



**The Romero
Catholic Academy**
Nurturing the Talent of Tomorrow

Summer 2022

Romero

News

News and events from across The Romero Catholic Academy



SPORTS AWARDS

Celebrating Romero sporting success.

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Our children celebrate the Platinum Jubilee.

OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING

Sacred Heart launch their OPAL initiative.

Romero goes Green



**ALUMNI: LIFE AFTER WISEMAN
COMMONWEALTH CONNECTIONS**

Romero^{News}

News and events from across The Romero Catholic Academy

Summer₂₀₂₂



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Nurturing the Talent of Tomorrow



Brendan Fawcett

Welcome to our Summer newsletter

Welcome to our Summer newsletter which is once again filled with some amazing stories from across our schools. This term we have been able to celebrate several events that, due to covid restrictions, haven't been able to take place; it is heartening to see our Romero Children come together once more.

Our first annual Eco Conference 'Romero Awakens' took place this term at Corpus Christi. This is an event allowing pupils across all 8 schools to demonstrate how they are addressing climate change and how to save our planet. Following the conference, all schools have signed our "Environmental Sustainability Pledge". This is our commitment to show that together we can reduce food and resource waste, create greener spaces and we can increase environmental education. Watch this **(green)** space for more updates!

School summer calendars are always full of sporting events and activities, and this term seems busier than ever. The Romero Sports awards allowed us to celebrate the sporting successes of our talented pupils. Chelsie Giles, Olympic Bronze medal winner and 2022 European Athletics Champion handed trophies out, in six categories, recognising top achievements across Romero's eight local schools. Chelsie was joined by Kieran Johnson from Guardian Ballers. Congratulations to all winners and nominees.

Jubilee events took place across all our schools this term, with schools celebrating with picnics, fetes, and tree planting. The celebrations were designed to help the children process the events of the Jubilee weekend while highlighting Her Majesty's commitment to faith and service.

Children's health and wellbeing is very important to us, and it is great to see the launch of Sacred Heart's Outdoor Play and Learning area. The school is the first in Coventry to try out an award-winning initiative and hopefully we will be able to create more facilities across our other schools in the coming terms.

This term has seen the return of statutory assessments and public examinations. This information only forms a part of what we know about our pupils. At the heart of all that we do is knowing our pupils' gifts and talents along with strengths and next steps to improve. I do hope that all students in Year 11 and Year 13 receive the results they deserve; may the results enable you to go onto your next destination as you find your place in the world. I am

pleased to see how many of our Year 11 intend to stay with us into Year 12 - long may the journey of learning continue!

The Cardinal Wiseman Alumni now has almost 3000 members, and this month Charlotte Lindsay, Leanne Wale and Mike Bench all share their journey from Student to Staff.

We often say that our staff are our greatest asset and I, along with the Board, want to take this opportunity to thank all our staff and governors. You have all worked tirelessly this academic year to ensure our 3,500 pupils are safe, secure and happy so they can flourish in all that they do. Our social event on July 15th was our way of saying 'Thank you' and I hope many of you were able to attend.

I wish you a restful and relaxing summer holiday.

God Bless.

Brendan Fawcett

On behalf of the Romero
MAC Board of Directors



Commonwealth Connections comes to Corpus Christi

A pair of Olympic and Paralympic champions joined children to test their teamwork skills ahead of the Commonwealth Games' arrival in the region next month.

Paralympic swimming champion Liz Johnson and Commonwealth gold-winning gymnast Steve Frew joined 60 students from six Coventry schools at Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School for an afternoon of outdoor exercise and training to give students the skills to host their own sports festival as part of the Commonwealth Connections programme.

Commonwealth Connections is a joint project from the British Council and the Birmingham Organising Committee for the 2022 Commonwealth Games; running from the autumn 2021 until July 2022, twinning 60 schools in the West Midlands with counterparts from the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The Coventry cluster, which is partnered with Zambia, includes Corpus Christi, Earlsdon Primary School, Finham Park 2, Riverbank Academy, Moseley Primary School, and Coundon Court.

The initiative is supported by the Birmingham Education Partnership, Youth Sport Trust and Birmingham Arts School, in partnership with Bring The Power, Birmingham 2022's youth programme, and Birmingham 2022.

Liz Johnson, who won Paralympic gold in the 100m breaststroke in Beijing 2008, is an Athlete Mentor for Youth Sport Trust.

She said: **"We've done a lot of work over the last term with these schools about sports leadership and planning events, and this is all with a view to the schools hosting their own sports festival."**

"Today is about preparing and making sure each school and each participant knows their role and are confident and competent about what they'll be delivering."

"They will be using traditional commonwealth activities, which leads us into the wider programme, where we've partnered schools in the West Midlands with countries around the commonwealth, with this cluster drawing inspiration from Zambian culture."

"Each school is bringing the activities they enjoy to this festival environment to hone the skills required to host an event, while integrating with other people beyond their usual circle."

Steve Frew, who is also an Athlete Mentor for Youth Sport Trust, won

Scotland's first Commonwealth gold in gymnastics in the men's rings in Manchester 2002.

