



18th April 2023

Dear parents and carers,

It is with a mixture of emotions that I write to let you know that I have stepped down as Headteacher of Cansfield High School, having been appointed as a Professor and Head of the School of Education at Bolton University.

It has been an honour to serve you, your children, and our community over the last five years. I am incredibly proud to have been part of a school that prides itself on inclusion, care, and knowledge of individuals. Without fail, every day has brought something new and, in many cases, a peculiar issue that I could never have prepared for. Certainly, the intellectual and emotional challenge of the last five years has kept me thoroughly absorbed and is unlike anything I have ever experienced. A particular challenge was getting through a pandemic and the disproportionate impact that this brought on our community. Yet in these moments of darkness, I have been deeply moved by the way that students, families, and members of staff have come together to support each other. It is this sense of community that defines our school and makes Cansfield so unique.

You will be aware that in recent years the school has transformed in every possible measure and it has been a gift to work with staff whose commitment and capabilities have made this possible. What the staff at Cansfield have achieved is testament to their hard work and dedication and they remain committed to your children. I should note that the calibre of staff at the school runs through every colleague we have from senior leaders to classroom support staff, admin staff to teaching staff, site staff to our finance team and is also fully reflected in our outstanding Governors. Your children have been and remain in excellent hands. As you will know from my previous letters, we have made several new hires in recent months, and I am certain that our new staff are equally committed to the values and philosophy of our school. Staff remain dedicated to ensuring the highest standard of provision for your children.

We have delayed making this news public to have as little impact on the outgoing Year 11s as is possible. My new post starts on 1st June, and I will continue to play a role in working with Year 11 students until the end of their time at our school as I normally would. To ensure the smoothest transition across the school, Governors have appointed Nici Daniels, our current Deputy Headteacher, as Acting Headteacher and I will be working closely with Nici to ensure that there is continuity moving forward. You will be aware that over the last few months Nici has been taking an increasingly central role in meetings with parents and behind the scenes she has had an increased input into operational and strategic decisions. The permanent position is in the process of going to advert and Governors and I will let you know the outcome as soon as is possible. Given the strong position of the school, I have every confidence that by the time I leave there will be an excellent successor appointed and I will be working closely with them to ensure that they get the handover that is necessary to minimise any disruption. Beyond this, part of my new role will involve working with schools, and Governors have already begun discussions about how this might work moving forward, so it is very likely that I will continue to be a presence in the school, albeit in a different role.

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On a personal level, looking back over the last five years there have been many more good days than bad. The joy of watching your children, and past Cansfield students, grow into the incredible young people they are today has been a privilege that I will cherish for the rest of my life. In my new role I very much hope that I continue to be part of this journey in some way, but whatever the future holds please accept my thanks for your support, your warmth, and your good humour over the last five years ... although all consuming, it has been nothing short of a pleasure. I have no doubt that Governors will make an exceptional choice for my successor and that the mission and trajectory of the school's development will continue at apace.

Over the next half term, it is very much business as usual. I and other members of the senior leadership team will be a constant presence in the school and standards will not slip. If you have any concerns or queries in the meantime, as always please feel free to email me direct at g.baker@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GB', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Geoff Baker.