



16 September 2022

Dear Alpha Trust Stakeholder,

I am delighted to be able to inform you of a proposed addition to our family of schools in Alpha Trust. As you are aware, we currently consist of Colchester County High School for Girls, The Gilbert School, Manningtree High School, Home Farm Primary School and The Trinity Secondary Free School with the Trinity Primary Free School opening in the near future. We are a dynamic, innovative and successful Trust originally formed by Headteachers who all share the same personal values and educational ambitions for their young people. We want to provide an outstanding education for our children whilst retaining each school's unique qualities and strengths and promoting its local context and community. Alpha Trust's mission statement has developed out of our schools' mutual values; "To provide all our children and young people with every opportunity to achieve excellent individual outcomes, both academic and personal; to be committed to advancing learner progress through ambition, challenge and inspiration in our teaching, learning and leadership; and to support our students as they build resilience, become proud of who they are, take on responsibilities and grow respect for others."

The significant benefits the Trust has already delivered to our students' education and life chances, for instance by sharing best teaching practice and learning initiatives, by using innovative research to drive our ambition to provide a world class education for all our young people, through recruiting and retaining excellent teachers, can all best be consolidated and developed even further. MAT expansion brings with it further shared resources and more opportunities for staff to work together and widen their knowledge and teaching pedagogy. As a Trust we also deliver financial efficiencies which allows greater funds to be strategically directed into learning. As educators, we also have a duty, and indeed a desire, to share best practice with other, like-minded schools, and in turn to learn from them.

Thomas Mills High School in Framlingham, Suffolk, is a flourishing 11-18 school and is consistently one of the region's highest performing schools. It has high expectations of its students, who make very good progress at the school, and of its well qualified staff. From the Sixth Form, its young people progress to a range of destinations from university (including Oxbridge), college, training, or employment. The school also encourages students to develop as individuals with an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. The school is noted for its calm, purposeful and self-disciplined atmosphere and its ethos is shaped by its Charter of Values which blends tradition and innovation. From this brief description of the school, it can be seen that Thomas Mills High School is a school that fits in with our way of thinking, our Mission, and is truly 'like-minded'.

Thomas Mills has not been part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) before but its Board of Trustees has recently undertaken extensive and exhaustive research and interview processes with a very wide range and number of MATs as it looks to join a trust following on from a recent negative Ofsted appraisal in some areas of leadership and management surrounding Safeguarding. Its previous Ofsted rating under the old framework over 10 years ago was 'Outstanding'. The school remains 'Good' in all other aspects of its operations.

After they had carried out their analysis, the Board of Trustees decided unanimously to explore a formal due diligence with Alpha Trust. We are extremely pleased to be working with them. Their reasons included:

- The balance of school autonomy with central services and support

- The strong track record of all our schools surrounding curriculum and student outcomes
- Strong assurance systems
- Our commitment to high quality education
- Clarity around governance
- Alpha Trust is distributed across all our schools with no separate 'head office'.
- Headteachers are expected to have a cross Trust role

On our part, we would like to emphasise that Thomas Mills brings many attributes to the Trust. In brief they may be outlined as:

- The high quality of teaching and learning
- The high quality of student outcomes
- The good progress made by all students
- The school's very broad and balanced curriculum
- The extra-curricular provision, including the creative arts
- Experienced leaders and staff

In initiating a due diligence process neither Alpha Trust nor Thomas Mills High School is committing to any final decision. The process will take several months and is conducted by external legal and financial experts as well as by Alpha Trust senior and experienced personnel. When and if due diligence is conducted to the satisfaction of both Alpha Trust and Thomas Mills, we all look forward to focussing on our shared fundamental tenet, our students' education.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Marshall Msc NPQH
CEO Alpha Trust