

1 October 2024

From Iain Grafton MBE

Dear Parents/Carers and Colleagues,

I write to let you know that after thirteen years of being the Chair of the Board of Trustees at Westcountry Schools Trust, the time has come for me to step down.

I have given careful consideration to this decision over the past two years, choosing to be certain that before doing so, there was a well managed process of handing over the reins to a new Chair.

I am pleased, therefore, to let you know that going forwards, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be Carl Atkinson.

Some of you will already know Carl, who has been the Vice Chair of Trustees for the past two years and who was formerly the Chair of the Governing Board at Hele's School. Carl has a wealth of skills and experience in the world of governance, particularly around the financial side of Westcountry Schools Trust, and he is a great advocate for all the Trust does for the children and young people we look after.

I have chosen to step down for three reasons. They are philosophical, practical and personal.

Philosophically our Trust is at a stage in its development where those of us who became Trustees and senior leaders over ten years ago are starting to move on, either through retirement, or because it is the right time to do so. We brought our skills and experience to bear on a model of delivery of education that had no real blueprint to follow. We learnt about how to do it, as we were doing it, and reflecting on that journey, and looking to the future direction of multi academy trusts isn't unique to Westcountry Schools Trust. It is happening locally, and nationally. Version 1 of multi academy trusts are beginning to do what is normal in all organisations. They are evolving, growing and changing. Some of their people are moving on. Our Trust is no different. It is time for me to step down and facilitate the Board to take WeST forward to its next and further iterations.

Practically I am stepping down in order to be able to manage the workload that has evolved with being Chair and carrying the portfolio of Lead Trustee for Safeguarding. As the Trust has grown, so has the workload for both roles. What was manageable ten years, and even three

years ago, has become unsustainable. I set myself high standards for all that I do, and the demands now are such that it is no longer possible to serve the Trust in both roles. Something has to give. This increase in workload for the Trust is being mirrored with my role as a foster carer with Devon Fostering, and I want to be able to give of my best to the role of Safeguarding Trustee, and support the Local Authority in providing a home for those children who from time have to be taken into care to keep them safe. I want to put on record my sincerest thanks to my colleagues on the Board for their support and endorsement in allowing me to continue as the Safeguarding Trustee, and thereby to support the work you all do to keep each other and everyone safe in WeST.

Personally, as my wife and I now have our very first grandchild (whom we hope and trust will be a WeST pupil in due course!), our family diary is starting to get booked up with the wonderful opportunities that come with being a regular childcare resource - stepping down as Chair of the Trust will liberate time for this!

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank each of you for all that you do to improve the life chances of the children and young people across WeST. I look forward to continuing to be able to support you all in that work in the years to come.

Best wishes,



Iain Grafton MBE
Trustee
Westcountry Schools Trust

From Rob Haring

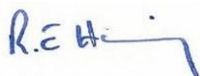
Dear Parents/Carers and Colleagues,

On behalf of the entire Westcountry Schools Trust, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Iain for his exceptional service and dedication over the past thirteen years as Chair of WeST. Iain's unwavering commitment and vast contributions have been instrumental in shaping the Trust into what it is today. He has given an immense amount of time and effort, always balancing support and challenge in a way that has allowed us to grow and thrive. His integrity and steadfastness have been a guiding light for all of us and his leadership will be dearly missed.

Iain's ability to foster a culture of excellence and accountability has set a high standard for us all. His thoughtful insights and strategic vision have ensured that the Trust remains focused on its core mission of improving the life chances of children and young people. As he steps down from his role, we are confident that his legacy will continue to inspire and guide the Trust for many years to come.

Thank you, Iain, for your remarkable leadership and for the profound impact you have had on Westcountry Schools Trust. We wish you the very best in your future endeavours and look forward to your continued involvement as the Safeguarding Trustee.

Best wishes,



Rob Haring
Chief Executive Officer
Westcountry Schools Trust