



Chief Executive Officer – Mr Jonathan Taylor



Dear all

It has been a highly unusual few weeks since our last newsletter and I would like to take the opportunity to thank and commend colleagues for their hard work, commitment and continued dedication – we have continued to support pupils, colleagues and our wider communities in so many ways through this unprecedented period.

I hope this finds everyone well and would like to take the opportunity to remind colleagues that our HR team and our employee assistance service, provided by Validium is available should you need any support.

This week the DfE wrote to me, thanking our staff for all they've done – this included specific thanks for the role 'school business professionals' have played. In the same way as teaching and learning has shifted in focus and delivery, so too has the often-unseen work behind the scenes. We all know that schools simply can't function without the work of our non-teaching staff at school and trust level. The same recognition is also deserving of our volunteers – including Governors and Trustees. Trustee and LGB meetings and briefings have continued and Heads have been in regular on-going contact with their Chairs. This is valued and very much appreciated.

This newsletter is intended to provide a trust wide update of some of areas we have been working on – to supplement all of the very many things that have continued at school level.

1. The Future

Despite so many unknowns, I am hugely positive about the future of our schools and our trust. We are actively planning what the future might look like, including considering what we will need to offer our pupils and staff in terms of 'recovery', but going well beyond this. Next year will start with a focus on character education, an essential part of our broader offer. High quality teaching, strong pastoral support and a coherent and well-planned educational offer remains essential to our work – in this respect nothing has changed!

There is, of course, a huge amount we can use from this incredibly difficult period, that will enhance and improve what we provide to our pupils and staff in the longer term. We can use this period as a catalyst for longer term change – enhancing our use of technology, further developing how we share our professional expertise, innovating in terms of our curriculum offer, refining our pastoral support systems and ensuring that our vision to deliver 'a world-class education, locally' is realised – with high academic standards, underpinned by our view of a holistic education. We will never settle for second best for our pupils.

I hope we can do so on a national level too – that this period leads to genuine reflection about priorities within our education system. There is certainly the scope to review our testing and accountability frameworks - as well as opportunities for innovation and reform. Technological investment is certainly needed too on a huge scale.

In terms of staffing I am delighted to announce that Emma Davies will be joining us in September to take on the role of Director of Primary Standards. Emma led her current school to an 'outstanding' under the new Ofsted framework and when we visited her school we were really impressed. She will complement Rob Brewster's work leading curriculum development – being able to appoint leaders of Rob and Emma's calibre over the past few months has been a real positive.

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2. Attleborough Academy and Fakenham Academy

I am delighted to formally welcome both schools to Sapientia Education Trust, with the final processes having been completed on June 1st. This takes our trust to 15 schools, educating in the region of 5,500 pupils. It is very rewarding that we were the Trust of choice for both schools – we look forward to both schools flourishing.

3. Extended Re-opening

Our Primary Schools all extended opening on June 2nd and our Secondary Schools from June 15th. A huge amount of planning went into the phased re-opening – with school leaders, staff and our central team working together to ensure that we could extend opening with confidence. Our School leaders, central team colleagues and school staff have been simply terrific – working together to discuss issues, share thoughts and plan for their own contexts.

We always approach things in a calm, measured and proportionate way – taking time to ensure decisions made are the best we can make – working always in the best interests of our pupils, staff and communities. We have been cognisant at all times of the DfE guidance (I've counted 47 updates in the past 3 weeks), staff views and Union guidance, too – accepting that views change too. Our Health and Safety lead professionals - Chris Lloyd and Guy McCurley – have been exceptionally busy and their specialist advice and guidance invaluable.

Initial feedback has been hugely positive.

4. Remote learning

Many of us have faced new ways of working – and it is clear that remote learning will continue for at least the remainder of this term for many pupils. I am aware of many examples of outstanding practice – including high-quality remote teaching. There are lots of colleagues who have developed expertise in this area and dissemination of best practice has taken place within and across schools. If this is something you would welcome further support with, please contact Zoe or Kirsty and we'll do our best to facilitate this.

