

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is to introduce ourselves as the Bridge Academy Trust's senior staff and also, initially, we would like to thank you once again for the ongoing efforts to support the school and your children in these challenging times. The continual and rapid change of circumstances that we have all faced and adapted to cannot be underestimated.

A significant amount of work has been completed in the past several months to facilitate the merger of the NEMAT academies with the Bridge Academy Trust with effect from 1 April 2021, which includes Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form.

Numerous planning meetings have taken place with the key focus being school improvement, children's experiences, and staff development. Some collaborative work has started with leaders, teachers and support staff. All of which is for the benefit of the children.

The formation of an expanded Trust will have numerous benefits including:

- greater collaboration at both infant, primary and secondary phases, an increase in the sharing of resources, best practice, and common solutions which can only benefit our staff and then, ultimately, the children;
- additional capacity to support all the schools to implement school development plans;
- increased professional development opportunities for our staff to develop their knowledge and experience, possible job opportunities, and chances for progression which mean that we can support and retain our high-quality staff whilst providing new opportunities for others, thus enhancing the offer our children receive;
- improved efficiencies for procurement for our schools, putting more resources back into school improvement, this would mean not only maintaining what we currently offer our schools, but potentially enhancing the support available;
- fulfilling our commitment to enhancing the wider provision for children, staff and communities as an outward-facing multi academy trust.

There will be a significant amount of support from the trust to the school and the leadership team. Mr James will continue to be the Executive Headteacher, supporting Dr Cusick as Head of School. Additional roles and staff centrally will enhance what is already happening in the school too.

This merger between NEMAT and Bridge Academy Trust provides us with an exciting opportunity to improve the education provision for all the children.

Bridge Academy Trust, like any other Trust, has a single legal and moral purpose: to advance education for public benefit. Our Trust has agreed its core purpose is to provide high quality continuity of every child's journey through education from 3 to 19, with a strong sense of 'community'. We have a community and school-led school improvement approach, with a long-term sustainable strategy. This therefore ensures both short and long term, sustainable improvements for every child that passes through Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form, and a smooth transition as they continue along their educational journey.

As a civic organisation, we strongly believe in helping local communities to thrive, first and foremost by giving children the best opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom. We strive to give children a better future. We have all witnessed the devastating impact of the global pandemic, yet it has been remarkable how our group of schools working together were able to withstand the perturbations of the pandemic, enabled our staff and children to be supported and to continue their development, and will be able to (including Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form now) withstand any future shocks, as we all continue to recover from the educational, social and economic legacies of COVID-19.

Bridge Academy Trust is recognised nationally as a leading Multi Academy Trust for a variety of reasons. We facilitate knowledge building for children through high quality professional development for our staff, with a view to improving curriculum and pedagogy. We bring our staff together in ways that are supported by proper strategic oversight and accountability, with the highest of standards and expectations. We have a no-excuse culture and insist that no ceiling is placed upon the aspirations of either children or staff. In short, we have made the goal for every teacher in every classroom to be as good as they can be in what they teach (curriculum) and how they teach it (pedagogy) so that every child can be the best that they can be and we will do this by procuring for every teacher the best evidence and training from research. We understand that there is no improvement for children without improvement in teaching, and no improvement in teaching without the best professional development opportunities for teachers.

So, why is Bridge Academy Trust a positive vehicle for school improvement and can take your school forwards? If we are honest, so much has been thrown at schools over the past 10 years on how to get better. Strategy after strategy every half term, presented as the 'tin-off-the-shelf' that you merely have to open to get the benefits from. Well, they just don't work and if they do, they are only ever effective in the short term. Bridge Academy Trust doesn't operate like that. We give far more thought into our approaches to school improvement. We provide a quality assurance model to ensure all that is being delivered is of a high quality; and also, a coaching model to ensure those delivering are the best they can be, supporting others to be the best they can be, in a way that is successful and sustainable. Our significant network of school improvement groups alongside our outstanding central school improvement staff and collaborative school leaders ensure that this is secure in all of our schools. This does not happen overnight, but there is the confidence that this has happened in all of our schools and will do in yours too. Our strategic oversight and accountability inherent in our Trust structures drive this evidence-informed school improvement.

I am fully aware that under NEMAT, Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form, was in a very small & limited group without many like-minded schools. One of the aims of bringing schools together in a Trust is to provide them (the children and staff) with levels of support and collective learning that would not be achievable on their own. In joining Bridge Academy Trust, Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form has become part of a DFE-recognised, high-quality Trust with outstanding schools that can support it, develop it and, also learn from it too.

We are looking forward to working with the children, staff and parents of High School & Braintree Sixth Form and we are genuinely excited at what we will achieve together.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Farmer  
Chief Executive Officer



Rob James  
Deputy CEO/Director of Secondary

