



## SILVER BIRCH ACADEMY TRUST

### *Update from the Board of Trustees*

The restructured board of trustees of Silver Birch Academy Trust has initiated a series of steps to address the very serious allegations raised against the trust and concern voiced by parents/carers.

We understand that concerns have been heightened by the limited amount of information we have been able to communicate so far.

It is the board's intention to be as open and transparent as possible and to address as many of the questions being raised as we can, while protecting the rights of all those involved. We hope you will understand that we don't have all the answers yet and, in some cases for legal reasons, may not be able to give you all the information you would like. We are, however, committed to regular updates as and when we can.

#### *Who is managing the trust?*

The board of trustees, which includes three new, independent trustees appointed with the support of the Department for Education in June, is responsible for the schools and over the last three weeks has worked to understand what has gone on previously and taken immediate action where required.

#### *Who are the new trustees?*

Three new trustees have taken positions on the board. They are:

- )} John Krumins, who is the chairman of Wavex Limited, an IT services company, is a corporate finance professional, sits on several other boards and is a trustee of Big Education Trust.
- )} Justin James, Chief Executive of Lion Academy Trust and Lion Education Trust.
- )} Bill Holledge, Chief Executive of Paradigm Trust.

All three are highly respected in their sectors. Justin and Bill are experts in education and academy trusts – running schools that are rated as “good” or “outstanding” – and each trustee is responsible for supporting different areas of the trust: finance, education and operations respectively.

#### *Why should parents have faith in the latest management team at Silver Birch? They've been let down consistently in the past?*

We hope that the actions we have already taken, in a very short period of time, will demonstrate our intent and determination to find out what has gone wrong and respond appropriately, and we ask parents for their support while we complete our planned investigation.

#### *What is being investigated?*

A comprehensive independent investigation will be carried out by a major audit firm, which will also share its findings, in full, with the Department for Education. The investigation will examine:

- )} The trust's management and its financial conduct
- )} The decisions, actions and events that led the trust to its current position

#### *How long will the investigation take?*

While the board recognises the urgency of the situation, it must also be thorough and take the right steps. Bearing in mind the complexity of the issues being reviewed, the investigation will be

phased but is unlikely to conclude before September this year. The board cannot pre-empt the final report of the investigation but will act on findings as or when relevant.

*Will the schools move to another trust?*

In parallel with the investigation, the board is urgently reviewing what action needs to be taken in the best interest of staff and children. This could include moving one or more of the schools (a process called re-brokering) to other trusts.

*If the schools move, how long will that take?*

Re-brokering, when schools move from their current multi-academy trust to a new one, is a structured process and is managed by teams from the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) office. Once a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) has requested that the RSC re-broker a school, how and when the trust is transferred to a new MAT is determined by the RSC. The MAT who requested the re-brokering cannot influence either the process or the choice of trust to which the school(s) is transferred. Clearly all parties work as quickly as possible to minimise any disruption to the school(s) involved.

*Where is the Executive Head Teacher and CEO now?*

Patricia Davies is on sick leave.

*What does this mean for staffing at the schools?*

The schools are fully staffed and it is very much business as usual. Our immediate priority is to have the most stable and productive environment possible in which pupils can flourish.

*What happens next?*

Gathering information for the investigation and stabilising the schools are our most important priorities. As soon as the board is able to provide more concrete information, we will do so. It is our expectation that there will be developments before the end of term and we will keep you informed as we make progress.

ENDS

