

25th September 2026

A message from the Chair of Trustees

Deb Rattley to retire as Chief Executive Officer of Aequalis Education Trust

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am writing to let you know that Deb Rattley will retire from her role as Chief Executive Officer of Aequalis Education Trust on 31 December 2026.

After more than 40 years in education, Deb has decided that the time is right to begin the next chapter of her life and spend more time with her family and friends. Whilst we will be very sorry to see her leave, the Board fully supports and respects her decision.

Deb had the passion and vision to build an education Trust that was ethical, inclusive and ambitious. Over the last two years, Deb has worked tirelessly to bring this vision to life and has overseen the conversion and expansion from a Single Academy Trust to a Trust comprising five schools, together with a non-maintained special school and a college. This has been a substantial undertaking. On behalf of the Board, I would like to recognise Deb's leadership, commitment and contribution throughout that process, as well as her many years of service to education.

We will now take the time needed to identify a new Chief Executive Officer who shares the Trust's values and has the experience and commitment required to lead our Trust through the next stage of its development. The recruitment process is underway, with an ideal start date of April 2027, so in the meantime the Board is putting interim leadership arrangements in place to provide continuity and support for the Trust's schools, colleges, leaders and central team during this period.

Our focus remains on providing stability, maintaining the progress made across the Trust and continuing to serve our children, young people and wider communities.

A message from Deb Rattley:

"Education has been far more than a career for me; it has been a vocation and a privilege. Throughout my career I have been driven by a deep passion for improving the lives, opportunities and outcomes of children and young people, and I have never lost sight of the difference that great education can make to their futures."

"I have been fortunate to work with remarkable children, young people and their families, exceptional colleagues, trustees and governors, all of whom have shaped my journey and inspired me every day."

"As I prepare for the next chapter, I do so with great pride in what we have achieved together and with every confidence in the future of Aequalis Education Trust. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey. It has been an honour to serve, and I leave knowing that the children and young people are at the heart of our Trust and will continue to thrive."

There will be opportunities over the coming months to thank Deb properly and to recognise her contribution to the Trust and to education more widely. We will keep colleagues, families and other stakeholders informed as the recruitment and transition arrangements progress.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank Deb for everything she has contributed and to wish her and her family every happiness for the future.

Sam Griffiths

Chair of Trustees Aequalis Education Trust