



6th December 2018

Dear Parents and Students,

I am writing to inform you of my promotion within the HOPE Learning Trust to become Executive Lead for Scarborough. As such I will be leaving my post of Principal at Vale of York on 31st December 2018. You will be very pleased to hear that I would not have been willing to take this step if it had left the future of this school and the superb children in our care in any doubt. I am delighted therefore, that Governors have appointed Mr Toby Eastaugh as my successor. Mr Eastaugh is an experienced Headteacher having previously worked in Kirklees and Barnsley and will take my place on January 1st 2019.

This is my 15th year working in York schools, I have been truly privileged to have learnt my trade under some exceptional leaders and to also be part of the growth and development of two highly successful Multi Academy Trusts, Pathfinder and HOPE. Time has flown at Vale of York and I come to the end of three years of working with and for the school. I am truly proud of the journey we have travelled on at Vale of York; transitioning to an Academy, moving from special measures, changing name, brand and uniform, securing a full house of teaching experts, raising standards and engaging community are just a flavour of the rapid improvements undertaken. The fruits of our labours are really beginning to show. I have been heartened by our recently commissioned independent review which recognised how much of the school is now securely good, and the results in 2018 showed measurable improvements. I couldn't have achieved any of this without the support of such a strong team of staff, our Governors, Students and Parents or without the warm, strong community that Vale of York Academy has become.

This has not been an easy decision to reach, I have been privileged and honoured to lead this fantastic school. In reality, I will visit often, my new role which is still within the Trust will still see me participating in all of the Trust-wide activities that I currently undertake. Our motto "Always giving the best" has been my aim in every development, change and initiative and as I leave the school in excellent hands I know that this school will continue to thrive and receive the formal recognition it deserves.

I wish all of you a bright and successful future,

Yours sincerely,

Helen Dowds

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