



ISSUE 1

SIGMA NEWS

FOR THE STAFF AND STAKEHOLDERS OF THE SIGMA TRUST

To be greater than the sum of its parts



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WELCOME...

Welcome to the very first edition of Sigma News for staff. The aim of this publication is to give you an insight into the activities happening across our schools and to introduce you to some key people within The Sigma Trust.

Later this term, we will be welcoming Harwich and Dovercourt High School (HDHS) to our family of schools. HDHS has a long association of partnership working with all of the secondary schools within Sigma. It was a founding member of the North East Essex Education Partnership (NEEEP) and fully supported the move to create a multi-academy trust. This now brings our total number of schools up to seven. With nearly 6,000 students and more than 700 staff, we are the largest multi-academy trust solely serving Essex schools.

Our first few months in operation have seen us develop a wide range of common policies and procedures necessary to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the Trust. We have established a small central team operating from offices next to those of North Essex Teacher Training (NETT), in Clacton.

My thanks go to all colleagues who were instrumental in the creation of The Sigma Trust and I look forward to a very exciting future together building on all our previous achievements.

**Jeff Brindle, CEO
The Sigma Trust**



OUR MISSION

To Be Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts represents the mission statement for The Sigma Trust. We believe we are stronger and more successful working together than we would be as separate institutions.

The mission for each academy within The Sigma Trust is to ensure no child is left behind. Education should foster in its

learners a curiosity to discover who they are and what they are capable of, together with developing the resilience for them to test the boundaries of their abilities, and build the skills necessary to face the future with confidence.

The Greek letter Sigma (Σ) is used in mathematics and IT to denote "the sum of", hence its adoption as our name.



NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS...

NORTH ESSEX DEBATING COMPETITION

Students took part in the North Essex Debating Competition this month, organised by Sigma.

The event, at Stanway School, tested students' wits and debating skills as they debated for and against a range of topics.



Passionate speakers explored and debated whether or not the media should be prohibited from reporting the names of suspects until they are found guilty in trials; and whether or not the cryogenic freezing of human beings should be banned.

Harwich and Dovercourt High School were this year's overall winners.

NORTH ESSEX MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD

Gifted and talented mathematicians can now battle it out for an £80 prize in a well-established competition.

The North Essex Mathematical Olympiad has held ten events since its launch in 2014, but now has the prize on offer from new sponsor Sigma.

The two-hour contests see students from ten schools across north Essex demonstrate their skills in teams of four.

The next Olympiads will be at Clacton County High School (CCHS) and St Helena School.

A Year 9 student from CCHS said: "I enjoy the maths competition because it is challenging and it allows me to step out of my comfort zone."

SIGMA **NEWSBITE**

LEXIA IMPROVES READING

A personalised approach to learning is helping to boost the standards of reading at Monkwick Junior School.

Thanks to funding by Sigma, the school has signed up to online programme Lexia and set about changing the culture of reading among its young people.

Year 5 and 6 have already seen the benefits to the computer programme, with Year 4 and Year 3 next to make a start. Pupils in Year 2 at Monkwick Infant School will also join Lexia this year.

Pupils take on a number of exercises, which they can also access from home, to improve their reading fluency and grammar.

Pupils devote three 20-minute sessions to Lexia each week.

TRAINING OUR PEOPLE...

INSPIRATION FROM STEVE HEAD

Trainer, coach, author and inspirational speaker Steve Head shared his tips on Making the 1% Difference with Sigma staff.

The inset day at St Helena School on January 6 saw teaching and support staff from across Sigma schools come together for an energetic and engaging event.

Steve urged colleagues to adopt a positive mindset, focusing more on the good and less on the negative, as well on tips to make 1% marginal gains which all add up to improve results.

Duncan Cook, assistant headteacher at St Helena, said: "Steve's presentation last year had the biggest impact on a body of staff I have ever witnessed.

