

# CE Briefing

**nexus**  
Multi Academy Trust  
*Learning together to be the best we can be*

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Halloween and bonfire night have been and gone, Remembrance Sunday took place last weekend... Surely now there's nothing left to do but to start gearing up for Christmas...(!?)

Before I provide my usual, monthly update on what's happened across our family of schools, I want to share the sad news that one of our beautiful pupils, Abigail Cook, sadly passed away at the weekend. Abigail was a pupil at both Pennine View and, latterly, Heatherwood School. She was a remarkable young woman who fought for so long to keep her little light shining, and she will be missed terribly by our Trust community, and especially those who worked most closely with her. We send our thoughts and prayers to Abigail's loved ones at this difficult time.

I am humbled by the joy our schools brought to Abigail's life. Whilst each of our settings are uniquely their own, the commitment to a loving, caring and ambitious school offer runs through all our academies, like a stick of rock.

Along those lines, it was wonderful to find out that **Abbey School** has pushed the boundaries of achievement once more and secured the **UNICEF Gold award**. Well done to Luci, Wayne and especially Jess Tapp for all the hard work that went into this process.

Whilst we're on Abbey, I'd also like to congratulate everyone's favourite England international **Jill Newbolt**, who has been recognised by the Youth Sports Trust at the annual ITV and Track Academy "Sport Gives Back" Awards, for her contribution to inclusive sports engagement at both Abbey and Fountindale schools. Well done Jill: we're all so proud of you!

It was great to welcome the Director General and Regional Director from the Department for Education to our West Riding Campus, recently. What we've co-produced in Barnsley is a testament to the innovations a multi academy trust and a local authority can realise, by working together to create a local, high quality offer for families. Michelle Sault's work in creating such a calm, loving and nurturing environment is having a demonstrable positive impact on the learning of pupils, who would otherwise not have a school place in their home borough. It's one of a multitude of achievements we've made, that just seems to have happened, so it was really helpful to reflect on this success with those who commission us on behalf of Government.

We have a busy few weeks in autumn half term 2, as we will be engaging in the selection process for a number of new "free" schools across the region that we have bid to open. The creation of new provision is hugely important for families, and it also allows us to create more job opportunities for our current and future workforce. I'll provide more updates as and when we know the outcomes!

Finally, on the theme of new provision, the central Trust team has now taken up residence at 300 Meadowhall Way, which is the site formerly known as "The Source" next to Meadowhall. The whole site became empty before the summer and we have taken on an initial 12 month lease, with a view to 80% of the building being utilised as learning space for some of our academies' Sixth Forms for September 2024. We're really excited about the potential upgrade this site will offer our learners and staff, with great transport links (it has its own tram stop!) and access to local employers. We are now working with our local authority partners to see how this new campus can create more specialist places locally, given the urgent need.

  
**Warren Carratt**



# Spotlight on the Trust Team...

In this briefing, we're focusing on... one of our **Executive Assurance Partners and Consultant Executive Headteacher**, Joanne Cliff, and our **Headteacher of The Willows School** Rachael Booth.



**Joanne Cliff** has worked in education for over 28 years and is dedicated to ensuring that all children have the best start to their lives by experiencing the highest quality of education. Throughout her career, she has worked within the primary sector, focusing on school improvement and children's own personal development so that they can flourish as adults.

Early in her career became an assessment consultant for Rotherham before securing her first headship in 2012. After a short time, she was seconded into a Special

Measures school in Rotherham, to work alongside the new leadership team, focusing on improving educational standards. When a school in Maltby was judged to be 'Inadequate', she was again tasked to bring about change.

As Headteacher of the school for 9 years, the school secured a 'Good' OFSTED judgement in under three years. When the school was visited by OFSTED again in 2023, it was again judged to be 'Good' with identified aspects of 'Outstanding'. Inclusion is a key part in children achieving success so Joanne is part of the Primary Inclusion Panel in Rotherham and has worked with national leads to signpost examples of good practice. Joanne believes that a key driver to securing school improvement is through a coaching and mentoring approach which can support and nurture staff at all levels; promoting innovative practice and ensuring the best possible experience for colleagues.

Joanne lives in Rotherham with her husband, three children (now adults) and two dogs, Ted and Baxter. When not working, she can be found in her garden or spending time with family.

**Rachael Booth** has worked in education for 28 years, nearly 15 years in mainstream secondary schools before making the move to The Willows nearly 14 years ago.

Initially Rachael was employed as the Head of Maths but soon she was seconded to the SLT before taking on the role as Head of KS4. After a restructure Rachael was assigned the role of assistant head before eventually being appointed as Head in 2017.

Rachael never envisaged herself as a head teacher and feels 'blessed and honoured' to hold such a position where she can have a positive impact on children and young people at The Willows as well as the adults she employs. The team Rachael leads really believe in the school motto, 'I can' with the school not only growing in numbers but with the many developments on site and the curriculum they deliver.

Rachael is married and lives in Worksop with her husband Andy and two boys, Harvey (20 years old) and George (17 years old). Rachael is an active Christian who is involved in the worship team at Nowchurch in Langold, playing the keyboard and singing backing vocals.

When she can, and the weather is favorable, Rachael rides an Indian Scout Bobber 1200 for commuting to school and for pleasure at the weekends visiting many popular motor biking spots. She claims it's a great way to de-stress! If the weather isn't so fair, Rachael enjoys a long walk or time in the kitchen blending her own spices and cooking an array of Asian foods a skill she learned from her mum who is Singaporean.

