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Dear Parents and Carers,

Update for Patchway Parents & Carers about Headteacher and School Rebuild

I wrote to you at the start of January with an update about interim leadership arrangements and roles at Patchway Community School from that point forward. I also promised to let you know when we had more information from the Department for Education about the school rebuild programme. I am now in a position to provide a further update about leadership arrangements and to tell you more about the latest developments in relation to the school being rebuilt.

Leadership Update

There are many signs of positive progress since we added additional leadership capacity to Patchway's staffing structure in January and I thank you for supporting changes to routines and expectations in the intervening weeks. There will be a separate end of term newsletter from the school to provide more information about day-to-day routines. However, we need to accelerate the pace of change and improvement to ensure that all Patchway learners are supported in fulfilling their potential in school so further changes are planned.

Mrs Sharon Beesley, who rejoined Patchway's leadership team on secondment from Abbeywood in January, has secured a permanent Deputy Headteacher post in south Bristol, so she will be leaving us at the end of this week. We will be sad to see her go and wish her well.

I am delighted to share that we have appointed Mr Steve Kneller as Patchway's new Headteacher. Mr Kneller is a very experienced Headteacher, who led Hanham Woods Academy from being inadequate to a good judgement from Ofsted when inspected. We are confident that he will be an excellent fit for Patchway's needs at this time and we are very pleased that he is able to join us after Easter as he has just finished an interim Headteacher role elsewhere. There are no other personnel changes on Patchway's leadership team for the remainder of the school year, but there will be some changes to roles and job titles once Mr Kneller has had a chance to review current arrangements with us. There will be further communication about this in due course. Mr Kneller will be in school tomorrow to meet staff and students for the first time, before starting in post on Monday, 15th April when term 5 starts.

In addition to Mr Kneller starting after Easter, as part of our collaborative work with Futura Learning Partnership whilst we explore the possibility of our two Trusts merging, Mr Dean Anderson, who is Futura's Director of Secondary, is going to support us with some additional capacity and expertise to oversee the next phase at Patchway from an executive leadership perspective. Mr Anderson was Headteacher at the Sir Bernard Lovell School in South Gloucestershire before he took on his current role and led the school from an inadequate



judgement to a good judgement when inspected by Ofsted, so he has a strong track record in school improvement and will bring fresh perspectives and ideas to support Mr Kneller's leadership. We are excited about this next phase of development for Patchway.

I am sure you will want to join me in thanking Mrs Powell for her leadership as Interim Headteacher since the start of the year, particularly given the uncertainty during Mr Howe's absence and while we have been looking for a permanent replacement since his departure.

School Rebuild Update

There has been very little information or activity regarding the school rebuild programme for Patchway for several months. In the context of the widely publicised problems with unsafe concrete in schools across the country, our worst fears were that the funding for Patchway to be rebuilt was going to be redirected. Fortunately, this is not the case, and we will still have a new school building. We were expecting to move out of the current main school building in the coming weeks and into modern temporary accommodation so that most of the building could be demolished immediately. This will still happen, but not before Easter 2025 because the contractors appointed to work with us on the design and build have withdrawn from the project. This means that a new contractor will have to be appointed before they can plan their design with us and then build. This process has started, but the changes will inevitably cause a delay. We are now unlikely to be able to be in our new school building until September 2027. I realise that this news will be disappointing for our whole community and I share your frustration. It will be worth waiting for and will be transformational when it comes. In the meantime, the temporary accommodation will be better than much of what we currently have, and we will continue to invest in the current buildings to ensure that they remain safe and fit for purpose whilst still in use.

Thank you for your ongoing support. I will update you in due course, as and when there is significant new information to share.

Yours sincerely,



—
Dave Baker
Chief Executive Officer
The Olympus Academy Trust