

SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST



INFORMATION PACK

EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO GO TO A GREAT SCHOOL



Table of Contents

Message from the Chair of Trustees	3
An overview of SAT	4
About Saffron Academy Trust	6
Our growth strategy	7
Our school improvement strategy	8
The Saffron Teaching School Hub.....	9
Benefits of working for SAT.....	10
What makes SAT a great place to work?.	11
Our schools.....	13
Leadership structure.....	20
Governance structure	21
Joining Saffron Academy Trust.....	22

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



Thank you for your interest in Saffron Academy Trust (SAT).

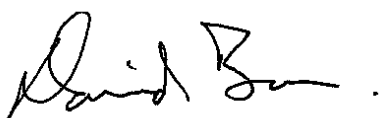
This is a strong and very successful Trust, comprising 9 schools in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Braintree and Coggeshall. All our schools are 'good' or better as far as Ofsted is concerned, which has been the result of, in no small measure, the careful intervention of the Trust where necessary.

We are a family of schools, each with its own community and character but aligned to the overall ethos and values of the Trust.

Collectively we aspire to provide a state education of exceptional quality and we believe, quite simply, that every child deserves to go to a great school.

I hope you find the information in this pack useful but please do not hesitate to contact the Trust if you require any further details. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "David Barrs".

Mr David Barrs
Chair, Saffron Academy Trust

AN OVERVIEW OF SAT

Our Values & Beliefs

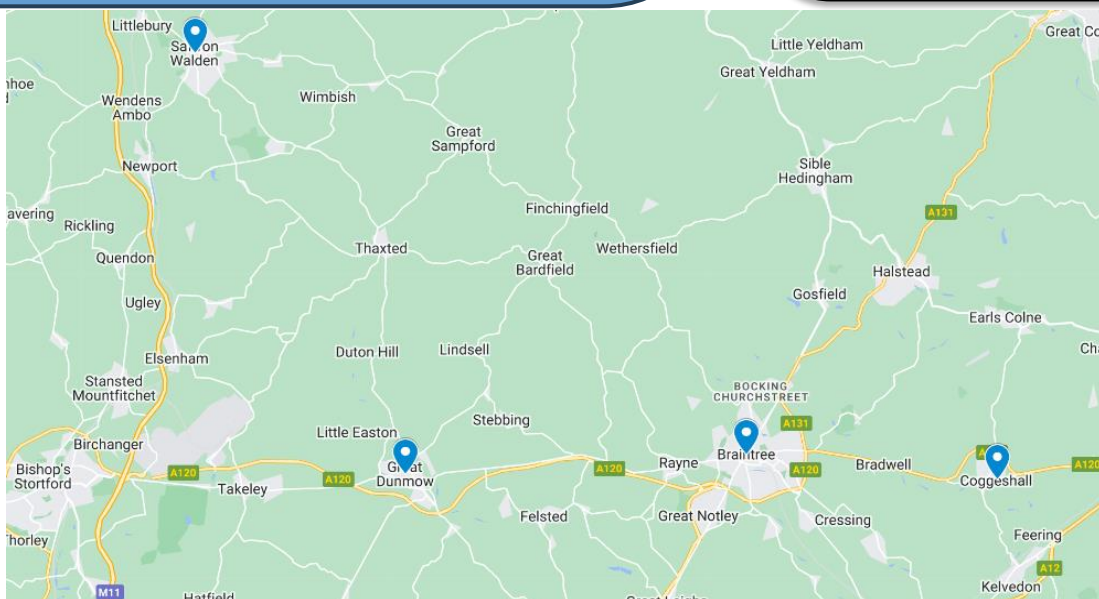
- Every child deserves to go to a great school.
- We are preparing young people for life in a 21st century world.
- Learning in our schools must inspire and lead to achievement and progress for every child.
- Learning opportunities must be broad and of the highest quality.
- We respect the unique character and context of the schools in our partnership, while maintaining high expectations of performance.
- We are all learners and we embrace evidence-based research and value teamwork.

