



ISSUE 2 - Summer 2017

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 second issue of Sigma News. It is amazing to think the Trust has been operating for nearly a year and has established itself as the largest multi-academy trust solely serving Essex schools.

Once again, I hope this magazine gives you an insight into the work Sigma has been involved in for the past six months and provides an opportunity to celebrate some of our key successes.

It has certainly been a busy period. We faced three Ofsted inspections in little more than a month and, while not all outcomes were what we would have wanted, I was delighted by the professional manner in which staff operated at a very stressful time. All three reports demonstrate the key strengths which exist across Sigma and show we are greater than the sum of our parts.

Harwich and Dovercourt High School (HDHS) joined Sigma on June 1. A welcome to all colleagues; it is great all of the schools who originally submitted the bid to create the Sigma Trust are now formally members. I very much look forward to working with you over

the next few years. The Trust has identified a number of senior colleagues from across the partnership of schools who will be seconded to HDHS next academic year.

The other significant development is the expansion of North Essex Teacher Training (NETT). From September, it amalgamates with Tendring Hundred Primary SCITT to form a new provider covering both primary and secondary phases. There will be about 70 trainees, equally split between both phases. This will ensure Sigma has a strong supply of NQTs for all schools going forward.

My thanks to all colleagues for their dedication and commitment this year.

Have a relaxing and enjoyable summer break when it comes.

Jeff Brindle, CEO The Sigma Trust



SEVENTH SCHOOL JOINS THE SIGMA TRUST FAMILY

Harwich and Dovercourt High School became the latest to join the Sigma Trust on June 1.

The school joins Clacton County High School, The Stanway School, The Thomas Lord Audley School, St Helena School, Monkwick Infant School and Nursery and Monkwick Junior School.

The school, rated Good by Ofsted last year, will benefit from the arrival of four additional senior members of staff -



including strategic leads of maths and science and a deputy headteacher - as a result of joining Sigma.

Jeff Brindle, Sigma CEO, said: "Our mission with Harwich and Dovercourt High School is to retain its Good rating and make sure all outcomes are above the national average. That is our aim for all Trust schools, with a view to all becoming Outstanding education providers in the future."

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS...

NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR MONKWICK JUNIOR SCHOOL



With members of the existing leadership team progressing with promotions elsewhere, the Sigma Trust has brought in a fresh group of leaders to work with executive headteacher Gavin Bradley from September.

Mr Bradley, who is headteacher at White Hall Academy in Clacton and has been working with Monkwick since January, said: "This is a new, exciting chapter in Monkwick Junior's history. The new team will build upon the good foundations laid by the outgoing team."

The new team is -

- Rebecca McCutcheon, headteacher - with a proven track record of improving teaching and learning in her previous schools. Currently co-head at a large junior school on Canvey Island.
- Jacqui Beavis, deputy headteacher - provided leadership support to Essex schools through school improvement roles at Randstad Education and Stanway Federation Academy Trust.

- Ashleigh Pool, assistant headteacher - instrumental in raising standards in literacy in her current school where she is deputy headteacher.
- Mark Visagie, assistant headteacher - currently curriculum lead for Monkwick. His new role will focus on personal development and behaviour.

SIGMA NEWSBITE

GOODBYE TO MARK!



After nine years of headship, Mark Walter is saying goodbye to Monkwick Junior School to relocate to the Yorkshire area with his family.

He has led the school through three Ofsted inspections and the conversion to academy status.

Executive headteacher Gavin Bradley said: "Staff are certainly going to miss Mark's sense of humour and singing ability! The Sigma Trust wishes him all the best for his new life in the north of England."

INFANTS AND JUNIORS TO SHARE GOVERNING BODY

It is the first time Monkwick Infant School and Nursery and Monkwick Junior School have had one team guiding and overseeing operations.

While some members have sat on the governing body of one or the other of the schools, new governors have also been brought on board for the fresh approach.

Sandy Tate has been appointed as the new chair of governors.

Claire Holmes, infant and nursery headteacher, said: "Having a shared governing body for the first time enables more joined-up thinking.

"The two schools can now work more closely together and there is an opportunity to support our families through the transition and provide continuity. It's a really positive change."

LONGER LESSONS INTRODUCED IN CLACTON

The school day is being restructured at Clacton County High School to meet the growing demands of the curriculum.

From September, lessons are being extended from 60 minutes to 75 minutes to ensure all subjects are able to meet the demands of the new GCSE specifications, particularly for English.

