



Parent Newsletter December 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we come to the end of another busy term with the Christmas holiday just around the corner, we would like to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and partnership.

In this newsletter, we're pleased to share some of the highlights from across the Trust and celebrate the achievements of our pupils, students, and staff. We are incredibly proud of all that our children have achieved this term, and grateful to you, as parents and carers, for the vital role you play every day working in partnership with us. We hope this newsletter gives you a snapshot of the joy, hard work, and festive cheer across the Trust.

We are delighted to report a significant improvement in attendance across our secondary academies this year. Through a strong focus on high expectations, consistent support, and close partnership with families, our academies have made encouraging progress in ensuring students are in school, learning, and thriving. Staff have worked tirelessly to promote the importance of attendance, put effective interventions in place, to create welcoming, engaging environments where children want to be. This collective effort is having a positive impact, and we are proud of the commitment shown by children, families, and staff in supporting this improvement. Thank you for your support.

In our ongoing commitment to improving the educational experience for all pupils and students, a relentless focus on the consistent implementation of behaviour policies has led to significant improvements in learning across both the primary and secondary phases. This has been driven by a marked reduction in low-level disruptive behaviour, alongside a decrease

in suspensions across the Trust, creating calmer, more purposeful learning environments where pupils and students are better able to engage and succeed.

We continue to strengthen and improve our provision for students with SEND across the Trust, ensuring that support is inclusive, responsive, and tailored to individual needs. Through improved identification, high-quality training for staff, and closer collaboration with families and external professionals, our academies are becoming better equipped to remove barriers to learning and support pupils and students to thrive. This ongoing work is helping to create consistent, nurturing environments where children with SEND are valued, supported, and able to make strong progress alongside their peers.

We are proud to have been approached by both Rotherham and Derbyshire Local Authority personnel to share best practice observed at Aston Academy and Shirebrook Academy. We look forward to continuing to develop and in the future, extend our provision on these sites to support the diverse needs of all our students.

Wishing you all a very happy, restful Christmas and a great start to the New Year.