Our Schools

Alec Hunter Academy (AHA), Braintree
 Beckers Green Primary School (BG), Braintree
 Helena Romanes School (HRS), Great Dunmow
 Honeywood School (HWD), Coggeshall
 Katherine Semar Infant & Junior Schools (KS),
 Saffron Walden
 R A Butler Infant & Junior Schools (RAB), Saffron
 Walden
 Saffron Walden County High School (SWCHS)

Our Community

4 Secondary schools,
 including 1 all-through
 school
 5 Primary schools
 6,500+ children
 1000 staff



THE AIMS OF THE TRUST

The educational aims of SAT are to support and promote:

- an education which enables pupils and young people, aged 3-19, of all abilities to fulfil their academic potential and achieve their personal best
- a broad curriculum across all key stages which promotes excellence
- teaching and learning which is highly engaging and geared to students making excellent progress through the key stages
- transition between key stages which delivers outstanding continuity of learning
- a focus on developing all professionals to deliver the highest quality of teaching and support to all our learners
- schooling which is outward looking and allows students to interact with ideas and people from around the world
- educational research into factors underpinning successful schools and highly effective learning
- involvement with the local area in a way which promotes community cohesion and cultural excellence



We are a family of schools which aspire to provide state education of exceptional quality for their communities because we believe, quite simply, that every child deserves to go to a great school.

ABOUT SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST

Saffron Academy Trust (SAT) was formed in 2011 when its founder school, Saffron Walden County High School, converted to academy status. Since then, SAT has grown and now comprises 9 schools: Saffron Walden County High School, Katherine Semar Junior and Infant schools and R A Butler Junior and Infant schools in Saffron Walden, Alec Hunter Academy and Beckers Green Primary School in Braintree, Honeywood School in Coggeshall, and Helena Romanes School in Great Dunmow, which is an all-through school.

The Trust also encompasses the Saffron Teaching School Hub, one of the first Teaching School Hubs to be designated nationally. Through the Hub and an extensive range of collaborative partnerships, the Trust provides support to over 260 primary, secondary and special schools. One key aspect of the support we provide is to deliver high quality CPD focused both on classroom practice and leadership development.



SAT enjoys an excellent reputation for school improvement. In order to work to achieve this SAT enhances each school's own strategic plan with a bespoke support package developed in partnership with the Headteacher. A SAT Director of School Improvement oversees the implementation of this plan and reviews it on an annual basis.

We have celebrated the outcomes of recent Ofsted inspections at three of our schools: Saffron Walden County High School retained its Outstanding judgement in March 2024, and R A Butler Junior School was recognised as an Outstanding school the following month. More recently, in November 2024, R A Butler Infant School received a short inspection and to our great pleasure met the criteria for Outstanding in all categories. They will receive a full Section 8 inspection in a year's time to confirm this outcome. All the Trust's schools are rated Good or Outstanding, underpinning the impact of the collaborative approach we take to support our family of schools.



Another exciting development, following several years of hard work and negotiation with the Department of Education, is that plans have been finalised to rebuild Helena Romanes School on a new site in Great Dunmow. Work has already started and the new Primary school building is due to open in 2026, followed by the Secondary school building the following year.

SAT's Central Services team supports our schools by providing financial services, IT management, premises management and higher level HR support so that school leaders and their Local Governing Bodies can focus their attention on standards of education. The Trust's Central Services offices are based at Saffron Walden County High School.

Whilst academic achievement is of crucial importance, we also value the development of our pupils' personal, social and creative skills. Our aim is that pupils leave our schools as successful, confident and considerate young people.

OUR GROWTH STRATEGY

Our vision is to be a local family of primary and secondary schools. We aspire to provide state education of exceptional quality and our emphasis is on school improvement rather than growth for growth's sake. As we grow, we will add other schools carefully and judiciously to the family if they share our values and wish to join us.

