

# The Active Learning Trust

A new way to support schools to meet their aspirations





Gary Peile, CEO

A warm welcome to this our newsletter for the start of the 2016/17 school year which I hope you will find both informative and useful. Our Trust has been working with schools now for nearly 4 years and we are proud to support pupils and students across Cambridgeshire and Suffolk as an approved academy sponsor. In this newsletter you will find examples of some of the excellent work across our schools and also information on how we support schools and the staff within those schools. 2016/17 will see the Trust grow as Highfield School in Ely, Cambridgeshire and Albert Pye and Ravensmere Schools in Beccles, Suffolk join our Trust. In addition we are proud to have been asked to sponsor a new secondary and special school in Littleport, Cambridgeshire as well as opening a new primary school for the growing population in Chatteris, also in Cambridgeshire.

These new schools provide further opportunities for staff across the Trust to develop their own skills and knowledge as well as providing opportunities for the Trust to bring further expertise into the Trust. Can I encourage you to check out our website for news and for the links to all our schools [www.activelearningtrust.org](http://www.activelearningtrust.org) and also to follow us on twitter [@activelearningt](https://twitter.com/activelearningt) where we share news on some of the wonderful work that takes place across our Trust. You can also get in touch via email to [info@activelearningtrust.org](mailto:info@activelearningtrust.org)

## Littleport Project

We are delighted to report that work on the Littleport Secondary and Special schools site is continuing on schedule to enable the schools to operate from September 2017. The 37.5million complex includes a three-storey secondary school, a two-storey special school, and a community leisure centre. The Trust has been asked by Cambridgeshire County Council to lead the 2 schools with a partnership on site with the new leisure centre. The secondary school, which will admit pupils from September 2017, will initially cater for 600 pupils aged 11 to 16, with the potential to increase capacity to accommodate 750 pupils in the future. The special school will accommodate 110 pupils with special educational needs between the ages of 2 and 19, and include a hydrotherapy pool and a new education and leisure complex will comprise of a sports hall, fitness suite, changing facilities, multi-use hall and a social area that will be available for use by the local community.



This innovative project will bring much needed facilities to the people of Littleport and its surrounding areas, and the Active Learning Trust are excited to be involved. Information can be found and building progress followed by linking to: [www.littleportproject.com](http://www.littleportproject.com)



## Developing Staff In Schools

As part of a wider commitment to support our schools in their task to raise standards, the Trust continues to develop programmes of support for school staff. Building on a very successful programme in our Lowestoft hub, all newly qualified and recently qualified teachers can access a new Trust wide support package, being led by Rae Aldous, headteacher of Westwood Primary and other colleagues. We will also continue with the third year of our highly prized Leading Active Learning Programme, open to all colleagues working with pupils and students. This programme is a professional development partnership between schools and the Trust. It focuses on achieving positive outcomes for the children and young people in our schools by facilitating

and supporting participants in bringing about positive change in relation to key school priorities such as refining boys' writing skills, improving attendance, strengthening student voice and developing cultural awareness. To date, nearly 60 staff have successfully undertaken the programme, which includes opportunities for leadership reflection and developing an evidence base to illustrate successful practice as well as benefits from collaboration and expert challenge in school network groups which are hub-based. The programme lasts for a full academic year and enables aspiring middle leaders, class teachers and support staff to develop an understanding of their leadership potential in the context of their own role as well as across the phase, department and school.

### One of the many colleagues who completed Leading Active Learning in 2015 said:

"My confidence has grown and I have a more reflective view on my role and how I support. The programme has helped me achieve and progress with positive outcomes for the whole school."



## Hub Collaboration

At the centre of the way in which the Trust supports schools is a model based on three school improvement hubs. At the Active Learning Trust, these learning hubs, based geographically in Cambridgeshire, Lowestoft and Ipswich, are designed to create strong professional partnerships across all ALT academies, and to stimulate and support schools across all these challenges. ALT recognises that each school is different and has deliberately not imposed a corporate style or identity, but there is a common approach to maintaining the highest expectations through the provision of quality support, advice and challenge.

Hub leaders are responsible for leading and co-ordinating school improvement and there is emphasis on a distinctive leadership style that seeks to place the onus on schools to act to address both their own priorities and also take a wider view across all ALT schools.



External reviews concluded that this role has enabled schools to develop a strategic view of what is needed, make connections and focus on the things best done together, across all schools. ALT schools have opened out their practice, both in classrooms and in leaders' work, to thoughtful scrutiny, debate and celebration. Hubs are based on a solid understanding of how this spirit of openness can lead to everyone raising their game. As a result, the children and their families have benefited from true collaboration that puts teaching and learning at the heart of every decision. ALT believes that this school led approach to school improvement is, and will continue, to make a substantial difference to the delivery of education to pupils and students in all schools.

