

Autumn 2021, Edition 1

# Achieving Better Outcomes

 **Staffordshire  
University  
Academies  
Trust**

## A look back on 2021

As 2021 comes to an end, we've reflected on some key milestones for the Trust and its Academies in our first ever newsletter.

# Welcome to the first SUAT newsletter.

Welcome to the first SUAT newsletter. No introduction to the Multi Academy Trust can be made without referencing our much-loved CEO, Keith Hollins, who recently passed away. Keith was the first CEO of SUAT, a much-revered inspirational leader and a friend. We worked together for over six academic years and his belief in the part that education plays in improving the life chances of every single child in SUAT Academies is what underpins the culture, vision and values that are none negotiable within the SUAT community. We have a wealth of educational expertise throughout the MAT, all of whom will continue to work to that vision and maintain the whole MAT ethos of Rights, Respect and Responsibility.



---

WE WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY

*Christmas*

---

When I started working for the MAT back in 2014, it comprised of just one secondary school, Staffordshire University Academy. Very rapidly two failing primary schools converted to be Academies and the three Academies formed a Multi Academy Trust. From this shaky and humble beginning the MAT has grown to 20 Academies, spread throughout Staffordshire. Through collaboration, those two primaries have gone onto become good Academies and are now pushing towards outstanding. We're very proud that 17 of our 20 Academies are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, the other three are waiting updated inspections soon.

At SUAT, we firmly believe that education isn't just about tests and that all children in our care should be safe, happy, fulfilled and experience a broad and balanced curriculum enabling them to succeed beyond just exam papers.

The purpose of the newsletter is to give a flavour of the work that goes on throughout the MAT, the bigger picture and community within which you belong.

Enjoy the read ...

**Rachel Bailye**  
Interim CEO SUAT



## Staffordshire University Academies Trust invests over £70k in 21 new websites.

**In October, SUAT rolled out 21 new websites, giving each Academy a fresh, high performing and beautifully designed website. The Trust had outgrown its existing website structure. It recognised that the websites needed to be more accessible and easier to navigate for pupils and parents.**

SUAT worked with a local agency to roll out a new website strategy, to provide each of its Academies with an updated, well designed, user friendly and highly functional website.

The £70k investment means that each Academy now has its own website, with its own content and style, but follows the Trust's structure and has a consistent and professional look and feel.

All of the new websites now also support teaching and learning. During lockdown, like every Academy, teachers were overwhelmed with a need to take learning online. The websites are now futureproofed and provide a digital educational facility for each Academy.

SUAT worked closely with its web agency to develop its own unique template which was first applied to its own website and then rolled out to its Academies. This new website structure is highly secure and has a transparent and useable content management system which allows the Academy to manage their own website effectively.

SUAT Interim CEO & Accounting Officer, Rachel Bailye said: "The website project was the brainchild of our late CEO Keith Hollins, so we are pleased and proud to have seen it through for him.

"Our new websites are fantastic and we're all incredibly happy with them. They're streamlined, visually representative of the Trust and brilliantly user friendly.

"Each one of our Academies has been able to benefit from this investment, as will any that choose to join our trust in the future.

"Previously our websites were functional but needed updating and we wanted a more transparent content management system which would allow all of our Academies to have more control over their own website. These new websites deliver that whilst looking professional, friendly, smart and a great portal for information about each Academy."

Sue Machin, Principal at St Edward's, Cheddleton said: "We're pleased to have a fantastic new look website that is so much more user friendly for all!"



## **Staffordshire University Academies Trust saves Academies £343k.**

**Staffordshire University Academies Trust has recently released figures which reveal the savings achieved for the 20 Academies within the Trust.**

This year the Trust has saved the Academies £268k in annual costs with an additional £75k saved in long term contracts.

The Trust has achieved this considerable figure by either funding the costs directly, negotiating discounts or by applying for grants on behalf of the Academies. Together, all three avenues mean that the Academies can redirect funding to what matters to them most, teaching and learning resources. Fundamentally, it also frees up a significant amount of capacity in the Academies so that teachers and staff can focus on the pupils.

