



# SIGMA TRUST

GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS



## About The Sigma Trust

The Sigma Trust is a local partnership of academies in North East Essex. Sigma was formally established in September 2016 and currently consists of 5 secondary schools, a junior school and an infant and nursery school. The Trust will soon expand significantly with three additional secondary schools joining. This will include a new school currently being built on the old Alderman Blaxill site and will be named Paxman Academy. Paxman Academy is due to open in September 2019 and will eventually have 900 students on site. The two other schools are Colne Community School and College and Philip Morant School and College. Both schools are currently part of Thrive Partnership Academy Trust and are being re-brokered into The Sigma Trust. The transfer should be completed by January 2019.

Once all of these moves have been completed Sigma will have around 10,000 pupils, 1400 staff and annual income of over £50 million. In terms of the number of secondary schools, it will be one of the largest academy trusts in the East of England region. It is also fairly unique in having so many schools in such close proximity to each other. The benefits of this are significant as it allows extensive joint working to take place and provides huge opportunities for staff and students alike. With the agreed expansion we will be able to increase the range of secondment opportunities available for staff development and ensure students have equal curriculum entitlement regardless of the size of school that they attend.



The five original secondary schools within The Sigma Trust all became academies in 2012 as part of the North East Essex Education Partnership (NEEEP). This was a company limited by guarantee and thus effectively operated as an umbrella trust. All of the partner schools therefore have a strong tradition of working collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for all students in their academies.

Soon after NEEEP was created, there was a desire to extend the partnership to incorporate primary partners. Changes to academy rules meant that this was only possible by establishing separate multi-academy trusts. Two of the secondary schools formed a MAT with the two primary schools in 2014, and one of the other secondary schools became an approved sponsor in 2015. Later that year a decision was taken to simplify this model by creating one single multi-academy trust and, hence, The Sigma Trust was born.

All schools are geographically close enough to provide the necessary support and challenge to take all academies to the next level. We have a set of shared values and a common mission and vision that aims to ensure that no child is left behind. No academy is seen as the “lead” school, and we believe that every school should be a giver as well as a receiver of support. All academies within the Trust retain their cultural autonomy, but we work together to ensure that best practice becomes shared practice.

The Greek letter Sigma ( $\Sigma$ ) is used in Mathematics and IT to denote "the sum of" hence its adoption as our name.

Our belief is that achievement is for all and that no child should be left behind. Education should foster in its learners a curiosity to discover who they are and what they are capable of, together with developing the resilience for them to test the boundaries of their abilities and to build the skills necessary to face the future with confidence.



We are not looking to work in isolation and will continue to collaborate with others to enhance the educational experience of children in the community. In so doing we aim to become a centre of educational excellence and innovation within the area.



The Sigma Trust has created a strong and unique partnership with the Learning Pathways Academy Trust (LPAT). LPAT was formed in 2012, and now consists of three academies: Lyons Hall in Braintree, White Hall Academy in Clacton and Braiswick Primary in Colchester. They currently have no plans to grow further but seek to remain outward looking to achieve the best outcomes for pupils in the area. In this, and in so many other areas, the values and vision of LPAT and Sigma align. Links with LPAT give Sigma strong primary support capacity.

In January 2017 the Headteacher of White Hall Academy, Gavin Bradley, was also appointed as Executive Headteacher at Monkwick Junior School. This provided the school with much needed leadership capacity and created additional support for the newly appointed Headteacher. In January 2018 Gavin became the Primary Executive Lead in The Sigma Trust, this role gives him oversight of all primary schools within the Trust and he works with the Chief Executive Officer, Jeff Brindle, to seek to create an appropriate balance of schools across Sigma.

In May 2018, it was announced that Sigma was the preferred sponsor for a new free school to be built on the site of the old Alderman Blaxill School. This school has long associations with other schools within The Sigma Trust. In 2008, the Stanway Federation provided additional capacity to keep the school open for a further six years until it was eventually closed due to a falling roll.



The new school will be called Paxman Academy and, as part of its ethos, there will be a key focus on the STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The school is due to open in September 2019

with a PAN of 180. Sigma intends to make sure the state of the art facilities are fully utilised from Day 1.

