

8th September 2023

Dear All,

It is a pleasure and a privilege to introduce myself as the successor to Ani Magill, the founding Chief Executive of Xavier, our Catholic Education Trust; what large shoes I have been left to fill! I am fortunate to be a long serving member of the Xavier family having formerly taught at SJB in Woking before moving to Salesian in Chertsey where I was Headteacher for 16 years. I have been involved with Xavier as Deputy CEO since our formation in 2016 and am passionate about and committed to securing the longer-term mission of the Trust.

Like the majority of you reading this, I am a parent, and I am delighted that my children are fortunate enough to attend schools within our Trust. We are truly blessed to have them taught and cared for by such dedicated and talented staff in schools that are led by great Headteachers; I know from working with them that they really do go above and beyond for the children in our schools. Thank you for everything you do to support them as parents, PTA members and governors. Again, like many of you reading this, one of my children is making the transition from primary to secondary school this week, so I share with you, and all those who are joining our schools at any stage, the nerves and the excitement of the first week. I hope this has been a happy experience for all those starting a new phase of education, be it in Reception, Year 7, or Year 12.

We offer a particular welcome to the school community at St. Joseph's in Guildford who are joining the Xavier family this term and look forward to St. Cuthbert's in Englefield Green becoming formal members of the Trust in due course. This will bring the total number of schools in the Trust to 17, with another 11 Catholic schools in Surrey due to join us, over the coming years, God willing.

I hope the summer holidays have provided you and your family with a good balance of rest and enjoyment, leaving you with many happy memories. However, we remember in our prayers at the start of this term, all those families who have faced difficulties over the holidays, especially the bereaved. The Xavier family were particularly sad to lose Rebecca Clarey, the long-standing, but still much too young, Head of Music at Salesian who did so much to inspire excellence in music in many schools across the Trust. We give thanks for all the blessings that Rebecca and all those who have died this year have brought to the Xavier mission.

On a happier note, congratulations to all those families who had children in Years 11 or 13 last year; once again, all three of our secondary schools achieved exceptional GCSE, A' Level and vocational results and we were delighted to see practically every student graduating to the place of their choice for the next stage of their education or training.

Of course, not all staff have been on holiday over the summer. Quite apart from all those who have been processing results and supporting students with next steps, an army of support staff have been beavering away behind the scenes doing all the things that are needed for us all to have a smooth start to the new year. As well as that, our IT and Estates teams have overseen refurbishments and building projects in a number of our schools, and we look forward to the children and staff enjoying these improved facilities this year.

On the subject of school maintenance, I can only apologise for any undue concern caused as a result of the inept handling of the RAAC debacle and subsequent media coverage. You may well have already heard from the Headteacher of your school, but I would like to assure you that the Trust commissioned a full survey of all our schools earlier this year and I can confirm that we have no RAAC present across the whole of the estate.

Many of you will share, with us in the profession, the utter dismay that met our Secretary of State for Education's response to this latest crisis when interviewed by Channel 4 News this week. Fortunately, we have been blessed with the example of a different approach to leadership that we can model ourselves on, that of Pope Francis who tells us, "Our greatest power is... the service we offer others". On behalf of the whole team here at Xavier, we look forward to serving you and your family this year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Kibble', written over a light blue background.

James Kibble
CEO