

## Chair's Letter to Parents December 2019

Seasons greeting to you all from myself and all the Governors. This years GCSE results showed several improvements, notably the best ever (62%) GCSE Grade 4 passes in both Maths and English since we opened as the Academy in 2011, as well as strong performances in Humanities, Languages and the Arts. We also improved in our Progress 8 or 'value added' measure (average for all children's grades from when they start in year 7 to those attained in year 11) to close to the national average as well a closing the gap in grades attained between disadvantaged and all pupils. The hard work of Richard Hedge and all the staff have produced these excellent and improving results. However, there is still much work to do in improving our performance for strong passes (Grades 5+ GCSEs). The Governors have commissioned support from external consultants and school external advisors to help the Academy on its journey towards a regaining an OFSTED Good grades, and we will continue vigorously supporting school improvement.

In spite of my expectations we have not been inspected by OFSTED this autumn. OFSTED's rules of inspection have changed recently from the old emphasis on metrics (% GCSE passes etc) to a new 'quality of education' judgement based more on the curriculum we teach and how we teach it- much closer to the essence of education and what teachers have always concentrated on. One consequence of this has been to accelerate a review of our curriculum, which we already undertaking, to make sure it provides appropriate choices and challenging ambition for all the Academy's students.

Now we know the result of the recent election, we hope the promises of increased school funding will be delivered. While the increased funding per pupil will help, it will just about keep pace with inflation, so we can not expect any bonus for our resources. The Academy's finances continue to be sound guided by the Governors' prudent approach. The result of the election also means we can anticipate that the future education landscape will be encouraging more inter-school collaboration and formation of Multi Academy Trusts. The Governors are continuing to explore options with guiding principles of maintaining a small school ethos and improving the quality of education and outcomes for all pupils.

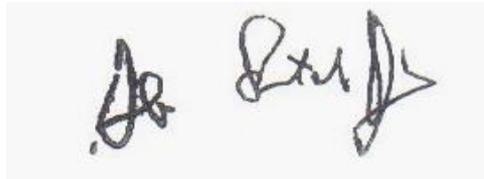
There has been considerable change in the Governing Board this year. We have welcomed new members: Richard Delight and Andrew Graham who were elected as parent Governors, Andrew Dethick (Staff Governor), with James Scorer, Barnard Rooney and Sam Hale who were all appointed as sponsor Governors. Five governors have resigned after serving the school for several years: Pauline Holt (staff governor), Semina Thomas (parent governor) Andrew Dickenson (co-opted governor), Sam Oliver (LA governor) and Jen Walters (sponsor governor). Their contributions will be sorely missed.

In school we will miss Mr Packwood whose management of student behavior and safeguarding across the Academy since 2011 was consistency recognized by OFSTED as good to excellent; Mr Rogers whose enthusiasm and charisma delighted all of us in school concerts as well as inspiring generations of pupils in

drama and music will also be remembered fondly. Other staff whose invaluable contributions will be missed include Mrs Ward and Mr Fairweather (English), Mr Sutcliffe (Computer Science), and Mrs Manning (Languages). In their place we have been delighted to welcome Mr Blaylock (Music), Mr Wood (PE), Mr Tetlow and Ms McCabe (English), Mr Muggeridge (Computer Science), Mrs Wild (Languages), Mr Ahmed (Science) and Miss Thilwin (Technology).

In spite of the ever changing landscape in education the Academy is in good shape. We have a dedicated staff, we were oversubscribed in our 2019 recruitment and results are on an improving trend. The Governors are determined to accelerate this improvement and we welcome your involvement and suggestions, either directly to me, or through the Parents forum.

With my best wishes for Christmas and New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Sutcliffe', written on a light grey background.

Professor Alistair Sutcliffe  
Chair of Governors.