5. 'Virtual' Ofsted and Wymondham College Prep School

Alex Wilson, Headteacher, joined us at Easter - one term ahead of opening. The school is full and heavily oversubscribed, with 60 reception children starting in September. The school will move into its new building in September 2021 and will grow to 452 pupils, including 32 Year 5 and Year 6 boarders.

At the moment we are still awaiting the proposed building schedule from the DfE/contractor, though initial works have started on site. As soon as we have further news this will be shared with you – the overall plans remain unaltered. Work to upgrade the temporary accommodation has started this week, funded by the DfE. It is very much full steam ahead.

Last week one of the very first national 'virtual Ofsted' inspections was undertaken as part of the opening process for Wymondham College Prep School. This was a 3-day inspection, conducted by an HMI based in the North-West.

A virtual inspection is certainly an interesting concept – it was robust, thorough and exacting. It had its challenges too – especially organising a live streamed tour of the initial school building. 'Virtual Ofsted Inspectors' – that's a phrase I never expected to use!

Our project team did simply a superb job.

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6. Goodbyes

We say goodbye this week to two central team members. Terry Roberts and Beckie Brittain. Terry has led work on Contracts and Projects over the past two years, previously he worked as the Business Manager at Framingham Earl. Beckie has been our Project Officer supporting the opening of White House Farm Primary School and Wymondham College Prep School. Both move on to exciting new posts and we wish them well.

7. School Leaders

I would like to end with a specific thank you to our school leaders. Headship can be an incredibly rewarding, though challenging job. Heads are very much on the front line, dealing with a whole range of complex issues. Our Heads have worked with additional and multiple agendas and challenges throughout this period – I am incredibly grateful for their work and support.

With best wishes

Mr Jonathan Taylor

CEO - Sapientia Education Trust

ea@set-trust.org

Chief Operations Officer – Mr Robert Moorhouse



Estate Management

Although work came to a halt once lockdown started in terms of contractor availability and contractors being able to access Trust schools, the estates team have continued to work throughout this period. The major summer works are normally planned at the start of the Spring Term but with some additional works added to our programme gave us the opportunity to bring forward summer projects and start them early once contractors became available. In addition to the normal workload, we have also been involved in procuring and supplying cleaning materials for the Primary Schools prior to their opening on 1 June 2020. This, as you might imagine, was extremely challenging given the pressure on supplies but we were able to secure necessary supplies and deliver them to all the schools prior to their opening. Since then we have re-supplied where required.

Work continues on the implementation of the Infrastructure Asset Management system. The database is loaded and now needs checking which will be done before the end of term.

Trust works update since the beginning of term:

Burston and Tivetshall Primary Schools

- Twenty new laptops purchased for the schools

Framingham Earl High School

- Utility survey completed
- Work on external improvements started with some tree removal
- Operation of Community Sports Centre taken over by SNDC on 1 April 2020

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Ghost Hill Infant and Nursery School

- Upgraded broadband connection installed

Great Hockham

- Upgraded broadband connection installed

Old Buckenham High School

- Most of old West Courtyard canopy removed (final section awaiting IT cabling re-location)
- Artificial turf installed in West Courtyard
- Window replacement in West Courtyard started
- Planning for installation of new MUGA at School underway
- Topographical survey and Utilities survey of site completed

Old Buckenham Primary School & Nursery

- First Phase of window replacement project undertaken
- Floor replacement work which was scheduled for Easter, moved back to summer

Rockland St Mary Primary Scholl

- Work on new building at rear of school underway
- New interactive screen purchased for classroom

Stradbroke High School

- Roof refurbishment work started (work brought forward from the summer)

Surlingham Primary School

- Two new interactive screens purchased for classrooms

Wymondham College

- Ongoing Boiler servicing and repair
- Refectory extension structure, sides, brickwork and roof completed
- Ongoing work with Wymondham College Prep School including the work to convert the Music Block into the temporary Prep School home.
- Further planning work completed on installation of Trod footpath from College to Besthorpe end of Golf Links Road
- Work to convert the Tom Eaton Centre to the new home of Music continues (this work has been planned and undertaken by College Estates staff)

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Health and Safety

The Trust H&S Officer, Chris Lloyd, has been at the forefront of work since lockdown to support Trust schools with specialist advice and risk assessment against an ever-changing documentation issued from the Government and other organisations. His workload has been extensive and he deserves much credit for the work he has done in supporting the Trust schools.

