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01 About The Sigma Trust

The Sigma Trust is a local partnership of academies in North East Essex.

The Sigma Trust was formally established in September 2016 and has grown to become one of the largest multi-academy trusts working solely within North East Essex. We believe in the power of collaboration to unlock every child's potential. Our network of 12 academies in North East Essex fosters a supportive learning environment where curiosity thrives and resilience is built. We consist of eight secondary schools, one primary, two junior schools, an infant and nursery school and an Initial Teacher Training Scheme.

All schools are geographically close enough to provide the necessary support and challenge to take all academies to the next level. We have a vision and values that aim to ensure that no school and no child 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".

The Sigma Trust now consists of over 11,500 pupils, approximately 1,700 staff and an annual income of over £80 million. Our initial teacher training scheme,

Advance Teacher Training delivering the Ambition Institute ITT programme, trains approximately 60 primary and secondary trainees each year. The size of the Trust allows extensive joint working to take place and provides huge opportunities for staff and students alike.

We are dedicated to providing outstanding educational experiences by nurturing our exceptional staff and fostering partnerships with other leading institutions like Tapscott Learning Trust and Learning Pathways Trust (to name but a few). Furthermore, we actively collaborate with other organisations such as Ambition Institute, Unity Research School and Teaching Hub to provide the very best CPD and training opportunities for our staff. This commitment to ongoing professional development ensures that we remain at the forefront of educational innovation and best practices. Through these collaborative efforts we are shaping a future where every student is equipped to embrace challenges, discover their passions, and step into the world with confidence.



02 Vision

The vision for The Sigma Trust is to ensure that no child or academy 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.

To be “Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts” symbolises The Sigma Trust. We believe we are stronger and more successful working together than we would be as separate institutions.

We will achieve this by:

- Being a local family of academies that fully embrace the vision and values of the Trust.
- Ensuring that all of our academies provide the highest standards of education, care, guidance and support.
- Collaborating so that best practice becomes shared practice.
- Celebrating the uniqueness and achievements of each academy.
- Creating centres of educational excellence and innovation to transform lives.
- Ensuring all staff thrive through access to high-quality professional learning and development.
- Aspiring to making working for us the same life-changing experience for staff as we have for our children, young people and their families.
- Working in collaboration with other stakeholders to enhance the educational experience of children and families in the community.
- Securing financial security so that public money is well spent.

03 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.



04 Our Schools



05

Governance

Members

The Members have a role akin to shareholders

The Chair of the Board of Trustees is one of the Trust's Members. The Trust's Members includes the Chair of the Board of Trustees. 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).

The Board of Trustees, much like the directors of a company, hold the ultimate responsibility for the Multi-Academy Trust. They are accountable under

the law for every major decision concerning the academies within their care. This dual role as both company directors and charity trustees reflects the unique legal status of academies. However, the Board wisely delegates many of the day-to-day governance functions. This delegation empowers key individuals and committees, such as the CEO, Board committees, and Local Governance Committees within each academy, to effectively manage operations. By distributing responsibilities, the Board of Trustees can focus on their core governance functions: defining a clear vision and ethos, and setting the strategic direction for the Multi-Academy Trust.

Trustees delegate some governance functions to Board committees, these include a:

➤ Finance Committee

➤ Audit & Risk Committee

➤ People and Culture Committee

➤ Standards Committee

Local Governance Committees

The Sigma Trust firmly believes in local governance structures.

LGCs 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 LGCs 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
- Engaging 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 LGCs in order to share practice and maximise expertise. One or more Trustees sit on each LGC.

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



06

School Improvement

Our Education Team is dedicated to providing exceptional support to our schools, ensuring they deliver the highest quality education for all students. Together, we use evidence-informed practices to raise standards, promote safeguarding, and drive continuous improvement in all aspects of education. Our team of experienced professionals includes:

➤ Director of Education:

Leading the strategic direction and development of our secondary schools, ensuring they meet the distinctive needs of older learners and preparing them for their next steps in education, work or training.

➤ Director of Primary:

Overseeing the strategic direction and development of our primary schools, ensuring they meet the unique needs of young learners.

➤ Director of Safeguarding & Pastoral Care

Championing child protection and safeguarding practices across the Trust, ensuring the well-being and safety of all students.

➤ Director of Performance & Review:

Analysing and evaluating school performance, identifying areas for improvement, and supporting schools in achieving their goals.

➤ Director of School Improvement:

Providing tailored support and guidance to schools, helping them implement effective strategies to enhance leaders, teaching & learning, and outcomes.

➤ Strategic Attendance & Behaviour Lead

Addressing attendance and behaviour issues proactively, ensuring a positive and purposeful learning environment for all students.

➤ Strategic Leads

Provide expert guidance and support to Heads of Departments on curriculum development, assessment strategies, and subject-specific pedagogy, ensuring effective teaching and learning practices across the Trust.

➤ By working collaboratively with our schools, we strive to foster a thriving educational community where every child has the opportunity to excel, ensuring that no one is overlooked or left behind.

