



St. William of York Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Lynch

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Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Hayley Mayers

Acting Deputy Head (Maternity Cover): Miss Nikita Ogston

9th January 2024

Dear Parents,

I do hope that you all had a good Christmas break. As we return to school at the start of 2024, I have some sad, but exciting, news to share with you all. I have come to the decision that I am going to retire as Headteacher of St William of York School, at the end of this academic year. I am proud to have served as headteacher, and I am enormously grateful that I have been entrusted with this role to lead such an amazing school, for such a long time!

I have made this decision after much careful thought and discussions with my family and the team here at SWOY. I celebrated my 60th birthday last June, and believe this is the right time to pass on this role to someone new. I am confident that the Governors will recruit a fantastic replacement for me, who will be able to lead the school, and the community of children, parents and staff from September 2024. Governors will advertise the post in the next couple of weeks, and will work with the Diocese and the local authority to ensure a smooth transition to a new headteacher.

I joined St William of York as a part-time teacher in January 1992, and became Acting HT in April 2005, and was made substantive Headteacher in Oct 2005. So, I have worked here for 32 years, and been headteacher for 19 years. I am, in fact, only the 3rd headteacher at SWOY, which tells us all what an amazing Catholic community we have built here in Forest Hill!

It has been an incredible privilege, and honour, to be part of such an amazing faith and school community for such a long time. I have been supported on a professional and personal basis from many governors, staff, pupils and parents, who have always worked alongside me to ensure that we are able to provide a safe, secure and inspiring learning community for our children.

The staff team at SWOY have always shown passion, commitment and love for the children in our school. They have worked hard and always been ready to take on new challenges and opportunities. Their efforts during the Covid pandemic was a testament to their understanding of how their role extends beyond the classroom, and how their kindness and concern for our families is an expression of the Catholic ethos of our school, and close links with parish community.

The support and love that both myself, and the school, has received from the parish community has been incredible in so many different ways. I am grateful for the prayers, the practical support, and the financial support during the Covid pandemic for our families when times were challenging. Fr Habte has been an inspiration, a faithful friend, and a brilliant pastoral and spiritual leader. We are blessed as a parish and school community that he is our Parish Priest.

I also have to take this opportunity to mention Fr Patrick Aikens as having been instrumental in teaching me the true values of how to lead a Christian, and Catholic faith community. He

showed us all how to truly 'live the Gospel' and to be true to the Catholic values that mean so much to us all.

The greatest blessing of being involved in this community for so long, is the relationships that I have formed with so many children and their families. It is a gift to have seen families pass through our school, and to be able to maintain that relationship as we meet at church, or in Sainsbury's! To also have former pupils as current parents, grandparents and also members of our staff team is an added blessing and brings me joy! I am sure we will be able to celebrate with parents, pupils and families, both past and present, towards the end of the summer term.

Governors will keep you informed of the progress in recruiting a new headteacher and I am confident that the school is in a strong position to continue its drive to provide the best education, and pastoral support, for our children. We have an amazing staff team, with some very talented leaders who are committed to the parish, and the whole SWOY community. I know that governors have the skill and expertise to work together to recruit the next leader for St William of York, who can take the school from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharon Lynch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sharon Lynch (Headteacher)