



## From the CEO

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Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for another term of giving your best for our children. If you haven't started on the chocolate eggs already, I hope you enjoy them – and plenty of rest – over the next 2 weeks! It's certainly been a jam-packed spring term for all of us and I've enjoyed spending time in each of our 6 academies. Since deciding 28 years ago to jump into the world of primary school education, it's never been boring ... and that continues to be the case!

### All change!

Many of us struggle with change, but change is sometimes absolutely the right thing to do. For 3 of our headteachers, this has been the case. Lynsey Butler-Mallender has decided to step down from the headship of Kirkby Woodhouse, Kate Watson has said goodbye to Archbishop Cranmer to take up the headship at Oak Tree and Emma Essex will be leaving Sir John Sherbrooke to become head at Robert Mellors Primary Academy from 1<sup>st</sup> September. Rachel Jones has been appointed headteacher at Kirkby and adverts are currently out for the headships at both Archbishop and SJS. I would like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to Lynsey, Kate and Emma for their strong and committed leadership and to wish Rachel every success as the new headteacher at Kirkby Woodhouse. I will be working with governors at Archbishop and SJS to help them – in what is admittedly a very challenging recruitment climate – appoint great candidates. Just to be clear, it's governors that make the final decisions – not me or anyone from the MAT Board – but I will be fully involved in the process, offering support and advice.

### Working Together

I mentioned in the last newsletter that we would be looking for ways to develop a stronger sense of 'togetherness' across our academies. On that theme, I am pleased to report that – in response to requests from staff – we have set up several new Aspire groups to cover the following areas of leadership: Maths, English, Sports and Deputy/Assistant Heads. With more people meeting to share ideas and develop their practice, it can only be a good thing for staff and pupils!

### Spotlight on SJS

Each newsletter so far has featured photos from one of our academies and, this time, it's the turn of Sir John Sherbrooke Junior School. Aside from my many positive visits to the school, I've



recently really enjoyed watching their appearance on Central ITV News! In case you didn't catch their moment of stardom with Baroness Byford, you can find it on YouTube or the school website. Under the guidance of deputy headteacher Sally Maddison as Speaker, the children were very impressive. Not wishing to be party political

in any sense whatsoever, but wouldn't it be interesting if children were making the key decisions currently facing our nation?

I have enjoyed getting to know SJS and all of our academies a little better this term and I look forward to continuing to build those relationships – with children, staff and governors – after the break.

With best wishes for a wonderful Easter,



Martyn Skinner



## From the Board

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On behalf of the Board of Directors (Trustees) of the Aspire MAT I would like to congratulate all staff involved with Oak Tree Primary and Nursery School with the progress and improvements seen at the academy since it joined the Aspire MAT in December. Our CEO, Martyn Skinner, stepped down as acting Head in January when Kate Watson assumed the full time role, which, I am delighted to say, was made a permanent appointment by the Board in March. Martyn continues to undertake some Year 6 teaching and provide support to Kate, ably assisted by the A team from other academies in Aspire. We are all looking forward with anticipation to seeing these efforts translated into evidence-based improvements when KS2 SATs are undertaken soon. I believe this 'whole MAT' team effort demonstrates more than anything what Aspire and its ethos is all about.

The first meeting of the Aspire LGB Leadership Forum took place in February. The membership is the chairs of the Local Governing Bodies of the five established academies in the MAT. This group will be the link between the Board and LGBs and will be driving a strategy for collaboration and improvement across LGBs, including training, standards, LGB recruitment, Ofsted preparation, sharing best practice, and much more. The remit of the group will be available on the Aspire website soon. As part of the improvement package put into place at Oak Tree, its governing body was suspended and replaced by an Interim Executive Board, as part of its improvement programme. The LGB will be reconstituted after the academy comes out of special measures.

The MAT website continues to expand with implementation of a 'Vacancies' section where, over the next few months, details and application packs for all staff vacancies across the MAT will be available (<http://www.aspire-mat.co.uk/vacancies/>). This underpins the role of the MAT as the employer of all staff in our academies. In addition this Newsletter, and previous issues, are available in the News section (<http://www.aspire-mat.co.uk/aspire-newsletters/>).

The Board are continuing to look for new directors to join the MAT Board as there are currently two vacancies. We need people with professional knowledge and skills who can help the MAT and its CEO to continue and develop the MAT – its activities, vision, expansion and strategic planning. Please contact me if you have any suggestions for possible candidates that the Board and Trust Members can consider.

I would again, on behalf of the Board, like to thank all staff for your dedication, commitment and support, and wish you all a great Easter break.



Peter Golightly – Chair of Aspire MAT Board

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