23rd October 2026

Leadership Update at Cherry Tree Academy

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to share some important news about the leadership of Cherry Tree Academy.

Following a competitive recruitment and selection process, Mr Adam Dawson has been successfully appointed as Executive Headteacher of Cherry Tree Academy and Kings Oak Primary Academy, another Waterton Academy Trust school in Barnsley.

This is a well-deserved appointment and reflects the excellent leadership Adam has demonstrated at Cherry Tree, particularly in leading the school's improvement over the past few years.

As you will know, Cherry Tree was inspected by Ofsted in September 2026. We were particularly pleased that inspectors judged **Leadership and Governance to be at the Strong Standard**, recognising the significant improvements made under Adam's leadership and the work of the whole staff team.

Inspectors recognised that leaders had successfully established a calm and safe school environment, improved attendance and significantly reduced behaviour incidents and suspensions. They also praised the school's clear approach to improvement, the support and professional development provided to staff, and the strong understanding leaders have of what needs to improve next.

We are very proud of what Adam and the Cherry Tree team have achieved together. His appointment as Executive Headteacher is recognition of this work and provides an opportunity for another Waterton school to benefit from his experience and leadership.

We recognise that Cherry Tree is at an important point in its improvement journey. The decision to appoint Adam to this wider role has been made with that firmly in mind. He will continue to lead the school's improvement, particularly our work to raise attainment, supported by a Head of School who will provide dedicated leadership on site every day.

What does an Executive Headteacher do?

As Executive Headteacher, Adam will have overall responsibility for the leadership, educational standards and continued improvement of both Cherry Tree and Kings Oak. He will work across the two schools, supporting their leadership teams, overseeing the quality of education and ensuring that both schools continue to provide the best possible opportunities for their pupils. This is an established leadership model within Waterton Academy Trust. It allows experienced school leaders to work across more than one school, sharing expertise and strengthening practice, whilst ensuring that each school retains its own identity and a strong leadership presence.

What does this mean for Cherry Tree?

We will now begin the process of recruiting a **Head of School for Cherry Tree Academy**. The Head of School will be based at Cherry Tree and will take responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of the academy, working closely with Adam as Executive Headteacher. This will ensure that there continues to be a senior leader on site who knows the children, staff and families well and is fully focused on the daily life of the school.

Adam will remain closely involved in Cherry Tree's leadership and will continue to have overall accountability for the school's performance and improvement. The Head of School will work alongside him to maintain the school's positive culture, support staff and ensure that children receive the high-quality education they deserve.

We know how important stability and continuity are for children, families and staff. We will therefore take care to appoint the right person to this role and ensure that the leadership arrangements are carefully planned.

We are delighted that Adam will continue to lead Cherry Tree in this new capacity. His appointment is a recognition of the work he has done and the confidence we have in his ability to continue strengthening the school whilst supporting another academy within our Trust.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of Cherry Tree Academy. We look forward to sharing further news about the appointment of the Head of School in due course.

Kind regards,



Dave Dickinson OBE
CEO Waterton Academy Trust