He said: **"The schools are coming together to create activities and develop leadership skills. It's really important that these kids have this opportunity as it gets them outdoors, giving them new skills and new people to meet."**

"This is the beauty of Commonwealth Games projects, bringing people together from across different cultures, mixing ideas and everybody benefitting."

Harry Clark, PE Teacher at Corpus Christi, said: **"Today has been all about bringing students from across the city and region together to learn from Olympic and Paralympic champions and engage in teambuilding exercises as part of the wider Commonwealth Connections programme."**

"It's been a privilege to have Steve and Liz here at Corpus Christi to support the day. They have brought so much enthusiasm to their activities, and it was great to see students of all ages and abilities getting involved and having fun."



The Romero Catholic Academy

Nurturing the Talent of Tomorrow



Romero goes green

Environmental advocates and the incumbent Lord Mayor joined children and staff from The Academy for a day of thought-provoking talks and activities to show the next generation how they can take better care of the planet.

Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School welcomed sustainability experts from Severn Trent, Coventry City Council, as well as Cllr Kevin Maton in one of his first appearances as Lord Mayor of Coventry, for The Academy's inaugural Eco Conference.

The day, which is set to be an annual academy-wide forum to address climate change and how to save the planet, was organised after students at Corpus Christi wrote to the senior leadership team at Romero Catholic Academy to ask what they are doing in response to the challenges raised at COP26 in Glasgow last year.

The conference began with an address from Cllr Maton and featured talks from Bret Willers, Head of Climate Change and Sustainability at Coventry City



Council, who ran through the origins of climate change and what we can do to reduce our impact on the planet, and Ricky Dallow, Commonwealth Forest Delivery Manager at Severn Trent, who introduced Corpus Christi's Tiny Forest to visitors from across the Romero Academy.

Corpus Christi's Tiny Forest is one of 72 sites planted across the Midlands in celebration of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. As Birmingham 2022's Official Nature & Carbon Neutral Supporter, Severn Trent, with support from local communities and environmental charity Earthwatch Europe, has created the tennis-court-sized forests across its region this year, one for each of the nations and territories competing in the Games.

Each Tiny Forest is made up of native tree species that are threatened by deforestation across the globe to raise awareness of the importance of protecting nature. A total of 600 trees were planted at Corpus Christi school on Langbank Avenue, including Oak, Cherry and Lime.

Hannah Thompson, Trainee Year 6 Teacher at Corpus Christi, said: **"I'm very passionate about the environment and I was delighted to be asked by the senior leadership team at Romero to coordinate the event. It was amazing to bring so many interested parties together and we appreciate the support from all concerned."**

"In response to COP26 and the children who raised concerns about the environment, we created a

committee made up of staff from the Academy who have been instrumental in making our first Eco Conference a reality.

"We've had some incredible guest speakers here today and some enthusiastic responses from the children.

"We hope that this can be an annual event and that each year we raise the bar for environmental awareness across the Romero Academy to encourage real change."

Cllr Jim O'Boyle, cabinet member for jobs, regeneration and climate change, said: **"I'm really pleased that these young students are so interested in what they can do to address climate change."**

"It's a hot topic for us all and one that really matters to this generation. Coventry is leading the green industrial revolution and projects like Coventry Very Light Rail, all electric bus city and our ambition to install more on street electric charge points shows what ambition we have to cut carbon emissions."

"Also this ground breaking innovations will lead to the jobs of the future so I hope the students were also inspire to think about how they could play their part in positive change in the future too."

Ricky Dallow, Commonwealth Forest Delivery Manager at Severn Trent, said: **"As a company that takes care of one of life's essentials, we're really passionate about making a positive impact on the communities and the environment where we live and work and these Tiny Forests are going to be a real asset to the Midlands."**

"These Tiny Forests will they help to deliver a lasting legacy for the Games and create inspiring outdoor classrooms allowing children to learn first-hand about nature and the environment."

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For more information visit **romeromac.com**

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Paul Madia, Executive Principle of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, with Claire Harrison OPAL Play Co-ordinator, Sophie Newman, PE and OPAL lead, and children exploring the new OPAL facilities.





Sacred Heart celebrates its OPAL launch

Children at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School have become the city's first to try out an award-winning initiative which transforms playtime into an outdoor adventure designed to promote children's health and wellbeing.

The School has unveiled its Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) play areas to its 420 students following eight months of staff training and volunteer support from the community, with children keen to pull on their wellies and explore.

The new facilities have been made available to increase the variety of activities available during playtime and lunchtime and have a positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of children.

Sacred Heart was the first school in Coventry to sign up to the initiative and is one of only a handful so far across the West Midlands to put the scheme into action.

The new play areas - which include a water area; mud kitchen complete with pots, pans and aprons; a construction zone; sandpit; quiet spaces; and a woodland trail - were created thanks to support from staff and parents who volunteered their time, and local businesses which provided additional labour and materials.