Since 2016 we have grown surely but steadily from 4 to 9 schools and, in addition, we have formed a Teaching School Hub. Remaining human in scale is important to us because our approach to school improvement is bespoke and done 'with' and not 'to' our schools. The Director of our Teaching School Hub, in conjunction with our Primary and Secondary Directors of School Improvement, develops SAT improvement plans in partnership with each Headteacher and we are careful to ensure that these add value to each school's own improvement plan.

Our Headteachers work closely together as part of a SAT Executive group and strategic decisions are consulted on through this forum. The CEO visits the Trust's schools regularly and works closely with every school leader. We regularly conduct reviews of aspects of school provision, including annual Fresh Eyes Reviews and external Safeguarding Audits in each school.

As we have grown, we have developed provision hubs in the Braintree and Uttlesford areas. Our financial services and IT networks are managed in this way.

As a medium sized Trust, we are open to new ideas and prepared to question our own practice. We also work collaboratively with other Trusts in our region for our mutual benefit.



OUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

It is the aim of SAT to provide places for children in nothing less than ‘Good’ schools. Through our Scheme of Delegated Authority, many areas of decision making are delegated to our individual Academies. However, the Trust reserves the right to change the level of authority delegated to schools in order to support their continued improvement. Secondary Headteachers in SAT are line-managed by the CEO and Primary Headteachers are line-managed by a Deputy CEO through regular supportive and challenging meetings.

Each school is thoroughly risk assessed annually by the CEO and Director of School Improvement, in consultation with the Headteacher, to determine what level of support the school will receive from the Trust in that academic year. The SAT Director of School Improvement and Teaching School Hub works closely with the school to ensure that actions are completed and targets met. Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) from within the Trust are deployed in schools to support improvement strategies, along with the support of a wider team of Expert Practitioners drawn from schools across the Saffron Teaching School Hub area. The SAT Improvement Plan for the school dovetails with the school’s own improvement plan, which is a more comprehensive document.



The Trustees rigorously review the performance of each school through termly SAT Standards Committee meetings. The committee comprises Trustees and external education advisers.

THE SAFFRON TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

SAT runs the Saffron Teaching School Hub, which is one of 87 Teaching School Hubs across England. It is the designated Teaching School Hub for the area covering the local authority districts of Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford. We work with strategic school and Trust partners, Essex County Council and Curriculum Hubs who are all dedicated to supporting the profession.



The remit of the Saffron Teaching School Hub is to deliver on the 'Golden Thread' set out in the DfE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy by transforming the training and support teachers and school leaders receive at every stage of their career. This 'Golden Thread' runs from Initial Teacher Training (ITT) through to school leadership.

Saffron Teaching School Hub plays a significant role in delivering:

- School-based [Initial Teacher Training](#)
- The [Early Career Programme](#)
- [National Professional Qualifications](#) (NPQs)
- [Appropriate Body](#) services

We also promote and deliver other high-quality evidence-based [professional development](#).

For more information, please visit the Hub's website at www.saffronteachingschoolhub.net



Doug Brechin
Director, Saffron Teaching School Hub

BENEFITS OF WORKING FOR SAT

Professional Learning Programme

Wellbeing

We care deeply about our staff and are committed to their wellbeing. We have a Staff Charter and a supportive leave policy.

All staff have access to a package of benefits including:
 Online GP services
 Wellbeing support
 Legal and financial advice
 Blue Light Card
 Bike 2 Work scheme

Support for Early Career Teachers

National Terms & Conditions

A variety of career pathways across the Trust

Pensions

All staff have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme or Teachers Pension Scheme and benefit from generous employer contributions



WHAT MAKES SAT A GREAT PLACE TO WORK?

