



## New flagship centre opens at Academy

**Author:** Paul Stimpson

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A state-of-the-art table tennis centre at Carlton le Willows Academy has been officially opened.

The Nottingham school's 3,000 sq ft purpose-built centre was funded in part by a £200,000 grant by Table Tennis England and cost £450,000 in total.

Table Tennis England Chairman Sandra Deaton officially opened centre by cutting the ribbon on a commemorative plaque. She said:

"This centre is a shining example of what can be achieved if everyone works together and I am sure it will be very successful.

"We thank you Carlton le Willows for sharing the passion we have for our sport and wish you the very best of luck."

England and GB Performance Coach Alan Cooke joined special guests at the event, where he entertained the audience with an exhibition match against Commonwealth Games bronze medallist and London Olympian Kelly Sibley.



From left: Sandra Deaton with former Academy chair of governors Bob Martin, current chair of governors Trish Brown and Carlton le Willows head Craig Weaver.

Guests on the night also heard Year 9 student Lorik Deliu describe his progress since first picking up a table tennis bat at school and enjoyed music by Year 11 singer Moyege Oke.

The national standard facility will be the new headquarters of the Nottingham Sycamore Table Tennis Academy, one of nine Table Tennis England Talent Development Centres around the country.

Kelly Sibley said she was 'blown away' by the centre. She added:

"They have great facilities, down to the flooring and the lights. It gives the students the opportunity to come and play table tennis every single day. That's the most important thing."

And Alan Cooke, fresh from the Rio Olympics, said:

"Sport starts in schools, so centres like these are vital. If every school had a table tennis centre like this, who knows what the future would hold."

The facility will be used for PE lessons during the school day and can be accessed by Academy students every day after school.

Members of the wider community will also be able to use the centre, which will help increase primary school and family participation in the sport.

Craig Weaver, head teacher at the 1,540-student school said:

“The opening of this facility is a very special event for Carlton le Willows. Students have shown a passion for the sport since we introduced outdoor table tennis tables a couple of years ago and now, thanks to our partnership with Nottingham Sycamore Table Tennis Academy, we can help develop the considerable talent we have here.

“We firmly believe at the Academy that education is about so much more than results. Sport raises aspirations and builds character and through table tennis we hope to bring our young people even more opportunities than before.”



Alan Cooke and Kelly Sibley play an exhibition match

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