Martins Fixings donated 20 tonnes of play sand, P Murphy and Sons Construction provided labour and tools to dig the sand pit, and Jaguar Land Rover provided volunteer support from eight staff members for

the creation of the construction zone, which includes a play car, pallets and piping for children to experiment with their imagination.

Jason and Kofi in Year 2 said: **"We love the sandpit. It's our favourite part and there's so much to do with your friends. You can do whatever you want."**

Alexa in Year 4 said: **"It's amazing and really fun. I've already been in the sandpit and making chocolate cakes in the mud kitchen, and some friends have been climbing trees in the woodland trail. There's so much more to do and it makes lunch time so much fun."**

Twelve of the school's play enablers and teachers were enrolled on OPAL's mentoring programme, where since September they have received in-depth training on risk/benefit evaluation and how to facilitate and develop play literacy, ahead of overseeing play across the new facilities.

Sophie Newman said: **"It's incredible to see the instant impact that our OPAL facilities have had on playtime, with children exploring with their friends and making new ones in the process, and letting their imaginations run wild in what is a crucial part of the school day."**

"As the project continues, we'll be continually developing our play offer, so if any individuals or businesses would like to support the project in any way, we'd be delighted to hear from them."

"We're always looking for extra donations of wellies and equipment such as push chairs, fancy dress and toys, but at the moment we're specifically looking for donations of compost for our tyre planters."

"I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has supported this project by volunteering their time and sending donations to get OPAL up and running, and to the OPAL team for helping us completely transform playtime here at Sacred Heart."





Former Olympian helps celebrate Romero sporting achievements

Women's 52kg Olympic Bronze medal winner and 2022 European Athletics Champion, Chelsie Giles, congratulated winners and encouraged guests to follow their dreams at the 2022 Romero Catholic Academy Sports Awards.

The event, held at Cardinal Wiseman, was the academy's first in-person sports awards for three years, and saw trophies handed out in six categories, recognising top achievements across Romero's eight local schools.

Chelsie was joined by the founder of Coventry-based Guardian Ballers Kieran Joseph, who gave an inspirational talk to pupils, parents and staff members about the importance of self-reflection and how young people can be supported through sport.

Head of PE at Cardinal Wiseman Chris Page, whose first teaching experience was with Coventry Judo Club where Chelsie was a member in her youth, hosted a Q&A Session with the Judo champion.



Chelsie said: **"It's always important to celebrate the things that young people are achieving."**

"You see lots of people across all sports give up at a young age even though they have so much potential, and it's awards like these that can go a long way to encouraging people to stick at it and build confidence."

As part of a motivational session, Kieran then asked the audience to reflect on how sport impacts them and consider the benefits that being involved in sport can bring, and encouraged pupils to take inspiration from Chelsie's story.

He said: **"If Chelsie can win an Olympic medal by putting mats on her living room floor and training in her**

home during lockdown, then these children can also achieve great things if they put their minds to it."

"When you celebrate hard work, it helps you to see why you put the effort in in the first place, and nights like tonight will hopefully help these young people to stay hungry."

"It's really special from a Romero perspective as there is such a big community to share and receive support, and the percentage that are here now will help to motivate the thousands of other children across the school family."

Mark McLoughlin, Principal at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, which was named School of the Year to cap the ceremony, said: **"To pick up this award on a very special night is a fantastic achievement for the children and parents for getting involved, and for our staff who go the extra mile to deliver an outstanding sports provision across all year groups."**

"We are extremely proud of our sporting pedigree at St Patrick's, where we offer 15 extra-curricular activities free of charge to all children and encourage each child to try at least one of them, and it's inspiring to have had the opportunity to celebrate all of the sporting success across the Romero family."

The full list of winners included:

Young Leader of the Year

KS2 (tie) - Kaydon Gillon, St Patrick's Catholic Primary School and Sofia O'Callaghan, Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

KS3 - Harry Davie, Cardinal Wiseman

KS4 - Keir Tanada, Cardinal Wiseman

Sports Achiever of the Year

KS1 - Victoria Madonko, Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

KS2 - Toni Duffield Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

KS3 - Deanna Salt, Cardinal Wiseman

KS4 - Helena Seraphin, Cardinal Wiseman

School Sport Team of the Year

Primary - Rowing team at St Patrick's

Secondary - KS4 Boys' Basketball at Cardinal Wiseman

Staff Member of the Year

Primary - Jevon Fraser-Walters, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Secondary - Chris Page, Cardinal Wiseman

Outstanding Sporting Contribution

Sophie Newman, Sacred Heart

School of the Year

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School



Good Shepherd culture day celebrations

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School in Longford has taken inspiration from City of Culture celebrations by dedicating a full day of learning to exploring diversity in its community.

Children at the School celebrated Coventry's year as UK City of Culture by exploring the traditions and backgrounds of classmates and their families in the school's first ever Culture Day.

The day of activities saw 34 countries represented by children who were invited to wear traditional dress and a group of parents who supported their learning with cultural artefacts, family photos and stories.

