

**Headteacher**  
Nicolle Deighton, MA. Ed

**Email**  
briarwood@bristol-schools.uk

**Web**  
www.briarwoodschoo.org.uk

**Briarwood Infant  
School**  
Queen Ann Road,  
Barton Hill, Bristol  
BS5 9TX

**Briarwood Junior  
School & Sixth Form  
Centre**  
Briar Way, Fishponds,  
Bristol BS16 4EA

**Briarwood  
Secondary School &  
Nexus Centre**  
Snowdon Road,  
Fishponds, Bristol  
BS16 2HD

25<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## **Changes to Briarwood School Leadership**

Dear Families,

Firstly, a big thank you for the support you have given us in term 1, particularly during our Ofsted inspection a few weeks ago. We deeply value the relationships with families and working together in the best interests of the pupils.

I am writing to let you know that there are a few changes to the leadership team starting after half term. Sadly, Rosie Wells, who was a Deputy Headteacher and responsible for Inclusion and Pastoral aspects of the school, has left us and gone to work for Bath Local Authority. Rosie had been with the school for over 10 years and worked alongside a great number of pupils and families and she will be hugely missed.

Rosie will be replaced by Antonios Petropoulos as Head of Inclusion. Antonios has been working as an Assistant Head with Behaviour and Pastoral responsibilities for over a year now, and prior to this he was Head of Sixth Form. He was also a teacher at the school before this, so knows the school incredibly well.

Although Antonios hadn't been head of Sixth Form for a while due to his secondment to the Assistant Head role, it was his substantive post. This meant we had a gap for Head of Sixth Form. We are pleased to announce that Sarah Lane Batt who has been covering this position was successful and will continue in this role on a permanent basis.

At the end of last academic year, we did a big review of our Nexus provision. The Nexus is highly specialised with very few similar provisions existing in the UK. We determined with the help of staff and external consultants that a restructuring of some of the roles within the Nexus was required. We advertised the role of Complex Needs Assistant Head, and we are pleased to announce that Cathryn Davies (who is currently Head of Secondary), secured this role. Cathryn's background and expertise are a great fit for this role.

With Cathryn heading over to lead the Nexus, we have a role available for Head of Secondary. Alistair Mackintosh, who is currently Head of Juniors will be taking on this role after half term. Alistair has been Head of Juniors for 6 years and at the school for 15, he knows most of the pupils and the families from their time on Juniors and he is excited for a bit of a new challenge, whilst also ensuring consistency for the pupils through someone that knows Briarwood really well.


This obviously leaves a role for Head of Juniors, which Tina Oram who is currently the pastoral Assistant Head has kindly agreed to move into on an interim basis. Tina has worked at the school in a leadership

role for a number of years now, so knows the pupils, staff and site well. Many of you have probably met Tina at our family coffee mornings and events. We will be running a recruitment process for a new Head of School when things have settled a little and to fit in with teacher and leadership notice periods.

So, a lot of change, but I am sure you will join me in congratulating the post holders on their new roles. The recruitment processes at Briarwood are always external and competitive, with governors and school improvement partner involvement, so the leaders involved have worked very hard to secure their roles in a highly competitive field.

I have included short biographies of the leadership team below so you can reference who we all are and what we will be doing, but if you have any questions, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



**Nicolle Deighton**

Executive Headteacher

## Briarwood School Executive Leadership Team Staff Profiles



**Nicolle Deighton**  
**Executive Headteacher**

I have been working in education for over 20 years now, the majority of which have been in the Special Educational Needs sector. I have been the Headteacher and later Executive Headteacher of Briarwood since 2018. I have a masters degree in Education as well as the National Q Over the course of my career, I have worked with a range of pupils from age 3 right the way through to 19 across many needs. I have supported the school in its growth and development and have opened new sites and buildings in my time at Briarwood, seeing the number of pupils more than double. I am passionate about providing high quality education for all and my expertise is in school improvement and development. I have worked as a specialist leader of education and I also currently work as an Ofsted inspector and School Improvement Partner as I feel that all children and young people deserve, and should receive, a high-quality education. I am proud to lead such a dedicated team of staff and work with such inspirational children and families.



**Jessica De-La-Mare**  
**Head of Education & Skills**

For the past 15 years, I have been involved in the teaching of SEND children both in mainstream and special school settings. During the past 11 years, I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside the wonderful children and staff at Briarwood and am passionate about raising standards and providing outstanding opportunities for children both in my own setting and in the local area. I am passionate about the development of the curriculum and the effective use of assessment. My strength and passion is educational research and using knowledge of pedagogy, creativity, and my experience in teaching and coaching teaching staff has allowed me to support the development of a curriculum and assessment system that suits the needs of our pupils. I currently also work on delivering the new National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, (NPQSEND), ensuring that new leaders have the best possible SEND practice.



**Rachel Moles**  
**Head of Education & Skills**

I am very proud to work with such a talented and committed team at Briarwood. Throughout my career, both within teaching and through leadership, I have had a passion for developing the curriculum. It has been incredible to be part of creating a tiered, sequential curriculum that has clear pathways for our pupils. I am very passionate about raising standards and ensuring our pupils have access to high quality teaching that puts pupils at the centre of what we do. Feedback from visitors and staff often highlights the warm, positive and welcoming environment we have at Briarwood. We are very proud of what our pupils achieve and look forward to continuing our school improvements to maintain high standards of education and provision.