Older students from across the other Sigma secondary schools in Colchester will access the new academy for identified Key Stage 4 subjects, creating a collaborative approach that ensures that all students have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets individual needs.

Our aspiration for growth is to develop our primary phase and become the MAT of choice for maintained schools and standalone academies in the area. We are not looking to work outside of the North East Essex area, but we have the capacity to provide additional support as required to other MATS in the area. In June 2018, we were asked to provide significant, immediate support for the Colne Community School in Brightlingsea. We were able to put in place an Interim Executive Headteacher and other senior colleagues with limited notice, to build confidence and implement key improvements in relation to the quality of education being delivered.

In July 2018, the Headteachers' Board announced that The Sigma Trust would become the new sponsor for both Colne Community School and Philip Morant School. The temporary arrangements that were put in place at Colne will continue and an Interim Executive Headteacher has been appointed at Philip Morant. Both Interim Executive Heads are experienced Headteachers from within Sigma and are able to provide the necessary leadership capacity for both schools to ensure a smooth transfer can be achieved.

The Sigma Trust is committed to developing its already outstanding team of staff. It ensures that it has the capacity for colleagues to voluntarily move between schools to fill any necessary gaps and enhance their career development. In 2018 four of our staff were acknowledged at the Essex Teaching Awards:

- Helena Boast – Headteacher of the Year
- Sarah Cross – Secondary Teacher of the Year
- Sue Crotty – Lifetime Achievement winner
- Bev Wrobel – Teaching Assistant of the Year

The Sigma Trust will ensure that it secures the best possible outcomes for all learners and that all its academies are rated at least "Good" with the overall goal of ensuring outstanding provision.

We have strived to keep the size of the levy or top-slice as manageable as possible given the tight financial situation faced by all schools. The annual cost charged for all the services outlined in this document is set at 4.5% of the General Allocation Grant (GAG) for 2018/19. This, we believe, will be the maximum amount we will charge.



## Mission, Vision and Values

### Mission

To be "Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts" represents the mission statement for The Sigma Trust. We believe we are stronger and more successful working together than we would be as separate institutions.

The mission for each academy within The Sigma Trust is to ensure that no child is left behind. Education should foster in its learners a curiosity to discover who they are and what they are capable of, together with developing the resilience for them to test the boundaries of their abilities, and build the skills necessary to face the future with confidence.

### Vision

Our vision is to ensure that all of our academies are at least "Good" with strong and improving outcomes and are able to demonstrate outstanding provision. We will achieve this by:

- Establishing a local family of academies that fully embrace the mission, vision and values of the Trust.
- Ensuring that best practice becomes shared practice so that no school is left behind.
- Recognising the uniqueness and achievements of each academy.
- Enabling every school to be a giver and receiver of support.
- Developing a relationship where autonomy and accountability go hand in hand.
- Creating a centre of educational excellence and innovation within the area.
- Working in collaboration with others to enhance the educational experience of children in the community.
- Training, recruiting and retaining teachers, leaders and support staff through high quality professional development.
- Requiring that services are delivered efficiently and represent outstanding value for money.

### Values

The Sigma Trust values the following attributes:

- Integrity - be honest, transparent, trustworthy and true to your beliefs.
- Passion - be positive and enthusiastic about what you are trying to achieve.
- Aspiration - aim for your best and set high, realistic goals.
- Resilience - never give up and strive to improve.
- Accountability - take responsibility for your words, thoughts and actions.
- Respect - for yourself, your environment and other people.

## Our Secondary Schools

### Clacton County High School

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 18
Location	Clacton, Essex
PAN:	279



### Harwich and Dovercourt High School

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 18
Location	Harwich, Essex
PAN:	260



### The Stanway School

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 16
Location	Colchester, Essex
PAN:	280



### St Helena School

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 18
Location	Colchester, Essex
PAN:	200



### The Thomas Lord Audley School

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 16
Location	Colchester, Essex
PAN:	168



### Paxman Academy

Type of School  
Denomination  
Age Range  
Location  
PAN:

Secondary Academy  
Non-Denominational  
11 – 16  
Colchester, Essex  
180  
Opens in Sep 2019