"Staff were fully absorbed; not only during the day, but following and policies and practices changed as a result."

Steve is also running sessions to prepare Year 11 students for their exams.

Steve's tips:

#149 Focus on the good.
Create a supportive and encouraging environment.

Four-minute rule.
Do not say anything negative for the first four minutes you enter a room.

Glimpse of brilliance.
Don't dwell on the bad stuff, play positive "films" in your head before you do something – then, you can only feel good.

Maths training day

Eight maths teachers from across Sigma secondary schools undertook training from exam board Pearson Edexcel.

Organised by Carol Anne Moffat, Sigma maths lead and Stanway School deputy headteacher, the training prepared staff for the marking and moderation of Sigma mock exams in December.

The day included exploring the new mark schemes and understanding the new process marks, evaluating the wording of questions and literacy demands for students, guidance for students on how to approach the exams and discussion about higher, foundation and entry policy.

Javi Sanchez, St Helena School, said: "A really good day; really informative. The focus on the assessment objectives has been useful."



English training day

Exam board AQA trained ten English teachers from across Sigma secondary schools.

Examiner Graham Elsdon prepared staff for marking and moderation of Sigma mock exams in English Literature.

Laura Pickup, head of English at Thomas Lord Audley School, said: "It was really useful to have this insight into the English Literature examination and helpful to see examples of how the questions can be approached.

Staff looked at assessment objectives in practice, dealing with the extract question, modern texts and question stems, strategies for approaching unseen poetry, exemplar materials and applying the mark scheme.



ROUTES INTO TEACHING

The Sigma Trust is striving to provide different routes into teaching.

The Trust is working with teacher training provider North Essex Teacher Training (NETT) and Coast2Coast Teaching School Alliance.

From September 2017, NETT will be providing Level 7 PGCE courses for both primary and secondary trainees ready to start their initial teacher training (ITT). Applications are now open to begin training this year.

The Stepping Stones course provides paid employment in a Sigma school to gain experience in the classroom before deciding whether teaching is an appropriate career and embarking on ITT.

The work is combined with bespoke training and support with skills tests to ensure ITT applications are successful.

Contact Jane Adamson or Darren Mackman for further details.

LIZ HARMER, Clacton County High School:
"I have found the experience of training through NETT to be a brilliant start to my teaching career. I have felt entirely supported throughout. I feel certain it has provided me with the combination of experience and learning necessary to progress into my NQT year with confidence."



PIPPA NEWBOULD, Clacton County High School:
"My route into teaching through NETT has provided me with all the support and guidance I have needed to make the most out of my training year. All the staff I have had the opportunity to learn from have been incredibly helpful and made me feel a part of the school community."



INTRODUCING OUR TRUSTEES...

Jeff Brindle, Chief Executive Officer



Jeff taught maths for 36 years in a range of schools across London, Surrey and Essex and is the former principal of Clacton County High School. He is passionate about partnership working between schools and achieving the best possible outcomes for all pupils, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

Nick Pavitt, Chairman



Nick has 12 years' experience in secondary school headship. Since retiring, he has served as the school improvement partner working with schools across five local authorities. He is also a governor of one of the largest primary schools in Essex, White Hall Academy in Clacton.

Carol Carlsson Browne, Trustee



Carol was a solicitor for 12 years before teaching for nine years in Essex primary schools and being made a primary strategy consultant with Essex County Council. She is a member of the Strategic Management Board of Tendring Hundred Primary SCITT.

Lorraine Laudrum, Trustee



Lorraine has more than 30 years' experience in primary education, giving her a clear vision for excellence and a deep understanding of the challenges faced. She is headteacher at Braiswick Primary School, part of The Learning Pathways Academy Trust, and so understands the importance of creating a strong network of schools.

Crystal Hawkins, Chairman of Finance and Audit Sub-Committee



Crystal is head of financial planning and analysis at Greater Anglia where her role includes supporting capital and operational expenditure business cases, improving efficiencies and controls to ensure key financial KPIs are met as well as developing and delivering training courses.