Best wishes,



John Barton
Chair of the Trust Board



Rebecca Scutt
CEO

Long Standing **Service Leaders**

33 Remarkable Years — Honouring Rebecca Hibberd as She Begins Her Next Chapter

Your future

begins at

Aston

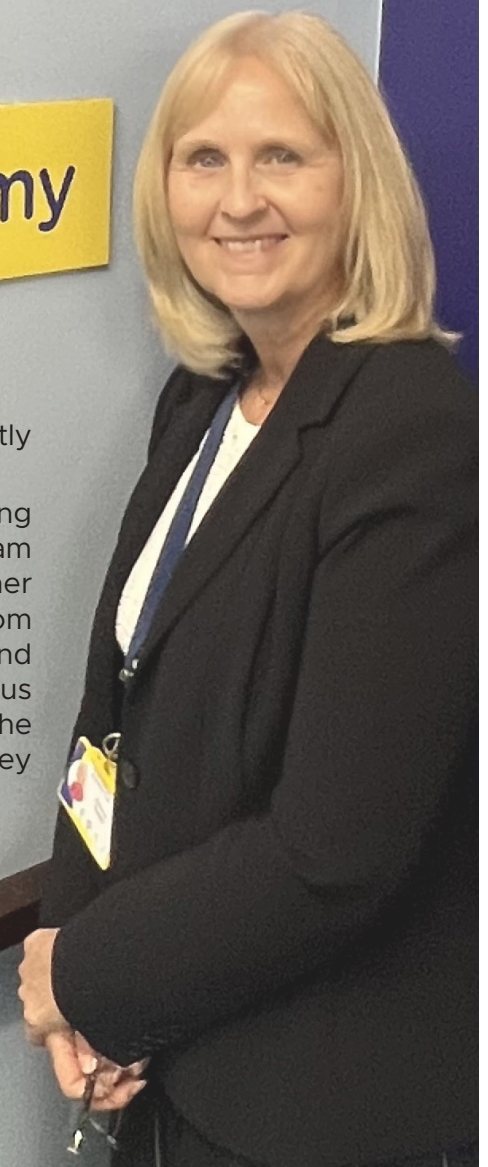
Academy

We wish to formally recognise and celebrate the exceptional contribution of Rebecca Hibberd, Executive Principal, whose dedicated service to Aston Comprehensive School, Aston Academy, Swinton Academy and ACET, spans more than 30 years. Over three decades, Rebecca has demonstrated unwavering commitment, professionalism, and integrity, playing a pivotal role in the Trust's growth and success. Her depth of experience, institutional knowledge, and calm leadership have been invaluable, providing continuity through periods of change and setting a consistently high standard for others to follow.

Beyond her professional achievements, Rebecca has made a lasting impact through her exemplary teaching of RE to hundreds of Rotherham children, her mentorship of staff working at various levels and her generosity and kindness. Many within the Trust have benefited from Rebecca's guidance, wisdom, and willingness to go above and beyond to ensure the success of children, individual staff members and numerous teams. Rebecca's legacy is not only reflected in the achievements of the Trust, but also in the culture of respect, dedication, and excellence they have helped to cultivate.

After 33 years, it's now time to put yourself first, Rebecca! Thank you for everything you have given to ACET – your commitment has made a remarkable difference for many. Here's to the long, happy and healthy retirement you so deserve.

Thank you



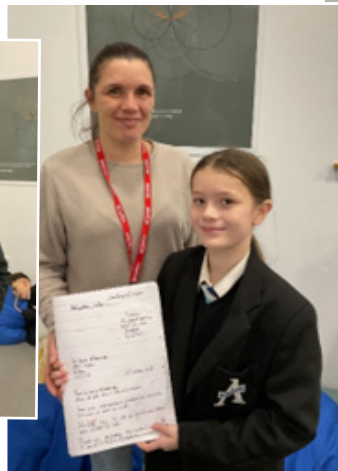
Secondary Showcase



Shirebrook
ACADEMY

Pinecone and Inclusion

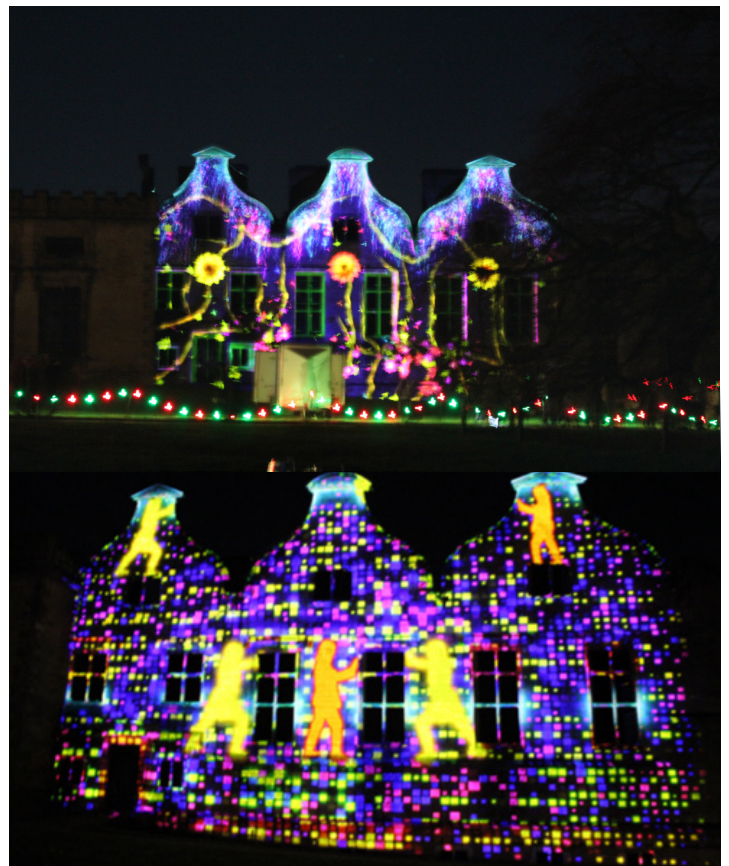
On Thursday 4th December, Pine Cone and Inclusion colleagues, Cheryl Dunphy and Megan Newby welcomed parents/carers of students that access Pine Cone provision for a 'Celebration Showcase' of students' work and fun activities for parents/carers to get involved in with their children. Parents spoke incredibly highly of the provision and the difference that it has made to the lives of their children. This would not be possible without the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm of key colleagues who organise and support this provision. Your contribution makes all the difference.



