



**The Circle Trust**  
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Dear Parents and Carers

This February marks the first anniversary of The Circle Trust, and as such, it feels like the right opportunity to share with our school communities about the achievements during our first official year.

Firstly, I hope that St. Crispin's being part of the Trust hasn't in one way felt very different! As you know, the creation of this Trust was to ensure that all member schools retain their unique ethos and character in perpetuity. We believe it is essential that schools should be run by, and their improvement driven by, their staff led by their Headteacher and Local Advisory Board (LAB). On the other hand, I am confident that St. Crispin's by being part of The Circle Trust has already felt the difference in terms of improved support and in being financially secure. The first year has been a wonderfully strong start for our Trust and there is much more to come in the future.

Given our first operational year has been so positive I thought you might like to know what the Trust has been doing, what it now offers and our ambitions going forward. This work of course is deeply embedded in The Circle Trust's vision. [Our vision](#) is:

[The Circle Trust believes that all children and young people deserve to have an excellent well-rounded education and to flourish in first-rate schools where the best teaching, the best facilities and the most up-to-date resources are made available to them.](#)

The name "The Circle Trust" symbolically reflects features of this Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). It is a deliberately chosen name to be neutral and without association to a specific school, educational phase, school type or local place. The circle gives a pictorial sense of inclusivity, which can naturally expand, with the overlapping circles in our logo depicting our desire to collaborate. Our Trust is then, a community of schools that have shared values and share an essential common ethos and vision for education and learning, as encapsulated in [our values](#):

- [The highest educational outcomes for every learner is paramount](#)
- [Preserving the unique identity and ethos of all partner schools is essential](#)
- [To be anything but utterly inclusive is non-negotiable](#)
- [Being self-reflective is essential in encouraging innovation, our Trust is always driven to improve further](#)
- [We value strong clear moral purposed leadership](#)
- [We depend on recruiting, retaining and professionally developing members of staff who are ambitious for all children and young peoples' futures](#)
- [Our Trust promotes collaborating with others and being outward looking](#)

In a sense, this Trust will be rightly invisible, we do not seek to promote the Trust itself but focus on the support and improvement of our schools. In essence, our Trust is accountable to schools and schools are accountable to the Trust. The Trust currently includes Nine Mile Ride Primary School, St. Crispin's Secondary School and we are just awaiting the formal academy orders for Shinfield Infant and Nursery School. Our ambition is to continue steadily growing the Trust over the coming years.



As an all-through Trust (nursery – 18 yrs. +) The Circle Trust is able to provide school improvement advice and strategies based on consistency and fluency in education. We are able to create and promote wide-ranging opportunities for our children, young people and their teachers. The work of our Trust fundamentally seeks to help schools improve and we call this work “The Learning Curve”. Naturally, this offers us a lovely pun opportunity with our Trust’s name but also talks to the eternal truth about learning and learning of course is the thing that schools do best!

It will not have escaped your notice I am sure that schools generally are suffering through significant financial hardship with a reduction of funding against a myriad of new responsibilities and expectations. By joining in a Trust, our schools are better able to achieve not just the sharing of school improvement good practice and opportunity but also financial efficiencies. That some MATs are behaving in very improper ways with money or contracts, as reported in the press, is dreadful and I wanted to reassure you that our stewardship of public funds and resource will always be open to scrutiny, above reproach and validated by external Auditors. The Circle Trust works with absolute integrity. Financial decisions as with all decisions are taken with transparency and in wide agreement. It would be fair to say our Trust is a steady financial ship but the challenge remains every year to do more with less.

The governance of the Trust is through a group of Members, Trustees and Local Advisors who work collaboratively to lead the direction of our work. Local Advisor is the name our Trust uses to describe school governance. Local Advisors act as the governance for each of their schools and as such play a pivotal role. At St Crispin’s the Chair of the Local Advisors is Mr Paul Jeffery, ably supported by a team of Advisors who are elected Parent and Staff Representatives or who have been coopted to the Board for their specialist skill or experience. More details about the Local Advisors at St. Crispin’s can be found on our website [here](#)

Members are the “guardians of governance” in the Trust. They have a distinct role. The Circle Trust like all Trusts is a Charitable Company. In effect, it was the Members who signed to create the company and were the first signatories for and agreed the Trust’s Articles of Association. You can see a picture and profile of all the Members for The Circle Trust on our website [here](#). Trustees on the other hand have a very significant hands-on legal responsibility for the Trust. Trustees are appointed using a skills matrix to ensure expertise across the fields of education; legal; business; H.R and finance. Trustees are our Trust’s key decision makers. The role of Trustee comes with specific legal responsibilities, which include ensuring the organisation remains solvent and spends money in accordance with its charitable objectives and in ensuring the schools in the Trust provide a good standard of education. You can see a picture and profile of all our Trustees as well on the website [here](#).

The first year of membership in The Circle Trust has made a material positive difference to St. Crispin’s. We have thrived on the opportunity to seek improved financial efficiencies and leaders have been professionally strengthened by a renewed understanding of the fluency of education from the very youngest to the oldest learners. Going forward, I very much look forward to the next opportunities that working in close partnership brings and especially our first Trust wide event, welcoming Musharaf Asgar, from the Educating Yorkshire programme to speak across all schools <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XogvI6TP72M>. Musharaf’s experience reflects how education and our time at school truly makes a difference.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ginny Rhodes'.

Ginny Rhodes  
Executive Headteacher