The Trust has covered the cost of essentials such as finance packages, training platforms and continuing professional development programmes, wellbeing and counselling support, marketing and website support, property services, health and safety support, grounds maintenance services, photocopier contracts and much more.

**This year the trust has saved the Academies £268,093k in annual costs with an additional £75,312 saved in long term contracts.**



## Meet Amy Hatfield, our Designated Health and Wellbeing Consultant.

**Meet our Designated Health and Wellbeing Consultant, Amy Hatfield. Trained as a counsellor, Amy has run her own wellbeing business for over 10 years, which began as a holistic practise, before it evolved quickly into supporting mental health.**

Now, Amy provides incomparable support for our Academy pupils, teachers, and their families in her capacity as a partner to SUAT. This help has been invaluable to everyone that she has assisted, for the past two years.

Amy's services are provided for all Academies within the Trust, which means that it can be a challenging task to manage but ensures that very effective support is available to all Academies that need it. At SUAT, we operate a referral system which is overseen at our headquarters. The HQ team are contacted by Academies and individuals with requests for Amy's support, and these are then reviewed before being placed in priority order. Academies can send a referral at any time, and appointments are accommodated as soon as possible.

Amy commented: "Looking after your mental health has been challenging for many individuals over the pandemic, and people will be affected by their emotions for a long time afterwards. It is so important to me to make sure that everyone gets the help that they need, as early as possible."

"In partnership with SUAT, my role involves reviewing certain policies that may affect the wellbeing of their pupils and staff whilst adhering to Department for Education (DfE) directives.

Amy continued: "One of my priorities is making sure that everyone involved with the Academies and Trust is more 'wellbeing aware,' and being closely involved with the many changes to ensure it is a safe space for mental health."

Our Designated Health and Wellbeing Consultant's sessions include one-to-one support for children and staff as well as group exercises. The appointments teach mindfulness strategies and positively challenge children's thought processes, developing their confidence, self-esteem and positively affecting their mental health. Amy is often called to question why an individual thinks they are incapable of a task and help them to find better solutions by developing their feelings of self-worth and self-assurance. Amy also supports our Academies to tackle key issues relating to online harms and peer on peer abuse.



The recent 'Happiness Project' which Amy ran in partnership with SUAT, involved visiting the Academies, some so large they took up to two weeks to ensure all pupils could be included. She coached pupils and staff in small groups to train them in self-care and coping with stress.

Amy is driven to remain accessible to everyone for support. If she can help to change just one child's life, it means so much to her. Amy stated: "My role is ever-evolving, and I am utterly grateful to combine forces with SUAT, they are all lovely people who share my passion for wellbeing."



## Staffordshire University Academies Trust invests £150k in new roofs for our Academies.



**Staffordshire University Academies Trust will be investing over £150k, in academic year 2021.**

This will bring the Trust's total investment in the real estate across its 20 Academies to around £1.5 million over the last three years. All 20 Academies have had additional investment in some aspect of their property over this time period, for example, new heating systems, energy efficient lighting, secure windows and doors, DDA compliant playgrounds.

The new roofs provide the Academies with building regulation compliant and most importantly, watertight roofs, creating a safe, warm and dry learning environment.

We've invested in these Academies because their roofs were flagged as high priority issues in our Trust – wide condition survey and have physically been leaking into classrooms, which has the potential to impact adversely on teaching and learning and staff and pupil well-being.

As part of our Trust, we ensure that all of our Academies are supported not just with educational and business matters but with infrastructure too, enabling teachers and support staff to focus on teaching and learning.

This latest round of investment means that staff and pupils are working in a high-quality environment and that the Academy Principals have one less thing to worry about.



## Campaign to Promote Safer Academy Drop Offs Launched at John Wheeldon Primary Academy.

John Wheeldon Primary Academy, Staffordshire Police and the INTO Academy Travel Team came together to run a two-week national vulnerable road users campaign.

The multi-force initiative aimed to create awareness of the sustainable options available to children and parents on their journey into Academy.