**Georgina Andrews**  
**Head of Provision**

For the past decade, I have had the opportunity to work alongside many inspirational children, young people and staff within Briarwood School. I am passionate about developing an inclusive culture where, with the right direction and support, every child can become motivated to achieve their full potential. As the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), I am fully committed to safeguarding and child protection and ensuring and promoting the welfare of children is at the heart of everything we do. My strengths are managing and leading change, developing new initiatives and processes, and using data analysis in order to identify learning barriers (and overcome them at the earliest possible stage!). As a qualified SENCO, I lead on provision across the school. I place a strong emphasis on collaborative, multi-agency work with all stakeholders to ensure we meet the needs of the child as a whole.



**Antonios Petropoulos**  
**Head of Inclusion**

I am truly grateful to be part of our school's community. My journey in education commenced in Greece, where I studied Classics. With a passion for education, I furthered my studies and knowledge, obtaining an MEd in Special and Inclusive Education with distinction. Over the past ten years, I have had the privilege of working with students with SEND, an experience that has profoundly shaped my approach to teaching and learning. I have been part of Briarwood's amazing team since 2016. I have worked in various phases of the school as a class teacher. I am particularly focussed on how we can foster aspirations in all our students through a robust employability offer. Currently, I am the Head of Inclusion, where my role revolves around nurturing behaviour and pastoral practices, and supporting our students and their families through transitions to adulthood. I am here to learn and grow alongside our students. It is an honour to be part of this community.



**Rebecca Hunt**  
**Head of Operations**

I started my role at Briarwood in 2013 having previously worked in the charity sector. I take responsibility for all operational support areas such as finance, human resources, health and safety, compliance and estate management. I also work with external services that support the school with HR Management, Health & Safety, Estate Management and ICT support. It is a privilege to work in an inspirational school with a dedicated and committed staff team, where children's needs are the focus of everything we do.

## Briarwood School Senior Leadership Team Staff Profiles



**Aggie Bennet**  
**Head of Infants**

I have been working in Education since 2004, completing my PGCE in 2010 and developing my specialist career in Early Years ever since. I am as passionate about striving for excellence for children and families in Early Years now as I was when I began my teaching career in Nursery and Reception in mainstream schools. As Head of School, I am privileged to bring my experience to Briarwood Infants to deliver, along with my incredible team, the very best Early Years play based, challenging and inspiring provision, ensuring our amazing children access the high-quality learning experiences they deserve. I am a Local Specialist Leader working throughout Bristol supporting Early Years settings and delivering Early Years training, and benefit from learning from the very best practice across our city.



**Tina Oram**  
**Interim Head of Juniors**

I have been working in Education since 2008, starting my career in Early Years education before becoming a SENCO in mainstream settings. I soon realised that I wanted to make an impact on special education and provision and joined Briarwood as Assistant Headteacher in 2019. As part of my work, in my role as Assistant head, I have been privileged to work across all of the age ranges and departments within Briarwood School and see the fantastic support our students receive from the Early Years all the way up to Sixth Form. I am a Specialist Mental Health Lead and a Trauma Practitioner, and previously led on Attendance, PSHE, Mental health and Wellbeing across the school, so I am in a good position to support Juniors as Interim Head of School. As Family Link lead you may have already met me during our coffee mornings and parent's events where we provide support, networking and access to external services.



**Alistair Mackintosh**  
**Head of Secondary**

I am the Head of School for the Secondary site, having been Head of Juniors for the past 6 years. I have been working at Briarwood School for 15 years now – before that I worked at two other SEN schools in Bristol, as well as for the Brandon Trust as a Home Support Worker for adults with Learning Disabilities. I started at Briarwood as a teacher of autistic pupils on our Secondary site, before moving over to Primary where I found I really enjoyed teaching PMLD children. I have always had a passion for encouraging children to develop their skills and learning through the use of technology and have led ICT across the school, as well as delivering training both internally and externally at the BETT Technology Show in London. I always love seeing our children grow and develop as they move through the school – the children who I first taught are now in Post 16!



**Sarah Lane-Batt**  
**Head of Sixth Form**

It has been a privilege to have been working in SEND for 20 years, beginning my journey as an LSA. I studied for a BA Hons whilst working as a HLTA in another SEND school in Bristol. Shortly after joining Briarwood in 2016, I undertook Schools Direct Teacher Training, where I have been 'home grown' and mentored by members of the Briarwood Team. I have worked across the different phases of the school as a class teacher for pupils with PMLD and ASD. I have been interim Head of School since January 2023 and am so excited to now have this post permanently. I lead a highly skilled team at delivering bespoke learning for amazing young people. Watching our students flourish into adulthood is an absolute pleasure, and I am very passionate about them each leaving sixth form with the skills, knowledge and experiences that allow them to be meaningful members of the community.



**Cathryn Davies**  
**Complex Needs Assistant Head**

Having been Head of School for Secondary and Nexus in Briarwood School since 2019, I am excited to start in the new role of Complex Needs Assistant Head. I gained my PGCE in 2004 and have experience across different settings, from Secondary Mainstream to Social and Emotional Mental Health settings. As a Team Teach trainer, I support our staff to follow the most positive behaviour systems that we can, supporting pupils to flourish. I have always been passionate about helping children with additional needs, by supporting Playschemes and charities throughout my adult life. I am passionate about creating a positive learning environment where all children can access learning and develop the skills they need for life after Education. This means I put the children at the heart of everything I do, making sure that all their needs are met, and positive strategies are in place to support them and their families. I am incredibly proud to be a part of such an inspiring school where I get to watch the children grow to be such wonderful young people, in turn the students here inspire me to continue to grow and learn as a leader to ensure they get the best experience of education as possible.