Bright Winter Nights - Art Event at Bolsover Castle

The culmination of students' work for the 'Hear My Voice' project with Junction Arts happened on November 27th and 28th at Bolsover Castle. It was a fantastic celebration of the work of Y10 students, who had been working with artists on a light projection piece for 6 weeks in the Autumn term. The project was based around creating a large-scale light projected artwork for the side of Bolsover Castle during its annual winter celebrations - and they succeeded in every department. During the preparation students looked at location and design and completed mark making sessions inspired by their ideas, and with the support of community artist, Lucie Maycock. They used puppetry to consider silhouettes and talked about the technical side of the project with Barret Hodgson, including a day of preparation at the castle. They also looked at movement and created poetry for a sound piece to accompany the display. The display looked incredible in situ and those in attendance marvelled at the sights and sounds in this historic, atmospheric location.

Our students loved working with a variety of artists and enjoyed the whole process of putting together this large-scale projection piece. Special thanks to Mr Nick Freer for supporting students in accessing this inspirational event.





ASTON Academy has achieved PUPIL RESILIENCE AWARD

Aston Academy has been awarded the Pupil Resilience Gold Award, recognising the school's commitment to promoting resilience in every aspect of school life. Across the curriculum, teachers encourage students to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes, and persist through difficult tasks. Collaborative projects, problem-solving activities, and wellbeing programmes help students build confidence, adaptability, and a positive mindset. Beyond the classroom, enrichment opportunities, leadership roles, and extracurricular activities further strengthen students' ability to overcome obstacles and thrive both now and in the future. Thank you to Debbie Adams (AVP) and Sarah Rhodes (Trust lead for PD) for having the resilience to ensure that the academy achieved Gold



ACET Alternative Pathway at Aston Academy



A huge shout-out to the KS4 Alternative Pathway (AP) team at Aston Academy! Their passion and dedication have created a welcoming, family-like environment where students are thriving. Since joining the ACET AP, students have shown huge improvements in resilience, attitude, and progress, taking part in apprenticeship festivals, orienteering, leadership qualifications, and even running their own enterprise tuck shop. This fantastic team is making a real difference in the lives of our students - thank you to the ACET Alternative Pathway staff – Zoe Fletcher, Carl Attwood, Dave Gerrard, Izela Barlow, Nicole Nixon, Claire Moore, Jayne Adams, and Andy Green. Thank you also to the amazing Aston Academy teaching staff who deliver the lessons every day.

Snowflake Charity work

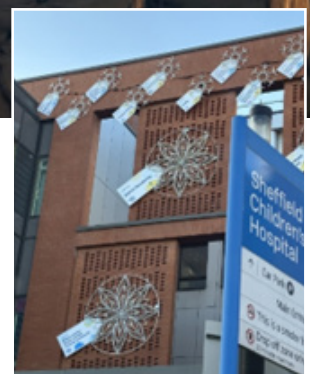
Each year Physical Education leaders Samantha Ward and Brett Sutcliffe run a variety of events with all proceeds going towards the Sheffield Children's Hospital Snowflake Appeal. These include a Halloween Disco, Christmas Jumper Day, Christmas Snowflake Fayre, and Summer Snowflake Festival.