John Wheeldon Primary Academy was chosen because it had a combination of factors which made it a good starting point. Including, complaints from residents, good Park and Stride locations, lots of enforceable streets, and the Academy was already being proactive in this matter.

On 14th September 2021, police officers from Staffordshire Police, along with senior members of Staffordshire County Council set out to educate parents and carers on how to park safely and legally when dropping off and collecting their children now that they have returned for the new Academy year.

On arriving at Academy, pupils were awarded various stickers and snap bands in different colours, depending on how they travelled in. This included using the walking bus, scooting, cycling, Park and Stride or walking.

As John Wheeldon Primary Academy pupils arrived to start their Academy day, they were greeted at the playground gates by the fantastic INTO Academy Travel Team. Staff handed out stickers and other goodies that will hopefully encourage the children to spread the word of this initiative and make the changes necessary for a greener, safer journey to Academy for all.

Amongst the people campaigning about the change was Helen Fisher, Deputy Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime, who commented on the event: "This is partnership working at its very best. It's marvellous to see the police officers educating the parents and those who need a reminder and that's what's happened this morning. Hopefully now behaviour will change."





The police force has contributed massively to the cause by raising a huge £50,000 for the INTO Academy Travel Team to purchase more Academy parking buddies. The purpose of the signs is to discourage cars from parking dangerously around the Academy gates.

For example, cars parked on zig zags or near crossing points can impede children's views and will render the crossing unsafe; the buddies make parents think about the safety of the children walking to Academy.

David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport at Staffordshire County Council explained: "For parents that need to travel by car, it can be a particularly busy time and we want to encourage them to not only be responsible drivers, but to use Park and Stride wherever possible and also park legally, keeping pavements clear for all pedestrians."

John Wheeldon Primary Academy hopes that the event this morning encourages parents to change their habits going forward. Whether that means using local areas to Park and Stride, cycle, or scoot with children to the gates or even dropping them at the near-by walking bus. This way, pupils get five to ten minutes exercise each morning, they can chat to their peers and allows them to wake up and prepare for a day of learning.

Principal at John Wheeldon Primary Academy, Richard Sutton, commented: "We are really pleased that John Wheeldon Primary Academy were chosen to kick off the INTO Academy Travel Team campaign.

"Academy mornings have always been challenging for us as our utmost priority is keeping the children safe. Unfortunately issues with parking have arisen that compromises our pupils' wellbeing, such as car fumes entering the classroom. We were eager to get on board with the project and to help raise awareness of the fantastic schemes that are available to parents and their children to get them to Academy safely and on time.

"As part of Staffordshire University Academies Trust, we strongly support protecting pupil and staff wellbeing so have been very proactive in tackling this issue, therefore encouraging our parents and carers to think before they park now that pupils have returned for the new Academy year."

Maps of where to find the walking bus starting point will be sent home to parents, which is located just a ten-minute walk away from the Academy and shows important information on where is suitable to Park and Stride.



**This campaign is being rolled out across the Trust with most Academies now taking part to raise awareness and educate for healthier and safer Academy arrivals:**

- St Leonard's CofE First Academy
- St Edward's C.E. Academy, Cheddleton
- Dove C.E. Academy
- Staffordshire University Academy
- Little Aston Primary Academy
- John Wheeldon Primary Academy
- Littleton Green Community Academy
- Perton Primary Academy
- St Paul's C.E. (VC) First Academy
- St Luke's C.E. Academy
- Charnwood Primary Academy
- Moorgate Primary Academy
- All Saints C.E. Academy, Denstone
- St Augustine's C.E. Academy
- St Peter's C.E. Academy, Alton



## £100k invested in Perton Primary Academy's playground.

**Perton Primary Academy has invested £100,000 to improve its playground.**

The Academy on Sandown Drive unveiled the brand new, state-of-the-art playground on 19 April.

With the support of the Trust, the Academy was able to turn plans around in six weeks.