### Our Primary Schools

#### Monkwick Infant and Nursery School

Type of School  
Denomination  
Age Range  
Location  
PAN:

Infant and Nursery  
Non-Denominational  
2 – 7  
Colchester, Essex  
90



#### Monkwick Junior School

Type of School  
Denomination  
Age Range  
Location  
PAN:

Junior  
Non-Denominational  
7 – 11  
Colchester, Essex  
90



## Governance

### Members

The Sigma Trust has five Members that include the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Members have a role akin to shareholders. Founding Members are signatories to the Articles of Association. They have the power to amend the Trust's Articles, receive the annual accounts and appoint Trustees as set out in the Articles. The Members meet on a termly basis which includes the Annual General Meeting. Details of the individual Members are available on The Sigma Trust website ([www.sigmatrust.org.uk](http://www.sigmatrust.org.uk)).

### Board of Trustees

The Trust is overseen by a Board of Trustees, currently consisting of 9 members including the Chair and Chief Executive Officer. Trustees are responsible for governing and exercising all the powers of the Trust. This includes:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, values and strategic direction.
- Holding the CEO to account for the educational performance of the Trust's academies
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Trust and ensuring legal compliance.

In addition to the LGBs, the Board of Trustees has two formal sub-committees; Finance and Audit & Risk. Details of the individual Trustees are available on The Sigma Trust website ([www.sigmatrust.org.uk](http://www.sigmatrust.org.uk)).