We are conscious that many of our families benefit from the work of the Children's Hospital Charity and have experienced the excellent care children receive at the hospital. We chose to support this charity as it directly impacts on our community.

The events are all co-ordinated by Sam and Brett and run by staff and Post 16 volunteers. Aston Academy was delighted to be nominated for an award in 2023 at the annual Sheffield Children's Hospital Awards evening where we were runners up in the 'Educational Establishment' category.

On Monday 1st December 2025, Aston Academy was invited to attend the Christmas Lights Switch on at the Children's Hospital and took six Y13 Health and Social Care students.

We are very grateful to be supported by many local businesses who donate raffle prizes each year. **So far Aston Academy has donated £35,527.29 to the Children's Hospital Snowflake appeal.** A huge thank you and well done to Sam and Brett.



Sports Leaders

Aston Academy is delighted to announce that, for the **second year running, it has been named a Centre of Excellence** by the Leadership Skills Foundation. This prestigious recognition is awarded to organisations that demonstrate a strong commitment to developing essential leadership skills in learners, preparing them for work and life. Centres are assessed against criteria including effective leadership practices, a positive school culture, and high standards of learner performance. With only **37 centres selected** for 2025–26 from over 2,500 nationwide, this achievement is a testament to the dedication of our staff and the outstanding contributions of our young leaders. Congratulations and thank you to Physical Education teachers Becky Miller (HoF) and Sophie Cocking who drive this provision at Aston Academy.



Science – Dr Melanie Hobbs

A huge thank you to Dr Melanie Hobbs for her exceptional work in leading our space club and giving students a genuine taste of real scientific research. Using data from the Spitzer Space Telescope, Melanie has guided students in analysing celestial objects and identifying unusual features—some of which could be followed up with time on the James Webb Space Telescope. After teaching the key GCSE and A-level concepts, she supported students through the full research process, culminating in presentations of their academic posters at a conference in Manchester. Melanie’s dedication has given students the opportunity to engage in authentic astronomy research and showcase their work on a national stage. **Well done Dr Hobbs!**



SWINTON Academy has achieved PUPIL RESILIENCE AWARD

Swinton Academy has seen a significant impact from the school-wide focus on resilience, embraced by staff and students alike. Evidence shows that students, in particular, recognise the benefits of our resilience-building initiatives and can clearly articulate how these strategies have supported their personal development. The introduction of resilience-themed books in the library has been especially well received, fostering positive engagement and reflection among pupils.

We have also seen a noticeable reduction in behaviour incidents across the school. Through our assembly programme and behaviour curriculum, improvements in both punctuality and attendance have been achieved.

This has been a year-long journey—and it is far from finished, however, we are incredibly proud of the progress made so far and remain committed to building on this work in the months ahead.

