

20 April 2021

Dear Colleague

On behalf of the OAK Trust Board, I want to take the opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to all our staff who make such a daily difference to the lives of our children. Your spirit of resilience during the past twelve months with the upheaval of COVID-19 has been remarkable. Our schools have thrived on many fronts and I am so proud of all our staff. In keeping with our values as a Trust, the wellbeing of the children has continued to be paramount.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I have not been able to visit the schools as often as I would have liked but have been in regular contact with Headteachers and governors. It has been consistently noted how adaptable and unified the OAK Trust staff are, and this is something I am grateful for, especially during a year of so many changes and challenges. Your willingness to change everything about your working life at a moment's notice has underlined the commitment and the resilience of each and every staff member, helping one another not just in the practicalities of learning new skills and directions but also mentally and emotionally.

To those that have remained in school during each lockdown to look after keyworker children – and those that are our most vulnerable – and to those staff who have been forced to learn new skills and deliver excellent remote learning to all those hundreds of children not in school, I want to say thank you. This extends from Headteachers to teachers to teaching assistants and school support and premises staff. You all embraced the challenge – many while caring for children themselves at home – and have continued to do so, ensuring the return to school has been as smooth and easy for the children as possible. I am so pleased to hear that the children have responded positively to the many changes and rules to keep themselves and others safe.

In a year like no other, and despite all the challenges, the OAK Trust continues to provide the best education and wellbeing for all our children. I am so pleased to be part of the OAK family and thank each one of you for your valued contributions. I hope you can also feel proud to be part of a Trust which works collaboratively to support one another and our students. As we look forward to the future and restrictions begin to ease, I will be sharing more about our vision and plans as we continue to help our students – and ourselves – come to terms with the last twelve months.

With my very best wishes



Stephen Mitchell, Chief Executive