

Summer Newsletter



From the CEO's Desk

Dear Parents and Friends of Sussex Learning Trust,

I wanted to pen a few words as we conclude the academic year 2017-8 about the progress of our Trust and our vision going forwards. Before I do, it is worth noting that we still operate in an educational climate that is at the 'whim' of politics and politicians. This in itself does not need to be a negative but when one considers the average 'role

span' of a Secretary of State is approximately 18 months, you can appreciate that we are forever expecting the next new initiative or pronouncement within, as we all are aware, a really challenging funding position. However, this does not impact upon our vision to be world class providers of education for local people.

Warden Park Secondary Academy

WPSA welcomed its new Headteacher, Mr Kenrick, in September and he has had a fantastic year really establishing himself with staff and students alike. He is retaining all the very 'best bits' of the current practices and complementing them with his own initiatives to ensure the academy continues to go from strength to strength, for example, the ground work has been done for WPSA to become an Apple Distinguished School of which there are only a few hundred world wide recognising excellence in utilising cutting edge technology to enhance learning. Whilst saying a very fond farewell to Mr Stoneley after 38 years of exceptional service the academy welcomes Mr Sorrell as Deputy Headteacher. Parents will be aware of the highly successful year the academy has had under Mr Kenrick which we expect to be borne out in some wonderful exam results.





Warden Park Primary Academy

WPPA goes from strength to strength. The most notable initiative this year has been the establishment of our Nursery. Many 'experts' told us we couldn't make it work under current funding but I am pleased to say that under Mr Davis' outstanding leadership we have proved them all wrong! We are full, over subscribed and looking at how we can accommodate the obvious desire

to send children in their earliest years to a school for their Nursery provision. To prepare children for Primary School was the sole intention of establishing the Nursery and we are delighted with our progress to date. WPPA is oversubscribed with a waiting list for places in the main school and this is testimony to its flourishing reputation.

Northlands Wood Primary Academy

NWPA has improved its headline SATS results by, at least, a massive 22%! Mr Sears (new Headteacher) and his team have introduced a new 'verve' to the academy. One of rigour and determination. Apart from the very important improvements in academic results, the academy has won accolades, and funding, for excellence in IT, Art and Sport.

The academy has risen significantly in local reputation which means it will increase its intake to become a two form intake primary. NWPA has introduced Forest Schools this year which has been embraced by every child as they learn through the natural environment and face new challenges 'head on'.





Hurst Farm Primary Academy

HFPA has been delayed in its opening due to circumstances beyond our control. However, I expect that activity towards opening this new academy for the town will gather a pace in the Autumn Term.



Haywards Heath Sixth Form

HHSF is still a project we believe to be critical for the area and something we would like to be part of a solution for. I expect that the Department for Education and West Sussex will continue to work together to identify the need (local people know what it is!) and consider the best way to seed fund a post 16 College. At some point I expect them to ask for providers to express an interest in running such a College and I expect we will prepare a case to do so. That said there are funding challenges and it will be important that the 'same curriculum mistakes' made by the then Central Sussex College are not repeated. The Trust will be looking for partners in our bid from local industry, probably with a Science or technological flavour. If you would like to discuss what this might mean, please email me. Meanwhile, lets all try to forget the scandal that is the building getting damp, growing weeds and costing a fortune to secure! You may be aware that a group from London (!) are bidding to open an unneeded new secondary school on the site? The national conditions of bids for new schools are unmet



in this proposal as a) there is no shortage of places in Haywards Heath secondary schools as Oathall has places and b) Haywards Heath is not a priority area. Most local to us, Crawley and the Newhaven district of Lewes are, and this group is proposing they will meet the needs in these areas from Haywards Heath! I cannot conceive that this bid will be entertained by the Department for Education but please involve yourself with any public consultation that might ensue.



There is every chance that with the planned Northern Arc housing developments of Burgess Hill that West Sussex will seek applicants to establish primary and secondary schools to meet the additional need for places. I expect the Trust to be interested given the proximity of WPSA for a 'sister school'.

Watch this space in this regard.

Kindness...

has been an important part of our curriculum across our academies for some four years now. Just this morning WPSA made its annual awards to those students who have been nominated for kindness awards. Next year you will

see Character Education becoming prominent across the Trust. We need to ensure young people appreciate how they can become more resilient, resourceful, confident, independent etc. in this complex and challenging world.

3 Good Things

I have been very interested in an initiative from Dr Pooky Knightsmith (follow on Twitter @PookyH) who speaks of 'drip feeding' positive mental attitudes to enhance

everybody's mental well being. It's simple; speak out about 3 good things that happened to you, or you observed, today. Sussex Learning Trust is embracing this.

...and Finally

The Trust has seen some exceptional collaborative work across academies and phases this year. This is part of our vision, that two or three Heads working together have to have 2 or 3 times more great ideas to make outcomes for children better. And we have three exceptional Headteachers! We would like to expand the Trust to maximise the benefit of partnership working. We are talking to local schools about such benefits, not least of which the uncertain future for some schools due to poor funding in this area. In addition, the Trust is increasingly persuaded that 'all through' education has such potentially huge dividends if a child stays within the same organisation for their formal education. We will be consulting in the new academic year on admission to WPSA accordingly. We believe that knowledge of the children as learners and people can only benefit their development. This is particularly true for our Trust where such an emphasis is placed on the development of the 'whole child'. Next year across the academies we are focusing on the relationship between the teachers and learners; we are instigating a Trust wide policy to address the additional needs of what the DfE describes

as vulnerable learners; we are continuing with Trust wide approach to eradicating barriers that some children experience to maximising their potential. Sussex Learning Trust has the moral purpose of education running through its core which is not at all exclusive to our demands that children are respectful and disciplined, understand the purpose of, and keep to, our community rules and work as hard as they can to achieve the very best outcomes the learner is capable of. Our academies are in many ways very traditional with a keen understanding of the opportunities and challenges that contemporary society offers and presents us with.

In summary a wonderfully busy and successful year with lots more to come in 2018-9. Thank you for your support of each of our academies.



Jonathan Morris
Chief Executive Officer

