



Dear parents and carers,

I hope that this email finds you well.

With the end of term fast approaching, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on some of the successes across the Trust over the course of the last twelve months. As always, I would like to thank you for your support over the last year.

In all measures used by the Department for Education and Ofsted, the Trust continues to be highly regarded with excellent schools. As I always say, we are not perfect, but there is no doubt the schools are in a strong place. We are lucky to have incredibly talented staff and pupils, as well as supportive parents across our community. Our children and young people serve as a constant reminder of hope for the future; whatever challenges may arise.

OFSTED

During this academic year, we have had a number of visits from Ofsted. These inspections have given us the time to stop and reflect on our journey and the actions we have taken to transform the lives of thousands of children and young people in our care. The inspection reports for all the schools inspected this year have some wonderful quotes. When you read the reports, it is clear that Ofsted have acknowledged an alignment across the Trusts' family of schools.

The inspection of Carleton High School earlier in the academic year resulted in an outcome where Ofsted concluded that, had this been a graded inspection, the school would have been judged outstanding – remarkable progress for a school in special measures in 2018. The same judgment was given to Orchard Head - again, brilliant progress. Additionally, three of our primary schools, Carleton Park, Larks Hill, and Halfpenny Lane, were each judged outstanding across the board. Combined with the outstanding judgment awarded to De Lacy Primary School, we now have four outstanding primary schools in the Trust.

Examinations and National Assessments

All examinations and national assessments have now been completed for this academic year. While we look forward to GCSE results day in August, last week saw the national release of SATs results for Year 6 pupils.

I am pleased to share the news that our Year 6 primary pupils once again achieved tremendous results. 86% of the cohort achieved the expected standard or higher in combined reading, writing, and mathematics. This is compared against the national average result of 62%.

In terms of our disadvantaged pupils (i.e., pupil premium pupils who receive free school meals), 73% achieved the expected standard or higher in reading, writing, and maths combined. This is

a remarkable achievement and sets our pupils up well as they transition to secondary school with confidence.

Earlier in the year the Trust was ranked in the Department for Education Performance tables as the third highest attaining trust in the country, out of over 1100 trusts. This is such a great community story and something that all families, staff, and pupils should feel proud of. It also represents excellent progress since 2018, when the Trust was ranked the 11th lowest achieving for primary outcomes.

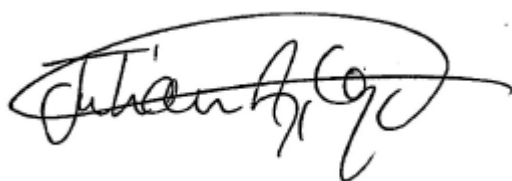
I am also delighted to report that our Year 1 children have again exceeded all Trust records, with over 92% of children passing the phonics screening test. This early indicator of reading competence is an important milestone in any child's development. I know that I speak for all staff when I say thank you to all parents and carers who work with our schools to support reading at home.

As an education charitable trust funded by the government, I am pleased to say that we remain in a strong financial position despite funding challenges. This means that our schools can benefit from improvements to infrastructure and buildings. We are excited for the opening of the new build at Carleton High School in September and have several further projects planned. These include a hall refurbishment at The King's School, nursery provision at Orchard Head, and improvements to the early years space at Northfield Primary School.

Some Personal News – CEO Departure

Finally, I would like to announce that after seven and a half years, I will be departing Pontefract Academies Trust at the end of December 2025 to take up a position as the CEO of a national multi-academy trust comprising of 36 schools. This is a decision that I have not taken lightly. It has been a privilege to be the CEO of Pontefract Academies Trust, and I am proud of our collective achievements over the last seven and a half years. The Trust is in a very strong place, and I have no doubt that it will go from strength to strength moving forward. The Board of Trustees will keep you all informed of plans for succession in due course.

Thank you, as ever, for the support and have a lovely summer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian Appleyard', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Julian Appleyard OBE

CEO, Pontefract Academies Trust