Scholastic Book Fair and Reading Week

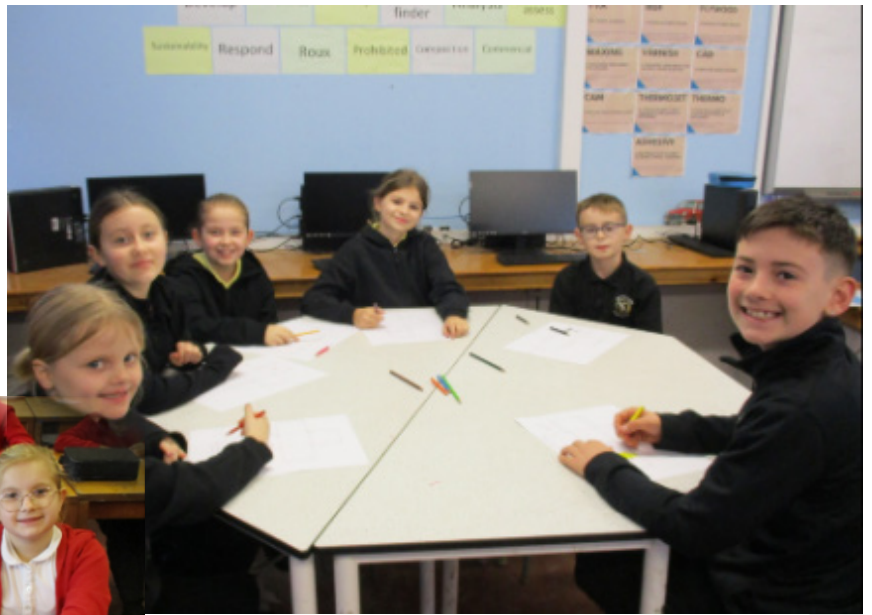
To coincide with the December Reading Week, which looked at different celebrations and festivals in fiction and non-fiction, we invited the Scholastic Book Fair into the academy. It was amazing to see students excited about reading, sharing book recommendations and supporting the school by purchasing books. Special thanks to Helen Moran for her enthusiasm and drive to make this happen.



Y5 Activity Day

On 20th November, Swinton Academy proudly hosted its first Y5 Activity Day of the academic year with nearly 200 Y5 students - and what a brilliant success it was! We were delighted to welcome students from our local primary schools for a fun, creative and engaging experience across our Art and Design Technology classrooms.

Special thanks to Louisa Longstaff for her excellent organisational skills and leadership of this successful event.



Y7 Achievements

Students continue to be recognised for their achievements, including earning 150+ Achievement Points, maintaining 100% attendance, and much more. The English Faculty also hosted its annual Meet and Greet event, where Y7 students interviewed a range of staff members—including the Deputy CEO—to learn about different career pathways and to develop their own interviewing skills.

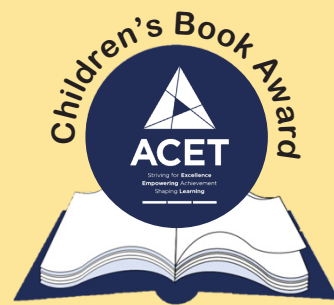


Lights, Camera, Action!

We are all looking forward to the school production of Buggy Malone. Our Performing Arts and Music duo, Becky Emms and Jo Bostandji have done an amazing job, dedicating countless hours to rehearsals to create a truly magnificent show. Special thanks to them for their wonderful creativity, commitment, and passion in bringing this production to life.

ACBA Launch

This half-term saw the launch of this year's ACET Children's Book Award (ACBA) to highly ambitious readers in Year 7, 8 and 9. This took place across the Trust in preparation for the grand award ceremony in July 2026. Students were given their reading booklets, enjoyed a video compilation from last year's awards and visited the library to start reading straight away. We can't wait to see what our readers can achieve this year!



Snowflake Festival

On Tuesday 2nd December we hosted our annual snowflake festival here at Swinton Academy! Our Year 10 Health and Social Care students welcomed over 100 students from our local primary schools for a festive day of Christmas crafts and games. Our Y10 students behaved impeccably and represented our school with such pride! We were even lucky enough to be joined again by Father Christmas himself (AKA the legend that is Mr Hilton), he took some time out of his busy December schedule to come and spread some Christmas cheer. It was the perfect way to start the festive season here at Swinton Academy, we can't wait to do it all again next year!



Primary Showcase

At ACET, we place great importance on delivering a broad and balanced curriculum because we believe every child deserves a rich, inclusive education that develops the whole learner. A curriculum that spans academic subjects, the arts, physical education, personal development and enrichment opportunities ensures that pupils are exposed to a wide range of knowledge, skills and experiences. This breadth allows children to discover their strengths and interests, builds curiosity, and supports high expectations for all, regardless of background or starting point.

