A message from Bridget Phillipson

Dear Dervla,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at The Holy Cross School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

There are real opportunities available for you to support improvement for a wider group of pupils including through:

- engaging actively with your region's RISE networks and partnering with nearby schools and trusts;

- contributing to regional roundtables and professional communities to spread the approaches that are working in your context; and
- sustaining excellence by continuing to focus on disadvantaged pupils

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Yours sincerely,

Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) - The Universal Service

RISE is the service to help every school improve. We want good schools to become great schools, and great schools to become leaders in driving change. Universal RISE is about making it easier for leaders to find relevant, high-quality resources, facilitating collaboration, and promoting the sharing of effective practice. We want every school to engage with Universal RISE, as a recipient and/or contributor.

What do I need to know about Universal RISE?

Universal RISE helps schools to:

- **Diagnose** improvement needs through DfE's data tools and, in future, by the "school profiles" digital service (planned for autumn 2026). School profiles will enable you to easily identify your school's strengths and performance gaps compared with contextually similar schools. It will signpost you to relevant resources and connect you with similar schools.