



15th December 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Now that we have reached the end of term, I wanted to write and update you on a few matters. This term has been as busy as always and has seen us continue to make lots of progress in different areas of school. It was lovely to see our progress as a school celebrated in the recent Challenge Partners Review and to have welcomed our biggest Year 7 intake for some time back in September. Our students have excelled this term and understood our new punctuality expectations very quickly. Thank you for all the support you have continued to provide this term and for continuing to work so closely together with us as a home-school partnership.

January 2024

After the Christmas break, students will return to school on Wednesday 3rd January in full uniform. Please note that Tuesday 2nd January 2024 is an INSET day, with students not in school. Please also note that students will return to school on a Week A.

Staffing Update

Earlier this week, I attended an interview for the role of Headteacher at a large school in South Bristol. At the end of the process, I was offered the role, which I have accepted. This means that I will be leaving Whitstone School after nearly four and a half years in March 2024. This new role will afford me the opportunity to work as part of a highly successful Multi-Academy Trust and to lead a larger, 11-18 secondary school. After Christmas, the Board of Trustees will start the process of finding the next Headteacher of Whitstone School, who I will work closely with to ensure a smooth transition.

The decision to take up the role of Headteacher in another school was one of the hardest of my career, given that the past four years have been comfortably the most enjoyable of my career. I have worked with an exceptional staff group, inspiring students and supportive families and have been fortunate to oversee rapid school improvement. The Ofsted inspection in 2022, the recent Challenge Partners Review, the increase in student numbers and, most importantly, the individual successes of our young people have seen us on a far more sustainable, positive path than where we were in 2019. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved and, most importantly, of the students and staff that make our school community the happy, vibrant place it is. I am confident that in the coming years, the school will go from strength to strength and look forward to hearing of its continued success. Whilst I will leave at Easter, all plans remain in place for Year 11 students in the summer, the opening of the specialist unit in September 2024 and the transition process for Year 6 students in the summer.

I am confident that there will be opportunities in the coming weeks and months for me to say goodbye to many of you. I would, however, like to say thank you at this stage for the kindness, support and belief that you have shown me personally during my time as Headteacher of Whitstone School. Our achievements in recent years are due in no small part to your commitment to the education of young people in our community. After Christmas, it will be very much 'business as usual' and I will ensure that you are kept updated as to the appointment of a new Headteacher.

Finally...

I hope that you and your families have a relaxing Christmas and a very happy and safe New Year. I look forward to seeing you again in 2024.

Yours faithfully,

Guy Swallow

Headteacher