

Educate for life

Dear parents and carers,

We hope you and your family enjoyed a restful Christmas break and that your child is looking forward to returning back to school tomorrow, with an exciting term ahead. Ahead of this, we writing to share some important news about the leadership of Cowes Enterprise College.

After nine years as Principal, Mrs Rachel Kitley has decided to step down from her role at the end of the spring term, as she takes up a prestigious new position with Ofsted, where she will be an His majesty's Inspector leading inspections across the South East.

While we are of course sorry to see Rachel leave, this appointment reflects her expertise, experience and the strength of her leadership. This decision also coincides with a family relocation – in the fullness of time - back to the mainland, as her children move into the next phase of their education.

Rachel joined Cowes Enterprise College in 2017, at a time when the school was at a very different stage in its journey. Working closely with staff, students, governors, families and the wider community, Rachel has accelerated the academy's improvement journey.

As a result, outcomes are now consistently at or above national averages; the school is recognised nationally for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; the sixth form has grown significantly with students securing strong university and apprenticeship destinations; the school has maintained its Good Ofsted judgement; and Cowes Enterprise College is now popular, oversubscribed and firmly established as a school of choice for local families.

Rachel has also played a key role in raising the profile of the academy beyond the Island, showcasing the strengths of our distinctive maritime curriculum and local heritage, which has brought national recognition and awards, including winning the Maritime UK Future Skills Award in 2022.

More will follow from Rachel in her newsletter on Thursday, but on asking her to share a message with you all, she said:

"This has been an extremely difficult decision, and come April I know I will miss the school and wider community hugely. However, I leave knowing that the school is now in one of the strongest positions it has ever been in, and that it will continue to go from strength to strength.

Everything that we have achieved together at Cowes has been as a result of the hard work, commitment and ambition of our staff, students, families and wider community and its been an honour to work alongside you all.

Moving to the Island was a big decision for my family and I, but from the moment we arrived we were made to feel incredibly welcome. The warmth, loyalty and support shown by the whole school community have meant a great deal to us and is something we will always be grateful for."

Rachel will continue to lead the school as usual throughout the remainder of the spring term. With the continued support of Ormiston Academies Trust, the recruitment process for a new Principal will begin shortly, with the intention of making an appointment for September. Further details regarding interim leadership arrangements for the summer term will also be shared in due course.

In the meantime, we want to reassure you that the academy remains stable, well led and fully supported. The senior leadership team, governing body and Ormiston Academies Trust are united in their commitment to maintaining the school's positive direction of travel.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Rachel Richards
Chair of Governors
Cowes Enterprise College

Paul Hyde
Education Director (South)
Ormiston Academies Trust