



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 grown to become the largest multi-academy trust working solely within Essex. The Trust has recently expanded to take on three additional secondary schools and now consists of eight secondary schools, a junior school and an infant and nursery school.

The Sigma Trust now consists of 10,000 pupils, 1400 staff and annual income of over £50 million. The size of the Trust allows extensive joint working to take place and provides huge opportunities for staff and students alike. We have been able to build a wide range of secondment opportunities linked to staff development and can ensure students have equal curriculum entitlement



regardless of the size of school that they attend. The approach taken within The Sigma Trust is unique in this area. There is no lead school, the Trust is built around the belief that best practice becomes shared practice and that every school can become a giver and receiver of support.

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. 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 school is left behind.

The Greek letter, Sigma (Σ), is used in Mathematics and IT to denote "the sum of" hence its adoption as our name and our tagline "Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts".

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.

Last year, we were announced as the preferred sponsor for a new school currently being built on the old Alderman Blaxill site. The new school, named Paxman Academy, will open in September 2019 and will eventually have 900 students on site. Pupil applications to the new school have been strong and the building is well on the way to completion. The school, once opened, will provide a much needed boost to the Shrub End area of Colchester where it is based.



As part of the school's ethos, there will be a key focus on the STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Already strong links have been made with MAN Diesels, the company that runs the old Paxman company factory in Colchester, and the Managing Director of MAN serves on the Local Governing Body of the school. 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

In January 2019, Colne Community School and College and Philip Morant School and College were re-brokered into The Sigma Trust. New leadership has been appointed in both schools and they are being rapidly turned around after facing a turbulent period. The creation of such a large group



of secondary schools in close proximity to each other has provided significant opportunities for collaborative working, which is at the heart of our vision as a trust. Our future expansion plans will focus on expanding the number of primary schools to develop the same collaborative opportunities whilst building on our close partnership with the Learning Pathways Academy Trust.

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. Gavin has since been appointed as the Primary Executive Lead in The Sigma Trust, with oversight of all primary schools within Sigma and he works closely with the Chief Executive Officer, Jeff Brindle, to seek to support both existing schools and any future expansion.



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.

Being inclusive is at the heart of what we believe and we continually seek opportunities to ensure we can meet all pupils' needs. At Monkwick Junior School we have recently secured funding that has created a GROW unit on site. This builds on a model created by LPAT where students at risk of exclusion can be continued to be educated in a school setting whilst receiving the specialist support that they require. We are now looking to expand this model to create the first secondary GROW provision in Essex.

The Sigma Trust is committed to developing its already outstanding team of staff. It ensures that it has the capacity to provide support for all schools as required and regular secondment opportunities are made available to allow staff to experience other schools. In 2019, for the second year in a row we had outstanding success at the Essex Teaching Awards:

- **New Teacher of the Year Award**
Winner: Dan Brown – The Stanway School
- **Secondary School Teacher of the Year Award**
Winner: Rebecca Reilly – The Stanway School
- **Secondary School Headteacher of the Year Award**
Highly Commended: Neil Gallagher – CCHS
- **Lifetime Achievement Award**
Highly Commended: Ann Bryant – TLA
- **Governing Body**
Highly Commended: The Stanway School & Thomas Lord Audley School
- **Student Choice Award**
Highly Commended: Kerry Rowland – TLA
Highly Commended: Andrew Chitsakamile – CCHS



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.

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



Colne Community School and College

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 18
Location	Brightlingsea, Essex
PAN:	248



Harwich and Dovercourt High School

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



Paxman Academy

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 16
Location	Colchester, Essex
PAN:	180



Philip Morant School and College

Type of School	Secondary Academy
Denomination	Non-Denominational
Age Range	11 – 18
Location	Colchester, Essex
PAN:	340



The Stanway School

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

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

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

Type of School Denomination Age Range Location PAN:	Junior Non-Denominational 7 – 11 Colchester, Essex 90	
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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).

Board of Trustees

The Trust is overseen by a Board of Trustees, currently consisting of 11 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).

