

STEP Newsletter

EDITION 17

NOVEMBER 2021

STEP Academy Trust is a growing community of academies that strive together for excellence in partnership to improve children's life chances. Like any good community, STEP Academies celebrate each others' successes, as well as share their challenges. This bi-annual newsletter provides an update on the very latest developments across our Trust.



STEP FIRST
We are all one team

STEP Academy Trust wins prestigious award

Since its inception ten years ago, STEP Academy Trust has been reliant on the expertise, skills and commitment of members, trustees and governors. Unpaid volunteers, their job is to support and challenge STEP leaders to ensure resources are effectively used to meet the Trust's charitable objectives.

Given the vital role played by all those involved in STEP's governance structure, we are delighted that their contribution was recently recognised with a prestigious award – 2021 National Governance Association (NGA) Outstanding Governance Award in a Multi-Academy Trust.

The judging panel noted:

“The trust's culture and ethos—characterised as STEP First— is evident in every discussion, with the Board of Trustees active in forming and refining the approach and understanding the challenges



of exporting culture to new academies within the trust without imposing on them.”

They also commended the way the governance model had developed over time:

“STEP's story epitomises how governance in a growing organisation needs to evolve and change.”

STEP WAY
We agree to do things like this

Drivers for STEP Way

Equality

When determining how we do things across STEP, our leaders, trustees and governors aim to ensure all stakeholders have equal opportunities and are treated fairly. An area of particular focus over the past year has been how the funding we receive from the Government can be distributed more equitably across the organisation.

To support this process, instead of funding being determined by geographical and historical factors, we are moving to a settlement based on core principles. These include:

- Every class should be funded to have an experienced teacher;
- Planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers —often referred to as non-contact time—should be above the minimum requirements;
- Every pupil in STEP, no matter their background, family context or other factors, should benefit from an equitable base level of resource.

We are confident that this approach will support all academies, over time, to achieve our STEP Standard of Excellence.

Diversity

With so much diversity across the STEP community, we are always looking for innovative ways to reflect this in our STEP Way. A new initiative developed by our Catering Team, is to incorporate meals from our community within the midday meal. In the coming weeks, pupils across STEP will be able to enjoy flavours from

around the world, alongside traditional British dishes, such as roast dinner and fish and chips.

All of our meals are prepared in accordance with Government guidance and standards, and we know that following feedback from the more than 500,000 meals we prepare each year, pupils greatly enjoy this part of the day!



STEP UP
We all succeed together

In Focus – Deputy CEO (CEO Designate)

A regular feature, “In Focus”, examines the work of a key STEP service, team or individual. This edition of “In Focus” features Paul Glover, Deputy CEO and now CEO Designate.

The last edition of the STEP Newsletter, featured our CEO, Mark Ducker, who had recently informed the Board of Trustees of his decision to retire at the end of the academic year, 2021-22. This relatively long notice period gave trustees ample opportunity to recruit a suitable successor and facilitate a smooth transition.

Following a robust recruitment process, we are delighted to announce that Paul Glover has been appointed to the role of STEP CEO, from September 2022. Mr Glover has played a leading role in the development of STEP since he joined the Trust in January 2012, leading a number of our academies as Headteacher and/or Executive Headteacher, before being appointed to his current role. As Deputy CEO Mr Glover has maintained oversight of STEP’s Education Strategy ensuring all our academies have the resources and support they need to be successful.

Mr Glover says: “I am extremely proud of the work which the Trust has carried out over the last ten years, providing an excellent education to many children across London and East Sussex. It has been an incredible journey to date, coupled with the



privilege of working under Mr Ducker’s leadership. I am delighted to have been appointed as STEP CEO from September 2022 and to be able to continue to work with all of the children, parents, staff and governors across the Trust in delivering our Mission.”

Rama Venchard, STEP Chair of Trustees commented: “Following a robust selection process, as a Board of Trustees, we were delighted to appoint Paul Glover in the role of STEP CEO. His knowledge of the pupils, staff and communities we serve and his passion towards our Mission will assist in a smooth transition from Mark Ducker’s leadership. STEP Academy Trust is committed to improving the life chances of all children, and we look forward to Paul leading us to continue to achieve this through the next stage in STEP’s journey.”



STEP stands for
Striving Together
for Excellence in
Partnership



STEP AHEAD
We invest in our future



Working in partnership beyond STEP Academy Trust

True to our mission – *to improve the life chances of all children* – STEP is committed to supporting external partners, *where we have the capacity to make a difference*. Indeed, most STEP academies have worked in partnership, experiencing the benefits of working as one team, before joining our Trust.

Two schools currently being supported by STEP are Peacehaven Heights Primary School and Nursery in East Sussex. Both have experienced challenges, particularly leadership capacity, so we are pleased to have been asked to support their respective improvement journeys.

Currently, both school communities are consulting on whether to formalise the partnership by asking to join STEP Academy Trust. If the consensus is that becoming part of STEP would be mutually beneficial, we would expect Peacehaven Heights and Telscombe Cliffs to become the nineteenth and twentieth STEP academies early in the New Year.

Committed to a carbon neutral future

As part of our commitment to improve the life chances of children, for a number of years we have promoted sustainability throughout STEP and reduced the Trust's carbon footprint. Measures have included: installing LED lighting; introducing meat-free days on lunch menus; and reducing the amount of printing and paper used across the Trust.



Building on recent pledges made by world leaders at COP26, STEP Academy Trust fully recognises and underlines its commitment to becoming carbon neutral. Over the coming months, plans will be developed to accelerate our progress towards this vital organisational goal. We look forward to sharing our plans in due course.