Children across all year groups produced reflective work based on their own cultures to create a group display to share with the rest of the school. The school is also set to host a 'Christmas around the world' day later this year to give children another opportunity to explore global cultures and faiths as a legacy of Coventry's UK City of Culture status.

Karen Vince, Year 6 Higher Level Teaching Assistant at Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School, said:

"We had a thoroughly enjoyable time finding out about the traditions and cultures of our school families, and were overwhelmed with the response from our parents who joined us in sharing their cultures."

"The children learnt so much and had a fabulous time, so to ensure this kind of collective learning continues, we will be planning a 'Christmas around the world day' in December and we are hopeful our parents will again share their traditions and celebrations with us."

Andy McConville, Principal of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School, said: **"It was wonderful to see the pride our pupils have in their heritage and the joy it gave them to share their customs with their school friends. Our children loved learning about the many different culture we have in school."**

"We are very lucky at Good Shepherd to have such a diverse community and our children embrace and admire each other's differences whilst also valuing our unity as a school family."





Cardinal Wiseman compete on the international stage

Olivia Ayres, Helena Seraphin, Cardinal Wiseman's head of PE Chris Page, Josh Okoduwa, Catholic Senior Executive Leader at The Romero Helen Quinn, Head of Girls PE Lisa North and Deanna Salt.

The International Children's Games arrives in Coventry from Thursday, August 11 until Tuesday, August 16, and four students at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School are hoping to make use of home advantage against their globetrotting rivals.

There are more than 1,500 participants aged 12-15 years from over 70 cities across five continents coming to Coventry to compete this summer, and Helena Seraphin, Deanna Salt, Olivia Ayres and Josh Okoduwa will be representing Coventry in basketball and football.

Deanna's performances in the regional girls' football tournament earned her a call up to the Coventry Girls football team, where she will join Olivia, a fellow key player for Wiseman's girls' team, in the Coventry side for International Children's Games in August.

Deanna was also the most valuable baller in Wiseman's recent victory in the KS3 girls Coventry Schools Basketball League final, but opted for football as her preferred sport.

Helena played a pivotal role in the KS4 Wiseman girls' basketball team which reached the regional schools final this year, earning herself a call up to the Coventry side. In the boys' competition, Josh was also chosen to represent Coventry after helping his KS4 boys' team to reach the regional final.

The Games, which are sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee, are set to take place three days after the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games conclude and on the back of Coventry's year as UK City of Culture.

Athletes will take part in seven sports over three days. Coventry's Games will be making history as disability or para-athlete elements will be incorporated for the first time in the history of the International Children's Games.

Lisa North, Head of Girls' PE at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School, said: "We are all extremely proud of the work that our pupils put in when training and representing Cardinal Wiseman.

"These four pupils have consistently shown our school values and it is an honour to put forward these pupils to represent our school and PE department at the ICG this Summer.

"Basketball and football have been our most successful activities in the last few years and we have strived to build on our success through intensive training and fixtures, helping us to

strengthen our position as a formidable force in the city when competing in these sports.

"It therefore came as no surprise that we have had several of our pupils chosen to participate in these events, representing Coventry at the ICG in the Summer. We wish them the best of luck, and hope they enjoy the occasion."

Danny Kingham, Team Coventry Manager, said: "I'm really excited for the upcoming International Children's Games. The event is going to be absolutely amazing and I'm looking forward to working with all the athletes that are part of the team.

"The children at Cardinal Wiseman are an absolute credit to their school, they displayed all the values we were looking for at the selection events so it was a pleasure to invite them to be part of Team Coventry."

The International Children's Games can be followed on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram via [@coventryicg2022](#).

Alumni: Life after Wiseman



**The Wiseman
Connection**

Mike Bench

Head of Humanities and Student Voice Coordinator at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School.

School Life

Mike grew up in the Wyken area of Coventry and attended St John Fisher Catholic Primary School before joining Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in 2005.

He said: **"My time at Wiseman, like any teenager at secondary school, had ups and downs with trials and tribulations, but there were key individuals who gave me a huge amount of support and helped me grow emotionally and taught me how to become an adult."**

Mike studied history, economics, media studies and English literature **"I really found my feet as an A Level student, so all of my fondest memories were of my time in sixth form. Having that independence of studying and having free periods was when I really bonded with the people who I'm still friends with now."**

It was during this time that his love of history developed, and he was also inspired to consider a career in teaching thanks to the passionate and supportive staff members around him.

He said: **"My main inspiration came at A Level, and it was my history teachers who really supported me and pushed me forward in terms of my education. They really fostered my love of history which is when I knew I wanted to take it further."**

"I had a teacher called Mr York who taught me about the Vietnam war, and I found I loved American history. I was really fascinated by the complexity of the nation and what it believes and stands for."



"I had a vague idea I wanted to be a teacher, but it was really those who supported me who were the inspiration. Because I had some challenging times at school, I always felt that there were staff who understood me and who I was."

"Ms Duffy, who is still a teacher at the school, taught me and supported phenomenally and now I'm proud to be her colleague."