Executive Headteacher Lynn Small said: "This was one of the first jobs I wanted to do when I was appointed Headteacher at Perton Primary Academy. The playground wasn't DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant and was difficult for wheelchair users or children with disabilities to enjoy.

*"The whole playground has been dug out as it was uneven before and we've removed old, unused flowerbeds so the space is much bigger now."*

**The Academy's new outdoor playing area is complete with football and netball pitches, a world map, compass, lily pads, hopscotch, noughts and crosses and much more.**





## Horton's new £20k car park.

**SUAT secured £20,000 for Horton St Michael's First School and Nursery to replace their damaged car park and driveway.**

A landmark project undertaken at Horton St Michael's First School in Rudyard was promptly progressed, taking just one week, and has completely transformed the car park and driveway. It now provides a safe environment for the pupils that attend the Academy in Leek and will for many years to come.

As the previous surface was in such poor condition, there was risk of the area deteriorating further over the cold winter months and posing an access risk to the staff and children at Horton St Michael's. This meant that the full renovation of the Academy car park and driveway was a priority for the Trust and Academy.

The restoration began with a complete excavation of the damaged area, before an entirely new drainage system was installed. The Academy's driveway and car park surface has been laid with stone mastic asphalt (SMA), which is a durable surfacing material and is suitable for heavily trafficked roads.

It provided the perfect solution for the Academy's busy car park and driveway to future-proof the area.

Installation of a new woven polypropylene weed suppressant membrane was also crucial to protect the asphalt from cracking, which would cause potholes to re-appear in the future.

Lesley Montgomery, Horton St Michael's Head Teacher is very pleased with the finished project. She said: "The Academy's driveway and car park were in such poor condition. It had been repaired numerous times over the years, however it had begun to present a real health and safety risk to our pupils, staff, and parents.

"Uneven surface levels presented a concern that vehicles would get damaged. This was further complicated by poor drainage. The potholes were often hidden by large puddles, which was a danger to both pedestrians and cars.







## Charnwood Primary Academy plant special tree to celebrate Her Majesty's 70th Jubilee.

**We're thrilled that one of our Primary Academies, Charnwood Primary Academy, has been gifted a celebration tree from the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC).**

This special tree was presented on 12th October 2021, where staff, pupils and guests gathered for its planting to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

Charnwood Primary Academy is one of 70 Academies across England and Scotland to be granted a Jubilee tree by the QGC, one for each year that The Queen has served.

Special guests that attended the planting included, Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr Ian Dudson, Mayor of Lichfield, Councillor Robert Yardley, Sherriff of Lichfield, Mr Peter Hitchman, High Sherriff of Staffordshire, Mr James Friend and Chairman of Lichfield District Council, Mr Barry Gwilt.

Mr Friend said: "It is an honour to be this year's High Sherriff of Staffordshire and it is a pleasure to be involved in the early stages of the QGC Jubilee Tree Planting.

"The Lord-Lieutenant has begun the scheme by planting trees in two cities of Staffordshire, Lichfield and Stoke-on-Trent. Today the tree is a Field Maple (*Acer Campestre*), a particularly lovely native tree, which will turn colour and look beautiful for years to come."

The local dignitaries were joined by Charnwood Primary Academy's Eco-Council, who have been elected by their peers from classes between Year 1 and Year 6, and the Principal of Charnwood Primary Academy, Katie Stanley. Several of the Academy's pupils read out a poem to commemorate the important event.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr Ian Dudson, began the ceremony with a speech: "We're here today courtesy of the Mayor of Lichfield, who has suggested Charnwood Primary Academy to be the city's recipient primary Academy, and so, I am officially gifting the tree this morning.



"The tree will be recorded on The Queen's Green Canopy Map as a lasting legacy in Lichfield of the Platinum Jubilee."

Focusing on planting sustainably, "Plant a tree for the Jubilee" will create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the nation and the British Monarch's 70 years of service. Not only this, but it will also help to educate Charnwood Primary Academy's pupils on the precious need for trees and how challenging it is to keep fragile young trees and saplings alive.