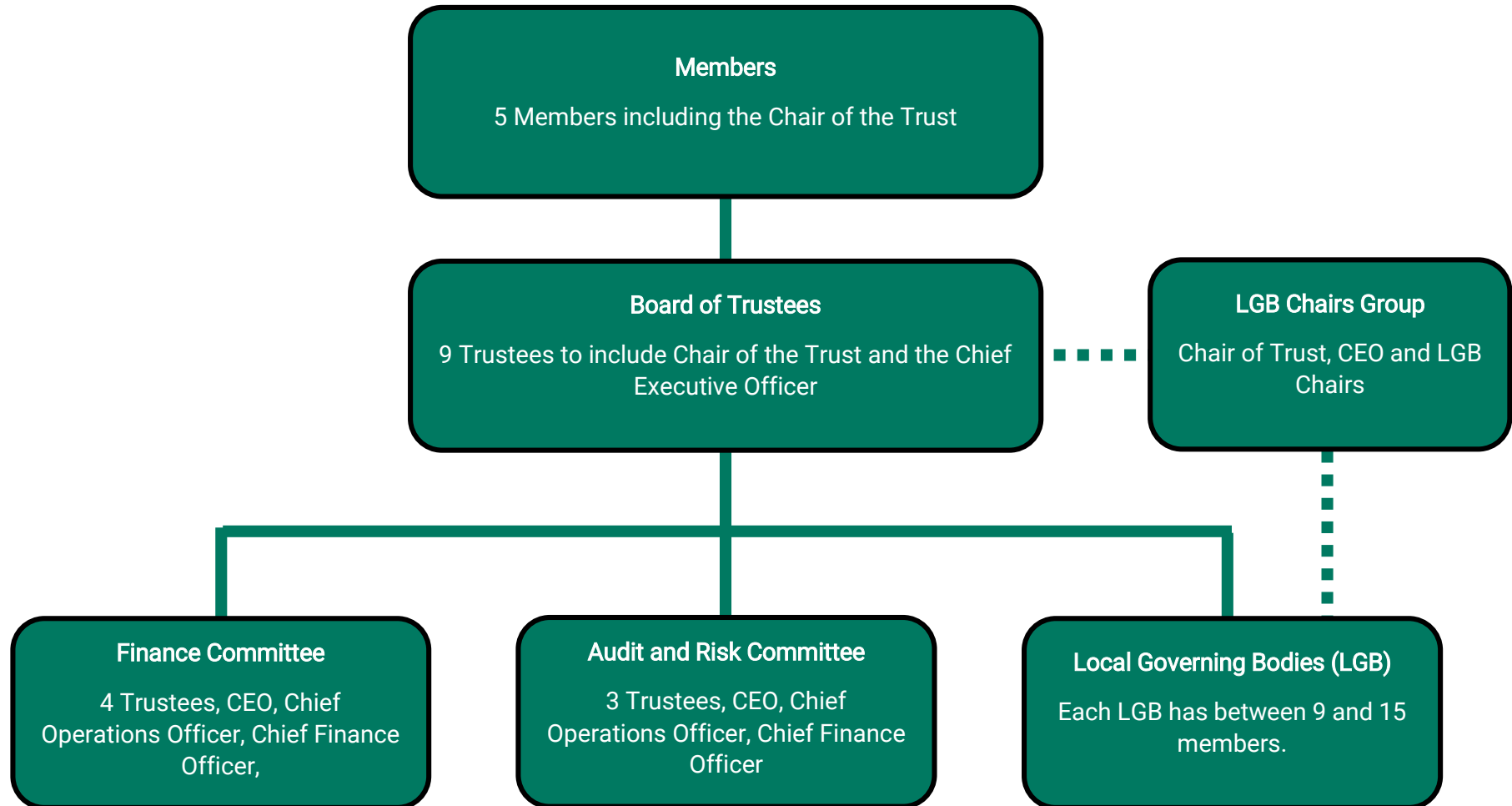
### Local Governing Bodies

The Sigma Trust firmly believes in local governance structures. LGBs have delegated functions as set out in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. The Trustees remain accountable and responsible for these functions. The duties of the LGBs include:

- Establishing the vision and ethos for the relevant academy ensuring that it fits within and promotes the vision and ethos of the Trust.
- Safeguarding and promoting the values of the Academy
- Supporting the Headteacher of the Academy and being a critical friend
- Monitoring the achievement, quality of teaching and behaviour and safety within the Academy
- Engagement with the Academy's key stakeholders e.g. parents/carers, pupils and staff
- Advising the Trustees about local issues they need to consider that affect the Academy

The Trust is moving towards a structure where each LGB consists of four or five "Regional Governors" that sit on more than one LGB, sometimes these LGBs are combined and meet on the same night. The Regional Governors will have a number of years of experience that they can bring to the LGB and may include Trustees. The remaining members of the LGB must include two elected parents and two staff members, including the Headteacher. The Chairs of LGB meet with the Chair of the Trust and the CEO on a termly basis.

## Governance Structure



## School Improvement

The quality of educational support that can be provided is key to driving forward school improvement. Too often academies within a trust are isolated and are not provided with the capacity they need to drive through school improvement. The close locality of all schools within The Sigma Trust ensures that this is not the case. Our school improvement offer includes the following commitments:

### ➤ Director of Education

Scott Holder, previously Co-Headteacher at The Stanway School, has been appointed as the Trust's Director of Education. The key priorities of this role include:

- Oversight of school improvement and education performance across the Trust.
- Acting as an interim Executive Headteacher, as appropriate and necessary, with responsibility for designated academies (he is currently acting in that capacity at Philip Morant School and College).
- Provide visible leadership across the organisation and, with the CEO and others, become the outward face of the Trust in liaising with external bodies.
- Develop and deploy the Trust's resources so as to secure the best possible outcomes for students and the sustainability of the Trust.
- Ensure a robust CPD offer exists for all classroom based staff working in close partnership with other organisations.
- Report to Trustees with appropriate, timely and relevant information and advice to enable them to exercise their responsibilities and ensure decisions are well informed, clear and implemented.
- Provide support and challenge for Headteachers in ensuring that standards continue to rise across all academies.
- Act for the CEO as and when necessary, including chairing meetings and attending conferences.

### ➤ Primary Executive Lead

The Trust has appointed Gavin Bradley, Headteacher at White Hall Academy, as the Primary Executive Lead (PEL) working across all primary schools within Sigma to ensure they have the support and capacity required. This is part of our unique partnership with the Learning Pathways Academy Trust (LPAT). The PEL visits the schools each week to ensure that support, additional capacity and training is readily available. All primary schools within The Sigma Trust benefit from access to LPAT's professional development programmes, including



Developing Teaching Programme (DTP), Outstanding Teaching Programme (OTP), Outstanding Teacher Assistant Programme (OTAP), NPQSL and NPQML.