IT

A note of thanks should go to Steven Vanderburgh (Framingham Earl) and Karl Coleman (Stradbroke) for their work supporting some of the other schools across the Trust during this period especially with regards to some of the work noted above.

Finally, a sincere thank you to Terry Roberts for all his work since he joined the central team. Terry has done some significant improvement work across the IT and contracts portfolio over the last two years at Trust level and will be missed by the team. We wish him well in his new post at another school.

Finance

The finance office has been working since lockdown either in the office or remotely. In addition to the normal running of the finances across the Trust, they have been involved in the integration of Attleborough and Fakenham to the Trust. Normally this is a fairly complicated procedure but has been made more challenging due to the current working situation. My thanks to the whole team and new colleagues at Attleborough and Fakenham for their work over this period of change.

Governance

Since the beginning of lockdown it has been a strange time for Governance as although LGBs have continued to meet and the Trust Board has continued to meet, having a meeting via a video-screen is a new experience for all. Thank you to all the Chairs and clerks who have facilitated these events and to Wendy Maguire for her work in coordinating efforts where required as well looking after the Trust Board. A few meetings to go before the end of term!

Mr Robert Moorhouse

Chief Operations Officer

robert.moorhouse@se-trust.org

DCEO: Director of Education – Zoe Fisher



Education Team

I would like to begin by thanking every one of you for the incredible time, effort, support and resilience you have shown over the last few months, everyone has played a part in our efforts to support our young people in a situation that offers so many unknowns.

The curriculum is a topic we have been discussing and reviewing for a while and *A World Class Curriculum* has been the theme of our Trust collaboration over the last 14 months. We are currently planning the Trust Professional Learning Day for Wednesday 2nd September, which we hope to host remotely.

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The theme for the next academic year continues to be the curriculum and looking specifically at *A World Class Curriculum: Character Education* and how we may recognise it in our schools. We are excited to have secured a speaker from the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues which is part of the School of Education at the **University of Birmingham** and I look forward to sharing more details with you in the coming weeks.

We have reached another phase whereby we need to consider what the curriculum now looks like as some of our children return to learn in school and others remain learning at home or a combination of both. There are lots of discussions around a 'Recovery Curriculum' and it is important to know what our definition of this is. It is an opportunity to innovate, be creative and try new things as we have already started to do in these new circumstances, rather than seek to return to an old normal.

Identifying what our children have and have not learnt over the last few weeks is key; diagnosis rather than assumption is important. We need to look at what has worked and implement it, for example some of our schools in the Trust are opting for baseline assessments using project work or assessments that will offer the pupil verbal or written feedback but no reference to grades, other schools are choosing smaller low stakes formative assessment including interactive quizzes to gauge the progress pupils are making through the curriculum.

The implementation of our curriculum has also adapted and teachers across our Trust have been impressive in the way they have met this challenge. Online live and recorded lessons were quick to appear, developing to virtually splitting classes into groups and the teacher 'popping' into each group for small group tuition and then bringing the class back together to share what they had learnt – all of which can be accessed via a mobile phone! The peer support to help colleagues with new technology and ways of working is fantastic to see.

For pupils that don't have access to remote learning, teachers have carefully planned activities that take students on a well-supported learning journey, guiding them through the curriculum with check points and one to one teacher feedback. The adaptability of our staff through their understanding of what their students need, has been amazing. Pupils have had to become more resilient and independent, parent engagement has also been crucial and many families have met these challenges through the support given by you and now is a time that offers the chance to harness this further.

It is also great to see assemblies and tutor time being adapted to work remotely, as it is the relationships we have with our young people that we build trust and engage them in a love for learning. Also, the connections that are being made to welcome our new nursery, reception, Year 7 and Year 12 pupils are creative with virtual tours of the school, tasks set to get to know the children through the vehicle of a subject or topic theme, online story times on private Vimeo and YouTube channels and Zoom calls to families so they can be introduced and get to know key staff. These innovative ideas are part of our new and exciting landscape.

