



Summer

Newsletter





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CEO - Reflections on the Year

As we come to the end of another successful year, I would like to thank our children, staff, governors, trustees and families for their continued dedication and support. Together, we have achieved a great deal and there is much to celebrate across The Societas Trust.

Throughout the year, our children have benefitted from a wide range of exciting opportunities, including sporting events, enrichment activities, leadership programmes and collaborative projects, helping them to develop confidence, resilience and new friendships across our schools. We have also seen many examples of academic success and external recognition that reflect the hard work and commitment of our staff and pupils.

Collaboration remains at the heart of our Trust. Staff have continued to engage in high-quality professional development, sharing expertise and learning from one another to ensure the very best outcomes for children. It has also been a year of growth, with new schools strengthening our Trust family and contributing their unique strengths to our shared vision.

I am incredibly proud of everything we have accomplished together.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in another fantastic year. I wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer break and look forward to the opportunities and successes that the year ahead will bring.

Jon Lovatt
Chief Executive Officer, The Societas Trust



The Societas Trust conference equips governance chiefs with strategic insights against a backdrop of change for MATs

Strengthening the knowledge and expertise of leaders and others in governance roles was a key focus of a professional development event led by The Societas Trust.

The Strategic Governance in a Growing System conference comprised inspiring keynote speakers and practical workshops covering digital transformation, financial stewardship and governance responsibilities.

Around 50 leaders, directors, governors and trustees attended the event, hosted with Inspiring Leaders at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Stoke-on-Trent on 25th March 2026.

Workshop themes included Ofsted and adjusted expectations for governors, aligning digital strategy with organisational vision and the vital role of governors in securing financially sustainable schools.

Other sessions explored the legal duties of boards and what good governance looks like in practice, governance during a time of change and navigating multi academy trust growth.

Jon Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer, The Societas Trust, said: "We recognise the vital role that trustees, governor and governance professionals play in shaping the strategic direction and success of our schools."

"That's why it is so important to step back from the day-to-day and provide the opportunity to reflect on and strengthen our practice so that effective governance can drive continuous improvement and ultimately ensure we serve our local communities."

Angela James, Chair of Governors, Ellison Primary Academy, commented: "Governors are committed to supporting and challenging schools to be the best they can be."

"It's great to bring everyone together in person and good to see governors and trustees in the same room so they can better understand one another's roles."

Steven Martin, Deputy Chief Executive, The Societas Trust, and Headteacher, Goldenhill Primary Academy, said: "Governors are crucial to the success of the Trust. It is right that they are included in professional development activities to maximise their impact."

"This conference has enabled us to work together and discuss challenges across our schools and share best practice solutions. It's also been great to make new connections."

Christopher Austin, Director and Vice Chair of The Societas Trust board, explained: "Events like this are incredibly important as they help delegates to understand their roles and responsibilities."

"Even though trustees and governors are working in a voluntary role, they have a legal duty as accountable public servants."

"Learning together and sharing knowledge and expertise is so valuable, and it's good to see this opportunity being opened up to other Trusts."

Sarah Milne, Trustee, Alpha Academies Trust, added: "As a Stoke-on-Trent resident, I find it fulfilling to give something back to the local community by being a trustee."

"I have been made to feel very welcome at this event. One of the learning points I am taking away is around board meeting dynamics and asking the right questions."

Roger Machin, Co-Vice Chair, The Societas Trust board, commented: "It's been beneficial to meet together in person. I have enjoyed networking with our school governors. The workshops, particularly on legal responsibilities, have provided a valuable refresher."

James Brown, Managing Director, Inspiring Leaders, which provides professional development and teacher training programmes and organises conferences, added: "It has been a real privilege to work with Jon and the team at The Societas Trust to deliver this conference for governors and trustees."

"At a time of both significant challenge and opportunity for schools, investing in the development and training of the dedicated volunteers who support our education system has never been more important."

