



29 January 2018

To all parents and carers, Palladian Academy Trust

Dear parents and carers

First PAT Parents' Newsletter, January 2018

Please find attached the first Parents' Newsletter of the Palladian Academy Trust (PAT). I am sending it to you with due fanfare! This inaugural edition gives some details of the structure of the Trust, and we envisage that the Newsletter will capture some of our key collaborative ventures, whether they be in the arts, outdoor education, sport, curriculum or other areas. Knowing what a fantastic group of children are enrolled in Trust schools, I am sure there will be colour, energy and life.

The Trust is now in its second year, as you will probably be aware. At this stage, the remaining appointments to the Trust Board and group of members are being made. However, please do let me, or Russell Franks, Chair of the Trust Board, know if you have an interest in being a governor, trustee, member or committee member, now or in the future. Vacancies will always occur in these areas.

It is worth saying that the Trust Board operates much as a board of governors in a school would have done previously, over-arching the whole group in areas such as finance and many policies. This means that school governors have a different but very important role to play.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) of the PAT has formed a dynamic team, one which I always enjoy working with. As well as the eight headteachers, Jo Marsh, our Chief Operating Officer and myself as CEO make up a team of ten. Work in progress at the moment includes a number of strands. It may be helpful to sketch in a few. It will really serve to illustrate how much work is already taking shape in this first phase:

- Networking opportunities for colleagues in equivalent roles, such as literacy coordinators
- INSET days across the PAT; we have agreed to hold them twice yearly
- Work on getting to know Trust estates better, and the submission of bids for site development to the Condition Improvement Fund
- Discussion on the future shape of our Trust, and possible new partners

- The development of really strong working relationships in the Executive Leadership Team, the Trust Board, its committees and at other levels
- Streamlining and alignment of testing and assessment within PAT, KS1 – 2
- New HR and payroll providers introduced
- New financial management systems for PAT schools
- Building relationships with other agencies and bodies, such as the Local Authority, other MATs, training organisations, and the DFE in the South-West
- Strategic planning. On Friday 2 February ELT will be carrying out a substantial updating of our Trust Development Plan for the Trust Board
- The development of our teacher training with key partner Bath Spa University
- Peer review exercises so that schools can count on having the benefit of very experienced colleagues thoughts and perceptions from a perspective outside the school
- Arts events planned such as One Night at the Palladian on June 18 which will showcase PAT performers across all schools and underline our commitment to a broad education experience and not one narrowly focused on passing tests and assessments
- Peer mentoring
- Competitive sports – the ‘Palladian Games’

... and many more!

I am proud to be the CEO of a vibrant learning organisation such as the Palladian Academy Trust. Essentially, the Trust is a partnership. As Local Authorities begin to adopt a new role in education, educational trusts provide new opportunities for collaboration in a single organisation. This enables more efficient use of resourcing, and enables us to share expertise very freely and openly across Trust schools. Although the government has removed the deadline for all schools to become academies, there is no doubt that the intention remains the same. It is also true to say that no new single academy trusts are being agreed, so that partnership is the way forward.

These are interesting times, educationally, as in other ways. We have all been taken by surprise by some national and international developments. However, I think the concept of a strong partnership will have a resonance with most parents from your own working and personal lives, particularly in straitened times. The good humour and strong relationships we hoped for are already there ... and being strengthened every day.

Please do let me have any thoughts at this stage, particularly those that may feed into our updated Trust Development Plan. In the meantime, thanks for your interest in the Trust, and for reading our first Newsletter. PAT schools have a 125-year lease, so we plan to be around for a while, inspiring and teaching young people and making a difference to their lives.

With every good wish, and thanks for your support – present and future,

Yours sincerely

T. Wittes

Chief Executive Officer
Palladian Academy Trust

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