Staff camaraderie has been key, Friday fancy dress and singalongs, whole staff quizzes, social media groups and team meetings have broadened the relationships that are so important for our profession and could form part of a new longer-term wellbeing agenda.

It is difficult to believe that it was only January when our Secondary Subject Networks last met, there was some fantastic collaboration and now could be the optimum time to enhance those professional relationships as I know some of you are doing across our schools. Also, it is a great opportunity to warmly welcome our colleagues at Attleborough and Fakenham academies to our networks. The networks at both primary and secondary level can provide shared planning and resources, remote meetings to discuss curriculum and ideas with like-minded specialists about what future learning could look like. It was lovely to put an MFL specialist in touch with a Primary Headteacher to share expertise and discussions around transition from KS2 to KS3. If you have mislaid contact details or are new to the Trust and would like me to put you in touch with other staff across our schools, please let me know.

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There have been new opportunities found by many of you in a difficult and challenging time and I have no doubt there are more to find. These opportunities will support us as we adapt our practice and strive to provide our young people with a World Class Education by knowing where they are in their learning and wellbeing, where they need to get to and how to support them to get there.

Mrs Zoe Fisher

Deputy CEO : Director of Education

Zoe.fisher@se-trust.org

Secondary Education and Teaching School

We remain as committed as ever to staff professional learning. Our teaching school programme will continue next year and all Teaching School sessions that have been postponed this term will be rescheduled. In 2020-21 the Sapientia Teaching School will focus on pathway courses for Middle and Senior Leadership, as well as specific courses for Primary Colleagues and Teaching Assistants. We are also hoping to run a Sixth Form Pathway course for the first time, which will consist of a total of four sessions and run in the spring term. Governor programmes will be bespoke and continue as before. A full programme will be sent out over the summer - most courses are currently planned to start after October half term. Our NQT and mentoring programmes will start as soon as possible after September. We very much look forward to continuing our pathways and we are very appreciative of the positive feedback received this year

Ms Kirsty Bray

Director of Growth & Development

Kirsty.bray@se-trust.org

Primary Education

I'd like to start this, my first newsletter as a member of the Education Team at Sapientia Education Trust, by taking you all on a journey. A chance to look back, take a breath, and recognise the unprecedented circumstances schools have experienced in recent months. I'll start with March – when the government announced they would be taking the extraordinary step of closing schools, indefinitely, to all except key workers' children and the most vulnerable.

I look back with awe at the way you collectively rose to face the challenge this presented. Since that announcement, you have worked tirelessly to construct models of how children can engage in learning from home, whilst other children continue to be provided with a safe, secure, nurturing environment at school. In regular discussions with each of the primary Headteachers, I heard many great examples of creative and flexible thinking. Wonderfully, a school hall was transformed into individualised 'pods' where children could curl up with a good book and have a quiet moment to themselves. Over time, children's remote learning has become increasingly refined and, alongside posting examples of children's work on your school's social media platform, you have created videos and blogs - all manner of ways of showing children and their families that you are there and that you care.

Moving forward in time, Boris Johnson then announced the plan for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children to return to school on 1st June. Whilst every one of you was desperate to provide children with the fantastic education they deserve, here was a whole new challenge. How could children be welcomed back to school in way that protected their safety and that of staff?

I had the privilege of attending a number of pre-opening risk assessment meetings held between the Trust and individual primary schools. I was struck by the level of thought, planning and care that had gone into welcoming children back. New measures included: staggered start times; organising bubbles (a phrase I never imagined using!);

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managing extra cleaning... Alongside this, at every step, you have regularly communicated with parents to keep them informed and up to date.

When contacting schools during the first week of the phased return, I clearly remember a passing remark from a Headteacher. He said how genuinely lovely it was to have children back in school as it was a poignant reminder of what schools are all about – a sentiment that I am sure is shared by you all. Our weekly primary Headteacher meetings continue to provide a further opportunity to share and learn from each other's experiences.

Not only have you managed all the above, you have also kept a keen eye on the future. Work continues on further developing primary school curriculum. This process offers an important focus on the best ways forward for giving children fantastic learning opportunities. As part of this, technology, such as Zoom, has been a fantastic tool for me to continue to have in-depth meetings with individual schools about plans going forward. I also look forward to upcoming sessions with primary schools on using a mastery approach to mathematics in mixed age classes.

