

Press release – for immediate release

South Yorkshire Multi Academy Trust to open two new special schools

Nexus Multi Academy Trust (MAT) - an academy chain formed in South Yorkshire – has won the right to open two new special schools in the region.

On 29th March 2019, Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi MP announced sponsors for 14 new special free schools across the country. The new schools will create more than 1,100 high-quality school places for children with multiple learning needs, including children with autism and mental health needs. The schools will open under the government's free schools programme to offer parents more choice and help raise educational standards.

Nexus Multi Academy Trust will open a 100-place special free school for children aged 5-19 with complex communication and interaction needs, autism spectrum disorder and other social and mental health needs in Doncaster. It has also been approved to open a 60-place special free school for children with autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional, and mental health needs in Sheffield.

Nexus MAT Chief Executive Warren Carratt said:

"We are humbled and excited to be named as the preferred sponsor to open the two new special schools. Nexus MAT was created to make the education system better in our local area and we are thrilled to be working with our local authority partners to co-produce two new schools and bring some much needed capacity to the special school system in the region.

"We look forward to working with children, families and our sister special schools across Doncaster and Sheffield to ensure that our new offer brings the choice and diversity families want and need. We already have a great working relationship with Doncaster and Sheffield Councils and I am thrilled to be entering into this next phase of partnership working."

Andrew Child MBE, Chair of the Nexus MAT board, said: "This is a great achievement for such a young MAT. In September 2017 we were the only Trust from the Yorkshire and Humber region to make it to the finals of the National Governance Association "Outstanding Governance" awards and we came back winners of the "Outstanding Strategy and Vision" category. To be then named the sponsor for the two new special schools is a privilege. We recognise that we have a huge responsibility here and we know that we have the skills, experience and enthusiasm to be successful.

"In the past 22 months we have secured an additional £1.5m to improve our existing special academies and by opening two more special schools in South

Yorkshire we are continuing to make the positive impact we planned to when we formed the Multi Academy Trust. This is great news for the City Region and we look forward to working closely with our partners to make the local offer for children and young people with special educational needs the best it can be.”

Mark Lehain, Director of New Schools Network, said:

“The application process to set up a free school is extremely rigorous so it is a testament to Nexus MAT’s hard work that they have been approved to open.

“Today’s announcement is great news for families across the country. This new wave of special free schools will offer students with SEND the opportunity to access an education that’s suited to their needs. We congratulate all the successful schools and look forward to helping them through the pre-opening process.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITOR:

- Nexus MAT is constituted of four schools for children and young people with special educational needs. Abbey School is in Kimberworth, Rotherham; Rotherham Hilltop School is in Maltby, Rotherham; Kelford School is in Kimberworth; Pennine View School is in Conisbrough, Doncaster. Crags Community School, a mainstream primary in Maltby, Rotherham, is in the process of joining the Trust.
- The chair of the trust board of directors is Andrew Child MBE. Mr Child was awarded his MBE in the 2016 Queens Honours for services to school governance.
- Free schools are state funded schools that are independent of local authority control. They have the freedom to decide the length of school day and term, their curriculum, teacher pay and how they spend their budgets.
- Free schools are more likely to be judged Outstanding when compared to other state schools (30% Outstanding).
- When full, free schools will have created 400,000 new school places; over 80% of approved free schools are in areas of demographic need.
- New Schools Network is an independent charity that provides support to groups wanting to set up free schools: www.newschoolsnetwork.org
- More information about the trust can be found at www.NexusMAT.org

- Further information on this award and/or about the trust can be provided by contacting the Nexus MAT Chief Executive Warren Carratt at ceo@nexusmat.org. He is happy to be interviewed for broadcast clips/printed media.