



28 March 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

St Neots Learning Partnership Trust's (SNLP) resolution to join the Astrea Academy Trust

As you will be aware, the SNLP has been working with the Department for Education (DfE), the Local Authority and the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) with a view to mapping out the long-term strategic direction for our two secondary schools.

Over the last two years we have been pleased with the continued improvement at both Ernulf and Longsands Academies. We have, however, been clear that the Trust will face funding difficulties to ensure that those improvements continue.

We were disappointed to be issued with a Pre-Termination Warning letter last month from the DfE for Ernulf Academy. Whilst this letter failed to recognise the two years of progress that has been made at the Academy, it confirmed that significant investment is needed to ensure Ernulf Academy makes rapid improvement.

The improvements we have seen over the past two years are largely due to the close partnership working between our two schools, and we have been keen to ensure that the two schools continue to benefit from this close working relationship that has benefited our learners in both schools.

Following the Pre-Termination Warning letter, one of the DfE's proposed solutions was to remove Ernulf Academy from the Trust, leaving Longsands Academy as a standalone school, with Ernulf joining another trust. The Board strongly believes that this would be a step backwards, destroying the firm foundations of partnership working that are now in place. This scenario would also likely see Longsands joining another Trust in due course as it is increasingly difficult to operate as a standalone school.

The Trust Board has never avoided making bold and robust decisions and therefore, to avoid division in the town, and to maintain and build on the strong partnership already in place, we have been exploring a number of larger Trusts which both of our schools could join. Following a presentation from Astrea Academy Trust the SNLP Trust Board has informed the DfE of our intention to join Astrea. This will help secure long term stability for all stakeholders and help access much needed financial support.



The SNLP's core belief is that every child in St Neots has the right to succeed regardless of which secondary school they attend. By coming together and being part of a larger group we will be better placed to achieve our core purpose by:

- ensuring greater opportunities for students, building on the robust foundations created by the SNLP and building on the strengths of each school in the new Trust;
- recruiting and retaining our own staff, ensuring excellent continued professional development with the ability to make best use of staff skills across all our schools – there should be no need for an excellent staff member to ever leave the Trust!
- combining and using our resources more effectively and efficiently, so that we can invest more in the teaching and learning of our students.

Astrea is family of 20 schools, with academies in Cambridgeshire and in the South Yorkshire areas. There is a very strong fit with our vision and values, and at the heart of their model is a belief in providing an education that 'inspires beyond measure'. More detail on Astrea can be found at: www.astreaacademytrust.org

We will continue to operate in the same way as we do now, by empowering each school within the new Trust to grow and respect its own identity within a wider family of schools. We will continue to strive for an enriched experience, as well as academic success for all learners.

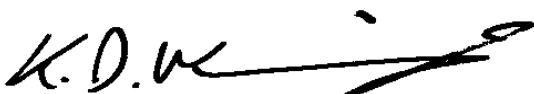
In joining Astrea, our students and teachers will both benefit – today and in the future. The Trust Board has worked hard to ensure that our existing core values are honoured. Indeed, collaboration, development and aspiration are core values that we share with Astrea.

Next Steps

The Astrea team are keen to meet with you, to introduce themselves properly to provide more detail on what it means to be part of the Astrea family. We will therefore be hosting a parents evening with details to be confirmed.

It is through clear leadership, service to our students, and high aspirations in our schools that we will inspire and embed our shared core values in our learners, staff and communities. The decision to merge with Astrea is a vital element in securing improvement and success for all of the young people in our care. We thank you for your continued support of our learners and we look forward to the exciting prospects that may evolve as a joining together with Astrea.

Yours sincerely



Karl Wainwright
Chair of SNLP Trust



Rick Carroll
CEO