"We were delighted to share expertise with colleagues in the room, and the event itself was warm, inclusive and inspiring - demonstrating clearly that school and trust governance is in very safe hands."



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**Early
Excellence
Inspirational
Learning**

CPD & Events

Early Excellence Training Inspires EYFS Leaders

EYFS leaders and practitioners from across the trust came together on 2 June for an inspiring day of professional development delivered by **Early Excellence** in partnership with SouthStar. The *Early Years Leadership & Practice Training* focused on strengthening high-quality provision, evaluating practice and ensuring the very best outcomes for young children.

Led by renowned early years expert **Andy Burt**, the training encouraged delegates to reflect on their current practice, curriculum intent and learning environments. Sessions explored key areas including effective EYFS leadership, outdoor provision and the development of early writing, all underpinned by the principles set out in the *Strong Foundations* guidance.

One EYFS Leader commented:

"The Early Excellence training was really inspiring and our EYFS team returned to school enthused and full of ideas. Andy Burt is so knowledgeable and thought provoking. The training really encouraged us to think about the strengths, and areas of development, for our setting, with a strong focus on the Strong Foundations document. Following the training, we are going to reflect on our curriculum intent to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our children and evaluate the effectiveness of our continuous provision."

The event also highlighted the importance of outdoor learning and communication-rich environments. Reflecting on the day, **Emma Murphy, EYFS Lead at Ash Green**, said:

"The Early Excellence training on 2nd June was inspiring. It made us pause and think deeply about our practice, including where our focus sits and what matters. The session raised the profile of outdoor provision powerfully, reminding us how meaningful and connected learning becomes when communication is at the forefront. I loved the focus on poems and stories too. It was a day that stretched our thinking and purpose."

The overwhelmingly positive feedback demonstrates the impact of high-quality professional development and delegates left with practical ideas, renewed confidence and a strengthened focus on providing exceptional early years experiences for every child.

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News

Oaklands Nursery School joins national network of early years experts

Oaklands Nursery School has been selected to join a national network of experts providing guidance to early years educators in their regions.

The government's Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs bring together the leading nurseries and childminders across England to share proven approaches to early years education.

Funded by the Department for Education and part of its Best Start in Life Strategy, the aim of the scheme is to support educators and improve the quality of early years provision.

Oaklands Nursery School, which is Ofsted 'outstanding', will advise early years providers, including childminders and schools, in Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Shropshire to enhance outcomes for children.

Sally Lynch, Headteacher, Oaklands Nursery School, said: "Children's earliest years have a profound impact on the rest of their life affecting their learning, health and wellbeing. That's why the quality of early years settings is so important."

She added: "We are incredibly proud to have been selected as an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub. This is a significant achievement and testament to our staff and the quality of practice across our school. We look forward to supporting educators across the sector."

Based in Porthill, Newcastle-under-Lyme and an associate member of The Societas Trust, Oaklands Nursery School is one of 36 hubs nationally. Its hub status was confirmed by the Department for Education in June 2026.

The hubs have specialist advisors and teachers in early language, maths, and personal, social and emotional development, and deliver tailored training.

The support that they provide includes:

- highlighting training and tools that reflect the latest, evidence-informed research and best practices in early childhood education, ensuring that staff feel confident and equipped to meet the diverse needs of children and families.
- encouraging equity and inclusion by helping settings identify and address barriers to learning so that every child can achieve their best, particularly those with socio-economic disadvantage.
- fostering a culture of continuous improvement where early years professionals are supported to reflect on their practice, share insights and grow together as a community.
- helping practitioners make informed decisions that nurture each child's curiosity, confidence and wellbeing.

Jon Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer, The Societas Trust, added: "We are immensely proud of our partnership with Oaklands Nursery School and glad to have been part of the successful bid for the school to become an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub."

News

Gladstone Primary Academy pupils feel valued, enjoy school and make suitable progress, finds new Ofsted report

Pupils at Gladstone Primary Academy feel valued, enjoy school and make suitable progress, according to a new Ofsted inspection report.

