

Dear parents, staff, and students,

As we approach the end of the academic year, I am writing to thank you for everything that you have done to support our wonderful BTH family. On behalf of all the governors, I would like to express my pleasure and joy in being part of such a positive and loving community.

I took over as chair of governors last summer, when it became clear that John Shuttleworth was too ill to continue. As you know, John sadly died just after Christmas. As well as attending his requiem mass at St Hugh's Church in Timperley, I was privileged to attend the memorial for him at school a few weeks later. The lovely new chapel was packed out with staff, students, and governors. John was devoted to the school, so it was wonderful to be able to return some of that devotion, which I know was also a source of comfort to his wife.

The governing body has welcomed several new members in the current year. Roxanne O'Gorman was elected by parents as a second parent governor, joining Christian Ostmeier in that role; Anne-Mary Kelly, Sarah Butler, and Eliza Patterson were appointed by the Diocese as new foundation governors; and Peter Cox was appointed by the Governing Body as an associate governor, to help us with his wide experience in secondary school management. We still have two vacancies on the Governing Board, one for a foundation governor and one for a Local Authority governor, but we are in a much stronger position than we were at the beginning of the academic year. If you would like to know more about the Governors, do have a look at the governor section on the school website.

A highlight of the year has, of course, been the OFSTED result in the spring, when the enormous efforts of everyone in the BTH family paid off, with 'good' ratings in all areas. Although she will probably say it was a team effort, I would like to take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to Mrs Hogg, whose enthusiasm, warmth, and determination to provide the best for all our pupils and students have been behind everything that has happened. She is right that it is a team effort, and this tribute should extend to the senior leadership team, all the staff, the children and young people, and the support of parents. But leadership is essential, and in that regard we are particularly blessed.

While it was great to get the affirmation from OFSTED, what really matters is the education and formation of our young people. Highlights for me have been attending the A-level results day last August, and helping out with any questions regarding university destinations (my day job is teaching Classics at the University of Manchester); giving a talk to students studying for A-level classical civilisation and hearing their highly engaged questions and responses; and seeing the extraordinary fine artwork produced by our A-level students.

It is always a special pleasure to attend liturgies and religious celebrations with the school. It was a delight to attend the welcome mass for the new Year 7 children back in the autumn. I especially enjoyed meeting new children whose older siblings I already knew at the school. A particular highlight for me was the advent service at St Vincent's church, which was so thoughtfully planned and prayerfully executed.

I have visited the school on numerous occasions and always been very impressed by the good manners and good sense of the children and young people whom I meet. Mrs Hogg arranged for a group of highly articulate and friendly sixth formers to take me on a tour one time, which allowed me to see parts of the school functioning in real life. On another occasion, I was taken to see the glorious new artwork in the RE department. Here, some of the great masterpieces of religious art have been reproduced in very high quality, with helpful commentary, linking the work to elements in the RE curriculum, as well as, most importantly, to the Christian life that is the mainstay of BTH. If you have not had an opportunity to see it yet, I would strongly recommend that you do so.

When you receive this letter, school will be just about to break up for the summer holidays. I wish you all a relaxing break, and lots of fun in whatever activities you have planned. For those of you who are moving on from BTH this year, you go with the good wishes of the whole family. For those of you who will be returning in September, we look forward to seeing you then.

With all good wishes,

Alison Sharrock

Chair of Governors