Local Governing Bodies

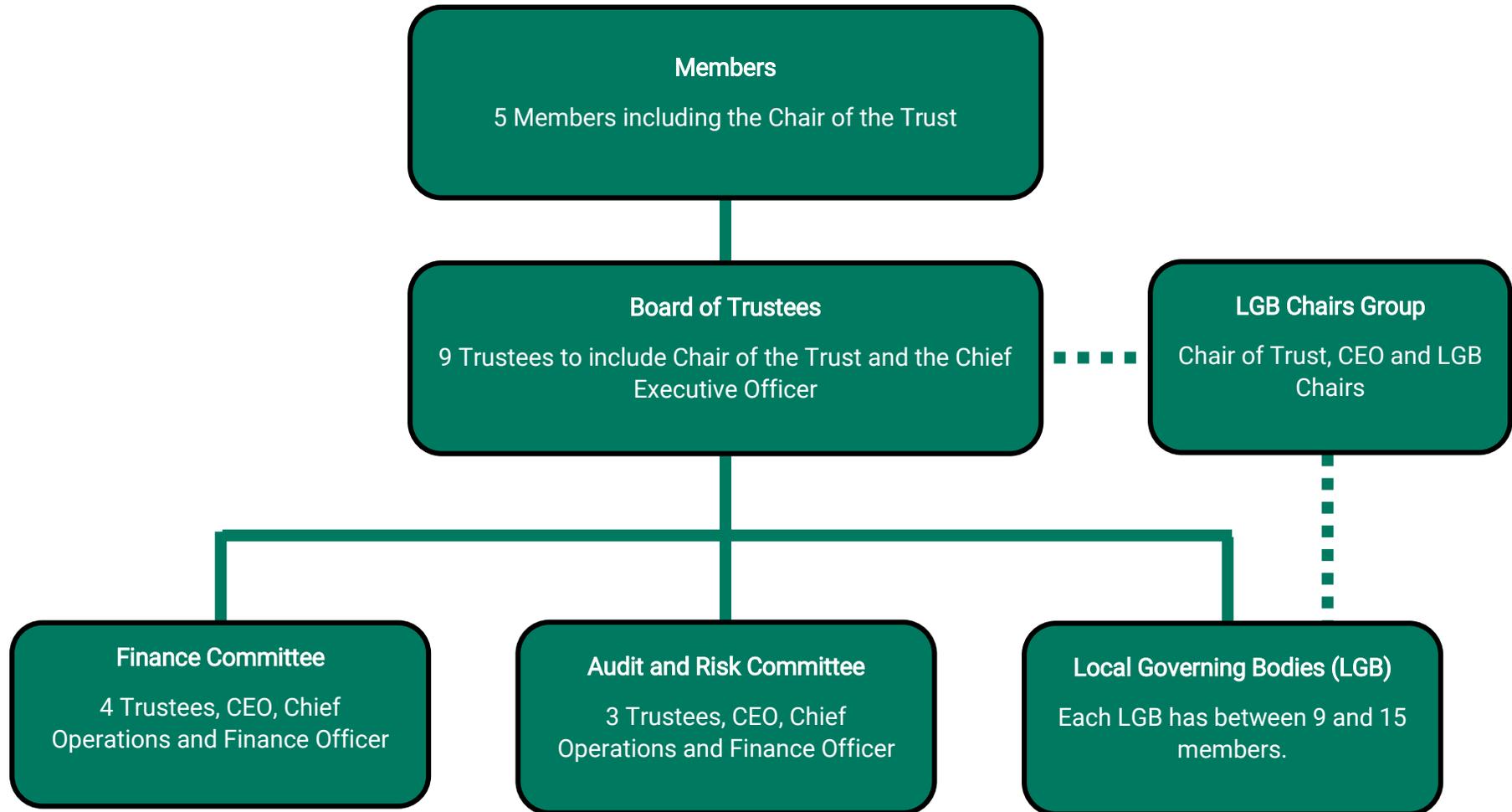
The Sigma Trust firmly believes in local governance structures. LGBs have delegated functions as set out in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. The Trustees remain accountable and responsible for these functions. The duties of the LGBs include:

