

Dear Parent / Carer,

Before we move into the pre-Christmas period, I wanted to write to give you an update on developments at Astrea Academy Trust and to give you some of the key highlights from the last academic year.

Although we are only three years old, there are now 25 academies in Astrea. As you may know, Astrea began in South Yorkshire and following the success of our work there, we have now established a second area of operations in Cambridgeshire, where we now have four schools.

Exams results and Ofsted inspections

Our primary schools are going from strength to strength – last summer's results saw us leap by 14 percentage points (four times the national increase) to 55% of children achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and maths. And if you look at the comparison over the last two years, that figure jumps to 23 percentage points, as only 32% of children were reaching the expected standards in 2016.

This level of improvement is impressive and we are proud of the work that our colleagues have put in to secure these results, but we will not rest there. A number of our academies results are in the late 80s and 90% range, and we want all of our schools to be working at this high standard and aiming for all children to be working at or above the expected standards.

Our secondary schools are also seeing significant improvements, including at Cottenham Village College, where nearly three-quarters of all students secured a Grade 9 – 4 in both English and maths, demonstrating a strong performance under the new, more rigorous GCSE examinations.

We have also had a very positive story to tell in terms of Ofsted inspections, with 100% of Astrea academies that have been inspected either improving their Ofsted grading, or retaining a Good or Outstanding grade.

The Astrea Promise

But for all of us at Astrea, the success of our approach is not measured solely in exam and test results, or Ofsted grades. We believe in an education that “inspires beyond measure”, which is why we launched The Astrea Promise in the summer term.

We believe that our role is to support your child in developing as a person, helping them discover their talents and to reach their full potential in the broadest sense. To do this, we focus on encouraging and nurturing resilience, empathy, aspiration, contribution and happiness in every pupil. We are dedicated to an education with no boundaries so that your child can fly.



Through the Astrea Promise, every Astrea primary school has formally committed to an education that reaches out beyond the classroom. The Promise means that during their time with us, every child will have the opportunity to experience 30 difference memorable activities and challenges that have been specifically designed to help develop character.

Working their way through bronze, silver and gold activities, pupils have the opportunity to get involved in a whole range of exciting projects, from growing and eating their own food and climbing a mountain, through to sleeping under the stars and visiting a university. The Promise also includes at least one visit to London and one visit to a foreign country.

During the last academic year, Astrea delivered 5,600 activities to over 2,000 pupils from across the Astrea family. These include: breaking a record; competing in a poetry competition; creating a sculpture; growing and eating their own food; volunteering in the community; visiting a university; and having an overseas trip.

We will be rolling out The Astrea Promise to our secondary schools this academic year, but in the meantime do keep an eye on #AstreaPromise on Twitter to see what each of our academies is delivering through The Promise.



Our family goes from strength to strength and continues to grow. We were delighted to start the new academic year with two new secondary schools in Cambridgeshire – Ernulf and Longsands in St Neots, and two new schools in Yorkshire – Astrea Academy Woodfields, a secondary school in Doncaster, and Astrea Academy Sheffield, a brand new 3 – 19 school in Burngreave in Sheffield.

Astrea Academy Sheffield is our very first “all-through” school and our very first brand new build school. Having opened its doors in September, Astrea Academy Sheffield will provide an education for children from 3 – 19, and they have hit the ground running, attracting a huge amount of interest from visitors and media alike. The new school is clearly making its positive presence felt in the local community, and our vision of a beacon for Burngreave certainly looks set to become a reality!

We are in discussion about further schools joining us in both Cambridgeshire and South Yorkshire, and – as ever – our focus will be on schools where we think we can make the biggest difference and where we can embed our vision of an education that inspires without measure.

I hope you have found this a useful round up of activity and developments at Astrea. We want you as parents and carers to feel a valued part of our family, so please do talk to us and let us know what we are doing that you’d like us to do more of, and also any issues or concerns you might have.

With every best wish,

Libby.

Libby Nicholas
Chief Executive