"I was really inspired by the power that a teacher can have on a student, and although I loved history, I wanted to be that person who was there for another child like me."

Career

Mike went on to study American studies and history at the University of Nottingham.

"I loved university; they were some of the best years of my life. During my degree I was able to do a year abroad and I spent this in Louisiana in America." he said.

"I really liked American culture, politics, film and TV, so doing a Joint Honours degree allowed me to have a more interdisciplinary approach to education."

Mike successfully applied for a teacher training course, and it was Cardinal Wiseman's tight-knit community feel which made him choose to complete his training at the school.

After qualifying, he applied for a permanent position at the school and in just two years progressed to Head of History.

He said: **"My role as Head of History allows me to shape the subject and what the students study, so I'm really able to inject some of my passion into**

this. It gives me the opportunity to help ensure our students have the most well-rounded history education possible by selecting topics that work for them."

"My big passion is really diversifying the history curriculum, making it relevant to our students. I want the students to be able to see their roots in what we teach, no matter what race or gender they identify with or what background they have."

"I love teaching our Year 8 scheme of work called 'protest, oppression, and division' where we look at all different case studies of people who have faced prejudice and oppression through society. I like to think that our history curriculum gives all students an understanding of other people's perspectives and other people's roots which they can take with them with an empathy to be a better citizen in the future."

"I like to think that our history curriculum gives all students an understanding of other people's perspectives and other people's roots which they can take with them with an empathy to be a better citizen in the future."

It was the passion that he has for History and developing a rigorous, engaging curriculum that saw Mike promoted to Head of Humanities during the Spring of 2022.

"I am delighted to be able to unite History and Geography in one shared vision of a humanities curriculum that represents and works all our students".

Advice to pupils

When speaking about the advice he would give to current pupils, Mike said: **"It's okay if you don't know exactly what you're going to do as a career at 16 or 18, or even when you go on to university or further studies."**

"Follow your passions because often it's exploring those passions that makes your career become clearer."

"It's okay to not to have your whole life mapped out ahead of you – because life is more fun when it's a bit more fluid."



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheWisemanConnection>

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Charlotte Lindsay

History teacher and Head of Year 10 at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School.

School Life

Charlotte grew up in the Bell Green and Wood End areas of Coventry and attended St Patrick's Catholic Primary School before joining Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in 2004.

She said: **"I had a great time at Wiseman. I had a close-knit group of friends who I'm still friends with now, and have some great memories from my time at the school."**

"I went on trips to Germany and Disneyland Paris and represented the school in swimming competitions as well as in sports tournaments at Warwick Track which I also enjoyed."

"I had a really nice form tutor and she was amazingly supportive during some pastoral difficulties. She would always check in on me right until I left sixth form."

Charlotte's favourite subject was history, but she also enjoyed media studies, with her favourite teachers being Mr Keane and Mr Kingshott, who both still work at the school today.

She then went on to study history, English and media at the school's sixth form.

"I knew I wanted to go into social work or teaching, but I wanted to do history at university as I really liked the subject, so this influenced my choice of A-Levels," she said.

"I had a really good support system so did quite well in sixth form. There was also strong careers support for those wanting to go on to university which I found helpful."

Career

Charlotte left Cardinal Wiseman to study history and politics at the University of Central Lancashire before going travelling for a year.

She then became a Teaching Assistant



and went on to complete her teacher training at Sidney Stringer Academy, Blue Coat School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School.

After qualifying, she successfully applied for a position as a history teacher at Cardinal Wiseman in 2018.

Charlotte said: **"It was quite strange coming back to teach at the school, but it very much has a community feel which I really like."**

"I have a very strong group of colleagues in my department who are all very supportive - something which is essential in teaching."

"The support network I had when I was at school was one of the things that inspired me to become a teacher, and it's great that we are able to offer current students support which is equally as strong."

"It's also fantastic to see how much the school has continued to improve since I was a student."

"I love teaching history so this is a dream job for me. I really like seeing students get passionate about the subject, particularly those in the older year groups who are really developing their knowledge of history."

Charlotte also became Head of Year 8 and has since moved up with the year group and is now Head of Year 10.

She added: **"It was excellent to get the**

Head of Year position. I know all of the students really well and it's enabled me to build some really good relationships with them and their parents."

"I'm responsible for the behaviour of my year group - both positive and negative - and making sure that students are rewarded when they are doing well and sanctioned when they're not."

"As part of this I make a really conscious effort to ensure that people are rewarded and recognised for their achievements rather than only focusing on any negative behaviour which I think the students appreciate."

Advice to pupils

When speaking about the advice she would give to current pupils, Charlotte said: **"Weigh up your options - there's not a set path for everyone."**

"Having more than one option is good, and if you don't achieve the grades to go to university or an apprenticeship, it doesn't mean you can't do it. It's not all about going in a straight line, there's always a different path to get there."

Leanne Wale

Senior Assistant Vice Principal
(Academic) at Cardinal Wiseman
Catholic School.

