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9 June 2021

Dear Trust Leaders and Chairs of Governors,

As you may be aware, the Trust recently undertook an external review of governance through the Confederation of School Trusts, a high quality, nationally recognised organisation which has, in particular, provided support for Multi Academy Trusts during the pandemic.

I have pleasure in enclosing a copy of the review for your information. I am immensely proud of the report. During the feedback we received, it was shared that 'very good trusts' would usually receive ten to fifteen development points – we received just three. Of greatest importance however was the recognition that our values are inescapably part of our DNA; that they are not spin or empty straplines.

Many of you will know that I have been involved in the Trust for some years and this report has provided me with an opportunity to reflect and appreciate just how much has been achieved for so many. We are an organisation that has been over 20 years in the making, founded on the vision of David Gregory, a person who understood the importance of surrounding himself with principled, skilled people who constantly challenge themselves and proactively look for opportunities to serve the staff, parents and pupils in our schools. He envisaged an ordered collective with the minimum of imposed bureaucracy, maximum individual autonomy, an entrepreneurial spirit and leadership at every level, prioritising leadership of learning. This is a legacy that Emily has more than ably taken forward over the most challenging of times and the future for the organisation under her leadership is an exceptionally exciting one.

Through my professional career in education I have seen many school and trust boards in action and I feel fortunate to be the chair of one of the most professional and dedicated. We are clearly however unable to undertake our role as Trustees were it not because of the meticulous work of the Executive Team, the effective leadership of Headteachers and the dedication of our Local Governing Bodies. These relationships are evidence of the collegiality, commitment and partnership on which the Trust is built and I would like to put on record my thanks to you all for being part of the organisation's development.

When the bar is set so high, of course, maintaining quality becomes more challenging. We are however a self-reflective organisation committed to following up, operating with agility, reading the political landscape and embracing change where we recognise that it's necessary. The three areas identified for improvement will of course be fed through our plans for the year ahead.

Once again, my thanks to all who have played a part in contributing towards this positive report.

With kind regards,

Nick Jones
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Enc: External Review of Governance

Chief Executive Officer: Mrs Emily Massey

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