The start and finish time of the school day will remain the same, but students will have four lessons per day instead of the previous five.

Principal Neil Gallagher said: "The new GCSE specifications for English language and literature are now very disconnected. We recognise the way English was previously taught, by developing the

English language skills through the literature texts, would be difficult without additional curriculum time allocated.

"We were teaching four hours of English in Year 9 and 10 and five hours in Year 11 which required students attending an additional lesson each week after school. Going forward, from Year 9, we will devote five hours per week to teaching English literature and language; that's a significant change."

The new four lesson timetable has allowed the school to build in one lesson of bespoke intervention each week for Year 10 and 11. The 75 minutes of intervention will be tailor-made for each student delivered by subject teachers.

Healthy Schools Award secured for second year

St Helena School has once again achieved the Healthy Schools Award after a successful audit.

The school has worked on raising the status of healthy food options in lessons and around the site, resulting in the launch of the Green Café hut.

Anna James, English teacher, said: "Another aspect which continues to thrive is that which allows students to take responsibility - including prefects, Youth Health Champions, Student Voice activities and the behaviour reward system which recognises success responsibility, resilience, reasoning, reflection, resourcefulness and respect."



NORTH ESSEX MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD

Mathematicians continue to battle it out in the Sigma Trust sponsored competition.

Year 8 took on the challenge at Clacton County High School in February before Year 7 took their turn at St Helena School. The competition tests students' organisational and teamworking skills as well as their ability to work under pressure



with strict time constraints. Schools from across the area battle it out for the new prize – from Sigma – of £80 at the two-hour contests.

TRAINING OUR PEOPLE...

Inspiring Leadership Conference

Monkwick Infant School headteacher Claire Holmes and the incoming headteacher of Monkwick Junior School Rebecca McCutcheon attended the Inspiring Leadership Conference in Birmingham.

Speakers from education, business, politics and sporting backgrounds shared their experiences of leadership with 3,000 headteachers. The Monkwick headteachers are looking forward to sharing the advice and strategies with staff, parents and pupils.



Behaviour Management and Teacher Toolkit Conference

The two-day event in February welcomed guest speakers to inspire our teams.

Teacher, trainer, facilitator and performer Ollie Frith shared his knowledge having worked with behaviour strategy from a classroom level up to influencing policy for 20 years, while author Ross McGill gave tips from his book Teacher Toolkit: Helping You Survive Your First Five Years. The event was held at Crowne Plaza Five Lakes.

Teaching and learning summer fete

The Sigma teaching and learning team invited colleagues to the summer fete to share ideas.

Stalls gave an opportunity to demonstrate teaching and learning ideas, pieces of research, projects and initiatives teams have been involved in this year.

The event was at Clacton County High School in June.

Challenge for All research

The research and professional development programme for Sigma schools will see a year of lesson study and action-based research on the theme of challenge for all.

Participants will work in a triad with colleagues from other Sigma schools to plan, teach / observe and analyse research lessons. Case studies and presentations with a focus on student progress will be shared throughout the year. Contact your teaching and learning lead or email charlie.mccarthy@sigmatrust.org.uk

Let's Think In English

The year-long programme kicked off at Clacton County High School with Let's Think leads from Thomas Lord Audley School and St Helena School.

Harwich and Dovercourt High School and The Stanway School get involved this half-term. Michael Walsh, from King's College in London, inspired getting students to think with reading, reasoning, classification, frames of reference and symbolic representation.

Kristina Reed, from St Helena, said: "I was engaged throughout which says a lot about how the students will find the Let's Think course."

SIGMA TEACHMEET BRING AND BRAG

The first Sigma Trust TeachMeet event – Bring and Brag – took place in March at the Thomas Lord Audley School.

Teachers were asked to take one teaching and learning approach, resource or idea which could be shared in no more than one minute. Ideas were shared in a speed-dating style, one to one, along the theme of growth mindset and challenge.

Participants got the opportunity to meet colleagues from across the Trust and to pick up ideas to try back in their own classrooms.

Sian Warriner, Thomas Lord Audley School, attended and said: "The event was a really positive experience which provided an excellent opportunity to share ideas to staff



from across Sigma. I got lots of new ideas for developing independence in the classroom which I shall certainly be putting into my lessons and sharing with my department."

COAST 2 COAST TRAINING

Coast 2 Coast is an innovative, cross-phase teaching school alliance which prides itself on the delivery of high quality CPD and school-to-school support, underpinned by impressive research and development.