Inspectors found that leaders of the school on Anchor Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, have established a warm and inclusive culture of high expectations, which pupils rise to.

Pupils are achieving well and engage enthusiastically in lessons at the school, which is part of The Societas Trust. They treat adults and one another with respect, develop resilience and are keen to learn.

Claire Annese, Headteacher, Gladstone Primary Academy, said: "We strive to teach an exciting and engaging curriculum that develops and celebrates pupils' gifts and talents.

"It is very rewarding to see Ofsted recognise that pupils make positive progress from their starting points, which prepares them well for their next stage of education."

Inspectors found that for disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and disabilities or are in social care, the barriers to learning are reduced, the report notes.

The report adds that leaders help to raise pupils' aspirations for later life. For example, visits from engineers, designers and dentists mean that pupils learn about different careers that are available to them when they are older.

Parents are positive about the school and know that leaders care about the families and local community.

In line with the government's new inspection framework, Ofsted has graded the school across seven areas in addition to safeguarding.

- Achievement - expected standard
- Attendance and behaviour - expected standard
- Curriculum and teaching - expected standard
- Early years - expected standard
- Inclusion - expected standard
- Leadership and governance - expected standard
- Personal development and wellbeing - expected standard
- Safeguarding standards - met

Under Ofsted's [new style inspection reports](#), the expected standard refers to a high standard and shows that a school is doing everything it should for pupils. Safeguarding standards are judged as either being met or not met.

Jon Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer, The Societas Trust, added: "I am incredibly proud of all the staff, children and governors at the school who deserve the positive recognition that Ofsted has given them, and that the support of the Trust has also been recognised in the report."

To read the report, published on 13th July 2026, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/142991>.



Ash Green Primary Academy praised for strong pupil wellbeing support in new Ofsted report

Pupils at Ash Green Primary Academy enjoy learning and achieve well, according to a new Ofsted inspection report.

Inspectors have highlighted the school's comprehensive programme for personal development and wellbeing as a strong point.

This area was graded as meeting the strong standard, which [Ofsted defines](#) as referring to excellent, consistent work that's making a real difference for children.

The report also recognises the positive work of leaders and governors in ensuring that the school, in Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, continues to provide an effective education for all.

Jodie Cope, Headteacher, Ash Green Primary Academy, which is part of The Societas Trust, said: "We strive to create a vibrant, supportive and caring school community that provides a strong foundation so children thrive and are well prepared for their next steps.

"This report reflects not only the dedication of our staff and governors, but also the support, trust and partnership of our families. Together, we have created a school community that places children at the heart of everything we do and it is wonderful to see that recognised."

The report notes that all pupils access a rich range of opportunities that enhance their experience of school. As a result, pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy learning and value the broad range of opportunities provided.

For example, pupils take on leadership roles such as becoming art ambassadors and reading heroes and explore future careers through an annual careers day.

Leaders provide highly effective pastoral support. Worry boxes in classrooms allow pupils to share concerns with confidence. Staff review these regularly and respond quickly.

In line with the government's new inspection framework, Ofsted has graded the school across seven areas in addition to safeguarding.

- Personal development and wellbeing – strong standard
- Achievement - expected standard
- Attendance and behaviour - expected standard
- Curriculum and teaching - expected standard
- Early years - expected standard
- Inclusion - expected standard
- Leadership and governance - expected standard
- Safeguarding standards - met

Under Ofsted's [new style inspection reports](#), the expected standard refers to a high standard and shows that a school is doing everything it should for pupils. Safeguarding standards are judged as either being met or not met.

Inspectors found that leaders work closely with governors and The Societas Trust to ensure that decisions are made with pupils' best interests at the centre.

Governance at all levels is effective. Staff feel valued and supported and are proud to work at the school. Parents are also highly supportive of the school.

