

## Chief Executive Officer – Mr Jonathan Taylor

The midpoint of the school year is a good time for in depth reflection. As you will read later in this newsletter SET has grown to over 750 employees and once Framingham Earl and Ghost Hill join in the near future we will educate in the region of 3,000 students. The Trust has a very clear aim – to provide world class education, locally.

World class, of course, has many different elements, but the starting point has to be in the classroom. Each and every learning activity must be well planned, focussed and progressive. Learning environments must be purposeful, creative and well ordered. Tasks should not be ‘fillers’ and must explicitly move pupils on in their learning. Outstanding classrooms have a buzz, an energy for learning and strong relationships are always evident. Research and innovation should be at the heart of our developing practice, simply doing the same will, at best, only maintain what we have.

This year Kelly has worked with a range of primary staff to share best practice and she provides a detailed update below. As a Trust we need to ensure that, as a minimum starting point, all of our Primary schools are secure in delivering at least an Ofsted ‘Good’ standard of education, before kicking onto ‘Outstanding’ and that progress exceeds national levels in all classes and age groups. Some schools still have work to do to reach this minimum standard and we will be relentless in setting the highest of aspirations for our pupils. What has become apparent to me this year is the historical failure of the Local Authority to provide adequate support, training and resources for our Primary Colleagues – schools have worked in relative isolation and now need to use strategies that are proven to work, rather than follow the latest fashion introduced by well-meaning but under resourced ‘consultants.’ Talk for writing is one such strategy and when delivered effectively is transformational.

I am pleased to confirm the appointment of Zoe Fisher as our Secondary improvement lead. For those of you who don’t know Zoe she introduces herself below. I am delighted with her appointment, primarily because of the excellence she’ll bring to the post, but it always rewarding when we can promote from within the Trust.

At the time of writing we are awaiting the Ofsted report on Stradbroke High, following their inspection a couple of weeks ago. One of the pleasing aspects of the inspection was confirmation that leaders knew the school very well and that our identified areas for development matched those of the inspection team. I look forward to the publication of the report and planning the next steps on the journey to be world class.

David Rzeznik, HMI, has been visiting schools in the Trust to provide an external viewpoint and to test SLT’s assessment of standards. Several generic points are emerging from school visits already undertaken and there are two points worthy of further reflection. Firstly tasks and work are not always matched to student abilities and can, on occasion, lack challenge. Are we always sufficiently challenging all students? Secondly teaching and work sometimes appears to be pitched at the middle - are we doing enough to move learning on?

We are now approaching the business end of the year. We need a relentless focus on Supporting Year 6, Year 11 and Year 13 in preparing for their crucial tests/exams. One benefit of cross-phase working has been explaining to Primary staff how much Year 6 outcomes matter in the secondary context. Year 6 outcomes are still used as a crucial reference point when pupils are in Year 11!

A final plea – Please can we ensure that all of our individual spaces/classrooms are tidy and clutter free – it matters!

I will spend time in all SET schools this half-term and look forward to meeting you.

**Mr Jonathan Taylor**

**CEO - Sapientia Education Trust**

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### SET Trust Schools

**Primary:** Old Buckenham Primary School | Seething & Mundham Primary School | Rockland St Mary Primary School | Surlingham Community Primary School | Burston Primary School | Tivetshall Primary School | Great Hockham Primary School

**Secondary:** Wymondham College | Stradbroke High School

## Chief Operations Officer Update – Mr Robert Moorhouse



### Wymondham College

- Work started on new estates building. Steel structure in place and will be followed by roof and groundworks before the end of February 2018
- Ongoing painting in Kett and Peel boarding houses
- Tender bids for new Maths building due on 15 February 2018
- New beds and lockers delivered and installed at Christmas 2017
- Design finalised for New Hall flat extension. Planning permission being sought.
- Temporary building installed at Tom Eaton Centre which will house HR staff allowing other staff moves into office space around the staff room.

### Stradbroke High

- CIF bid submitted
- Safety & Servicing checks completed

### Old Buckenham Primary

- New control panel for boiler system to be installed at February half-term.

