

## PRESS RELEASE

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***Leadership team pledges a new era in excellence at the Steiner Academy Exeter following “inadequate” Ofsted report***

A new leadership team overseeing a period of special measures at the Steiner Academy in Exeter has pledged to deliver a new era of state funded Steiner education following an Ofsted inspection which ranked the school inadequate.

Acting Principal Paul Hougham who was appointed to the post on October 11<sup>th</sup> this year, a day after Ofsted inspectors visited the school said: “This is a new era for the Steiner Academy Exeter and we are wholly committed to this school offering an excellence in Steiner Waldorf education whilst meeting the requirements of Ofsted and the Department of Education.” He added: “At the heart of the reorganisation, already well underway, is a seismic shift in the consistency and level of rigour and responsiveness of our focus on the quality of children’s education and wellbeing.”

The two day Ofsted inspection on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 raised serious concerns with leadership, quality of teaching and safeguarding at the 442 pupil school at Cowley Bridge Road, Exeter. The inspection came just one year after a previous report ranked the school as “requiring improvement” and followed reports of two six year old children leaving the school unaccompanied in July. An external independent investigation has since been conducted and new safeguarding measures were immediately introduced.

Mr Hougham is now working alongside a new Academy Management Committee, headed by Chairman Paul Jones, appointed following the resignation in October of the entire Governing Board and the school’s Principal Alan Swindell. Mr Swindell had been the school’s Principal since 2013 when the Steiner free-school Academy was established, making it among the first Steiner schools to be eligible for funding from the Department for Education.

Moira Marder, a National Leader of Education and Chief Executive of the Ted Wragg Trust - who has recently turned-around the fortunes of two Exeter secondary schools; St James and West Exe - is providing leadership and teaching support.

Acting Principal Paul Hougham previously worked for the Steiner Academy, Hereford which is ranked as one of the best performing schools in Britain in the Department for Education’s Progress 8 League Tables. He explained the measures already being put in place at the school: “The interim Executive Team is working alongside colleagues from the Ted Wragg Trust and Babcock LDP Educational Consultancy to ensure that the school is safe and effective, and moves quickly to a level of provision that is more regularly

effective and “good.” As part of this process the school will be formally “re-brokered,” which means that the Regional Schools Commissioner will be inviting tenders from existing multi-academy trusts who are interested in adopting the school within their fold.”

“As the Ofsted inspectors left the school on 10<sup>th</sup> October, immediate changes began to be made to restore the school’s provision of safe and effective education. This began with the establishment of a new Executive Team; the resignation of the Governing Board and its replacement with a new Academy Management Committee; four days of closure for staff retraining; allocation of leadership and teaching support from the Ted Wragg Trust; and the instigation of a school wide organisational review addressing the effectiveness of the school’s structures, systems, policies and culture.”

Mr Hougham added: “I would like to thank the parents who have been extremely supportive and receptive to our vision for the future. We will continue to work closely with them to ensure we are meeting the needs of their children.”

**ENDS**

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