Leaders and staff understand pupils' individual circumstances and backgrounds well. For disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and disabilities or are in social care, the barriers to learning are reduced, the report notes.

The report adds that leaders have ensured that a well-sequenced and progressive curriculum is in place across all subjects. Teachers deliver this curriculum well in most lessons. Reading is a high priority and a clear strength across the school.

The report also commends pupils for treating adults and one another with respect, developing resilience, being keen to learn and having highly positive relationships. Pupils leave the school as confident, respectful and well-prepared individuals.

Jon Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer, The Societas Trust, added: "It is fantastic to see children at the school thriving and Ofsted's recognition of how well pupils and staff are supported by the school and the Trust."

To read the report, published on 20th July 2026, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/142990>



Working for us - Our commitment to Wellbeing!



"The SAS Wellbeing Service has been an invaluable resource for our staff at Ash Green. A number of colleagues have accessed the counselling service, and the speed at which support is available has made a real difference. Knowing that someone can be seen quickly, without lengthy waiting times, provides reassurance at a time when people need it most."

The power of having someone to talk to should never be underestimated. Staff have shared how valuable they found the opportunity to speak to a professional in confidence, with many describing the support as life-changing. For some, it has helped them build resilience, develop coping strategies and continue working through what has been a particularly challenging time.

As a school, we place great importance on staff wellbeing, recognising that when we invest in our people, we are ultimately investing in the children and families we serve. Having access to such a high-quality, responsive service has been invaluable, and we are extremely grateful that this support is available to our staff."

Jodie Cope, Head Teacher.

SAS wellbeing services are available to our all of our staff and governors, from the first day of employment.

Staff Wellbeing

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Years 2 and 4 Enjoy Fantastic Activity Days at Trentham Gardens

Our Year 2 and Year 4 students recently enjoyed exciting activity days at Trentham Gardens, and what a wonderful experience it was! Throughout the day, pupils took part in a variety of engaging activities, explored the beautiful surroundings, and worked together to complete challenges.

The trip was a fantastic opportunity for the children to develop their confidence, teamwork, and communication skills while having lots of fun with their friends. Our students truly lived up to their title as the **RUGS – Really Useful Generation of Students**. They demonstrated excellent behaviour, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude throughout the visit, making us incredibly proud.

From start to finish, the children had an amazing time, creating lasting memories and embracing every opportunity that came their way. Well done to all of our Years 2 and 4 pupils for being such wonderful ambassadors for the school! We look forward to many more exciting adventures in the future. 🌟🌳👏