This term has seen colleagues from Sigma schools attending maths and

physics specialism training. Other colleagues have enjoyed the recent SPAG conference with guest speakers Phil Beadle and David Didau. Didau explored the secret of literacy with delegates – making the implicit explicit for our students! A full programme of courses and conferences is now being planned for the next academic year and will be shared with Sigma schools.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

Trust Thursday – an opportunity to visit another school and take part in CPD – **November 9**

Trust Thursday – a Teachmeet style event for sharing teaching and learning ideas – **March 8, 2018**

Trust Thursday – Sigma summer fete, an opportunity to share teaching and learning ideas, resources and classroom based research – **June 28, 2018**

Year 7 history challenge day – **July 7**, Clacton County High School

Science and maths training day – **July 10**, 9.30am to 3.30pm, St Helena School

Maths SOW planning day, improving transition from primary to secondary – **July 13**, Thomas Lord Audley School

Sigma geography team meeting – **July 14**, 2pm to 4pm, The Stanway School

Sigma history team meeting – **July 17**, 2pm to 4pm, St Helena School

MFL AQA exam board training day – **July 18**, 9.30am to 3.30pm

Sigma joint inset day – **February 19, 2018**

INTRODUCING CENTRAL TEAM...

JEFF BRINDLE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Jeff taught maths for 36 years and is former principal of Clacton County High School (CCHS). He is responsible for the development of Trust-wide strategies and action plans for the improvement of educational standards and governance. He leads the headteachers, creating the Trust's vision and values, and is accountable for the educational success and financial viability of all schools.

BRIAN MARKHAM, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER



Brian was business manager at CCHS for six years, working as production manager in a marketing and communications company previously. He oversees the strategic leadership for the support services within the Trust and provides guidance to the chief executive officer and board of trustees on all non-educational aspects. His remit encompasses finance, premises, statutory compliance, health and safety and managing Trust growth.

KRISTA HOOK, TRUST PA



Krista worked at Alderman Blaxill as business manager for the Stanway Learning Centre for two-and-a-half years. As Trust PA, she provides confidential secretarial support to the CEO and senior colleagues. Krista is the first point of contact and ambassador for the Trust. She advises on compliance with legislation and guidance, including DfE, data protection, Freedom of Information Act and governance.

JACQUELINE TOMKINS, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER



Jacqueline has been director of finance and business operations at Harwich and Dovercourt High School since September 2015. She joins the central team in September. As chief finance officer, Jackie will have responsibility for overall financial strategy and budget setting. She will ensure accurate and timely financial reports and financial returns are presented to the board of trustees and lead on internal and external financial monitoring and auditing processes.

INTRODUCING OUR MEMBERS...

The Trust has members who are responsible for appointing the Trustees and act as shareholders to the company.

NICK PAVITT



Nick has 12 years' experience in secondary school headship. Nick previously acted as facilitator for North East Essex Education Partnership (NEEEP) and so has a long history of working with the Trust schools. He is governor of one of the largest primary schools in Essex, White Hall Academy in Clacton.

SARA CULLIS



Sara runs her own company, providing marketing consultancy and training in both the private and education sectors. Sara is vice chair of governors at St Helena School, where she has been involved for more than seven years. She is passionate about working in collaboration to ensure all children have access to excellent education and are inspired to learn.

RICHARD MOODEY



Richard has worked in financial services for 30 years; the past 15 at Zurich as a national account manager, looking after key strategic partnerships for the insurer. Richard has been a parent governor at CCHS since 2008 and, more recently, chair of the finance and curriculum committee.

BRIAN PALMER



After 25 years in research, sales and business management worldwide, Brian took responsibility for British Petroleum community relations in 1996 - with an annual budget of \$100million, mostly committed to education projects worldwide.

Brian's experience as chair of Essex Careers and Business Partnership led him to becoming a governor at Stanway School and chair of the Stanway Federation Multi Academy Trust. He was also chair of NEEEP before the formation of Sigma.

ANDREW SMITH



Andrew is headteacher at Lyons Hall Primary School, Braintree, and chief executive officer for the Learning Pathways Academy Trust.

Andrew has been executive principal of Tendring Primary School since September 2015.

He is also a National Leader of Education, an Ofsted inspector and is lead headteacher in the Professional Learning Network Teaching Schools Alliance.

north
essex
teacher
training



Have you thought about a career in teaching at a primary or secondary school?

We are now recruiting for September 2018

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

NORTH ESSEX TEACHER TRAINING

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