## ➤ Director of Standards

This post is currently vacant and will be linked to future growth. The Trust currently employs an external consultant to carry out many of these tasks. The post holder will work closely with the CEO, Director of Education and Primary Executive Lead to continue to ensure that the highest quality of education is provided in all of our schools. The key priorities of this role will include:

- Further improve standards across The Sigma Trust;
- Work with the Director of Education to strengthen internal quality assurance systems in relation to teaching and learning;
- Develop and monitor consistent strategies across Sigma schools linked to accurate assessment and intervention aimed at raising attainment;
- Ensure consistency across the Trust in the implementation of agreed policies linked to teaching and learning;
- Take a lead role in any internal reviews carried out in Sigma academies;
- Provide focused leadership and governance support to Sigma academies, particularly as they prepare for Ofsted Inspections.

## ➤ Internal Reviews

The Sigma Trust has set up a programme of Internal Reviews in all schools to both challenge and promote best practice. This year all reviews have been led by an external consultant, Kevin Crossley (previously CEO of The Collaborative Academies Trust). Kevin has carried out the reviews alongside colleagues from schools across the Trust. The reviews this year have included Pre-Ofsted reviews to ensure that schools are ready to face their next inspection and subject reviews aimed at identifying and addressing areas of inconsistency. The aim of each review is formative rather than summative and seeks to support the school to create an action plan to address the issues identified and where necessary to provide additional capacity required.

## ➤ Strategic Leads

We have appointed a number of Strategic Leads who oversee key areas of the curriculum. They are highly regarded and experienced professionals in their subject specialism and cover English, Maths, Science, Modern Foreign Language, Humanities and SEN. This group meets regularly to ensure that common specifications and assessment arrangements are in place to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. We are seeking to grow this team to cover other aspects of the curriculum and develop more cross phase working in the future.



*Charlie McCarthy, group facilitator, Vince Maiella, Sarah Davies-Llewellyn, Carol-Anne Moffatt, Scott Holder, strategic development officer, Fiona Cook, Melissa Capes and John Knights.*

## ➤ Teaching and Learning Group

The Teaching and Learning team, consisting mainly of Deputy Heads from each school, meet each half term to plan the CPD needs across the Trust. This includes regular twilight and NPD sessions for all staff. The twilight sessions have included Teach Meets, Bring and Brag and Trust Thursday sessions where staff from all schools meet to share good practice on a regular basis. An annual Trust Non-Pupil Day has been created to enable all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to meet together to listen to key note speakers, share best practice, and to network with other colleagues. The group also ensures that consistent approaches for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is implemented across the Trusts schools.

## ➤ Data and Curriculum Group

The Data and Curriculum team, also consists mainly of Deputy Heads and Assistant Heads from each school. The role of this group is to ensure that clear, concise and accurate data is provided for the CEO, Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of Headteachers. The group has implemented a range of strategies to support the reliability of predictions made. This includes joint pre-public exams and external moderation supported by agreed common specifications. The data is used to implement any required intervention strategies.

The success of this approach was recognised by the Education Policy Institute (EPI), in their report “School Performance in Academy Chains and Local Authorities – 2017”, published in June 2018. The Sigma Trust was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of over 200 different groups of schools, including Local Authorities and Multi Academy Trusts.



## ➤ Seconded Staff

The Trust fully recognises that unexpected vacancies which arise during the year can impact significantly on all schools and is often the biggest risk to school improvement. Since it was formed in September 2016 the Trust has been able to immediately fill these vacancies by ensuring that it has the necessary capacity and flexibility to respond. In that time, we have seconded staff into roles at all levels: including Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, SLT members, SENCo, Heads of Department and classroom teachers. We have also been able to provide similar levels of support to schools outside of The Sigma Trust where requested to do so by the Regional Schools’ Commissioner. Additional capacity at primary level is provided by LPAT and the Trust is seeking to work with more primary schools to enable it to further expand its capacity.