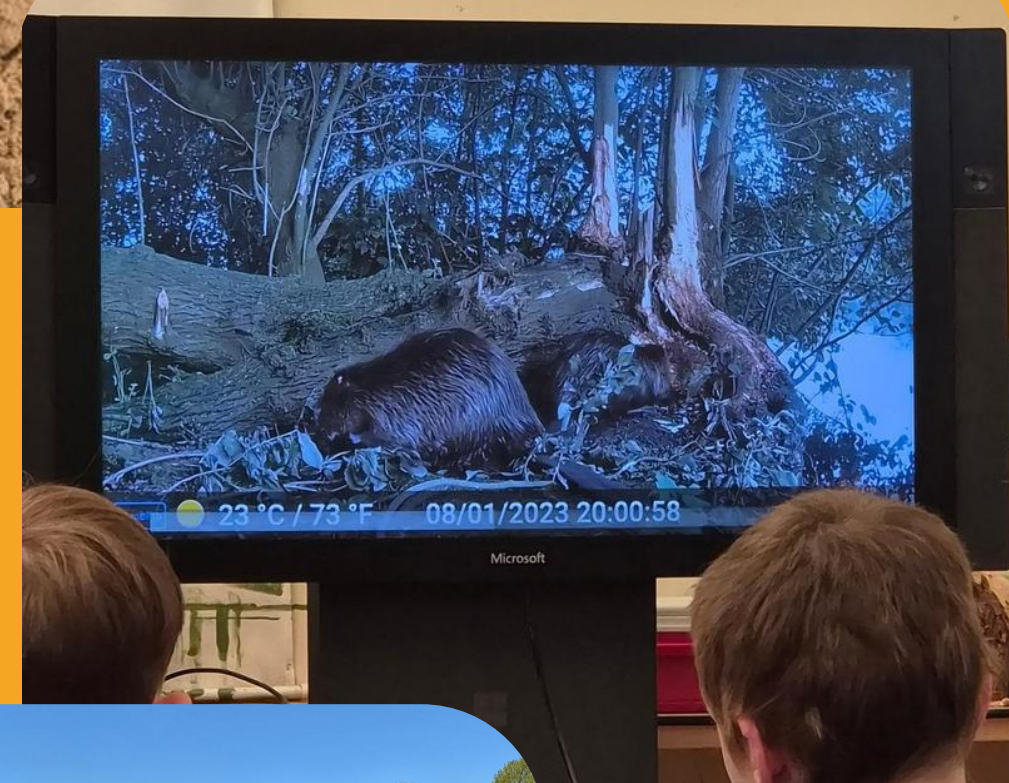
Year 2 Trentham Trip

The trip had a particularly positive impact on pupils with SEND, who demonstrated increased engagement with their peers compared with the classroom environment. The experience provided valuable opportunities for social interaction, helping to build confidence and strengthen relationships. (Y2 Teacher)

The trip was a fantastic opportunity for the children to connect with one another outside of the classroom setting. It was great to see them encouraging one another, working collaboratively in teams and engaging with each activity enthusiastically. These shared experiences helped to strengthen positive relationships and made the day a highly valuable and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. (Year 2 Teacher)

Year 4 Trentham trip

This was first time that Sandford Hill have attended the Societas day at Trentham. The children thoroughly enjoyed the range of activities and learning about the wildlife at Trentham Gardens. It was a busy, fun packed day where the children persevered and worked hard to develop their team work skills during the day's activities. (Year 4 Teacher)



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The Societas World Tour Collaborative Event 2026

This year, children from across the Societas Trust came together once again for the Trust's annual Collaborative Sporting Event – **The Societas World Tour 2026**.

Building on the success of previous years, the event celebrated how sport can bring people together by taking children on a journey around the world through a variety of exciting physical activities. Hosted at the Stoke City Academy Dome, over 120 pupils from Years 2 and 3 across the Trust enjoyed a morning filled with teamwork, friendship and fun.

Children from each of the Trust's schools were mixed into teams, giving everyone the opportunity to meet new people, build confidence and work alongside children from different schools. Throughout the morning, they rotated around a carousel of activities inspired by sports from around the world. These included archery, cricket, American football (NFL), and the ever-popular primary school favourite – the parachute, all designed to encourage teamwork, communication, resilience and enjoyment.

Each activity was led by staff from across the Trust, highlighting the collaborative approach that continues to strengthen relationships between schools while providing memorable experiences for pupils.

It was fantastic to see children encouraging one another, celebrating each other's successes and embracing the opportunity to try new sports. The smiles, laughter and determination shown throughout the morning perfectly reflected the values at the heart of the Societas Trust. A huge thank you goes to Stoke City Community Trust for once again supporting and hosting the event at the Stoke City Academy Dome. Their continued partnership enables children across the Trust to enjoy high-quality sporting experiences in an outstanding venue. Another heartfelt thank you must also go to all of the PE leaders, teachers, support staff and volunteers from across the Societas Trust whose hard work, enthusiasm and organisation made the event such a tremendous success.

As the morning came to an end, children returned to their schools with new friendships, increased confidence and lasting memories of their sporting journey around the world.

Malik, Year 4 pupil from Ellison Primary Academy, said:

"I really enjoyed trying sports from different countries. My favourite was the NFL because I'd never played it before. I made new friends from other schools and everyone worked together really well."

