

2nd October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers of DSAT,

MUCH TO CELEBRATE

I do hope the new school year has started positively for you and your children. Last year was an exciting year for us in so many ways with eleven positive inspection outcomes, many pleasing results across the age ranges, and some great joint events for staff and pupils. I think the highlight for me was the singing event in Salisbury Cathedral. It is scarcely believable that this was nearly a year ago and that we are all set to go again in the next couple of weeks. The children have been enjoying their workshops with the new songs over the past week.

WELCOMING NEW FRIENDS

We are looking forward this term to welcoming four new schools into the Trust, making a total of 28 schools altogether. St Nicholas', Porton; St Martin's, Salisbury; Broad Chalke and St Martin's, Lyme Regis, should all become part of the family on 1st December. Their leaders and staff are already engaging fully with us and bringing new skills and ideas with them. It was my pleasure last Thursday to be at Salisbury Cathedral in a ceremony to formally welcome new Headteachers to the Diocese. Our own Mrs Scrivens from Marden Vale, and Mrs Hill from St Nicholas', were there to receive their blessing from Bishop Stephen.



YOUR SUPPORT

We are so grateful for the support that you give to our Headteachers, leaders and staff in seeking to do the very best for your children. I am constantly amazed by how tirelessly they work for the good of our children and I know that you are grateful for that. Please feel free to express your gratitude to them whenever you get a chance! This Thursday 5th October is National Teachers' Day so it is a perfect opportunity to say thank you to the teachers and support staff in our schools.

On that note, I am sorry to say that we have been dealing with a number of situations in recent weeks where people have behaved in ways that I can only describe as unacceptable towards our staff. I want to assure you that wherever there are difficulties or challenges, we will do all we can to work with you towards a suitable resolution without the need to resort to formal complaints. Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to completely satisfy everyone all of the time, but our staff will always do all they can to support. However, I must emphasise that we will not tolerate staff being spoken to inappropriately, be that with bad language, raised voices, personal attacks or aggression. This applies to in-person communication and online. In these situations, we will write to warn people about future behaviour and use legal measures where necessary. It pains me to say this, and I know it only relates to a small minority,

but I know that the majority of you will be supportive of this in order to maintain good order and positive environments for children and adults. Thank you.

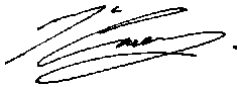
It is certainly true that a number of you face frustrations with accessing support services beyond school for meeting particular learning, physical and social needs. I can assure you that we share these frustrations as we find it harder and harder to access these services. We make as many representations as we can in the case of individual pupils, and also locally and nationally to highlight concerns and issues in this respect. It often feels that there are insufficient services and funding for addressing need. We are with you and your children as we seek to secure the very best opportunities for them but please understand that we are sometimes powerless to change things.

DSAT IS 10!

Finally, I want to draw your attention to the fact that on 1st December, DSAT will celebrate its 10th anniversary. We will share further details later in the term as to how we can engage the children in this celebration. We have grown and developed so much during those 10 years and there is much for us to be proud of as we look to go 'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'. Take a look at the map below to see where we are within the diocese.

Thank you again for your on-going support.

Best wishes,



Mark Lacey
Chief Executive



DSAT SERVICES TEAM