

Our ref: CAC/SPh

**Outwood Academy Shafton**

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Principal: Mrs Cara Ackroyd

14 December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Today I have spoken to the students in the academy about a change that will take place in the New Year and I wanted to take the time to write to you all and let you know about the change.

Thursday 17 December will be my final day as Principal at Outwood Academy Shafton. Of course, I am staying with the Outwood family having secured a promotion to the role of Associate Executive Principal. This new role will involve supporting schools in the North West that will be joining Outwood and setting up a brand new region for our Trust in that part of the country. This is not only a fantastic career opportunity but, very personally, it will mean that I will be working closer to my family and near to the areas that I grew up in. Many of the schools in this area need a great deal of support and I am excited to think about the difference that we can make for even more young people.

For the last five years, it has been my absolute pride and privilege to lead our academy community. Thousands of memories come to mind- some times of great joy and celebration and other times of great difficulty and sadness. There is something very special about this community and the young people here. Five years ago, outcomes for students in Shafton were the lowest in Barnsley and among the lowest in the country. The predecessor school was subject to Special Measures by Ofsted which is a very difficult place to be. A huge amount of work by leaders, staff, students and families has seen this completely transform. By 2018, we were graded by Ofsted as "Good" in every area. In 2019, we were designated as a national Centre of Excellence for Inclusion. We now compete with the best schools in the area and perform above all national averages. Importantly, behind all of the figures, this means that I have witnessed our young people grow in confidence, grow in belief that they can achieve and watched them aspire to make brilliant futures for themselves. I am immensely humbled to have known every one of them. I know that they will continue to grow as learners and as young people. They have faced difficulties that no other generation have ever faced and yet they work harder than ever, with great determination and resilience. They have very bright futures ahead. I wish them all every success in all their future adventures!

You will join me in congratulating Mrs Alison McQueen, who will take on the role of Principal from January. Not only has Mrs McQueen been a part of the journey here for more than 22 years but she is also a phenomenal leader who cares deeply about this community and wants the very best for the young people that we serve. I have no doubt that our academy will continue to go from strength to strength under her leadership. I am pleased to say that I will be supporting her in this new role, in the background, for a few months yet to come. I know that, like myself, Mrs McQueen will find herself very fortunate to be supported in her leadership by the most magnificent team of teachers and professionals here at Shafton.

I cannot thank you all enough for your wonderful support over the last half a decade. I will never forget my time in Barnsley and the time I have spent with the special young people of this great town.

With the most humble gratitude and thanks to you all,

**Cara Ackroyd**  
**Principal**

Outwood Grange Academies Trust, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 06995649.

Registered office address: Potovens Lane, Outwood, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2PF.

VAT number: 158 2720 04. Outwood Grange Academies Trust is an exempt charity.

A list of Directors' names is open to inspection at our registered office.