, mean that Xavier Schools remain largely happy places to be. Life is undoubtedly tough for some of our families, and this is understandable, particularly given some of the pressures that modern society places on us, but this shouldn’t be an excuse for losing perspective; one only has to take the time to zoom out slightly and look at the world around us to appreciate this.

So, reflecting on this, please let me take this opportunity to say thank you. Thank you to the staff who work tirelessly for the good of the children, we don’t always get it right but wow, you give our young people a great deal. To the parents and wider families who work with us, who aren’t afraid to provide the right combination of tough but unconditional love that children need to thrive. To the governors and other volunteers who give of their time and expertise freely for the sake of the children. And most importantly to the pupils and students for all the joy, grace, character and promise that you bless us with every day. Thank you.

As we approach Holy Week and the climax of the Lenten season, we are encouraged to empty ourselves of all that takes us away from God, to make room for the grace that He freely gives us and to put it to good use. A good way to start this journey of return to God the Father, is by counting our blessings. For those looking to take more practical steps, CAFOD can always be relied upon to offer an avenue through their [Lenten appeal](#). However you choose to spend Easter, please do so with the best wishes from everyone here at Xavier for a restful, fruitful and joyful holiday.

God bless,

James Kibble
CEO