## ➤ Initial Teacher Training

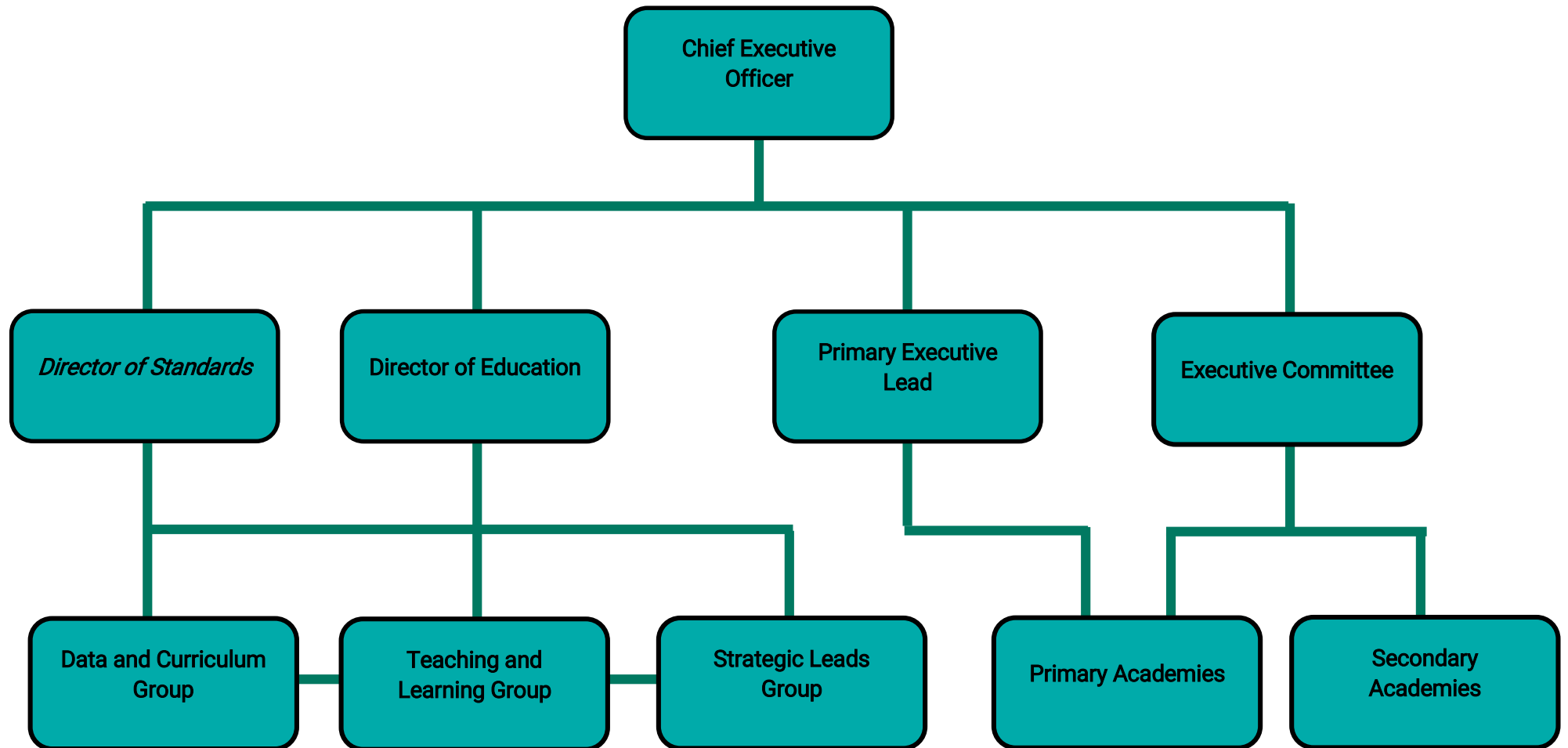
The Sigma Trust has its own ITT provider, North Essex Teacher Training (NETT). NETT currently has over 60 trainees working across both the primary and secondary phase following its amalgamation with Tendring Hundred Primary SCITT in September 2017. All schools within Sigma benefit from having trainees within their schools and from the supply of locally based NQTs. Most of our trainees secure posts within partner schools.

Sigma schools also have close links to Teach First to further support the training and recruitment of new entrants to the profession. Both the PEL, Gavin Bradley, and Neil Gallagher, Principal at Clacton County High School, serve on the Teach First East Anglia School's Forum.

