

8 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome Back! I hope you have had a wonderful summer holidays and that this finds you somewhat re-charged and ready for the academic year ahead. I thought I would write out nice and early into the term by way of introduction to my new role and also to welcome you to the new academic year.

On 1st September, I commenced my role as Interim Chief Education Officer for the Trust, as part of the Multi-Academy Trust Central Team. As some of you might be aware, I have been Headteacher at Riverside School, Tadcaster, since 2008 and closely involved with the STAR MAT since its inception. Indeed, I count myself privileged to have been involved in many of the discussions and decisions along the way – I know our Trust, I live and breathe the principles and values we all deliver every day! I bring with me some 30+ years of education experience which includes around 10 years as a secondary school governor and chairing roles within North Yorkshire for school funding, Team Around Child meetings, Prevention Services and others. I am passionate about getting involved and working with the right people to make a difference for our young people, staff and families.



Enough about me! Much more important is what I hope we can achieve TOGETHER.

No-one could have imagined the events since February 2020. Indeed, at some point we must properly take stock of what we have achieved in our Trust and beyond – remodelling our educational landscape repeatedly, dynamically and hopefully maintaining a positive and welcoming demeanour throughout. We have had many successes. In no way has it been easy, but I sincerely believe we at the STAR MAT have been helped along the way by having a shared intent, a positive professional discussion, aligning our schools and talking to each other. We have been so much stronger together. Strong enough to offer support within the Trust to help each other through in order to support our families to the very best of our ability. Strong enough too, to present a shared voice in recent weeks during the disastrous A level and GCSE results debacle; playing our part in presenting a reasoned argument for why the ‘algorithm’ approach was so unfair to our young people.

Into this academic year and beyond. We have a bold and ambitious [Strategic Plan](#). It aspires to reach some shared values in teaching and learning, further our curriculum development, explore a ‘digital entitlement’ and support our young people through educational and pastoral support and intervention. It aspires to truly value our people; to recruit, train and retain, with every employee proud to work in our Trust. For our staff to also be the very best they can be.

However, that aspiration must also be grounded on what needs to come NEXT. From the turbulence of the last few months, we must first ‘re-build’ and re-establish some common ground for our young people. There is no time to waste as every single young person counts – our first priority, our ultimate endeavour must be to get learning back on track and ensure that summer 2021 sees every young person step forward to their next challenge with courage and confidence. Time is always precious in education – these next eleven months more so than ever. I hope that every student and family within our Trust feels able to play their part in this too – we need to work together, maximising attendance, engagement and pupil/student progress to help make a difference to young lives.

Thank you for taking the time to read this – my very best wishes for a super term and year ahead. As soon as decorum and risk assessment allows, I look forward to seeing you in and around our Trust.

I can always be contacted with your ideas and feedback via CEO@starmat.uk

Kind regards,

Ian

Ian Yapp
CEO the STAR Multi-Academy Trust & Executive Headteacher, Riverside School