



INTOUCH

THE GREYSBROOKE SCHOOL GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2019



Say Hello, Wave Goodbye

THE FESTIVE
EDITION

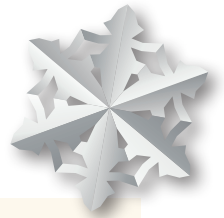


As Christmas rapidly approaches and another year comes to an end, we wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful and happy Christmas, wave goodbye to 2019 and say hello to 2020.

2019, and this last term in particular, has been a hive of governor activity, with big decisions being made about the future of our school. We're embarking on a period of change at Greysbrooke, but we confidently believe that these changes are all positive, and will ultimately benefit the children.

Consequently, we're really excited about 2020 and working with our new Headteacher, our new partners at the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, and our new catering suppliers once the contracts have been confirmed.

So, as we wave goodbye to 2019, **we'd like to thank the fabulous team of teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, lunchtime supervisors and the caretaker, who work tirelessly to make Greysbrooke the wonderful school it is.** Enjoy a relaxing and well-deserved break.



Academy Update

Following multiple meetings, conversations and a consultation period, on the 7th November we voted formally to apply to convert Greysbrooke into an Academy and apply to join the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership. The ATLP Trust Board are currently considering our application (although all indications are that we will be successful), and once we have a formal letter of acceptance, we will apply to convert to an Academy.

Due to the election, all conversion applications are on hold, which means there will be quite a backlog. We are currently being advised that the actual conversion is unlikely to take place until September 2020. However, ATLP have assured us that they will consider us an extended part of the Multi-Academy Trust as soon as they accept our application, meaning there will be opportunities to benefit from the partnership with immediate effect.

Thank you to everyone who has challenged and supported us on this journey. It is a big step for Greysbrooke, but we believe it is the best way to ensure a sustainable future for the school, and enable us to achieve our vision - **We will consistently be an exceptional provider of educational excellence and enrichment opportunities.**



WAVE GOODBYE

On the 20th December, after over 23 years, Mrs Foster will close her Headteacher office door for the last time. We thought it would be really lovely to reflect on her time at Greysbrooke before we wave goodbye and wish her a happy retirement.

I'm sure you will all join us in extending an enormous thank you to Mrs Foster for the huge contribution she has made to the children, the school and the community over the last 23 years. We wish her every happiness in her retirement, as well as a relaxing and highly fulfilling 'Life after Greysbrooke'.



WHEN DID YOU FIRST START AT GREYSBROOKE?

“ I came to Greysbrooke as Deputy Head in September 1996 having been head of lower school at New Oscott Junior School, Sutton Coldfield. Following two periods of acting headship at Greysbrooke, I became headteacher in September 2004. ”

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF DURING YOUR TIME HERE?

“ During my time at Greysbrooke I have witnessed many changes including the school's growth from 150 pupils to 210, five successful inspections including an 'outstanding' status granted by Ofsted, participation in a Co-operative Learning Trust, the commencement of wraparound school provision and the establishment of a highly regarded onsite nursery.

I have welcomed many children into school over my 23+ years here and have taken great pleasure in working in our local community with the support of a happy, committed and professional staff.

The children have been my greatest source of pride – the young child who first learns to read; the participation in many community and partnership events such as Young Voices; exemplary behaviour on residential trips; sporting achievements and the past pupils eager and excited to share their successes in adult life - especially the two university graduates who continue to hold me responsible for their love of English and History!

I am proud of so many things and so many people who have committed themselves to making a difference. ”

WHAT WILL YOU MISS THE MOST?

“ Quite simply, the people – especially the staff and children. ”

WHAT ARE YOUR HAPPIEST MEMORIES AT GREYSBROOKE?

“ Fun times with the staff – often involving misbehaviour (usually engineered by me!). I can still remember Mrs Grainger and the ever-growing stalactite and stalagmite display; Mrs Ward dressed up as Marilyn Monroe; the staff musical performances at the Y6 leavers assemblies (we really cannot keep in time or in tune!) to name but a few! Basically we have had lots of laughter over the years. ”

HOW WILL YOU SPEND YOUR CHRISTMAS?

“ With my family in my new home and with my new husband, Ian. Two new grandchildren (Bethany – born April 2019 and Arthur – born October 2019) means that Christmas will again take on a new meaning... and we need a larger dining table! ”

WHAT PART OF RETIREMENT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

“ Being able to do more of what I want to do when I want to do it. My first holiday outside of school holiday times is already booked - Fuerteventura here I come! I am also booked to take my grandson to weekly baby swimming classes. ”

WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE MRS BALLINGER?