Saffron Academy Trust is a family of schools who have chosen to work together, pooling our resources and sharing our ideas so that we can provide an exceptional standard of education to children in our community. We want all staff in Saffron Academy Trust to be able to do an exceptional job so that they can help to give our children and young people a great education. We understand that if staff enjoy going to work, feel valued, know they are listened to and have their talents nurtured they will perform at their best. Staff at SAT want to put in discretionary effort because they love their job.

In order to have excellent, motivated staff we are mindful about their health and welfare, their workload and the simple need for a job to be fun and rewarding. Our experience is that because we look after our staff they often stay and develop their careers within the Trust.

We aim to attract the very best people and to keep their talents we work hard to build loyalty via four strands:

1. Through leading the culture and climate
2. Through talent development
3. Through effective pupil behaviour management
4. Through creating manageable workloads and well-being approaches



At the heart of what we do is an investment in growing and developing our staff. We have a Staff Charter and leadership pathways, we give staff appraisal the time and attention it deserves, we create time for line-management and mentoring and offer coaching. Saffron Teaching School Hub delivers the Early Careers Framework and a suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs).

Our staff, consequently, tell us that they enjoy working in our Trust and feel valued as you can see from some of the comments made by our staff in response to our 2025 Staff Charter questionnaire:

- “This is an excellent Trust to work for because it listens to the thoughts of its staff.”
- “Lovely school and my line manager is excellent.”
- “I love working at this school. My line managers are supportive, kind and keen to improve standards of education for our pupils. It is a privilege to work with leaders and staff who all care so deeply about safeguarding and education to give all pupils the best life chances.”
- “I love working at my school. The school has a wonderful supportive environment.”
- “I have never felt so valued in a workplace or any school I have ever worked at. I thoroughly enjoy coming to work every day!”
- “I adore working here - it is a wonderful school, and I am proud of what we achieve.”
- “My line manager is super, everyone in the school is so supportive, I cannot think of another school that would be so caring, and my work is a joy.”



OUR SCHOOLS

Alec Hunter Academy



Alec Hunter was the first school to join Saffron Academy Trust back in 2013. At the time, the school was graded ‘inadequate’ and in

need of fresh impetus and a new direction.

Relaunching as Alec Hunter Academy under the auspices of SAT allowed us to retain the character of the school as a warm and welcoming community provision, whilst demonstrating an appetite for aligning ourselves with a beacon of academic excellence. It has proved to be an exceptionally fruitful partnership over the past 11 years, with the school going from strength to strength, now being graded ‘good’ in our last two inspections and becoming very much the school of choice for local families, since we are heavily oversubscribed.



The Trust has been crucial to us in different ways at various stages of our journey. School improvement and leadership support were invaluable in the earliest phase, yet it was particularly pleasing that SAT colleagues fully understood the contrasts in context between our schools. As time has moved on, the opportunities to share expertise have grown and now, with a larger group of partners, there is huge strength to be drawn from pooling our ideas and approaches.

However, we all have our own distinct voice. This is not a Trust which issues directives, it consults with school leaders on strategic direction and cultivates collaboration, permitting a degree of autonomy which is not only valued highly by SAT Heads but is very much the envy of those working in other organisations.

“Living for Learning, Learning for Life”



Our mission is to serve our community by providing opportunities for all our young people to progress, enjoy learning and fulfil their academic potential in a safe, caring environment that prepares them well for a successful future.

Trevor Lawn
Headteacher

Beckers Green Primary School



Our Motto: Be Challenged,
Be Inspired, Be You

At Beckers Green we are proud to provide a nurturing environment where the needs of individual children are supported through an ambitious, inspiring and creative curriculum. We strive to deliver an education that will enable our children to reach their potential and be well prepared for a life-long journey of learning.

Given the diverse social, economic and academic profile of our vibrant community, we strive to create a centre of excellence for pupils, parents and carers. We recognise the intrinsic value of community engagement and the importance of working in collaboration to support the development of our pupils, which is why we have enhanced our offer to include a wide range of enhanced support for our wider community which ensures our pupils are able to flourish.