- 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

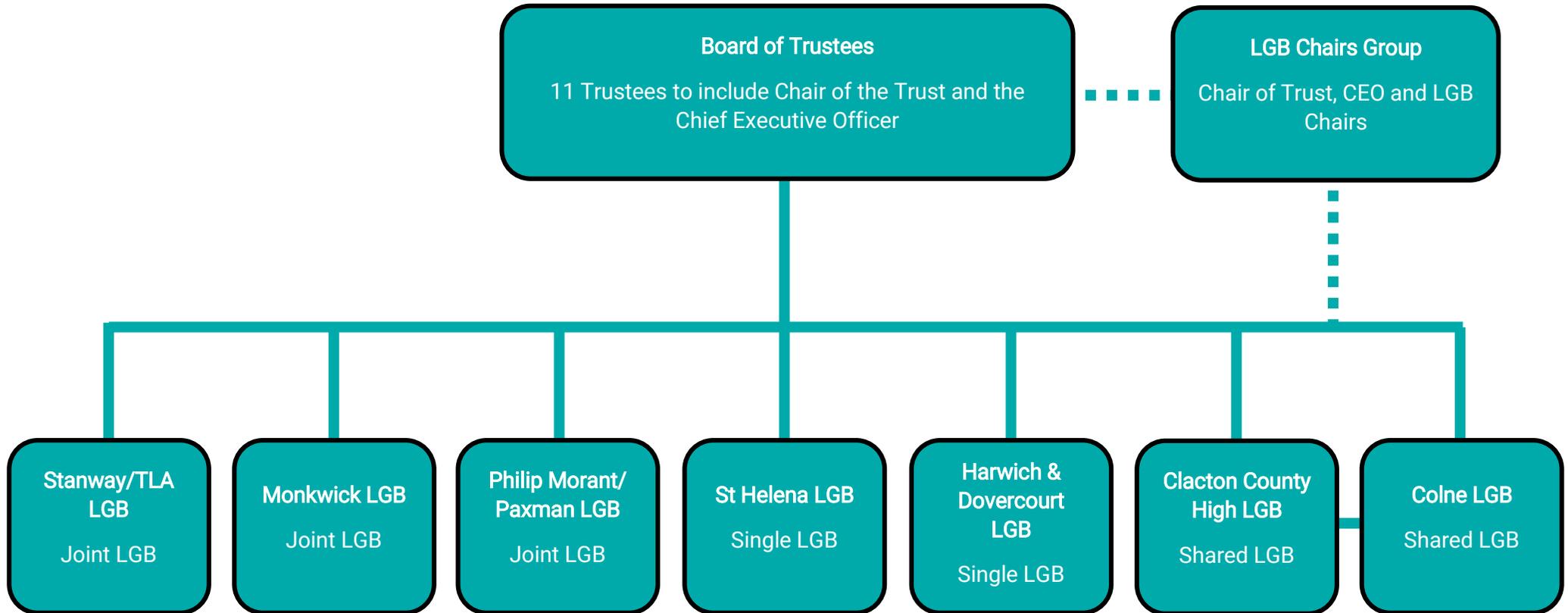
A number of schools operate with joint LGBs in order to share practice and maximise expertise. One or more Trustees sit on each LGB.

The Chairs of LGB meet with the Chair of the Trust and the CEO on a termly basis.

Governance Structure



Local Governing Body 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 roles and activities:

➤ **Director of Standards**

Lyn Wright, previously Head of Education and Early Years with Essex County Council, joined The Sigma Trust in February 2019 to become the Director of Standards. The key priorities of this role 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.

➤ **Director of Education**

Scott Holder, Executive Headteacher at The Philip Mornat School and College, is the Trust's Director of Education. The key priorities of this role include:

- Acting as an interim Executive Headteacher, as appropriate and necessary, with responsibility for designated academies.
- 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 The Sigma Trust 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.



➤ **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.

➤ **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 Trust 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 reinforced 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 14th 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.