“ Stay grounded and never be frightened to go against the grain if you are committed to this being in the best interest of the children and people in your care. ”

WHAT ONE PIECE OF WISDOM WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE CHILDREN OF GREYSBROOKE?

“ A statement by French poet, Guillaume Apollinaire, which until recently was on my office wall. I have always held it dear...

*'Come to the edge', he said.
'We can't. We are afraid.'
'Come to the edge', he said.
'We can't. We will fall.'
'Come to the edge', he said.
And they came.
And he pushed them.
And they flew.*

Children, you can fly. Always have dreams and work hard to achieve them. Always try your best...you can do no more. Believe and you really can achieve.

I will love hearing about your achievements from your teachers in the future.

Good luck to all of you. ”

SAY HELLO

Mrs Foster's decision to retire left a vacancy for a new Headteacher at Greysbrooke from January 2020. Following a rigorous application, assessment and interview process, Mrs Eleanor Ballinger was offered the position.

We thought you might have a few questions about Mrs Ballinger, so we asked her to tell us a little more about herself before we all welcome her in person in January...



WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY WORK AND WHAT DO YOU DO THERE?

“ I am currently the Deputy Head at Brownhills West Primary School and have been there for five years. My job is incredibly varied and no day is ever the same but some of my main roles include: safeguarding all pupils and staff; supporting our teaching staff, through coaching and mentoring; being the Read Write Inc. Phonics Leader; leading on Pupil Premium; daily teaching (ranging from Nursery - Y6); leading on Curriculum Design and Growth Mindset across the school. ”

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE HEADTEACHER POSITION AT GREYSBROOKE SCHOOL?

“ I began looking for my first headship around March/April time but was incredibly selective as I didn't want to work just anywhere. I have previously really enjoyed working in one form entry schools as the size allows me to get to know everyone who attends the school really well, as well as their families. When the position of Headteacher at Greysbrooke came up I was ecstatic as it focuses not only on the educational excellence offered to its pupils, but also on the importance of enrichment opportunities - something that I strongly believe in!

The moment I visited the school it just felt right; I was impressed with the polite pupils, the calm and positive attitudes to learning, and I received a genuine warm welcome from the enthusiastic staff. I had to apply! ”

WHAT MOST EXCITES YOU ABOUT COMING TO GREYSBROOKE?

“ I'm excited at the prospect of becoming a member of the school community and will commit to provide the very best for the children, families and staff. I especially can't wait to get to know each and every child and work alongside the experienced and skilled Greysbrooke team who provide such a wealth of rich learning opportunities, both academic and non-academic. ”

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT IN SCHOOL?

“ I firmly believe in improving the life chances of all children and educating the 'whole child' by nurturing and inspiring them to develop a love of learning. By offering a creative and varied curriculum, I want children to really enjoy their time in school, be exposed to a range of learning and enrichment opportunities which will equip them with lifelong skills, confidence and a thirst for learning. ”

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT OUTSIDE SCHOOL?

“ My family! Family time is incredibly important to me as I have a husband who works shifts (he's a Paramedic) and 3 sons (aged 19, 17 & 11) so we relish any time we have off together. We enjoy eating out, going to the cinema and walking our dog, Ernie. I also love anything to do with musical theatre! ”

HOW WOULD THE CHILDREN AT YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL DESCRIBE YOU?

“ Children describe me as kind, caring and someone who is always there for them when needed. ”

HOW WOULD THE PARENTS AT YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL DESCRIBE YOU?

“ Parents describe me as a bubbly, happy and approachable person who listens to concerns with empathy and understanding. I'm also known as the lady with big hair and nice shoes! ”

WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO THE CHILDREN?

“ I have already met some of the fabulous children at Greysbrooke during my visits to the school, but I will be officially introducing myself to all the children on Tuesday 7th January in a whole school assembly. ”

WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BE INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO THE PARENTS?

“ From day one I intend to be out and about at the beginning/end of most school days so that I can meet as many parents/carers/family members as possible on the school drop-off and collection. ”

IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THREE WORDS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

“ Positive
Dedicated
Fun ”

Have yourselves a merry little Christmas, and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2020.