

CEO Briefing



The summer term has officially started - if only we'd had better weather over the Easter holiday, eh? When Dubai international airport is flooded due to heavy rain (as it was this week), I guess we can't be too surprised that we aren't getting the seasonal experience we'd want! Please deliver May!

Regardless of the wet and the wind, I hope you all had a good break over Easter and that it helped re-energise you for the third and final (!) term of this school year.

It is with much regret that I have to include news of the loss of another beautiful pupil in one of our schools, as **Olivia Guest** sadly passed away on Monday 25 March 2024. Olivia was a 7 year-old pupil in Sparkles Class at Kelford School. Whilst Olivia had significant health needs during the autumn term, she made a full recovery and attended school for the majority of the spring term. Our thoughts and prayers have been - and remain - with Olivia's family, and I'm grateful for all the support provided to them by the school team during this difficult time, particularly from **Catherine Bentley** and **Collette Gillott**. Olivia was, and remains, a beloved member of the Kelford School community, and it has been our privilege to know her and love her.

The start of the Easter term also brings a bittersweet ending in the next fortnight, as **Daryl Bennett** will be retiring from his role as Head of School at Heatherwood at the end of April. Daryl has not only been a dedicated senior leader at Heatherwood - serving as Deputy Head and Head of School for over a decade - but he is also one of the most humble and lovely human beings you could wish to meet (even if he supports Liverpool FC - hey, nobody's perfect!). I consider myself very fortunate to have known Daryl and worked with him over the last 5 years, and he will leave an enduring legacy of kindness and high aspirations at Heatherwood School. Whilst the prospect of retirement is something to be celebrated, Daryl will nonetheless be missed sorely. Thank you Daryl for all you've done over your career to change the lives of children and families for the better.

Staying at Heatherwood, we've also, this week, welcomed **Lyndsey Proctor** as the new Headteacher of the school. Lyndsey has taken over the role of Headteacher from Lisa Suter, though Lisa will continue to work closely with Lyndsey and the school over the summer term to ensure there is a successful leadership transition in place (something especially important, given the pending retirement of Daryl). Lyndsey brings lots of headship experience to the role, and we're really excited about the positive impact she can and will have for our school and our Trust. Welcome, Lyndsey!

We held our biennial Employee Opinion Survey (EOS) in February, and our Human Resources team have now reviewed the findings and will be sharing these with Headteachers. Overall, **68% of staff responded**, which is a marked increase compared to 2022, across what is now a much larger Trust.

Whilst there are always helpful learning points from these initiatives that will inform how Trust and school leaders plan and act, I was incredibly proud to see some of the headlines, which I'll share now.

98% of employees feel **driven in their work** to make their **school a success**; **94%** of employees **look forward to coming to work** most days; **95%** of employees have **confidence in their school leadership team**, and believe that the **school is managed effectively**.

From a Trust perspective, **93%** of staff welcome the **chance to work with colleagues** from other schools and are **proud to be part of our family of schools**, and **96%** of **employees** agree that the Trust vision of **'Learning together to be the best we can be'** reflects what's important to them.

If one works to the principle that 100% of people can't be happy 100% of the time, I think our EOS reflects a hugely positive outlook for our workforce. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and share your views!



Warren
Warren Carratt

CEO Briefing

About our Multi Academy Trust...

Episode I - What is an academy trust?

One of the questions in our 2024 Employee Opinion Survey was about the legal duties of the Trust, with 72% of staff saying they would like to know more about these. It seems helpful, therefore, to use these monthly briefings to provide some incremental learning content about our Trust.

In this month's briefing, we'll start with explaining what an Academy Trust is.

Academies were first introduced in 2000 by the Labour Government. In 2010, this model was adopted and adapted by the Coalition Government, and the Academies Act 2010 was passed. Under this adapted model, the role and function of Local Authorities in maintaining state schools in their area was taken away, and schools granted permission to become an academy.

Existing schools became "new" Academy Trusts, directly accountable to the Secretary of State for Education, rather than to the local authority (council).

The new Government in 2010 also passed legislation so that any new schools opening from that point forward must be a "free" school (as in "free from local authority control"). In reality, a free school is a new academy.

From 2012, we started to see the emergence of more Multi Academy Trusts, with more than one academy in a Trust.

Every Academy Trust **must**, by law, have a Chief Executive Officer (also called an "accounting officer"), who is legally accountable to the Government for all aspects of provision across the schools in that Trust. A Trust **must** also have an appointed Chief Finance Officer.

An academy trust (single or Multi) is a public funded private limited company with exempt charity status. It is a private company registered with Companies House, **only** for the purposes of publishing annual accounts and abiding by company law, not unlike NHS Trusts.

However, that does not mean an academy trust is a privatised model of state education.

All academy trusts are public authorities (like a council or an NHS Trust), and as an exempt charity it means a Trust cannot make a profit and must use the public funding it receives in pursuit of its charitable objectives, which are defined by the Government and included in the articles of association, an extract of which is as follows:

"To advance for the public benefit education... by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum or educational institutions which are principally concerned with providing full-time or part-time education for children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise... or schools specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs".

An academy trust has legal responsibility for all of the schools in that trust. The Chief Executive Officer is legally accountable for **all aspects of all schools** - including any and all inspection outcomes - and they are overseen by a volunteer board of trustees/directors (more about these in a future briefing).

More information can be found at www.nexusmat.org, on the "about us" pages.

