

CEO Briefing



Having been invited to partake in their world book day events a few weeks ago, I had a beautiful visit to Beech Academy yesterday. I was so impressed with the wide-ranging knowledge of our year 8 pupils about so many different literary characters and authors (*it's no accident that in the literacy quiz, I came last!*), and it was a joy to see our pupils and our staff so excited to celebrate reading as a school community. A heartfelt **thank you** goes to Mrs Cooper, Mr Davies and the whole Beech Academy community for making me feel so welcome, and for having the kindness to ask me to join their world book day celebrations.

This half term has, and continues to be, very busy. A big **well done** to our staff and pupils at Craggs Community School, for hosting an Ofsted inspection last week. At the same time, our staff also supported Derrymount School through it's first monitoring visit, after an inadequate Ofsted inspection outcome last May.

It is impossible for an Ofsted inspection to not be a stressful and uncertain experience, as the current approach of having single word judgements (*a topic of much national debate at the moment*) has an impact on how the world sees and understands a school and the Trust it is a part of. We, all of us, work in state education because we care deeply about the difference we make to the lives of children and their families, and that difference is multifaceted and impossible to distil to a word or two. All we can do, in the face of such a mismatch, is work hard to be the best we can be, and believe in our values, which drive our intent and deliver our impact. I'm immensely proud of the feedback from both inspection teams about the difference our schools make. Behind that, our Trust ensures that schools are stable, secure places to work and learn, and we ensure leaders have support, are prepared, and live with as little uncertainty as possible.

Whether that's through finance, how we respond and react to crises and complaints, or how we prepare leaders and staff for the Ofsted process: all of that is about creating the best conditions we can. Other Trusts do that in different, less respectful and less diverse ways, and school leaders have less influence. That's a choice, and we choose a different path.

I was really proud to find out that two of our apprentices were recognised at the annual Rotherham North Notts College apprentice awards event last night. **Hannah Tinkler** was awarded Apprentice of the Year in Teaching, and **Brooke Storey** received the "Highly Commended" award. Both Hannah and Brooke work at our beautiful Fountaindale School, and we're so proud to have them as part of our family. **Well done!** Our Trust was also awarded Employer of the Year "Highly Commended", which is a wonderful reflection of the hard work of our school leaders and staff teams. Likewise, **Joanna Hedge** does a huge amount of work to provide the support and scaffolding for our schools to, in turn, support our apprentices. A real team effort, rewarded!

As this is my last briefing of the term, I'll wish you all an early **Happy Easter** - have a great break, once we get there!

Lots to do before then, though!



Warren
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