Our work with the SAT's Director of School Improvement has allowed Beckers Green to push forward with bold plans to improve the underlying pedagogy of teaching and learning. This has been achieved through a shared commitment to the ECT Framework, NPQs, TPP, and targeted ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders at all levels.

We have benefitted from collaborative approaches to curriculum development as a result of our SAT Subject Development Cycle, as well as receiving bespoke support which reflects and adapts to the unique needs of our school and setting.

The Trust also provides extensive support for some of the more complex aspects of school leadership - operational and strategic - particularly with regards to premises management, health and safety and finance. As a leader, having expert guidance when navigating these often-challenging areas has been invaluable.



Claire Smyth
Headteacher

Honywood School



Welcome to Honnywood School.

My vision for Honnywood is to be the beating heart of the communities it serves: to imbue challenge and aspiration across our communities through the development of our core values so that all learners achieve happiness, social equity and economic well-being, now and in the future. Honnywood is an inclusive school, where we have a strong learning focused culture and ethos; we strive to bond together through living out the core values of trust, respect, equity and excellence.

When looking to merge with a Trust of schools, values and culture were of the utmost importance to us. We needed to find a Trust that allowed us to retain the uniqueness of our school community, a Trust that celebrated our differences and understood that contexts differ from school to school. We needed a Trust that would allow us to thrive and coexist with a range of other schools and not be worried about our identity being compromised. We needed a Trust that put children front and centre and had the capacity to support the development of teaching and learning. We needed a Trust that would provide us with challenge as well as support and add real value to our operation.



In Saffron Academy Trust we found what we were looking for and have never looked back. There have been countless times that being a member of this Trust has supported us to combat the unpredictable world of school leadership. Central to this has been the environment of collaboration, challenge and autonomy that the Trust provides. I can honestly say that it was a great strategic decision to merge with Saffron Academy Trust.

'A traditional and progressive education: building character for an exceptional future'



James Saunders

Headteacher

Helena Romanes School



Helena Romanes School is an age 4-18, all-through school, proud to be at the heart of the Great Dunmow community. The primary phase of the school opened in September 2021 and will continue to grow until our first cohort joins the secondary phase. Pupils in our primary phase have access to subject-specialist teachers and facilities. As an all-through school, we believe it is our privilege to guide children through the most important years of their lives, from the time they arrive with us in reception to the time they leave our dynamic and expanding Sixth Form at the age of 18.

It is an exciting time for the school. In October 2023 the school was graded 'Good' in all areas by Ofsted. In September 2025, the school will begin relocating to a state-of-the-art new building, constructed by the DfE, in Great Dunmow. This building will allow our pupils to experience the richest curriculum possible in cutting-edge facilities.



Underpinning the improvement of the school is Saffron Academy Trust. Not only has the Trust been instrumental in helping us secure our new school building but the central services team has supported us in improving the quality of teaching and learning, maintaining our buildings and balancing our budgets. We are also proud to be part of a family of schools where leaders at all levels work collaboratively to secure our collective mission that every child deserves to go to a great school.

Vision: 'OUR MISSION IS TO BE A LOCAL SCHOOL OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY'

Values: AMBITION, KINDNESS, RESPECT, RESILIENCE, BROAD MINDEDNESS and INDEPENDENCE



Catherine Davis
Executive Headteacher



Jennifer Hone
Headteacher (Primary)

Katherine Semar Infants & Junior Schools



Katherine Semar Infant and Junior Schools are founding members of Saffron Academy Trust. We are a two form entry primary school in Saffron Walden and have been part of the Trust since 2014. We have enjoyed shaping the Trust and are very proud of the Trust's school improvement

record and the close partnerships we have created with all the schools in the Trust. The schools in the Trust have all the advantages of working collaboratively but are encouraged to be autonomous and make sure we create the curriculum which is right for our children.



To ensure all our children achieve their very best, we have developed the INSPIRE curriculum which is a bespoke curriculum written by our school for our children. It encompasses our school values, curriculum aims, subject disciplines and enrichment as well as promoting language development and knowledge retention.