School Life

Leanne grew up in the Wyken area of Coventry and attended St John Fisher Catholic Primary School before joining Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in 1995.

Leanne said: **"I absolutely loved my time at Cardinal Wiseman, mainly because the staff cared and wanted you to do well."**

"My main interest was science, but I enjoyed my whole school experience. I was a reluctant sports person, but I even enjoyed that and was part of the netball team."

"It was somewhere that felt safe and welcoming, and students were supported their whole way through the school. The staff saw potential in everyone and pushed everyone's strengths."

One of Leanne's fondest memories was when a supportive teacher went out of her way to ensure she was in the best possible position for university.

Leanne said: **"I studied chemistry, biology, and PE at A-Level and AS level in Geography at Cardinal Wiseman's sixth form. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but when I moved on to A-Levels, I knew that teaching science at secondary school was the right direction for me."**

"It was because of this that I decided to apply to study chemistry at the University of Warwick, and our deputy head of sixth form, Mrs Ireland, told me about the Warwick Awards scheme which would lower the grades needed for a place and open other pathways. Her encouragement and support meant so much and she demonstrated just how much teachers wanted the best for all of their students."

"My application was successful, and the awards scheme actually gave me a different set of resources, including access to a number of bursary options, so to have someone spend their time supporting me like that was incredible."



Career

Leanne went on to study chemistry at the University of Warwick and was the first one in her family to attend university.

"I loved the whole experience and was very fortunate to receive a bursary from AstraZeneca. It also gave me the opportunity to visit one of AstraZeneca's labs every year."

Leanne went on to complete her Masters in Chemistry at Warwick before applying for her teacher training. **"I had a fantastic personal tutor who really helped me when applying for my secondary teacher training."**

Leanne completed her secondary school teacher training at the University of Warwick, with placements at Foxford School and Caludon Castle School, where she went on to teach science at Coundon Court as an NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher) and worked her way up to become head of year. It was at Coundon that allowed her to explore which areas of leadership she could specialise in, which is when she developed an interest in special educational needs (SEN).

"After two-and-a-half years at Harris School in Rugby, which followed my time at Coundon, I moved on to Ernesford Grange as a SENCO where I stayed for a year. During my time as a SENCO, I also taught science as well as English and maths when gaps in the timetable needed filling."

Leanne joined Cardinal Wiseman in 2018 as a lead practitioner, which involved working with trainee teachers and overseeing the chemistry curriculum.

"I enjoyed my role as a SENCO, but I was keen to move back to teaching science again and also work on the development of staff – an area which is extremely rewarding," she said.

"I was then seconded to senior leadership as assistant principal, with a particular focus on SEN and inclusion, which further progressed me to my current position of senior assistant vice principal, overseeing academic development."

"It's very different to what I've done before but I absolutely love it. The biggest gains we can make with students is with what goes on in the classroom day-to-day, so it's fantastic to know I'm making a difference."

"I always try and use my experience as a student at Wiseman to help our current students, giving them an insight into what funding and bursaries are available for further and higher education and being supportive when discussing next steps."

"I try to use Mrs Ireland as my inspiration because if I can be anywhere near as supportive as she was, I'd be extremely happy."

Advice to pupils

When speaking about the advice she would give to current pupils, Leanne said: **"Don't let anything stop you doing what you want to do."**

"If you work hard and have resilience, you can follow your passions and get to where you want to be in life."



Perry the Bull visits Sacred Heart

School pupils at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School were treated to a visit from the official mascot of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games during a week of sporting highlights.

The School welcomed Perry the Bull in June to help pupils get in the Commonwealth Games spirit ahead of the competition's arrival in the region this summer.

The visit followed Sacred Heart's sports day on June 13, which saw pupils across all year groups take part in a range of classic races, with parents invited to a picnic and to explore the school's new Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) facilities.

Children had the chance to #PoseWithPerry, who is inspired by the design of ten-year-old Emma Lou, the winner of a national design competition that tasked children aged 5-15 with creating a mascot that reflects the

identity, heritage and culture of Birmingham and the West Midlands.

The mascot's rainbow-coloured hexagons represent the coming together of the Commonwealth in equal partnership with the diverse communities of Birmingham and the West Midlands at the Games in 2022.

Perry is named after the Perry Barr area of Birmingham, the home of the Alexander Stadium, which will host the athletics events at the Games, as well as the opening and closing ceremonies. The stadium has undergone a £72 million transformation in time for the Games.

Paul Madia, Executive Principal at

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, said:

"Our pupils were very excited to see Perry and he created a brilliant atmosphere in the school on the back of our sports day.

"People throughout the region should be looking forward to the Commonwealth Games this year, and it's been great to see so many of our pupils getting involved with sports because of it. It's a fantastic opportunity to promote sports, wellbeing, and the importance of friendly competition with the next generation, and I'm grateful for Perry's support in helping to share that message."