Andrew Davenall, Vice Chairman



Andrew is a chartered civil engineer whose career has given him extensive experience in financial planning, change management, recruitment, employee development and business restructuring. He has been a governor at Stanway School since 2004.

Bradley Powell, Trustee



Bradley works for Birkett Long LLP as a solicitor in Colchester, focusing mainly on commercial property and landlord and tenant matters for residential property. He is keen to help Sigma Trust schools to perform to their best and to give the children the best possible opportunities.

Steve McGrath, Trustee



Steve is an experienced manager of communications and IT with a background in high security data processing. He served in the RAF for 37 years. Steve was network manager at Clacton County High School until he retired, but stayed on as governor, becoming chair in 2016.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

COAST 2 COAST TRAINING

The Coast 2 Coast Teaching School Alliance works collaboratively to design, develop and deliver high quality training and professional development for teachers, leaders and support staff which leads to school improvement.

Coast 2 Coast offers a wide range of CPD courses, including...

C2C Science Subject Specialism Training for KS2 and KS3 – starts January, 2017

C2C Physics Subject Specialism Training – starts January, 2017. Conference May, 2017

C2C Maths Subject Specialism Training for LSAs and trainee teachers – next date January, 2017

C2C Teacher Toolkit Conference with Ross McGill – February 24 and 25, 2017

C2C SPAG Conference with Phil Beadle and David Didau – May 5 and 6, 2017

For more information or to book, contact Darren Mackman on

dmackman@coast2coast-tsa.co.uk

SIGMA TEACHMEET – BRING AND BRAG

All Sigma Trust teachers are invited along to the first Sigma TeachMeet of 2017.

The Bring and Brag event, on Thursday March 30 at Thomas Lord Audley School, will see teachers share one teaching and learning approach, resource or idea in less than one minute.

Tips, which can be on the main theme of growth mindset or another idea, will be shared in a speed-dating style. The event will give colleagues an opportunity to meet, share their examples of best practice and pick up new ideas.

Food and drink will be available from 4.30pm with the event running between 5pm and 6.30pm. Book on www.sigmatrust.eventbrite.co.uk

SUBJECT TEAM TRAINING

Heads of department from English, maths, science, modern foreign languages, geography and history from across Sigma have begun sharing best practice.

The colleagues met for the first time last term to support each other and to plan strategically to ensure high achievement across all schools.

The groups have already shared approaches to Year 11 revision and intervention, planned common mock examinations, shared resources and teaching approaches, moderated assessments and organised exam board training.

The sessions continue into 2017:

English team – February 2, 2017, 2.15pm to 4.15pm, Clacton County High School

Science team – February 6, 2017, 4pm, St Helena School

History team – February 7, 2017, 2.15pm to 4.15pm, Thomas Lord Audley School

MFL team – February 8, 2017, 2.15pm to 4.15pm, Thomas Lord Audley School

Geography team / planning twilight – February 20, 2017, 1pm to 5pm, Thomas Lord Audley School

Maths team – March 30, 2017, 2pm to 4pm, Clacton County High School



Tendring Hundred Primary
SCITT

**Do you know someone who is
interested in a career in teaching,
either in a primary or secondary
school?**

**North East Essex Teacher Training
provider is now recruiting for Sep. 2017**

**Alternatively, consider the Stepping
Stones programme to gain experience
of working in a school before training.**



NORTH ESSEX TEACHER TRAINING

Jane Adamson
(Programme Director)
Email: teach@coastalscitt.co.uk
Tel: 01255 431949
www.coastalscitt.co.uk

STEPPING STONES

Darren Mackman
(Coast2Coast Teaching School Alliance)
Email: dmackman@coast2coast-tsa.co.uk
Tel: 07885 242362
www.coast2coast-tsa.co.uk