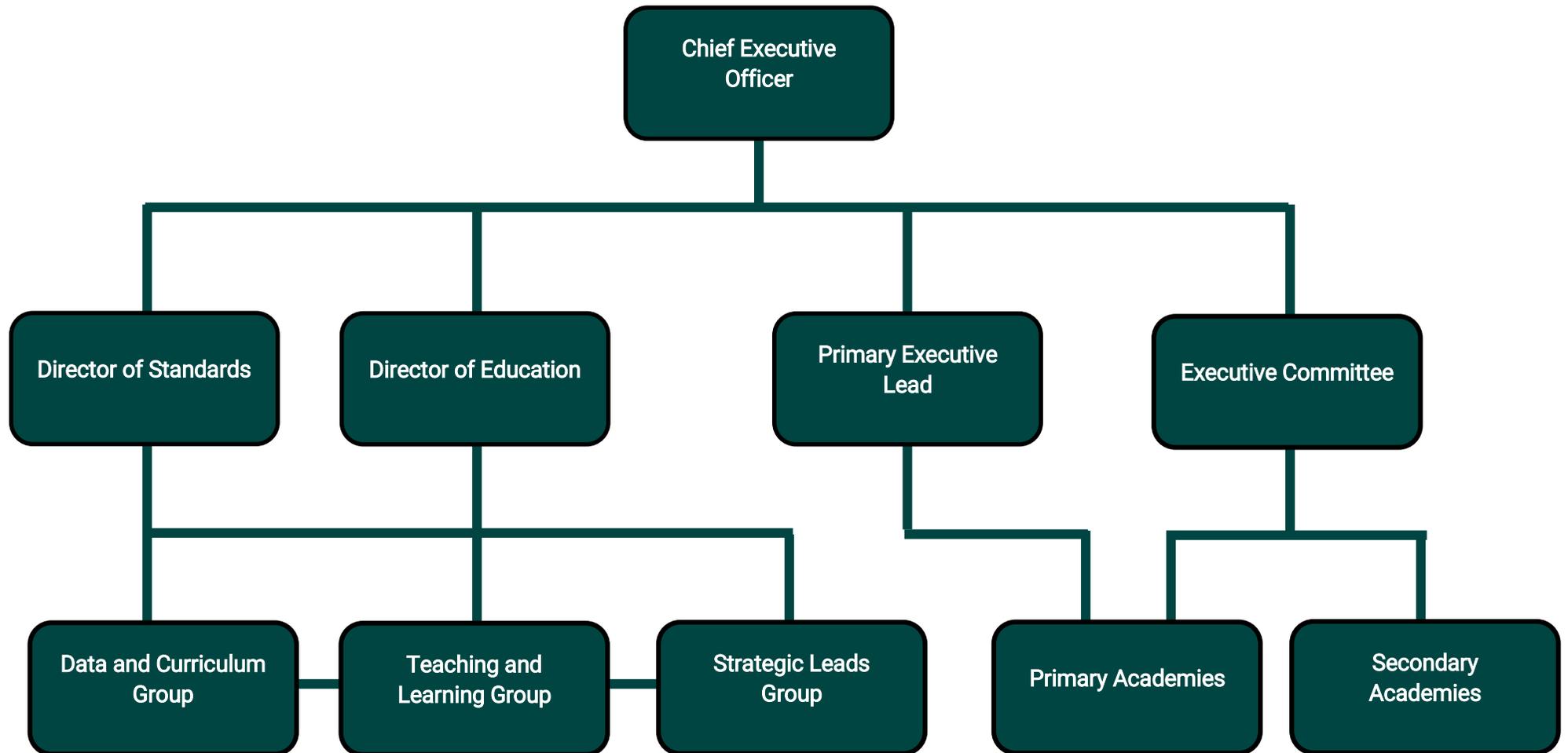
➤ **Initial Teacher Training**

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.



School Improvement Leadership Structure



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, led by the Chief Finance and Operations Officer.

➤ Finance

All finance operations have been moved to the centre with a team of expert staff. 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.

➤ Human Resources

A centrally run HR team oversees all recruitment, contracts and disciplinary issues along with employee relations matters. 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 Estates team are responsible for overseeing all building related issues across the Trust. Currently the team are managing 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 June 2019.



The Trust also receives an annual budget of around £1.5 million in School Condition Allocation and has commissioned a Building



SIGMA TRUST

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.

➤ **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 has appointed joint Chief Network Officers to oversee these developments.



Central Services Operational Structure

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Operations and Finance Officer

Admin Team

- Trust PA
- Admin officer
- Admin assistants

Data Protection Officer

Network Team

- Chief Network Officer(s)
- Network Managers

Estates Team

- Estates Manager
- Estates Assistants

HR Team

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

Payroll Team

- Trust Payroll Manager
- Pensions Manager
- Payroll Officer
- Payroll Assistants

Finance Team

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

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