

January 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

At the end of each year, Academy Trusts are required to publish their annual accounts by 31 January, providing a report on the previous academic year (September 2017 – August 2018). Turner Schools' annual report has now been published, and as the Chair of Turner Schools I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you with some of the highlights.

Overall, the year was a positive one for Turner Schools – and saw us grow, now serving over 2,000 pupils with Folkestone Academy joining the trust alongside Morehall and Martello Primaries. The Turner Free School then opened in September, making us a family of four schools. Our only Ofsted inspection so far was at Martello Primary and the inspection team concluded that our Leadership and Management are Good. The lead inspector, Dom Cook, said he hoped the community would take this finding as a vote of confidence in us.

Fundamentally, our approach is driven by a belief that all young people can succeed. We won't rest until the youngsters we serve obtain the knowledge to lead and the skills they need to succeed. This is what rests at the heart of the changes that Jo Saxton and her fantastic team of Principals are implementing. It's why, for example, we've invested in renovating Folkestone Academy. We have made it a brighter and quieter environment with inspiring educational imagery now lining the corridors. It's also why we have removed phones so that children can focus on learning, not screens. It's why we've renovated Morehall Primary and built a new library there.

Our free breakfast scheme is also part and parcel of this wider drive to improve education. We are providing a great start to the day for hundreds of children who are taking up our free breakfast. Research has shown that providing children with breakfast not only improves their concentration and behaviour but also boosts attainment.

Our approach to phonics has also seen reading come along at leaps and bounds. We want all of our children to develop a love of reading at an early age so that it opens doors for them, not inhibits them.

Children in Year One have begun essay writing - something they are enormously proud to be doing, and almost certainly a national first. And more of our primary children are becoming times tables 'Rock Stars'.

We've also spent time building stronger and better relationships with local employers, and we have introduced a series of university and career visits for pupils from younger ages. We now have an All Age Careers lead, at Folkestone Academy, for instance, who is introducing our pupils to the world of work from their very first days in school, helping them understand how school subjects come to life at work – history helps you if you are a lawyer; art if you are an engineer; and maths if you run your own business or are running trains for Eurotunnel!

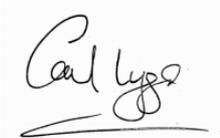
Jo Saxton and her team have also worked extremely hard to bring in additional funding to Turner Schools with the explicit aim of this funding supporting all four schools. The additional funding Jo personally applied for amounts to over half a million pounds, and comes from a combination of government grants as well as charitable donations.

This is a significant amount of money, and has meant that we have been able to invest in the growth of the organisation itself so that we are well-staffed and able to provide more of the support that each school needs. Specifically, we have been able to engage SEND expert David Bartram OBE, who has contributed to Special and Disability educational reforms nationally, and Peter Gale, a scientist and former senior Ofsted inspector as Director of School Improvement. We have also been joined by Hayley Porter-Aslet, a qualified accountant and former Kent County Council schools lead, as our Director of Finance and Operations, who has led the improvements to our facilities, the food we serve and services behind the scenes.

There has been a lot of change across the Trust this year, and at Folkestone Academy in particular (as we address the concerns that the Department for Education raised when the academy was given “Coasting” status in January 2017 prior to the academy joining us, based on GCSE results in the previous three years). With these changes now largely in place, working in partnership with you as parents, I have every confidence that we have laid the right foundations to build a better and brighter future for your children.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August, 2018 can be found on: www.turnerschools.com/about-us/finance/accounts.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Lygo', with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Carl Lygo
Chair of Turner Schools