We are very proud of our school as we believe Katherine Semar is true to its vision that it is 'A nurturing school of exceptional quality'.



Julie Puxley

Executive Headteacher

R A Butler Infants & Junior Schools



R A Butler Infant and Junior Academy is a proud member of Saffron Academy Trust. We are a three form entry primary school in Saffron Walden and have been part of the Trust since 2017. In that time our school has gone from strength to strength with support from SAT, yet with the freedom to plough our own path to make a fantastic school that is right for our school community. Our unique points are celebrated in the Trust; we have a high focus on oracy and the spoken curriculum, we are a very inclusive school with a significant number of pupils with high level needs, we are a very proud Gold achieving Rights Respecting School, meaning that our children understand their rights and place in the world and they have a voice and they will use it for good.



The Trust model of school improvement for primary schools has undoubtedly contributed to our Outstanding Ofsted in May 2024. Collegiate working across the primary schools has strengthened subject leadership, pedagogy, language and vocabulary development, the quality of our whole curriculum and challenge from other excellent leaders. Alongside superb development in teaching and learning, we have also benefitted from excellent support and funding for our capital programme and IT infrastructure.

R A Butler is a unique school and we relish being part of Saffron Academy Trust where schools are encouraged to flourish independently, but also to unite to create strength and support where it makes sense.



Emma Vincent
Executive Headteacher

Saffron Walden County High School



I feel privileged to have been involved in SAT from the outset, as a senior leader and now as Headteacher. One of the greatest benefits of being a SAT school has been the development opportunities that I and many others have been given, combined with excellent collaboration and support that help each school to continue its journey of improvement. The SAT Headteachers' group meetings show how much we value our autonomy and differences, but also how much we take pride in and want to support the quality of education in every school in the Trust.



