

3 March 2017

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Dear Parent/Carer

As we enter the second half of term, I wanted to update you on some recent developments at Trust level.

### **New Trustees Wanted**

We are looking for three talented people with experience of senior leadership in teaching and education to join our Trust Board. This is following our three Headteachers stepping down as Trustees in November, due to changes in Department for Education (DfE) policy. Trustees are the key decision makers in the Trust. They ensure that the Trust has clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; they hold Headteachers to account for educational performance; and they ensure that the Trust's finances are strong and well managed.

This is a great opportunity to join a close-knit team, and help shape the future of education in our community. The Board meets approximately six times a year, with Trustees also expected to attend three sub-committee meetings and training as required. Full details of the roles are available on the Trust website at [www.southbanktrust.co.uk/site/vacancies](http://www.southbanktrust.co.uk/site/vacancies). If you know anyone who might be suitable, please do encourage them to apply. The closing date for applications is Friday 24 March.

At the same time, Jon Stonehouse will be stepping down from the Trust Board. As Director of Children, Education and Communities with the Local Authority (LA), Jon brought valuable skills to the Board, as well as cementing our close working relationship with the LA. However, as the number of academies in York grows, the LA's Executive has asked him to resign to avoid any perceived conflict of interest in his dealings with other MATs. We're grateful for everything that Jon has done for the Trust during this critical early phase, and we look forward to continuing to work with him and his colleagues at the LA to deliver excellent education in York.

### **New Members**

Last month we advertised for two new Members to join the Trust. We're delighted to announce that we've now appointed two outstanding individuals. Claire Antrobus is an independent arts professional working with cultural and educational organisations across the UK. She's a former Vice-Chair of Governors at Millthorpe and has two children at Scarcroft School. Peter Quinn is the former Director of Student Support at the University of York, who now runs an educational consultancy focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education. He has two children at Knavesmire, where he is a regular volunteer for classroom reading and school trips.

We're very excited to have found such strong candidates from within our community, and looking forward to the skills and expertise they will bring to the Trust.

## **York High School**

This week we announced on our website that the Trust is in discussions to sponsor York High School. This is following an Ofsted inspection of York High which placed the school in Special Measures, requiring the school to convert to a sponsored academy as soon as possible. The school's governors have identified the South Bank MAT as the most appropriate sponsor, and the Local Authority has supported this as a local, community-based solution. In an educational context, a sponsor supports an underperforming school with expertise, leadership and governance but does not offer any direct financial support (ie no money is transferred from the MAT to the sponsored school).

Following consultations with our schools' governors and staff, the Trust Board has decided to progress to the next stage of assessment for sponsoring York High. There is a strong tradition of York schools supporting each other to ensure all children receive the best possible education, wherever they live in the city. We welcome the opportunity to help. However, there are also a number of risks involved, and we will not make the final decision to accept York High unless we're confident that those risks can be managed. We recognise that our existing schools are the Trust's most valuable resource, and we will not do anything to jeopardise their success.

We are now awaiting approval from the Department for Education, which has to ratify any sponsorship applications, by the end of this month. If that is successful, we will undertake a process of due diligence to assess and mitigate the risks, before making a final decision in the summer.

## **Outstanding Results**

Congratulations to Knavesmire School's 2015-16 Year 6 class for their exceptional results in the Key Stage 2 SATs. These made Knavesmire the top-ranked primary school in York on the headline measure of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. The Key Stage 2 Maths results also placed Knavesmire in the top 2% of primary schools in England. Although SATs are only one particular measure of the quality of education, we're thrilled to see the hard work of students and staff recognised in this way.

## **Grant Income**

We were recently informed that the Trust has successfully applied for an £88,250 grant from the Department for Education. This will allow the Trust to develop the financial and administrative support we offer our schools, while keeping as much money as possible available for front-line teaching and learning.

As ever, if you have any questions about the MAT please contact your child's school, or e-mail me directly on [chair@southbanktrust.co.uk](mailto:chair@southbanktrust.co.uk).

Yours faithfully,



**Edwin Thomas**  
Chair of Trustees