Jubilee Celebrations at Good Shepherd and St Patricks

Staff and students at Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School and Little Heath Primary School, which share an entrance and playing fields in Bell Green, came together for the first time in three years to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Students from Years 1 to 6 took part in a range of activities from dodgeball and rounders competitions in the playing fields and playground, to monarchy-inspired word searches, royal arts and crafts including a crown making session, and a Jubilee picnic with their school neighbours.

Dr Abdullah Shehu MBE, co-founder and Chairman of Coventry Muslim Forum and Deputy Lieutenant for the West Midlands, also joined the more than 450 students for a tour of the two schools and visited Good Shepherd's Jubilee Tree, a Swedish Whitebeam planted to mark the Queen's 70 years of service.

Dr Shehu, who works closely with religious leaders and local authorities in his role as Deputy Lieutenant to improve community cohesion, said: **"The two schools have shown great example of unity and teamwork to bring the children together as part of strengthening the wider community."**

"It's been a special day and a worthy celebration of Her Majesty's 70 years of service, and I think it's important that the children are given a day like today to understand the gravity of her impact on the country and the Commonwealth, maybe not through instant reflection, but by remembering today in years to come and into their adulthood."

Andy McConville, Principal of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School, said: **"The pupils have had a wonderful morning celebrating the Queen's Jubilee whilst also bringing our communities together."**

"They have loved having the opportunity to get to know the children they see going to school across the road. I am sure friendships have been made within their neighbourhoods."

Jo Stanley, Headteacher at Little Heath Primary School, said: **"It has been a lasting memory today for both children and staff. The jubilee**

celebrations across both schools demonstrate passion for our community and our country.

"What a perfect example of unity. We thank everyone involved in making today a great success and look forward to more opportunities for our schools."





Staff and students at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School commemorated the Platinum Jubilee weekend with a day of outdoor activities, from parachute games to celebrate the colours of the Commonwealth, to a picnic to bring more than 230 pupils and 30 staff together.

The day, held after the official celebrations concluded, was designed to help the children process the events of the weekend while highlighting Her Majesty's commitment to faith and the importance of providing equal opportunities to all.

Mark McLoughlin, Principal at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, said: **"Schools across the Romero Catholic Academy really got behind the Jubilee celebrations, and I'm sure these events will live long in the memory of all who were involved."**

"It represented an opportunity to allow our pupils to put what they had seen and heard into perspective and reflect on the significance of 70 years of service."





Blue Sky thinking

Blue Sky was launched by Sacred Heart in September 2014 as a Teaching School offering support to schools through the 'Big Six'. Now Teaching School Alliances have become regional Teaching Hubs, the Directors decided to relaunch Blue Sky as part of our organisation to lead on curriculum and assessment for pupils and teachers, along with learning and development for all job families.

Blue Sky is now set to deliver a suite of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and support to improve teaching and leadership across all schools in the city.

As part of the new provision, which will continue to be based at The Lodge at Sacred Heart, Blue Sky will provide a new CPD catalogue for the next academic year including courses and programmes on Catholic Leadership, Senior Leadership Development, Subject Leadership, Teacher Development and a wider range of additional training and workshops. The full programme will be announced later this summer.

Blue Sky's collaborative approach with strategic and professional partners harnesses talent across primary, secondary and special schools in the region to offer school-to-school support to ensure the best possible teaching standard for the benefit of children

and young people in the city.



Will Allen, Director of Blue Sky, said: **"This is an exciting new chapter for Blue Sky as we look to expand our training and development**

opportunities to teachers across Coventry, Warwickshire and the West Midlands, and ultimately have a real impact on the learning experience of children across the region.

"The level of expertise we have across the Romero academy is tremendous, and while we continue to make this accessible to our own staff members, our expansion means that we will also offer these opportunities to other schools as part of a bespoke support package, whether that's for certain

subjects, leadership skills, or for SEND learning.

We will also support bespoke training for all job families from safeguarding to managing difficult conversations.

"Our new CPD programme will be one of our flagship provisions following our expansion, but we will also look to extend invites to events, seminars and workshops throughout the school year, while having the capability to visit schools to deliver training in house.

"We'd love to hear from other schools and fellow education professionals about their personal development plans, and look forward to rolling out our new and improved provision in the next academic year."

For more information email: admin@romeromac.com



Farewell Paddy

As we approach the Summer, we will be saying goodbye to Patrick Taggart who is retiring from his post as Director of Operations. Patrick began his vocation as a governor at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School; from his appointment in July 1995 and then Chair for several years until he stepped down in 2006.



Anyone who knows Patrick will speak of his unequivocal passion for the promotion of Catholic Education from Primary to Secondary. With

the announcement of conversion for all eight schools Patrick took the opportunity and volunteered his services as a Governor again in February 2014, taking up post as Chair of the Board leading us through the conversion process in August 2015.

In August 2016, Patrick took up post as Academy Business Director. Through this role Patrick was instrumental in shaping a central team that would ensure Principals could focus on teaching and learning, whilst the HR/ Finance function was effectively covered through specialised teams who can rise to the challenge of compliance from the Academy Trust Handbook.