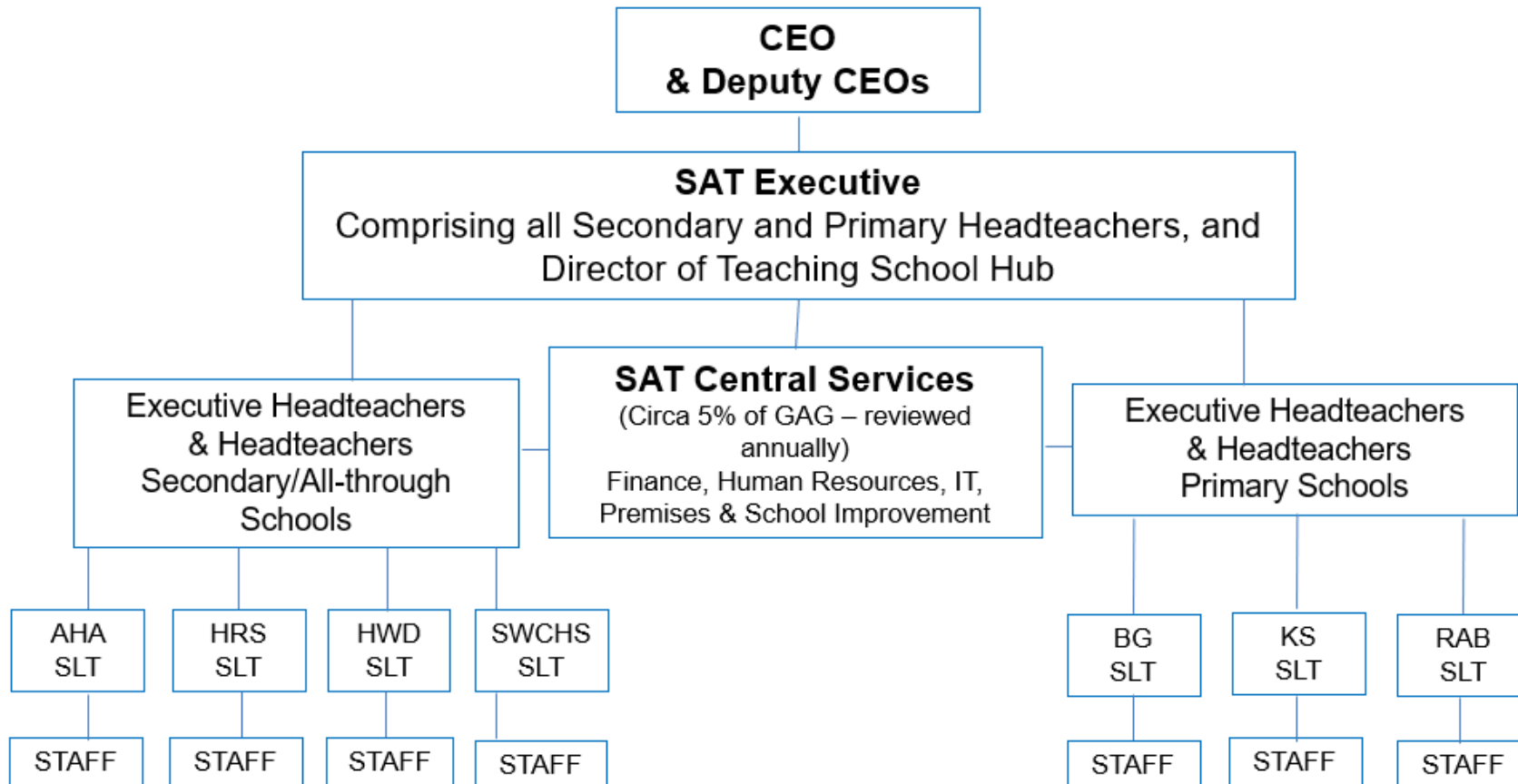
Here at Saffron Walden County High School, we have long had the aim of being a 'local school of exceptional quality.' We are incredibly pleased to be a fully comprehensive and highly inclusive school. We are also a very unusual school; we have one of the largest school sixth forms in the country, a school farm, and a world class concert hall. We were included in *The Learning Rainforest* as we put great emphasis on subject pedagogy, and we trust our passionate middle leaders to know what is best for their discipline. We offer a rich education both in and out of the classroom that impacts on every student. We have a lovely student body and a fantastic staff team. We are looking forward to meeting our new CEO and working with you. We are a restless school, and we are always looking for our next adventure.



