

23rd June 2022

Dear Families,

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you that following a cycling accident yesterday morning, our Headteacher Jeremy Richardson, passed away today, on Thursday the 23rd of June. Our community has lost a great leader and a wonderful man. More importantly, his wife and three children have lost a much-loved husband and father and our hearts go out to them at this tremendously sad time.

I know that this news will be met with immense shock and sadness, however I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Jeremy and the immense impact he has had on all of our lives. He first joined Beckfoot Trust in 2017 and was appointed to the position of Headteacher of Beckfoot Thornton in April of that year. It is no secret that the school needed root and branch improvement and under Jeremy's leadership, Beckfoot Thornton has not just been improved, it has been transformed. As CEO of Beckfoot Trust I always take great pleasure in visiting Beckfoot Thornton; it is an exceptionally calm, purposeful and learning-focussed organisation with highly professional staff and motivated students.

Jeremy's great leadership strengths were recognised by Beckfoot Trust in 2019 when he was appointed as Executive Headteacher. His influence has been felt throughout our whole Trust. I have personally had the absolute privilege to have worked with him side by side since my appointment as CEO last year. His passing is greatly felt by us all.

Jeremy brought to Beckfoot Thornton and our wider Trust, a wealth of senior leadership experience and as a former Ofsted Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and Department for Education advisor, he was always exacting in his approach to all aspects of school improvement. Every decision he made had student learning at the heart. His excitement and love of school improvement was palpable and infectious, and we know that he whole-heartedly loved his job and his school.

Our school and Trust community and the world of education as a whole, owes so much to Jeremy and despite our deep grief, our overwhelming feeling is one of gratitude. We feel so very fortunate to have worked with him and his influence lives on in all of us.

As planned and previously communicated, school is closed to students on Friday for our staff Training Day. Any student that is particularly affected by this news should contact the school on the following email office@beckfootthornton.org and arrangements can be made.

In agreement with Jeremy's family, who we are in close contact with, on Monday the 27th of June it will be the business of learning as usual and this is because they absolutely know it is what Jeremy would have wanted, however we will be running a series of assemblies through the week. Professional support will be available in school for staff and students, and more details will follow in due course about the school and Trust's plans to commemorate and celebrate Jeremy's life.

Such is Jeremy's leadership that he leaves the school on a tremendous continuous upward trajectory with sustainable and distributed leadership. As an interim arrangement, as was the case whenever Jeremy was in other schools, Sally Trusselle will be Acting Headteacher. Sally already has the support and respect of our community, and I will personally be supporting the school, even although in truth, I know they do not need it. Jeremy has left us with a very precious legacy; we will continue to do whatever it takes to lead this school to where it deserves to be, delivering the absolute best outcomes for the young people and community that we serve.

Thank you as always for your ongoing support – I know we will all pull together as the close-knit school community that we are at this deeply sad time.

Yours sincerely,



Shirley Watson,
Chief Executive Officer,
Beckfoot Trust