



16th June 2023

Dear SEAT Staff and Parents

I am writing to inform you of a significant change in the leadership of the South Essex Academy Trust.

Simon Harbrow, who has led the Trust since its beginnings in 2011, is stepping away from the Chief Executive role. The Board together with SEAT Members have agreed to appoint **Catherine Stalham**, currently Deputy CEO & Headteacher at Winters Gardens, to replace him, **taking up the position of CEO from Monday, 19th June 2023**. Catherine will continue in her role as Headteacher of Winter Gardens Academy until the end of the summer term.



Catherine Stalham – CEO SEAT

Catherine has her professional roots within the communities of the trust, starting her teaching career at Westwood Academy some 18 years ago and, after gaining experience within other local schools, took on the Headteacher role at Winter Gardens Academy where she has led the school from an Ofsted category rating to its now good status. It is now a thriving school community. Catherine has continuously impressed the directors with her motivation and enthusiasm to enhance the opportunities for our children, staff and colleagues. With her exciting vision for our organisation and inspiring leadership style, Catherine can now bring her skills to the Trust as its new Chief Executive.

Obviously, this change creates other opportunities within our schools, Simon Harbrow will stand in as interim Headteacher for Westwood Academy until our new headteacher Emily Perryman takes up the role in September 2023, before moving to the part time role of School Improvement Officer, reporting to the CEO. Senior leaders at Winter Gardens Academy will stand in as interim Headteacher and Deputy until a formal headteacher appointment process can be undertaken during the Autumn term. From September, Katie Herbert will become Acting Headteacher and Jade Vickers, Acting Deputy Headteacher. Winter Gardens parents are able to talk to their children about the change this weekend and Mrs Stalham will hold an assembly on Monday morning to discuss the changes.





**SOUTH ESSEX
ACADEMY TRUST**

> collaboration > challenge
> perseverance > innovation

The directors are delighted and excited to see how Catherine, as our new Chief Executive, will take the Trust and its leaders, staff and children into the next phase in the life of our organisation. We welcome Catherine to her new role and, on behalf of the whole community, thank Simon for leading the trust community to where it is now.

Best,

Julie Mulcahy
Chair – Board of Directors
South Essex Academy Trust



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