### Burston and Tivetshall

- New ceiling to be installed in Tivetshall school hall over half term
- Condition date Collection due at Tivetshall in February

### Seething and Mundham

- New dishwasher installed

### Rockland and Surlingham

- Classroom painted at Christmas 2017 at Rockland
- Tree work planned at both schools at February Half-term

**Mr Robert Moorhouse**  
Chief Operations Officer

## Mrs Kelly Stokes – Director of Improvement – Primary Lead



Since writing the last newsletter, much has happened across our primary schools with wonderful events taking place both leading up to Christmas, and following the holiday break.

Some children were taken on a magical journey through a wardrobe to Narnia where they sipped on soup around a campfire while singing Christmas carols; other children have sung collaboratively in Norwich with other primary school children in a national 'Sing up' project.

Several of our schools have also had the opportunity to watch 'School of Rock' performed at Old Buckenham High School and then question the children after about the performance.

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A visiting teacher to Wymondham College from Argentina had the opportunity to go into several of our schools and experience what English primary and nursery schools are like. She commented on how welcoming the schools were and has offered to establish links between her own school and schools in the SET.

English and Maths subject leaders have continued networking and sharing good practice by meeting up to look at writing across the Trust ensuring assessments are consistent and secure for all our schools. Teaching Assistants have also met up to work together on understanding the progression of English and maths from Reception to Year 6. The training days were held at Wymondham College and staff were keen to celebrate their schools and share their variety of roles and responsibilities.

Peer reviews have continued with Rockland, Surlingham, Great Hockham and Seething and Mundham schools all taking part. The opportunity has allowed leaders to gain a deeper understanding of the strengths across the Trust schools and recognise areas where support can be offered.

Several schools have also had a visit from David Rzeknik, the SET school improvement partner, who has worked with staff to help understand next steps to drive improvements. One of his recommendations has been to investigate 'Talk For Writing' in primary schools to support English teaching. He suggested a school in Birmingham that is a training school and several head teachers visited the school (Montgomery primary) to see the project in action. The staff were impressed with the writing and books at the school, so we will be looking at how our schools can benefit from links with Montgomery in the future. The trust is also starting to look at resources for maths in the primary schools to develop the Mastery approach and Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract approach, both of which are being developed in the classrooms.

The EYFS team have met up at Great Hockham to discuss best practice and share ideas. This network has plans of meeting termly to support each other with moderation and assessments, focussing on changes that are being introduced by the government and the latest documents being circulated, such as 'Bold Beginnings'.

There are new staff members who have joined our schools in January. They have made a great start and we hope they are enjoying being part of the growing SET team.

**Mrs Kelly Stokes**  
Director of Improvement – Primary Lead

## **Mrs Zoe Fisher – Director of Improvement – Secondary Lead**



I am thrilled to be part of the Sapientia Central Team. I am looking forward to working with both staff and students across the Trust; getting to know each school's individual personality.

Having started my career in London, I returned to my home area three years ago to join Wymondham College and having seen the Trust grow, I am excited by the prospects that now lie ahead. With the opportunity of working across schools, I will be seeking out the outstanding practice that occurs daily and sharing it with others to build relationships and opportunities to enhance the experience of our students and drive our schools forward. With our students at the core, a collaborative approach based on research, innovation and experience, offers a bright future.

**Mrs Zoe Fisher**  
Director of Improvement – Secondary Lead

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## Mrs Tina Smith – Director of HR



It's a really exciting time in HR and Payroll at the moment, we are busy developing new systems and procedures across the Trust and these will be communicated to you all in due course. The Trust's new HR and Payroll information system is in the early stages of rolling out Employee Self Service (ESS) and People Manager (PM) which will enable you to review your own personnel record and payslips all in one central area unique to you (once migrated to the new system). The People Management aspect will allow managers to review and authorise leave requests, authorise training requests and manage performance and the recruitment processes.

We are continuing to increase the SET Primary School teaching capacity. We envisage the central team growing steadily over the coming months as more schools join the Trust.

That said, our core function continues to review policies in partnership with the recognised Trade Unions; the most recent policies to be updated are:

- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Capability
- Whistleblowing

Watch out for more on the **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**, an overhaul of the Data Protection Act 1998 and one of the most significant pieces of legislation in a long time (to be implemented by May 2018).

And finally ...some interesting facts about HR:

- Current number of staff in the Trust: 769
- Total number of positions across the Trust: 939
- Total number of new starters since 1<sup>st</sup> September: 67 (inc. fixed term roles at WC)

**Mrs Tina Smith**  
Director of HR

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