I know many challenges await us as we journey forward, but through our collective effort, I know we will continue to support each other and do our very best by the children in our care.

Mr Rob Brewster

Director of Primary Development

Robert.brewster@se-trust.org

Safeguarding

I have been so impressed to see schools adapting and responding to constant change and the new requirements for safeguarding. I would like to extend a huge thank you to staff who continue to work tirelessly to ensure our vulnerable pupils are safe and supported during these challenging times. Safeguarding induction training has continued via Zoom and many staff have been completing online training – if you have completed courses please do send copies of your certificates to your Trust HR contact to ensure that your training records are kept up to date.

In addition to induction training, MyConcern training has also taken place via Zoom, there has been lots of positive feedback with schools feeling more confident in everyday use and the more advanced features such as reports. If you or your school would like further training, please get in touch to arrange. Bereavement training is booked for key staff in the coming weeks which I hope will enable staff to feel confident and equipped to support and signpost pupils and their families.

As more pupils return to school it is crucial that we maintain the attitude of 'it could happen here' and prepare to support pupils who may have been adversely affected by the current situation. It is also important that we ensure staff are aware of and use our excellent reporting systems, MyConcern and CPOMS, to record any concerns they may have about a student.

Thank you for your continued dedication to safeguarding our children.

Ms Claire Fox

Safeguarding and Attendance Lead

claire.fox@se-trust.org

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Director of HR – Mrs Tina Smith



The HR and Payroll Team would like to welcome all Attleborough and Fakenham staff into the Trust; we would like to thank you all for your contribution into the consultation and transfer process during these very difficult times. To clarify, we provide a full HR and Payroll and Pension service to all schools across the Trust so if you have any questions whatsoever please do not hesitate to contact us. The HR Officer responsible for Attleborough is Vickie Minister and the HR Officer responsible for Fakenham is Natasha Cockram.

Activity, over the last few months, within the HR Department has been quite lively with transfer of schools, furlough of boarding staff at Wymondham College and the phased re-opening of both the Primary and High Schools. Please remember we can advise on Risk Assessments for working arrangements where you have any worries or concerns about returning to work.

Recruitment is starting to pick up again now and we are posting adverts for both teaching and support roles. These can be accessed from our Sapientia Education Trust website (se-trust.org), or via your Employee Self Service Account. Some changes have been made to the recruitment process to accommodate Zoom or Teams video interviews which will continue for the foreseeable future. If you are a recruiting manager, please contact Jade O'Brien, Recruitment Manager for more details.

We continue to offer wellbeing support through the Trust's Employee Assistance Programme (Validium), please find details below:

Remember you can call Validium for support on a variety of issues
- or go online at validium.com to check out vClub



0800 3 58 48 58

Outside UK: +44 141 271 7179

For online support join vClub at validium.com

Username: **Sapientia**

Password: **EAPsupport**

NGT Service: 18001 + helpline number or download NGT Lite App.
Ensure your device is connected to WI-FI to run NGT Lite.



My vClub – Available on App Store & Google Play

Furthermore, a large variety of on-line training courses are available via iHasco, the Trust's on-line learning platform. IHasco offer both mandatory and optional training courses in easy to access bite size learning. If you would like to access any optional courses, please let your HR Officer know who will register you for these.

Please don't forget to sign up for SODEXO discounts and benefits, Sodexo offer % discounts on both everyday and occasional purchases. The link to access this service is

https://sapientia.employeebenefitsplatform.com/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=clickherebutton&utm_campaign=21days17062020

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SAPIENTIA
EDUCATION TRUST

Sapientia NEWSLETTER

SAPIENTIA EDUCATION TRUST | JUNE 2020 | EDITION SEVENTEEN

Welcome
The discount and benefits scheme for employees
Click Join to find out more, or Login if you have already registered

Cycle To Work By Sodexo

Cycle2work

Childcare Vouchers

View more benefits

Finally, I wish you all well and safe in these ever-changing and demanding times.

Mrs Tina Smith

Director of HR

tina.smith@se-trust.org

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