Persey, Year 3 pupil from Ellison Primary Academy, added:

"It was really fun meeting new people and trying activities we'd never done before. Everyone encouraged each other and it made the day really enjoyable."

Jon Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer of the Societas Trust, said:

"Events like The Societas World Tour demonstrate the power of physical activity to bring children together. By working alongside pupils from different schools, children develop confidence, communication skills and resilience, while creating friendships that extend beyond their own classrooms. Thank you to everyone who helped organise such a fantastic event and to Stoke City Community Trust for their continued support."

Deborah O'Neill, Schools Workforce Development Officer at Stoke City Community Trust, added:

"It is always a pleasure to welcome pupils from across the Societas Trust to the Academy Dome. The enthusiasm, teamwork and positivity shown throughout the morning were wonderful to see. We are proud to continue supporting opportunities that inspire children to be active, work together and enjoy trying new sports."



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Welcome to Sutherland Primary Academy

Welcome Sutherland Primary Academy

We are delighted to share that, following a period of thorough discussion between their Trustees and our Directors, Sutherland Primary Academy will be joining The Societas Trust as an Associate Member from September 2026.

The Associate Agreement marks an exciting new chapter in our relationship and provides an opportunity for the school and Trust to work even more closely together for the benefit of the children, staff and communities we serve. The agreement is designed to support collaboration at every level, with the intention that Sutherland may become a full member of the Trust following a successful period of partnership and the necessary approval from the Department for Education.

Societas and Sutherland have enjoyed a strong and positive relationship for many years, already working together across a range of areas. This next step will build upon those foundations, creating even greater opportunities for collaboration, professional development, shared learning and enrichment for children. Sutherland will also benefit from the wide range of support services available across the Trust, while bringing its own unique strengths, expertise and character to our growing family of schools.

What makes this partnership particularly exciting is the strong alignment between our values and aspirations. We share a commitment to providing the very best opportunities for young people and a belief that Integrity should guide our decisions and actions. It is a value that sits at the heart of both organisations and helps ensure that we always act in the best interests of our children, staff and communities.

We warmly welcome Sutherland Primary Academy as they begin this exciting journey with us and offer my congratulations to everyone connected with the school. We look forward to working together and building an even stronger future for all as part of the Societas Family.



Farewell

Celebrating Our Retirees

Thank You for Your Years of Service

This year, we proudly recognise and celebrate a number of colleagues from across The Societas Trust who are beginning a new chapter as they retire from their careers in education.

Valerie Moss - Gladstone Primary Academy
Sandra Green - Gladstone Primary Academy
Ellen Picken - Gladstone Primary Academy
Ian Walford - Sandford Hill Primary
Jill Dawson - Ellison Primary Academy
Helen Manser - Ellison Primary Academy

Retirement is a significant milestone and provides an opportunity to reflect on the lasting impact these individuals have made on the lives of countless children, families and colleagues. Through their dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment, they have helped shape our schools and communities, leaving a legacy that will be felt for many years to come.

Across classrooms, offices, playgrounds and leadership teams, our retirees have shared their knowledge, kindness and experience generously. They have supported children to achieve their potential, mentored colleagues, embraced change and contributed significantly to the success of their schools and the wider Trust.

While we will miss their daily presence, we know that the values they have demonstrated throughout their careers will continue to inspire those who follow in their footsteps. Their contribution to education and to The Societas Trust has been truly invaluable.

On behalf of our Directors, leaders, governors, staff and pupils, we would like to offer our sincere thanks and appreciation for everything they have given to our Trust and school communities. We wish each of our retirees good health, happiness and many exciting adventures in the years ahead.

Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for your outstanding service. Your dedication has helped make a difference to generations of children, and for that we are extremely grateful.

Thank you.



<https://www.societastrust.org.uk>



The Societas Trust
Summerbank Primary Academy
Summerbank Road,
Tunstall
Stoke-on-Trent
ST6 5HA