

# Chief Executive Officer

## UPDATE

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear parents/carers

I am writing to you today, to inform you that I will be retiring in December 2025 after giving 35 years' service to education in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire.

During my time as Chief Executive Officer, the Trust has grown in size and reputation by providing exceptional non-selective education to young people in Lincolnshire, with all schools now being significantly over-subscribed. As well as ongoing high performing success seen in Sixth Form, the latest end of Key Stage 4 Progress 8 scores show the Trust schools now consistently outperform the vast majority of Lincolnshire Grammar Schools with the South Lincolnshire Academies Trust now being the 12th highest performing Trust in the country, and number 1 in the East Midlands.

The Trust's first two schools, Bourne Academy and Spalding Academy are consistently the top two performing non-selective secondary schools in Lincolnshire, with Giles Academy and Cowley Academy making rapid progress to reach a similar position. My focus has always been on wanting to improve the life and careers opportunities for young people and together the staff and I have worked to significantly improve the outcomes and opportunities for over 4,500 students' year-on-year.

I have always said and feel strongly that working with young people is such a privilege and to challenge young people to be ambitious, aspire to be their best, to achieve and reach their full potential is a mindset I support and one that I know will continue, which is reflected in the 'Aspire, Challenge, Achieve' ethos of the Trust.

As well as announcing my retirement today, I am extremely happy to announce that Mrs Jemma Curson will be the new Chief Executive Officer from January 2026. Mrs Curson is one of five Deputy Chief Executive Officers at the South Lincolnshire Academies Trust and is also currently Head of School at Bourne Academy, having also been the Head of School at Spalding Academy. This is a highly credible appointment that will ensure the ongoing success for the South Lincolnshire Academies Trust, to ensure young people continue to be successful and have the best possible opportunities. Part of what makes our schools so special is how visible myself and the leadership team have always been, as we live and breathe every aspect of school life and it is this approach will certainly continue under Mrs Curson's exceptional leadership, as she will apply the same determination, passion and drive to maintain the highest standards across the Trust.



As part of this transition, Mr James Hind, who is also one of the Deputy Chief Executive Officers will continue in this role, but will also take over Head of School responsibilities at Bourne Academy from Mrs Curson from September 2025. Mr Hind currently leads teaching and learning for the Trust, as well as the SLAT Sixth Form at Bourne Academy. He has been instrumental in both the Trust and the school's success and will provide continuity at Bourne Academy during this period of change and transition.

Even though I plan to retire in December 2025, as well as Mrs Curson taking up the new role of Chief Executive Officer full-time from January 2026, I will continue to offer transitional guidance on behalf of governors from January 2026 for the remainder of the next academic year, as part of a transitional succession plan.

I feel privileged to have enjoyed an amazing career in education over the past 35 years and I have loved every single minute of every day. In this time, I have been surrounded by a team of extremely talented and hardworking school leaders and wider staff and together we have seen thousands of students flourish, which fills me with immense pride and it has been the most rewarding job imaginable. The success stories of others, both student and staff, will always be the legacy I am most proud of, in being able to help and contribute towards shaping a better future for everyone.

Each of the schools in the Trust are in their best ever position, with all of them being high performing and now over-subscribed due to our strong reputation for high quality education and outstanding pastoral care. The success of the Trust can only be attributed to amazing young people, that I feel hugely proud of and to the wider team of experienced leaders, teachers and support staff that I have already mentioned, all of whom are truly exceptional.

For the future, it is down to knowing how incredible Mrs Curson and the staff in the Trust are, that I can be 100% positive about the future of the schools.

Finally, please be reassured that although I will be retiring in December 2025, as you would all expect, I will end my career working as hard on my last day for you and the students and staff as I did on my first! We still have a significant number of months to achieve so many more successes together, so it will most certainly be business as normal from now until I retire.

My decision to retire has been an extremely difficult one and although I will miss immensely being immersed in the demanding role of leading the Trust, I am fortunate that retirement will provide me with opportunities to make the most of family life and charitable work outside of education.

Kindest regards,



**Mrs Lucy Conley**

*Chief Executive Officer*

South Lincolnshire Academies Trust