In September, the two Monkwick Schools will have three Teach First participants based at their schools. This opportunity could be extended to other schools joining the Trust.



## School Improvement Leadership Structure



*Planned post linked to future growth*

## Operational Support

The Sigma Trust believes that Headteachers need to be given the support required to focus on school improvement. Too often this is undermined by the demands of wider operational issues that have little to do with teaching. We have created a central team with the expertise and capacity needed to manage key operational functions for each school.

### > Finance

All finance operations have been moved to the centre with a team of expert staff working under the leadership of the Chief Finance Officer, an EFSA School Resource Management Advisor. This team is responsible for working with each school and the Local Governing Body (LGB) to set and monitor the budget, procuring best value through economies of scale and managing all day to day orders and processing. All finance policies are managed centrally.



Ensuring the financial stability and accountability of the Trust and its individual academies is of paramount importance. Too often where MATs get into difficulty it is due to financial mismanagement rather than educational outcomes. The Sigma Trust is in a very strong financial position as can be seen in the Financial Statement and Annual Report available on our website. The balances for each academy is taken from this report.

### ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIES BY FUND BALANCE

Fund balances at 31 August 2017 were allocated as follows:

	Total 2017 £
Clacton County High School (The Sigma Trust)	1,625,230
St Helena School	820,836
Harwich and Dovercourt High School	900,440
Monkwick Infants School	504,269
Monkwick Junior School	56,119
The Stanway School	1,243,613
Thomas Lord Audley School	109,334
The Sigma Trust Central Services	201,455
North Essex Teacher Training	81,719
	<hr/>
Total before fixed asset fund and pension reserve	5,543,015

## ➤ Human Resources

A centrally run HR team oversees the full employee lifecycle including recruitment, issuing contracts and advising and supporting employee relations casework. Sigma has recently appointed Nigel Sawyer from Essex HR to this team as Employee Relations Manager, bringing with him his wealth of knowledge and experience in the area. All HR policies are managed centrally following consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) of regional trade union representatives. These include Pay Policy, Performance Management and Discipline and Dismissal.

## ➤ Estate Management

The Chief Operations Officer has responsibility for overseeing all building related issues across the Trust. He is currently overseeing different stages of major expansion in three of the schools; Stanway, Monkwick Junior School and Clacton County High School altogether totalling over £15 million. In addition, we have the new Paxman Academy under construction with completion in 2019. The Trust also receives an annual budget of around £1.5 million in School Condition Allocation and has commissioned a Building Condition Survey of all schools to ascertain the priorities for improvement. This has led to major improvements to roofing, windows, mechanical and electrical and fencing to the majority of schools within the Trust. Due to the extent of this work we are now recruiting additional estate staff to support site teams to ensure all health and safety issues are fully addressed.



## ➤ Payroll

Payroll is also run centrally by an experienced payroll team rather than outsourcing to a third party. This ensures a direct link to both finance and HR and enables accurate and effective delivery of pay to all staff.

## ➤ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The introduction of GDPR has put a major pressure on all schools. The Sigma Trust has appointed its own Data Protection Officer (DPO) to make certain that all academies are fully compliant with the new regulations and that all data is securely managed.

## ➤ Information Technology (IT)

The Trust has ensured that all schools have well managed IT systems and have local technician support available as required. All IT resources and services are procured centrally to ensure best value for all schools. We are currently in the process of joining up our systems, via a Cloud based solution, to make the sharing of documents more effective. The Trust is in the process of appointing a Chief Network Officer to oversee these developments.



**Central Services Operational Structure**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Trust PA**

**Chief Operations Officer**

**Chief Finance Officer**

**Data Protection Officer**

**Network Team**

- Chief Network Officer(s)
- Network Managers

**Estates Team**

- Trust Estates Manager
- Estates Assistants

**Human Resources Team**

- Trust HR Manager
- Employee Relations Manager
- HR Officers
- HR Assistants

**Payroll Team**

- Trust Payroll Manager
- Pensions & Payroll Manager
- Payroll Assistants

**Finance Support Team**

- Trust Finance Manager
- Academies Finance Managers
- Finance Officers
- Finance Assistants

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