A broad and balanced curriculum is vital in preparing pupils not only for examinations, but for life beyond the classroom. It helps develop critical thinking, creativity, resilience and social skills, while also promoting wellbeing and a love of learning. By offering a wide range of learning opportunities, ACET academies equip pupils with the confidence, adaptability and cultural awareness they need to succeed in an ever-changing world and to become responsible, engaged members of their communities.

Here we celebrate just a small selection of key highlights from the primaries that showcase the wider curriculum offer:

Listerdale Primary Academy

Denise Armitage, who works in EYFS, is currently working towards her Forest School qualification. She has attended training this term and has been working incredibly hard on setting this up at Listerdale, as well as developing her portfolio for the qualification. Foundation Stage children have enjoyed the curriculum planned so far and we know it will be a big success! Watch this space!



Sue Newsome deserves recognition and a big shout-out! In 2026, she will celebrate her thirtieth year at Listerdale Primary—a remarkable milestone. Over the years, Sue has supported hundreds of children and been an integral part of the Listerdale team. She works across multiple year groups and goes above and beyond through her dedication to the academy vegetable area, sharing her horticulture and gardening knowledge to enrich pupils' learning. Through events like Harvest and the RSPB Bird Watch, Sue demonstrates excellence in her commitment to high-quality learning experiences, equity by ensuring all children can access and benefit from her expertise, and empowerment by inspiring pupils to engage with the natural world and develop their skills. Thank you, Sue, for always going the extra mile!



As part of their learning, our **Y6** pupils recently wrote letters to students at a school in Poland. This week, they were delighted to receive Christmas cards and thoughtful replies in return. This wonderful exchange celebrates the global friendships they are building and reminds us all how meaningful small actions can be.





ACTIVE TRAVEL TEAM



Mode Shift Stars

Well done to Mya Glen for achieving the Active Travel Award for Lowedges Primary Academy. Achieving the Active Travel Award is a fantastic accomplishment, as it recognises our commitment to promoting healthier, more sustainable travel choices. Increased walking, cycling, and scooting help pupils develop independence, boost their physical and mental wellbeing, and contribute to a safer, greener academy environment. This achievement also strengthens our whole-school community by reducing traffic, improving air quality, and encouraging positive lifelong habits.

Houses of Parliament

Aughton's Y6 visit to the Houses of Parliament in November strongly reflects the ACET values of excellence, equity and empowerment. The experience provided pupils with outstanding learning beyond the classroom, offers all children equal access to a meaningful civic opportunity, empowering them to understand their rights, use their voice, and see how they can shape the world around them.

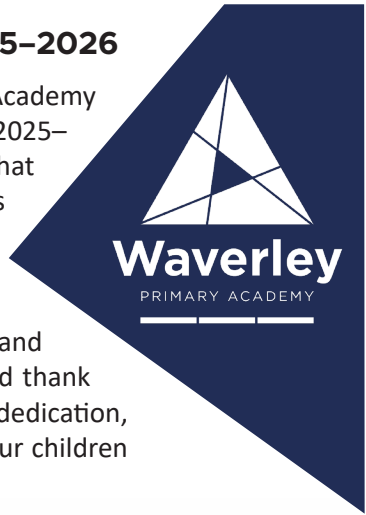


Sincere thanks to principal, Toni Tomlinson, for organising this wonderful experience for the children - your dedication has given them a truly inspiring opportunity they will remember for years to come.



The Music Mark Recognition Award 2025–2026

We are thrilled to announce that Waverley Primary Academy has been awarded the Music Mark Recognition Award 2025–2026! This prestigious award celebrates schools that provide high-quality, inclusive music education. This achievement reflects our ACET values—excellence in delivering outstanding music experiences, equity in ensuring every child can access and enjoy music, and empowerment by inspiring creativity and confidence in our pupils. A huge congratulations and thank you to Jennifer Hughes, our music lead, for her dedication, passion, and commitment to enriching the lives of our children through music.