The process of selecting Academies to be a part of the project began with the QGC office, who tasked the Lord-Lieutenant of each district to identify primary Academies to take part. A total of 70 Academies are to be gifted a celebration tree to plant, including a primary Academy adjacent to Balmoral. A detailed criteria helped to narrow down the country's Academies, deciding which would have the honour to be a part of this historical nationwide scheme.

Katie Stanley commented on the fantastic event: "It is such an honour to be chosen as the site for the Jubilee Tree, and we will take good care of it at the Academy. We will also be incorporating aspects of the event into our curriculum, and I know that the pupils are all thrilled to be a part of this historic event."

The QGC planting project has commenced in Staffordshire, at the beginning of the tree planting season and will continue into 2023 to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen and her Platinum Jubilee.







## A tribute to our CEO, Keith Hollins.

**Unfortunately, many of you will now have heard the news that our beloved CEO, Keith Hollins, passed away on 23 September 2021 after a battle with Coronavirus.**

Keith was instrumental in making this Trust what it is today – one of the largest and leading MATs in the UK. His passion and vision were remarkable and collectively, those within the Trust will continue his legacy in the same manner that Keith would have.

We'd like to celebrate his incredible life and pay tribute by highlighting just some of his many wonderful and impressive achievements.

Very recently, Keith was interviewed by Academy's Week, where he was celebrated for his achievement with SUAT. In six years, 17 Academies have joined the Trust, however, Keith, as modest as ever, insisted "It's got nothing to do with me." Those who knew him well, will know that isn't true.

His success with the Trust came from a wealth of experience and his belief in collaborative working. Throughout his outstanding career in education, Keith has pioneered innovative ways to enable effective collaboration and excellence in education that has been recognised throughout the sector at the highest level.

Described as 'inspirational', a 'super head', 'high flying' and 'in a class of his own', Keith has committed his life to driving up educational standards, turning around underperforming Academies and forging powerful partnerships that have ensured the pupils of Staffordshire Academies have had the very best educational opportunities possible.

He began teaching in 1976 and worked at Academies in London, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. He has made a huge impact on education in the Staffordshire region which ultimately led to him receiving an Honorary Doctorate by Staffordshire University in 2018.

In 2004, as the newly appointed Headteacher of Westwood College in Leek, Keith led the college to Specialist Academy status and to Beacon Academy status by 2005. By 2007 he achieved an Ofsted rating of Outstanding.

Keith was the architect of the South Moorlands Learning Community in 2009, which is a partnership of the six Academies in the pyramid of The Cheadle Academy.

He also engineered the current Leek Education Partnership (LEP), of 20 Academies in the Staffordshire Moorlands, and was the Chair of LEP for four years. This is a quasi-legal organisation that links all 20 Academies in the Leek District, including First, Middle, High and Special Academies.

He also became a National Leader of Education (NLE) from 2007 to 2015 and Westwood College was a National Support Academy. His services were in high demand; he was continuously deployed from 2007 and was instrumental in helping to lead four North Staffordshire High Academies out of Special Measures in six years.

In September 2007, Keith became the Executive Principal of both Westwood College and Cheadle High Academy, a Staffordshire Secondary Academy which was then in Special Measures. This was the first leadership model of its kind in Staffordshire. Cheadle High was removed from Special Measures eight months after his appointment. Soon after, Cheadle High Academy was awarded 'good with outstanding features' at full inspection in May 2010. In August 2011, Cheadle High Academy converted to become The Cheadle Academy.

