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Chief Executive Officer: Mr. Ryan Duff

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Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, may I wish everyone a Happy New Year. Secondly, as important stakeholders of both St. Martin's and Discovery Educational Trust, I wanted to introduce myself to you all.

As you are likely aware, St. Martin's has been part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) since 2014. Originally called Brentwood Academies Trust, the MAT was established with two schools, St Martin's and Larchwood Primary School, also in Brentwood. A third school, Chase High, in Southend, joined in 2015. In September 2020, the name of the Trust was changed to Discovery Educational Trust (DET).

I was appointed the Executive Headteacher of DET in February 2020, having spent eight years as the Headteacher of Larchwood, moving the school from an Inadequate Ofsted rating to Outstanding.

Now, in my role as DET's Chief Executive Officer, I want to ensure that our parents and carers and our communities are more informed about the work that the Trust does and the benefits it brings to its schools.

One of my initial tasks was to lead the recruitment process for the new Headteacher, Mr Smyrk. It is widely recognised that Mr Smyrk's appointment has been a success - throughout the pandemic, he has demonstrated strong leadership and has brought stability and a high level of confidence to the school.

I continue to work closely with Mr Smyrk and we have regular engagement on topics such as school improvement, pupil success and how we ensure that St Martin's continues to be a school of choice in the local community.

As part of this ongoing interaction, we have discussed how we might communicate more effectively to our parents and carers. The introduction of the weekly 'News and Views' was one communication tool that has resulted from those discussions and this is now embedded across all three DET schools.

I am pleased to announce that the next element of our 'Trust-wide' communication strategy is an undertaking that all written correspondence, including emails, will receive a reply from a member of staff within 48 hours of receipt. This does not supersede the timelines detailed in certain Trust policies. DET schools will still adhere to these, but general enquiries sent to St. Martin's from parents and carers will be replied to within two working days.

An effective communication strategy with all stakeholders is a DET priority. On behalf of DET, I hope that you see this as a positive step and I look forward to sharing more information with you about DET, the role it plays in ensuring accountability across all three DET schools and the positive difference it makes for your children.

Yours faithfully

Ryan Duff
Chief Executive Officer