The School Improvement Cycle:

- **All Sigma Trust schools agree to engage and support the improvement cycle; this will involve a commitment of senior or middle leaders working beyond their school.**
- **Schools will work towards aligning calendars, SLT, subject and CPD meetings**

The Sigma Trust has set up a programme of internal reviews in all schools to both challenge and promote best practice. The internal reviews are led by the Director of Performance and Review with support from Sigma colleagues and external consultants, as appropriate. The reviews have included pre-Ofsted checks to ensure that schools are ready to face their next inspection and subject reviews aimed at identifying and addressing areas of inconsistency. All schools also have a Pupil Premium review carried out by an external consultant to ensure the support for disadvantaged students is effectively managed. 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 any additional capacity required.

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, 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.

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, Standards Committee, 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. This team is supported by the Trust Data Officer.



Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Planning focus on the following areas:

➤ Curriculum

The curriculum covers big ideas, big people, and big themes. It speaks to the individual and lets them know where they have come from, where they are going and how they might, one day, add to it.

➤ Relationships

The school is a place where all students are kept safe, relationships flourish and there is a sense of purpose and belonging.

➤ Culture

The school creates a culture that is motivating and ambitious for all: children achieve their full potential within the classroom, pitch, stage or studio.

➤ Leadership

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision; we promote a high performing culture, prioritising the right things at the right time.

➤ Teaching

Teachers expertly deliver challenging and inspirational lessons so all students are actively engaged, participate fully and learn deep knowledge. Students read often, and read challenging and age-appropriate texts.

➤ Ambition

All students achieve and are ready and eager for their next steps, and have the skills and experience to become confident citizens.

➤ Inclusion

Students, particularly those who are vulnerable, are well supported, so they attend, achieve, enjoy and engage fully with all the school has to offer.



**Ambition
Institute**



**Advance
Teacher
Training**

07

Advance Teacher training (Initial Teacher Training)

Our Partnership with Ambition Institute

Advance Teacher Training is proud to be a founding partner of Ambition Institute's new teacher training program in Tendring and Colchester. This collaboration allows us to contribute our expertise and experience to develop a training offer that empowers trainee teachers to make an impact from their first day in the classroom. We offer year-long primary and secondary teacher

training programmes designed for graduates and career changers. This year we have trained 60 trainee teachers. Our school-centred approach provides a strong support network and exciting environment to ensure trainee teachers feel supported, confident, and well-prepared. (<https://advanceteach.org.uk/>)

08

Central Operations Team

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 Operations and Finance 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 School Leader 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. 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.

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 People and Culture teams which enables accurate and effective delivery of pay to all staff.

People and Culture

A centrally run People and Culture team oversees all recruitment, contracts and disciplinary issues along with employee relations matters. All People & Culture 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 of the Trust's buildings. The team manage an annual School Condition Allocation of over two million pounds linked to a fully costed school condition survey. Over the last few years, they have managed the significant expansion at a number of schools. In 2019, we successfully managed the new build of Paxman Academy in Colchester. The school opened on time with its first cohort of pupils joining in September 2019. The Estates Team have responsibility to develop and deliver our Environment and Sustainability strategy to reduce our carbon footprint. This had led the team to have a programme to install LED lighting and solar panels across Trust schools.

IT Team

The Trust has a dedicated Central IT Team who have complete oversight of the Trust's IT developments and provide additional capacity to individual schools as needed. 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.

Data Team

There is a dedicated Central Data team who have oversight and responsibility to ensure data is shared across the Trust to the CEO, senior Trust Leaders and Trustees as required. The Trust has moved to the same MIS base and assessment areas which enables data to be shared and presented in a consistent and coherent way.

Data Protection 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.



09

Investing In Our People

At The Sigma Trust, we recognise that our employees are our greatest asset. We are committed to providing a comprehensive benefits package that fosters well-being, financial security, and professional growth.

Prioritise Your Health:



Health Shield Cash Plan:

Mitigate the impact of healthcare costs with our Health Shield Plan. Receive reimbursements for dental care, optical expenses, physiotherapy, and more. Additionally, prioritise your mental health with access to remote GP consultations, counsellors, and mental health resources.

Employee Assistance Program:

Navigate life's challenges with confidential support. Our Employee Assistance Program offers short-term counselling, legal advice, and financial guidance for you and your immediate family.



Wellbeing Initiatives & Discounted Gym Memberships:

Achieve a balanced lifestyle through our wellbeing programs and discounted gym memberships. Enhance your physical and mental health with yoga classes, gym sessions and mindfulness workshops.

Secure Your Future:

Excellent Pension Schemes:

Plan for a comfortable retirement with our generous pension schemes. We prioritise your financial future, enabling you to focus on your present.

Free Will Writing Service:

Ensure your wishes are protected with our complimentary will writing service. Gain peace of mind knowing your legacy is secure.

Enhance Your Lifestyle:



Perkbox Discounts:

Enjoy exclusive discounts from major brands with Perkbox. Save on everyday essentials and special indulgences, maximising your budget.



Discounted Cinema Tickets:

Relax and enjoy the latest films with discounted cinema tickets. Experience the magic of the big screen at a reduced cost.



Cycle to Work Scheme:

Promote a healthy commute and reduce your carbon footprint. Our Cycle to Work scheme makes cycling to work more accessible and affordable.

At The Sigma Trust, we strive to create a supportive and rewarding work environment where you can thrive. Our benefits package is designed to empower you to achieve your full potential, both personally and professionally. Join our team and experience the difference today.

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