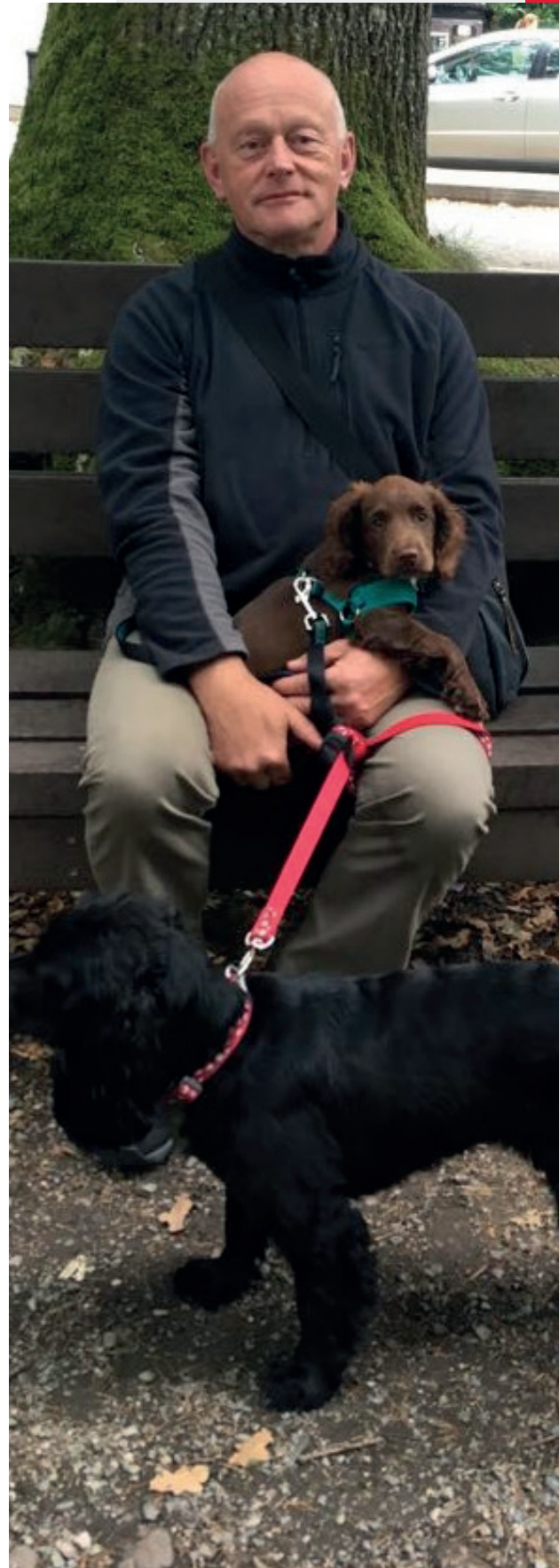
In 2008, an Ofsted inspection of this leadership model gave it an 'outstanding' judgement. At this time, Executive Headship was quite rare and Keith was asked by DfE to give evidence to STRB (Academy Teachers' Review Body) on the way in which he was remunerated. This model was adopted in the STPCD (Academy Teachers' Pay and Condition Document) and is still the preferred model for calculating the pay of Executive Heads.

At this point, his career was already considered exceptional, and he was a beacon for Staffordshire's education community. We then, at SUAT, were lucky enough to have him join the Trust as our CEO.

His leadership allowed SUAT to realise its ambitious growth objectives. The Trust is now held up as best practice in educational circles such as the Local Authority and the Diocese. Most recently, Keith has been nominated for another Honours, thanks to his exemplary response to the Covid-19 pandemic. His leadership over this difficult period has further endorsed his relentless commitment to education and the support and wellbeing of those involved with the Trust, pupils, teachers, staff and Academy communities alike.

Whilst Keith loved his work and knowing that this made a positive difference to the education of young people, he also had other passions and many hobbies. As a proud "Stokie", he loved Stoke Football Club. When he wasn't cheering his hometown team on, he was gaining enjoyment from his motorbikes or spending time with his beautiful family, whom he adored, and his three loyal dogs.

Keith has paved the way to excellence and everyone at the Trust is committed to carrying on his truly inspirational work. He will be greatly missed and always remembered.





Email: [office@suatrust.co.uk](mailto:office@suatrust.co.uk)  
Phone: **01782 987120**  
Website: [suatrust.co.uk](http://suatrust.co.uk)

Staffordshire University Academies Trust  
Kern House, Stone Business Park  
Brooms Road, Stone  
Staffordshire, ST15 0TL