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20th July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we finish another Academic Year I just wanted to say thank you for working with us as we move back into a new normal and thank you for your patience and support over the year.

This year our trust has grown to over 2300 children and over 350 staff. It is envisaged during the next academic year a further four to five schools will join us. This will be quite a milestone for the trust as once we have 3000 children the Education Funding and skills agency will allow us direct access to capital funding. This year we have replaced the heating systems at two school; renovated the disabled access at another; replaced a roof and rewired a school and improved our overall infrastructure. Next year we hope to be in a position to replace the roof on one of our schools and further our efforts in reducing our carbon emissions. Almost all of our schools now have energy efficient LED lighting.

As a trust we work in the background to support our schools being the best they can be and making sure no child is ever left behind. As a trust we have responded to the government Green Paper about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. We have made the point that our children have to wait too long to be seen by specialists and that there is a lack of skilled professionals which is slowing the process down.

Our school improvement partners, or as we call them CISPS, have been working hard in our schools to support heads with curriculum models and appropriate interventions. This year alone over 80 days have been spent in schools with staff and children. The impact of this has been an excellent set of results at the end of Key Stage 2 SATs.

As we break up this week I just want to thank all of the staff in our schools who have worked so hard to not only educate the children but also bring back our much-loved educational visits. There have been many residential and a number of other visits that have taken place. I would also like to thank our senior leaders who have managed complex staffing levels and kept our schools open.

Finally, I would like to thank our most special group of young people, our children. I am in awe of their resilience and how much they have bounced back in what have been such uncertain times.

I do hope you all have a wonderful summer break and I know all of us look forward to welcoming you all back in September.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Rickeard".

Canon Paul Rickeard
Chief Executive Officer
Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust