



FINHAM PARK  
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Dear Parents

I am writing to provide you with an update about how things are progressing at Whitley since joining Finham Park Multi Academy Trust in January. I am sure many of you will have seen the really positive press release that was published in the local press – this link will take you to one example if you missed it: <https://coventryobserver.co.uk/news/trusts-executive-head-vows-to-help-turn-coventrys-whitley-academy-around/>

### Governance

Your new Local Governing Body (LGB) has been formed to support the role of local governance at the school. You will remember from my previous letter that the Chair of Whitley Academy LGB is now David Kershaw CBE, a local man who has huge experience of educational improvement in the most challenging circumstances, and as the ex-headteacher of Coundon Court School, has a long association with our City. Other governors were co-opted by the Trust to reflect their local knowledge, and other specialties such as finance, safeguarding and inclusion, and school leadership.

### Whitley Local Governing Body develops...

Name	Role	Area of expertise
David Kershaw OBE	Chair	Education; governance
Fanny Anderson	FPMAT Trustee	Finance
Pauline Parkes	FPMAT Trustee	Safeguarding & Inclusion
Kathryn Wright	Headteacher	Education
Paul Green	FPMAT Consultant Headteacher	Education & Leadership
Ian Jamie	Co-opted Governor	Business & Careers
Staff x 2	Staff Governor (Elected)	
Parent x 3	Parent Governor (Elected)	

I am delighted to inform you that we are now actively seeking new parent governors – the body of parents elect these. Please contact the Clerk to Finham Park MAT, Sam Jannaway on [s.jannaway@finhampark.co.uk](mailto:s.jannaway@finhampark.co.uk) if you feel you may be interested in one of these roles. Kathryn Wright will also be writing to you about this exciting opportunity to be part of Whitley's improvement and exciting future.





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## Engagement with Remote Learning

This has been a real area of improvement since January! Teachers are working hard to support learning at home – and we are all grateful for the support that you as a parent are also providing at this challenging time! We have had some wonderfully positive feedback from many of you, especially following ‘congratulations letters’ that were sent to many students this week – comments included:

- “Thank you for your kind email...I think it will motivate her to keep up her good work. Thank you for the recognition and encouragement.”
- “On behalf of *student* I would to thank you as well for the support and assistance you have given... during this difficult time. Also thank you for appreciating their effort in learning.”
- “Thank you so much for the letter and for the recognition of *student's* work. They have been trying so hard...  
Please thank the RE teacher for his comment and all the other teachers for the praising feedback they give... after they have submitted work. It really gives them a positive boost.”

We have also been providing face to face learning at school for the children of critical workers and those who are vulnerable. I am delighted to report that Whitley students have been welcoming, polite and very engaged with their remote learning when I have met them on visits to the school recently. I feel proud to be associated with them!

## School Improvement News

This month, our seconded MAT Consultant Headteacher, Paul Green and Kathryn Wright have started to work together in earnest to bring about rapid improvement to the school. They are meeting with all senior leaders on a weekly basis, and there are now very clear lines of responsibility on the leadership team. Kathryn Wright has joined her first Finham Park MAT Strategic Operations Meeting, the ‘engine room’ of our MAT, where key decisions are made and all schools contribute to our goal of delivering a “World Class” education for all students. In addition, Whitley teachers and support staff recently joined our annual MAT Training Day (imagine over 600 colleagues in an online environment!) where keynote speakers and workshops focused on sharing best practice and improving teaching and learning in all subjects. One key part of our work has engaged all Whitley staff in ‘Co-construction groups’ – primary and secondary colleagues working together to jointly plan fantastic experiences and innovate new strategies to use in all classrooms – even if the classroom is often in one of your living rooms now!





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**“A small hole not mended in time will become a big hole much more difficult to mend”  
(Ancient Chinese proverb)**

I am sure you will be familiar with the sentiment in the proverb above... One of the things we have to manage carefully in education is our school budget:

Almost all schools in Coventry have made significant adjustments to their provision over the past 5 years to ensure they remain financially healthy in a challenging economy – some of these changes will now begin to take place at Whitley Academy. In all honesty, our role here is simple. We must ensure your child is provided with teaching and learning of the highest quality, whilst making sure that the number of staff we employ matches the income a school receives, based on the size of its cohort. With this in mind, we will be making some simple changes to the curriculum offer, mainly in the Sixth Form, and making sure the number of staff is appropriate for the size of the school. This will mean a reduction in staff at the school overall. I must reassure you as parents that your son/daughter’s provision will not be affected. These long overdue adjustments will in turn provide greater resource for us to improve the education your child receives. One thing we are planning to do is to offer new subjects on the curriculum – for example, the long awaited return of Design Technology /Engineering subjects and the introduction of Music for all those budding performance artists out there! Ultimately, our plan will redistribute budgets so that more funding is available for much-needed ICT investment; additional classroom and site improvements; and a healthier financial position in the near future. No change is easy, but it is vital if we are to improve the offer for our students as fast as we possibly can.

**And finally...**

As soon as social distancing restrictions are relaxed, we will be inviting you into school to talk to us about the future plans we have for Whitley Academy. Together we will develop a shared vision for an ‘outstanding’ future; together we will see the school develop a new specialism to reflect local, national and international priorities, new subjects on the curriculum, more sporting activities, clubs and societies and we will ensure – as we have in all our other schools – that there is something to excite the mind of every young person who attends. Whitley Academy has a bright future with your support and involvement!

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the school office by email or telephone and make an appointment to speak to someone.





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Yours faithfully

Executive Headteacher

Finham Park Multi Academy Trust