Going Above and Beyond

We are delighted to celebrate Georgia Scott and Georgia Wild for their outstanding commitment to supporting children who have experienced trauma. Going above and beyond their daily teaching roles, they have attended specialised trauma training to enhance their classroom practice and share insights with the wider Waverley team. Their dedication reflects our ACET values—striving for excellence in their professional growth, promoting equity by ensuring every child receives the support they need, and demonstrating empowerment by inspiring positive change in others. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and the lasting difference they will make to our classrooms and the wellbeing of our pupils. A huge thank you to both Georgias for their passion and commitment!



A New Library at Brookfield

Principal Daisy Dunning was thrilled to welcome The Rt Hon John Healey MP and Councillors Cusworth and Harper to officially open the academy library in November. This fantastic space has been lovingly created from scratch by Liz Pounder and the Y6 pupil librarians, using £1,300 raised during the summer Readathon, alongside £500 worth of new books generously donated through the Libraries for Primaries initiative. The library is a true testament to the dedication, teamwork, and enthusiasm of our pupils—and a wonderful resource that will inspire a love of reading for years to come! Special thanks to Liz Pounder for her genuine commitment to the Brookfield and Swinton community – her dedication, passion, and tireless efforts continue to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of our pupils and families.



ACET Supporting the **Wider Education System**



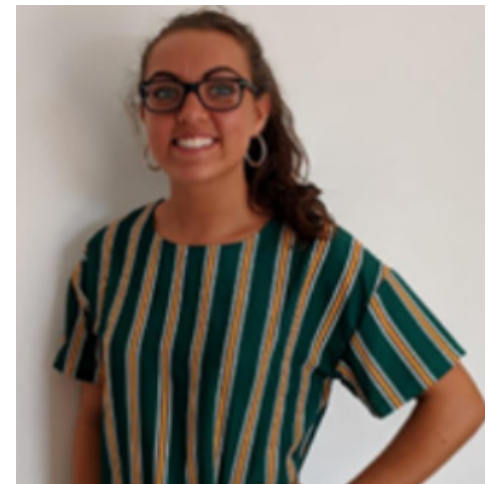
Sheffield Hallam University

Special thanks to Andy Green, ACET Strategic Director for Attendance & Behaviour for the work he is involved in to support PGCE students at Sheffield Hallam University. Andy contributed to a Behaviour Management Lecture delivered to 180 secondary teacher trainees. It was delightful to receive a communication from the course leader thanking the Trust for Andy's contribution.



Rotherham School Improvement Service

Sarah Rhodes, Assistant Vice Principal at Swinton Academy, is involved in the development of a borough-wide initiative for Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE), 'Together for Tomorrow'. Sarah will be supporting the delivery of the conference planned for the spring term to help colleagues gain clarity of understanding of the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory framework.



Science and STEM Curriculum

April Taylor, Teacher at Waverley Primary Academy, has continued her work as an associate leader for the local authority by helping schools to strengthen their Science and STEM curriculums and pedagogy. As part of her role, April delivers termly subject network meetings alongside offering bespoke school visits to strengthen Science subject leadership and teaching in schools. April keeps colleagues up to date with current research, prepares schools for the new OFSTED framework and mentors staff closely to help build confidence within their subject leadership through Enthuse Partnerships. This year April organised a hugely successful 'ROSIS Science Conference' which focused on enhancing STEM enrichment opportunities for children within South Yorkshire schools and offered colleagues a chance to network with local and national business partners to enrich their school curriculums. April is continuing to extend her outreach to work with schools and partners beyond South Yorkshire to capitalise upon good practice in order for our schools to receive exceptional CPD opportunities and continue to drive the development of STEM skills. Thank you for everything you are doing in promoting STEM across the region, April, you really are making a difference to the wider profession.



ACET

Striving for **Excellence**
Empowering Achievement
Shaping **Learning**



Merry Christmas

Rebecca Scutt
CEO



ACET

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