



WIMBLEDON CHASE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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26 January 2024

Dear Staff and Parents

Chair of Governors Update

As I write to you today, it is with a heart full of gratitude and a touch of nostalgia. After a fulfilling four-year tenure as the Chair of the Governing Body, the time has come for me to step down, prompted by my family's move from Wimbledon to the countryside of West Sussex.

This journey with Wimbledon Chase Primary School has been nothing short of a privilege. Witnessing the remarkable growth of our students and staff has been a profound joy. The dedication and cooperation from our entire school community have been pivotal to our collective success.

My tenure has been marked by significant milestones and challenges:

- Developing a renewed sense of trust and transparency following the change of leadership in 2018 was crucial (and my primary motivation for joining the Governing Body as a Parent Governor in 2019).
- The pandemic and a pivot to remote learning tested us all, a situation for which there was no playbook. I was immensely proud of the responsive and sensitive approach of the school and the adaptations which were put in place.
- The recruitment and selection of a new headteacher, Mr. Ellis, in 2021 was a rigorous process and involved an immense amount of work. His exceptional leadership has since guided the school admirably.
- We faced an arduous legal challenge from an unreasonable supplier over a two-year period. Thanks to the unyielding spirit of our office staff and the legal acumen of our Governors, we ultimately triumphed in this David versus Goliath battle.

These experiences have been invaluable learning opportunities. Despite moments of uncertainty, the expertise and diversity of our Governing Body have been my steadfast support. Kipling got it right: *'the strength of the wolf is the pack'*. I am proud of our accomplishments and confident that these efforts have laid a robust foundation for the future.

Now, as I pass the baton, it is with great pleasure that I introduce Kunal Patel as the new Chair of the Governing Body. Kunal brings a wealth of experience from his professional services background and a fresh perspective that I am sure will lead Wimbledon Chase into its next exciting chapter.

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At the foot of this letter, you will find an introductory statement from Kunal. Kunal has penned a few words to acquaint himself with you all and share his vision for the future of our school. I encourage you to read his message and join me in welcoming him in his new role.

Although I have stepped down as Chair, I intend to remain as an Associate Member of the Governing Body to offer support during the transition.

My heartfelt thanks go out to each of you for your trust, support, and collaboration over these years. Serving you and our wonderful students, the true stars of Wimbledon Chase, has been an honour and a joy.

That's it from me. It's been a blast!

Best wishes

Tom Jeans

Governing Body, Wimbledon Chase Primary School

I am very pleased to be able to introduce myself, Kunal Patel, as the new chair of the Governing Body of Wimbledon Chase Primary School. I was elected by the Governing Body in December, following the recent decision by Tom Jeans to step down as chair. I feel privileged to have this opportunity and am excited to support Mr Ellis and the School in this new chapter.

I grew up in Merton Park and was a former student at the School. I have fond memories of my time at Wimbledon Chase and am proud to still be a part of the local community. I feel that my experiences as a former pupil, coupled with some of the transferable skills and learnings I have developed during my working career, will bring a valuable and fresh perspective to the Governing Body.

Whilst I am a relatively new governor, joining as a co-opted governor in April last year, there is a huge wealth of expertise, skills and interests on the Governing Body, which I will be tapping into so that together we can ensure Wimbledon Chase continues to thrive for all of our children and our community. I am confident that I have the necessary professional and practical skills, commitment, and expertise to steer the Governing Body forward.

Transparency, community and partnership will remain the key governance priorities that have been championed under Tom's stewardship and I plan to continue in this vein with my fellow governors.

I would like to thank Tom for his hard work and dedication to the School during his time as chair over the last few years. He will definitely be missed and we wish him all the best for the future.

Kunal Patel