Using his extensive experience from commercial roles, HR expertise alongside his understanding of

education, he was able to establish an effective Shared Services Team, one that is highly functioning as an operation today.

Patrick has been visionary in working with Principals to create a school that brings out the best of pupils and provides an enrichment opportunity for the whole character of a child to flourish. Two examples of this, are the newly refurbished Saint Charles Lwanga Theatre at Cardinal Wiseman and the 3G Muga Pitch at Corpus Christi.

Patrick has been instrumental in establishing a state-of-the-art theatre at the Secondary school which is open and accessible to the pupils at Primary; this promotes and strengthens the transition from Primary and Secondary as well as putting the arts at the heart of our experience for all pupils.

The 3G Muga pitch has enabled sport to flourish at Corpus Christi and across schools, as well as enabling a link to our community and partnerships beyond our schools for the benefit of Coventry children.

Both aspects show demonstrable

evidence of how Patrick works with schools with a vision, to translates into a reality that greatly benefits the pupils and staff in the Romero and beyond to the city.

Patrick is always one step ahead. His contribution to Catholic Education is demonstrated in the way he goes 'above and beyond'; he is driven by making a difference for all the pupils and staff within Romero. He is innovative and forward-thinking, always looking for ways for the organisation to live out its mission; and it was under his leadership that this newsletter is bought to you. We promise to keep up his good work.

Go well go safely Paddy, we wish you health and happiness in your retirement.



Social Snapshot



Cardinal Wiseman
@OfficialWiseman

This term Drama students have been carrying out their end-of-year assessments and the work on display has been so diverse and incredible to be part of. All students have embraced these performances and have grown in confidence throughout the year.



Cardinal Wiseman
@OfficialWiseman

128 of our brilliant mathematicians from Year 7 and Year 8 took part in the Junior Mathematical Challenge on Thursday 28 April and the results, which we received this week, were amazing. Cardinal Wiseman got 2 Gold, 8 Silver and 25 Bronze Award winners. Hooray!



Corpus Christi
@CorpusChristi

We are exceptionally proud of our choir today who represented the school beautifully performing at the new cathedral as part of Coventry Cultural Cantata 2022.



Corpus Christi
@CorpusChristi

Wow! What an exciting afternoon! We were fortunate to have a visit from Jeff Rich (Status Quo drummer) who taught us about the importance of following our passions and how hard work and dedication makes anything possible! Dream big children!



Saint John
@SJFCoventry

Year 5 have been busy at the Black Country Museum, finding out about the lives of Victorian children. Classes 11 and 12 asked lots of thoughtful questions to help them find out more about their topic.



Saint John
@SJFCoventry

Year 3 have been true science detectives this week! They learnt about the different parts of a plant by putting on their science goggles and dissecting a flower, to see all the parts inside in detail.



Sacred Heart
@SacredHeartCov

Wow! Year 4 well and truly conquered Conkers!! We are so incredibly proud of how well all of the children represented Sacred Heart - they all overcame so many challenges and we couldn't be any prouder! Well done children!



Sacred Heart
@SacredHeartCov

Dancing Stars...

1st place Midlands Regional Champions!

4th place National Champions!





Good Shepherd
@goodshepherdcoventry

Year 2 are excited to be at Belgrade Theatre, Coventry this morning to see a production of Peter Pan.



Good Shepherd
@goodshepherdcoventry

We are focusing on Vocations this week at Good Shepherd. We are being attentive to what it is God is calling us to be.



St Gregory
@stgregoryscoventry

North East schools' team are continuing to work with Junior Pcso's @StGregsPrimary school. Managing a crime scene today and recording important evidence. Well done to a fantastic team.



SS Peter and Paul
@sspeterpaulcoventry

What a fabulous morning for our sports day today! The children all performed with great sportsmanship and many children achieving HUGE personal bests! SSPP, as always are very proud of all the children.



St Patricks
@StPatricksCov

Our choir performed at the Royal Albert Hall, they rehearsed for weeks and were a credit to the school.



SS Peter and Paul
@sspeterpaulcoventry

Year 3 visited Cadbury's World as part of their English learning on Ronald Dahl's 'Charlie and the chocolate factory'.



St Gregory
@stgregoryscoventry

They researched the Scientist Dr Ben Woodcock and conducted their own investigation to see how many worms live on our school grounds!



St Patricks
@StPatricksCov

Year 3 enjoyed a trip to Cadbury's World and go to experience how the chocolate is made and even try some.





The Romero Catholic Academy

Nurturing the Talent of Tomorrow

We are a multi-academy company comprised of the following individual schools/academies:



Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School
Omnia pro Christo



Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School
Walking in Christ's footsteps, opening hearts and minds



Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School
One Fold, One Family, Walking with Christ



Ss Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School
Learning and loving on our journey with Jesus



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Pray, Reflect, Learn and Grow to Mirror the Love of Jesus



St Gregory's Catholic Primary School
Learning and Growing in the Service of God



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
With Jesus we love, grow and succeed



St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
To live, love and learn, in our caring community



Blue Sky
Teaching School Alliance