

Governor Gazette

Issue: 2
December 2023

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Chair's Shares

As the autumn-coloured leaves blow from the trees and New Year beckons, it becomes a time to reflect.

Sixty years ago Bob Dylan published the song 'Times they are a-changin' ' referencing the 1960's changes in politics and society. The words in the title have echoed down the decades and are still applicable today.

Shifts in the geopolitical landscape (a world in flux), national political changes, together with changes in society and change brought about by the recent pandemic plus rising energy costs – these impact on us all.

And in this whirlwind of change lies education which at times faces change every month (some would say every week). The general election in 2024 will certainly bring new political ideas together with new initiatives to a sector desperate for stability in strategy and finance.

From my perspective as Chair, I have a genuine pride in the great things Nexus has achieved in 2023 and I am confident it is well positioned to face and address what changes come in 2024.

I would like to thank everyone who works in our schools and in the central team as well as all the volunteers (including my fellow directors) for your total commitment to the education of our students and wish you all a restful Christmas break and a peaceful New Year.

Best wishes, Andy



Chief in Brief

As all our academy council meetings are taking place this half term, I'm sure local governors are looking forward to hearing about the achievements of our pupils and staff over the 2023-24 school year so far.

Hopefully local governors will be able to join our schools' celebrations over the Christmas period.

Governance Underpinnings

Academy Trust Handbook Scheme of Delegation Annual Accounts and Governance Statement

For more information on the above visit www.nexusmat.org

At Beech Academy, we are all delighted to have witnessed the growth of our 'Academy Council' since its inception. Initially, the work undertaken by colleagues was as part of a 'Transition Board' in the Spring and Summer of 2022 to prepare the school and wider stakeholders for joining Nexus on 1st September 2022. This process was both collaborative and seamless and our transition completed right on time, to the delight of our children, families and colleagues.

Subsequently, the transition board became the 'Academy Council' from the autumn term in 2022 and has since been instrumental in providing the support and challenge for school leaders which, in turn has enabled our leaders to further develop the school and implement a clear and focused School Improvement Plan. Members of our Academy Council are becoming more and more prevalent within the day-to-day work of the school. In October, we held a development session for members that focused on the current self-evaluation for Beech and our subsequent priorities for this academic year. This proved to be a really helpful opportunity for members to ask a range of questions to better understand the direction of the school and to see Beech 'in action' on a normal working day. Since this time, our members have also been involved with supporting initiatives and activities during the autumn term. Recently, one member has supported our Literacy Coordinator, Bev Cooper to help with our 'Parent Literacy Workshops' which have proved to be a roaring success and our Community Governor accompanied pupils and colleagues on a recent trip to watch 'A Christmas Carol' at Nottingham Playhouse theatre.

At Beech, we are very much looking forward to continuing the journey that we have begun with our Academy Council and are really excited to watch it grow from strength to strength. We would like to offer a huge 'thank you' to all of our current members for the work that they do to support the school. It is both appreciated and valued in equal measure.

Getting to Know Directors

Mark Greenwood — Director

Mark Greenwood is a **Director** of Nexus MAT. Mark is a Procurement professional, and is a highly driven strategic thinker who excels at transformation and change management.

Mark particularly enjoys developing staff through training, mentoring and coaching and supporting the adaptability of teams through a constantly changing business landscape. Mark has worked across the public, third and private sectors.

Gillian Askew — Director

Gillian Askew is a **Director** of Nexus MAT. Gillian first became a Governor in 2016 in a local primary school and has held Vice Chair of Governing body and Chair of Resources Committee roles. During her career Gillian set up a small urban care farm delivering land and animal-based opportunities for children with disabilities or learning difficulties, also offering short breaks through the Aiming High Scheme in Doncaster.

Gillian has worked within the public sector, with close links to Education since 2013 and has worked closely with Educational bodies in recent years such as DfE and The National Governance Association.

Gillian is delighted to be able to support Nexus through her role as Director.

Pupil Parliament at Beech Academy

The Pupil Parliament at Beech have had a very busy and exciting year. In September 2022 the first School Council was elected with each tutor group voting for a member of their class to represent them at Council meetings. Following this, in November, and with the help of Nexus, the School Council converted to a 'Pupil Parliament' model and the school council representatives converted to MPs. During the remainder of the year, our MPs formed a 'Cabinet' with a Prime Minister and positions including; Minister for Health and Minister for Sport.

The MPs then focused their work on asking 'constituents' how they felt about school and what changes they would like to consider making. A common theme that many pupils seemed to want to change was lunchtime arrangements. Thanks to the hard work of our MPs liaising with Senior Leaders, the school now uses a new catering company for lunches which has greatly improved the quality of the food being served. Also, our Pupil Parliament have introduced a number of lunchtime clubs offering a variety of extra-curricular activities including; Art, Football, Nature, Music and Chess and even an Eco-Schools club.

This year, the Prime Minister and three other, chosen MPs have been inducted into our new 'House of Lords' where they will serve as peers, overseeing and advising the new Pupil Parliament wherever they can help. Beech have recently taken part in UK Parliament Week by holding elections for new MPs in each class. Some of last year's MPs have been re-elected and some are completely new and we look forward to watching their progress this year!

By Sienna Callaghan (Beech Academy Prime Minister)



Corporate Governance & Policy Team

We are here to support you and answer your governance queries

Contact us at: clerkingservices@nexusmat.org

Winter Wonderland

Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st

December



Winter Wonderland

We are really excited to announce that this year, with support from Rotherham Council's Winter Holiday Activity Fund (HAF), we are creating a Winter Wonderland Sensory Exploration Adventure here at our new Trust Head Offices, Enterprise Works.

This Winter Wonderland will give some of our youngest children the opportunity to immerse themselves in a sensory story "When Santa got stuck up the chimney", join in some fun activities in our "Countdown to Christmas" activity room, get hands on to explore our Sensory Winter themed exploration room and finally the chance to meet Santa (or one of his helpers) and receive a present to take home.

The event will be happening over **three days, Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st December** and again with support from HAF, we are able to open the doors after school to invite families and Direct Payment Workers with children to visit us too.

Here at Nexus HQ, the Extended Schools team are busy planning and preparing for the event, working with local suppliers and beyond to receive extra support for the event too. Our Central Team are also supporting the event, and quickly getting into the Christmas Spirit, and we are all looking forward to meeting and welcoming our children and staff to the event.

If you would like to know more or get involved please just get in touch with **Amanda** or **Lauren** from the **Extended Schools Team**.

