



The Collegiate Trust

Exceptional Education for All

April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

CEO's Update 3 – Summer 2023

I hope that everyone enjoyed a restful Easter break and that the start of term is going well. It has been a busy few months since my last update, with many successes and developments, but equally some real challenges to tackle and overcome. Let's start with some good news...!

Firstly, I would like to wish Mr James Purveur the very best of luck as he begins his new role as Principal at Waterfield Primary School this term. His promotion, which arises as a consequence of Dr Hope's departure after four years, is very well-deserved and we look forward to seeing Waterfield continue to thrive under his leadership.

Further to my communication just before Christmas, I am delighted to confirm that *Woodcote High School* joined our Trust on 1st April 2023. Consequently, we are now a family of eight schools (six in Croydon and two in Crawley), with close to 6000 pupils, in total. I have been pleased to welcome the Woodcote community to the Trust this week and we look forward to building strong partnerships with them as we collaborate to deliver an exceptional education. Find out more about our newest school at www.woodcotehigh.org.uk. In addition, I am delighted to inform you that the Department of Education has given approval for *Ifield Community College (ICC)* to join our Trust. The formal transfer process will now begin and we expect ICC to join us officially in the new academic year. This addition will, in particular, strengthen our Crawley hub and will provide a natural secondary choice for Year 6 pupils at Gossops Green and Waterfield.

These two secondary schools joining our Trust represents quite significant growth and so we have been building our capacity and organisational structures to ensure that our high-quality work will continue to have strong impact, both in our existing schools and our new schools. As part of this, I am excited to be welcoming Mrs Katie Turner back to the Trust's Executive Team as Director of Education in September 2023, following a year in the role of interim Principal at Riddlesdown Collegiate (where Dr Parimal Bhatt has been appointed to the substantive post). Mrs Turner's expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning and professional development is first-rate, and, under her direction, the Education Team will continue to flourish. At the same time, Mrs Lucy Bruce, who has been a real asset to our team this year as she has covered the Director of Education role, will move into the role of Director of Performance & Quality where she will lead on self-evaluation and quality assurance, as well as supporting Principals to prepare for and manage OFSTED inspections. Meanwhile, with an anticipated c.1000 Sixth Form students across four secondary schools next academic year, Mr Mike Smith will move into the full-time role of Director of School Improvement (Post-16), working closely with the Heads of Sixth Form to ensure the highest standards and best preparation for life beyond school.

In addition to the growth that comes as a consequence of new schools, it has been great to see a significant number of pupils joining our schools in-year, where we have had spaces to accommodate them. Whilst some of these new pupils have recently moved to the area, a number have moved to one of our schools simply because of the reputation that the school has established and the quality of education that families can feel confident about within our Trust. All of our secondary schools are now oversubscribed for entry in Year 7 and the number of applications for a place in Reception in one of our primary schools has never been higher. Thank you for the confidence you demonstrate in our work and for continuing to advocate for our schools, telling your friends and families about the great experience that you and your child(ren) are having with us. To those families who have recently been offered a place in one of our schools, we look forward to welcoming your child in the coming months.

Registered Office: The Collegiate Trust

A: Honister Heights Purley Surrey CR8 1EX
T: 03300 100 701
E: admin@tct-academies.org
W: www.tct-academies.org

As well as the usual high-quality learning in classrooms each day, it has been great to see how our wider programme of learning outside of the classroom continues to be restored. Last term, audiences were wowed by the stunning performances of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *Grease* at Riddlesdown Collegiate and The Quest Academy, respectively, whilst our programme of trips and visits continued to develop again. The opportunities for cultural and creative learning that such activities offer are a key part of delivering an exceptional education for all and we shall continue to promote them positively.

Alongside these numerous activities and developments, however, we cannot forget the fact that we continue to operate at a fraught time in education. OFSTED is facing huge criticism currently as concerns about the impact of high-stakes inspections on teachers' wellbeing have soared. This may lead to some changes, possibly including the removal of school categorisation, in time. For now, however, whilst we share some of these concerns and try our best to mitigate against them in our schools, I am also very proud of the quality of work that has been seen and reported across the Trust by OFSTED in recent months. You may like to read the recent inspection reports from [Courtwood Primary School](#) and [Quest Primary School](#) – and look out for the report from Riddlesdown Collegiate's recent graded inspection which should be published in the next few weeks.

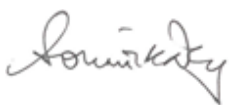
At the same time, all of our schools were affected by the national dispute on teachers' pay and conditions which led to up to four days of strike action last term. You will probably have seen that the recent offer made by the Secretary of State has been rejected by four teaching unions, including those representing Headteachers, who are especially concerned that pay awards will not be fully funded and that any salary increases will, therefore, need to be met from existing budgets that are already very tight. Consequently, two further days of strikes have been announced – 27th April 2023 and 2nd May 2023 – with a further three dates to follow later in the summer term. (As before, the Principal or Head of School at your child's school will write to you to let you know whether and, if so, how your child will be affected on these days – please do not assume that your child should or should not attend school until the details are confirmed.) I know how disruptive these strikes have been for many families, including for our own staff. I know also how conflicted many teachers have felt about what they should do for the best – choosing to strike has rarely been an easy decision to make. As a Trust, we respect the individual choices that our colleagues make and I am grateful for the support and understanding that so many parents have shown us, despite the disruptive impact of industrial action.

We also know that more families are struggling financially as the cost of living continues to impact household budgets. In our schools, we are mindful of this and are trying to find ways of supporting this (e.g. second-hand uniform, reduced cost or free trips and activities, with payment plans where appropriate). Any families who may be eligible for, but are not currently in receipt of free school meals are encouraged to apply – see [here](#) for details – especially as the increasing cost of food supplies is likely to mean that cost of school meals will also soon need to be increased.

In spite of these challenges, I am grateful to everyone in our schools for their continued efforts. In the coming weeks, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils will be taking KS1 and KS2 tests and students in Year 11 and Year 13 will begin their GCSE and A Level exams – I wish them the very best of luck. With hard work and good support, I know that everyone is capable of achieving the results that they deserve.

Our strength comes from our shared culture of ambition, focussing on our PEOPLE and their LEARNING and so as we begin the final few months of this academic year, I wish everyone a very successful term ahead.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Dey
Chief Executive Officer