Polly Lankester
Headteacher



LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



Key:AHA: Alec Hunter Academy

HWD: Honeywood School

RAB: R A Butler Infant & Junior Schools

BG: Beckers Green Primary School

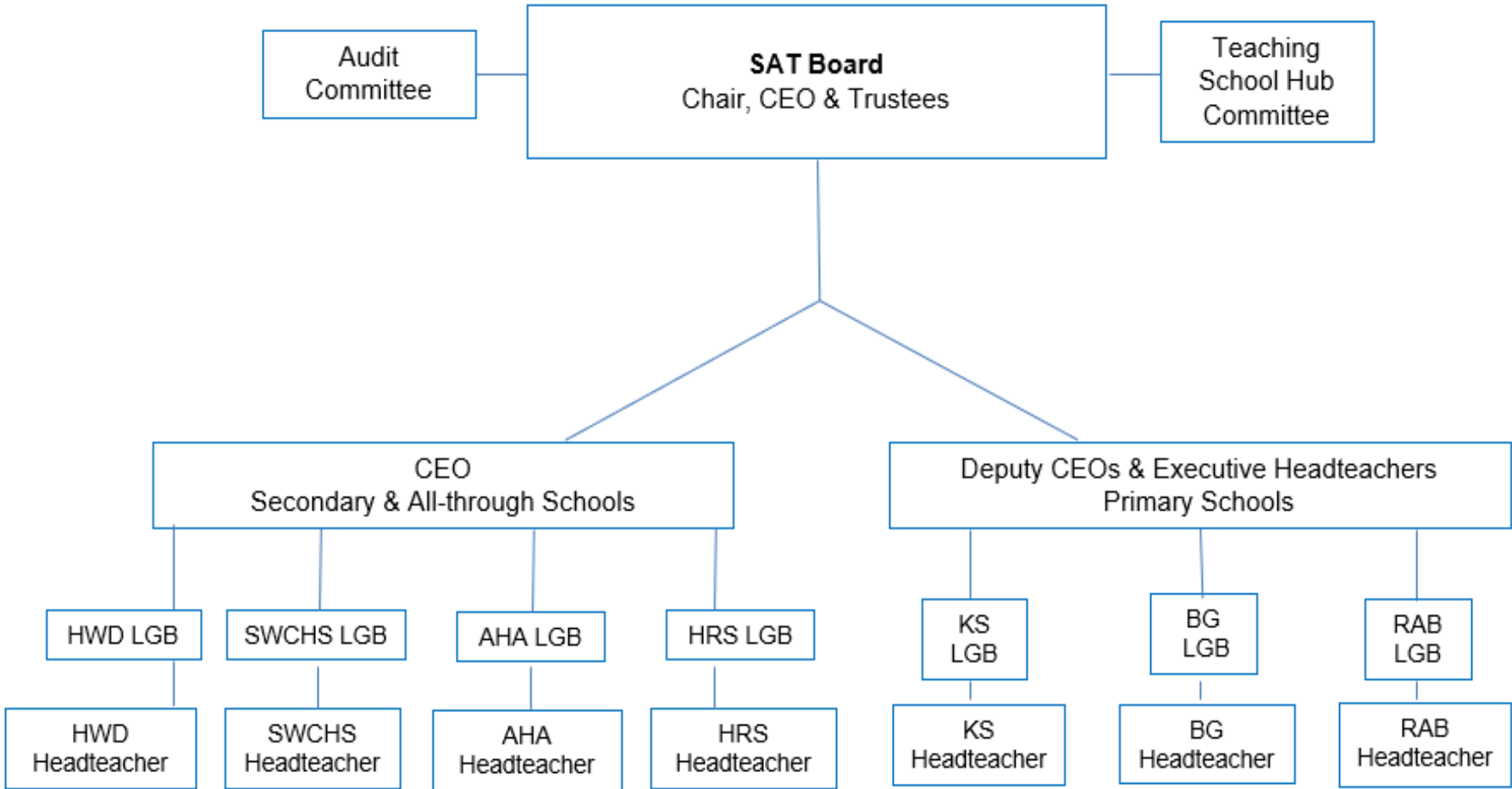
KS: Katherine Semar Infant & Junior Schools

SWCHS: Saffron Walden County High School

HRS: Helena Romanes School



GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE





JOINING SAFFRON ACADEMY TRUST

The process for schools wishing to join SAT is as follows;

- An initial expression of interest should be submitted via email to enquiries@saffron.academy
- We will contact you to arrange a convenient time to meet your Trustees or Local Governing Body
- A formal request to join SAT should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Board, Mr David Barrs, at enquiries@saffron.academy
- SAT will conduct a thorough due diligence process on the standards and resources of the school making the application
- If approved, a date for conversion to Academy status (if required) is set. SAT takes responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating consultation requirements, TUPE arrangements, land transfer, funding agreement matters and makes any necessary amendments to its Articles of Association.

If you have any general enquiries, or require further information about our Trust, please contact the Clerk to the Board of Trustees,
Mrs Kathleen Hutchinson at: enquiries@saffron.academy

Further information can be found on the Trust's website at www.saffron.academy

Saffron Academy Trust
Saffron Walden County High School
Audley End Road
Saffron Walden
Essex CB11 4UH
01799 513030

We very much welcome enquiries regarding the Trust and look forward to hearing from you.

