

PRESS RELEASE: 1 APRIL

Rowena Hackwood appointed as Chief Executive of Astrea Academy Trust

++ Experienced CEO goes back to South Yorkshire family roots ++

The Board of Trustees of Astrea Academy Trust is today announcing the appointment of Rowena Hackwood as the new Chief Executive. Rowena will take up position from the Summer.

Currently Chief Executive of the David Ross Education Trust, Rowena will head up the 27-strong academy trust that is based in South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire.

Astrea was set up in late 2015 as part of the Northern Powerhouse programme, and the Trust has grown to a family of schools, encompassing primary, secondary, all-through and SEN schools.

The Trust has built an impressive track record in a short space of time: significantly improved results in reading, writing and maths in its primary schools, amounting to a 28%-point increase in just three years. Astrea has seen a strong performance in Ofsted terms, with virtually all schools improving or retaining their Good status and many improving from 'Special Measures' to 'Good'.

Financially, the Trust is also in a strong position. Having inherited debts of £5.2m Astrea has reversed this position through prudent financial management and robust curriculum-led financial planning, and the most recent financial accounts show a surplus of £1.03m.

Professor Sam Twiselton, Trustee Chair of the CEO Recruitment Panel, said:

“We are delighted to have appointed someone of Rowena’s calibre to steer Astrea through this next phase of its improvement journey. In a short space of time, the Trust has established itself as a serious player to be reckoned with, helping improve education in communities that have for too long been left behind.

“The whole sector is grappling with the implications of these unprecedented times, but we will come through this together and Astrea will continue to do everything we can to support our academies, our pupils, our teachers and our communities throughout the challenges. Rowena brings both local understanding and empathy together with strong sectoral experience and so is extremely well placed to take the helm as we move forward.”

Rowena Hackwood, Chief Executive Designate said:

“I am very excited to be taking up the leadership of Astrea Academy Trust, and it’s a real privilege to follow in the footsteps of such an inspirational leader as Libby Nicholas.

“Astrea speaks to me on a number of levels – but at the most fundamental, the role takes me right back to my family roots in South Yorkshire. My mum actually attended one of Astrea’s primary schools, and my Granddad lived just a few doors down from one of the secondaries – so I have a deep-felt understanding of the communities that Astrea serves. Cambridge has also always been a place close to my heart from my university days and so I am delighted to be able to serve both areas.

“The sector as a whole is facing some of the most challenging times it has ever known. But it is at times like this when family bonds are at their most strong, and it will be no different with Astrea. I’m very much looking forward to getting started and helping the organisation navigate its way through the challenging issues that schools the length and breadth of the country are facing, and towards happier days again.”

ENDS

