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1st April 2020

Dear Parents,

Whenever a school joins the Durham Diocesan Multi Academy Trust I usually send a letter of welcome. Today, in what feels particularly strange circumstances your school has become part of the Multi Academy Trust. I know the whole community of Stanhope and beyond has been working incredibly hard to support each other and I look forward, once we have reached a sense of normality to meeting you all.

I would still today, like to officially welcome you to the Durham Diocesan MAT on behalf of myself, the Trust CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and the Durham Diocesan Board of Education. Over the last twelve months the Diocesan Education Team and I have worked with your school and the Department for Education to support your school in becoming part of our Diocesan Multi Academy Trust.

The clear vision for our Trust is to ensure all of our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive academically, socially, culturally and spiritually. We believe the drive for excellence and effectiveness in our schools is paramount, but not merely because the Government says so. We want to enable every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God as a sign and expression of the Kingdom which is at the heart of the Church's distinctive mission.

Prior to joining the Trust the DDMAT team have been in school supporting the staff and leadership to ensure your school is prepared for joining the MAT and we will continue to work closely with your school leaders. Many parents have asked if they will see me regularly in your schools and the answer to that is no. This is not because I don't want to spend time in your schools. Only seven years ago I was a HeadTeacher before working for the diocese and I loved being part of my school community. However, my role is now more strategic to ensure the multi academy trust grows and serves even more children in the Diocese of Durham. You still have a Head Teacher and I must allow him to fulfil their role in looking after your school. However, I will be meeting with your Head Teacher and Chair of the Academy Council on a regular basis to monitor the success of your school in my role as CEO.

As I have said this is an exciting time and in this role I look forward to working more closely with our leaders on the journey of education that helps to prepare your child for their future steps in life. I am committed to working with your school to continue to support them to ensure a high quality education for all children, enabling them to achieve and excel in all areas of the curriculum and make good if not excellent

progress, from whatever their starting points, overcoming any barriers to learning and valuing their education.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the future and would encourage you to visit our Trust Website www.durhamdmat.co.uk to learn more about those working with me to support your schools.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Rickeard
Chief Executive Officer