

September 3rd 2020

To all parents and carers

You will by now have seen in the school newsletter the news that Kate will be stepping down as headteacher from the end of this academic year. After 18 brilliant years at Eleanor Palmer School and a long and very successful teaching and leadership career, she has decided that she will be retiring – from full-time headship at least! So, as a Governing Body, we are getting in touch now to let you know what we are doing and to get some input from you.

This is huge news for the whole school community – pupils, staff and all parents and carers. There is no bigger change in the life of the school than the transition between one head teacher and their successor. A head teacher does so much to embody the values and ethos of a school, in every aspect and in all the decisions - large and small - taken every single day. This is particularly so in a small school like Eleanor Palmer where we are very fortunate to have had so much individual care and attention from Kate. I know many will find it difficult to imagine the school without that very personal and distinctive “Kate” stamp that she puts into all she does.

But vital though a headteacher is, the school is bigger than any individual head teacher. A school is the sum of all the pupils, staff and the bigger community around it. A school is also the values and the ethos it holds; the history of the achievements of the pupils who look back on it as the start of their learning career; it is all the efforts of staff down the years, the events and traditions that become part of the school day and the year and which change over time and even the fabric of the school itself, preserved, cared for, renewed and added to. The governors are the people whose job it is to make sure that the values that are important to us all are carried forward.

As a Governing Body, we are proud that Eleanor Palmer inspires a love of learning in children and the confidence, enthusiasm and ambition to do their best. We have a strong commitment to creativity, and aim to make the children’s learning vivid, real, engaging and memorable and to provide challenges that encourage their development in all areas. Excellent teaching is at the centre of what Eleanor Palmer does and we are proud of the talented and dedicated staff who are constantly looking to improve their skill and practice for the benefit of the children in our school and the wider education community. We want a leader who brings that passion to the role. Inclusiveness is a top priority for our school, where children flourish because of attentiveness to their individual needs, and we celebrate diversity in all its forms. We value our active and engaged school community, in which everyone, including pupils, staff, parents, carers and the local community, all play a part and we want to build on those strengths.

The governors have a big job to do in the coming months. There is no bigger job for any Governing Body than the task of appointing a new head teacher. We are fortunate to have a whole year’s notice from Kate to allow us time to find the right person. We will have access to expertise beyond the Governing Body and we will be able to call on help and advice from our local authority, Camden. Finally, we have a talented and committed Governing Body with a wide range of skills and experience. So I think we are in an excellent position and are confident that we will find the right leader for our school who will take the school on the next step of its journey.

We’ve set out above some of the key things we think are important about the school. As a Governing Body, we’ll shortly be writing the advert and the job description for the role. We believe that we have already have a good idea from you what you value – from your brilliant contributions

to our school community events, from the parent survey, from talking and listening in lots of different situations. However, we'd also like to hear especially from you about the things you value most about EP, which you would like us to keep in mind during this recruitment process. If you would like to put them in an email and send them to me - Jennifer Allan (my school email address is governors@eleanorpalmer.camden.sch.uk) then we'll be sure to consider them. We'll be making sure that pupils' views are also taken into account and, of course, talking to staff as we want to make sure this process includes the whole community.

We appreciate, of course, that you will have questions and concerns, and we will keep you informed. We will ensure that governors are present at forthcoming EP events to chat to and the parent governors will be around in the - socially distanced! – Home Zone.

It just remains for us to say welcome back to school and welcome to new children and their parents and carers. This will be an important year for us, with a lot to do – just like every year! We will be giving a lot of thought to how we can thank Kate and appropriately mark her tremendous career when the time comes. But in the meantime, it is the start of another year of achievement and fun – and “Keeping it EP”!

Best wishes

Jen Allan (chair of governors) and the Governing Body