

12<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Welcome**

Welcome everyone to the new academic year 2023/24 at South Essex Academy Trust. I hope you had a lovely summer and are coping with the heat! I have been looking forward to starting a fresh year in my new role as CEO and wanted to write to you all, not only to wish you a great year ahead but also to share a bit about our multi academy trust and our exciting plans for the future.

Some of you will know me from being the Headteacher at Winter Gardens Academy, from 2015 until Summer 2023, but for those of you who don't know me, here is a little about myself! I have been in the teaching profession since leaving University. I taught at another of our trust schools, Westwood Academy, before moving to Winter Gardens as Headteacher. At Winter Gardens Academy my team made rapid improvements and moved the school from Special Measures to Good (with Outstanding for Leadership/Management and Early Year Foundation Stage). Last year I began to work on areas across the trust in my role of Deputy CEO and loved it so much I was keen to apply for the position of CEO.

On a personal level, I have one daughter who turns ten this week and keeps me busy as taxi driver! When not at work, you will find me socialising with friends, at the gym or relaxing with a good book. Having worked for the trust for 16 years, SEAT has a special place in my heart. I look forward to continuing Mr Harbrow's success and leading the trust into the next phase of it's exciting development. Please see below for more information about SEAT.

**Who we are:**

A family of unique schools, in which the team of staff support each other; collaborating to learn, develop and grow, with children's education at the heart of all that we do.

**Our Values (in adult and child speak):**



**Our Academies:**



We are also in a 'partnership agreement' with Hadleigh Infants and Nursery school, which means they can access support, services and advice from South Essex Academy Trust.



**Exciting developments:**

- A new three year Trust Strategic Plan is being written as we speak and will be shared with you all in November when approved by the Board of Directors. This plan will work on making the schools the very best that they can be. It will tell you what we hope to achieve in the next year, in two years time and in three years time. The staff are excited to work together towards these goals and I look forward to sharing with you the impact of this plan on your children and their learning.
- Simon Harbrow will be carrying out a new role for the trust – School Improvement Officer. This role is to lead the improvements in teaching and learning across the trust and in individual schools. Mr Harbrow will be visiting schools regularly and working closely with staff to develop key identified areas. This is a brilliant development for the trust and we look forward to sharing with you the impact of this work.
- I have now set up social media pages for South Essex Academy Trust, see links below. Please follow us on Instagram and Facebook and like/comment and share our posts! I will also be starting a SEAT newsletter which will celebrate achievements and share information from across the trust. This will be sent to you termly.
- Last week we had a SEAT first! All classes across our schools met over zoom to take part in an assembly with Kindness Coach John Magee to launch our 30 days of kindness challenge and the children loved it. See socials for more information!

[https://www.instagram.com/south\\_essex\\_academy\\_trust?utm\\_source=qr](https://www.instagram.com/south_essex_academy_trust?utm_source=qr)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088042883442>



I hope you enjoy finding out what we are getting up to across SEAT as well as at each school. I look forward to working in partnership with you this year and sharing more information about the trust in the next few weeks.

Kind regards,



Catherine Stalham  
CEO of South Essex Academy Trust