

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents

I write in advance of the new term to offer my thanks for your continued patience and support as we plan ahead for an exciting future. This morning, I addressed all staff at the beginning of our Wemms Conference and felt exhilarated by the tangible sense of enthusiasm and purpose therein. The next three days will see no stone left unturned in the preparation across every facet of school life for the boys and girls upon their return on Friday, with new starters also having a useful familiarisation day on Thursday.

### **Aims**

In my talk, I stated two clear objectives for the future and trust that you will share our determination to remain steadfast in the first and resolute in our pursuit of the second.

1. We are unified at Wemms in our desire to make a positive difference to the boys and girls in our care.
2. We are unified at Wemms in our aspiration to establish it as the leading independent specialist school in the United Kingdom.

The sky is the limit for this school, especially its pupils, and we hope you will join us on the journey...

### **Senior Leadership**

As a step in the right direction, I am pleased to share with you the news that I have appointed Emma Turner as our new Business Manager. Having established herself as an outstanding candidate from a strong field, Emma will start work for Wemms immediately on a part-time basis before undertaking a full-time role with responsibility for all non-academic aspects of school life in mid-October. Emma is thrilled to be joining Wemms at a time of great opportunity and I know she is looking forward to meeting you all in due course.

Meanwhile, the acting Principals, Gail and Neil, will oversee all aspects of the academic and pastoral running of the school on a day to day basis. Together with Emma, they will have operational responsibility for the effective management of the school and report directly to me for advice, guidance and support. I will work closely with them, as well as the trustees, to develop the business model, quality assure and move the school forward with ambition.

### **Governance**

In terms of governance, I am delighted to announce that we have two new, potential trustees joining the Board, Fiona Bulmer and James Pearce, subject to ratification later in the term, in order to assist with oversight of the key areas of safeguarding and finance. Both are knowledgeable in their field and

*Chief Executive*

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demonstrated a sound appreciation for, and understanding of, our culture and values. I will continue to work with the Board and ensure greater diversification and transparency. It is obviously important that we recruit people of the right calibre, personality and skills to fulfil the trustee remit and this will remain a work in progress.

### **Ofsted Action Plan**

I regret that the school's challenge of the Ofsted Report from last term was unsuccessful. Consequently, it will be published in the public domain next week. From my early observations, the school does many things well but naturally there are areas for improvement. This is to be expected in any setting and the crucial thing is to stay reflective and remain committed to being a "school that learns".

I have attached an executive summary of key actions for your information which will show you how the school is addressing concerns raised in the report as well as steps being taken to ensure a successful outcome to the Ofsted reinspection, which I hope will occur as soon as practically possible. A much more comprehensive action plan is being sent to Local Authorities this week to show them the level of seriousness with which we are approaching the new academic year.

I appreciate that the last few weeks has been extremely challenging for many of you with uncertainty about funding but trust that our enhanced level of communication with key stakeholders will help expedite a positive resolution as soon as practically possible.

### **Communication**

The acting Principals, Gail and Neil, will write to you later in the week with important information for the term ahead as well as staffing updates. Moving forward, it will be very helpful if you can all follow the correct channels for communication with relevant members of staff – either administrative, academic or pastoral – without "leaping straight to the top" as this will assist greatly with oversight of line management and accountability. It goes without saying that the acting Principals, Business Manager, trustees and myself will still be delighted to chat with you and we will keep an "open door" policy! My thanks in advance for your co-operation in this respect.

Finally, I look forward to a busy and productive year ahead and hope that your sons and daughters return with zest and make the most of the wonderful tutelage and spacious site on offer here at Wemms.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DM', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Duncan Murphy

Chief Executive  
Wemms Education Centre

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