

Dear Yeoman and Redgate families

Looking back over this term, the most striking aspect is the difference between the first and last halves of it. The first half of term was extremely challenging for everyone as the effects of covid continued to be felt, with staff and children absent due to very high levels of infection throughout the school communities. The staff have coped amazingly well, despite their own fatigue, to keep going while they have had to cover for absent colleagues and manage their own classes too. I would like to thank them for their commitment and professional approach which has never faltered and I would also like to thank all of you for being so understanding on the, thankfully, few occasions when classes had to be closed.

It felt very different as we returned to the academies after February half term and much more 'normal' until Ofsted arrived at Yeoman Park of course! Once again the staff and pupils rose to the occasion and were fantastic – more details about the inspection when the report is available.

I was especially pleased to visit both academies to meet the students and children this term. It was such a pleasure to see them enjoying their day. I was welcomed into all the classrooms enthusiastically and invited to see the students' work, which they displayed very proudly. As it was Shrove Tuesday at Redgate, pancakes were being enjoyed by many classes, and food featured highly at Yeoman Park too. Students were mixing dough and making bread to the accompaniment of delicious smells. I had a lovely conversation with one young man who had recently joined Redgate and when I asked what he thought of his new school, he said 'Brilliant'. You can't get better than that!

Both academies have made improvements to the environment. In the post 16 unit at Yeoman, the redesigning of the space has made a great difference to the students there, encouraging greater independence. The outdoor areas at Redgate have been given a comprehensive makeover since I last visited and now the children have interesting outdoor spaces to enjoy safely. Everywhere I went in both academies there was an air of calm participation in the varied and interesting activities staff had prepared for their students. It was inspiring to see the positive interaction between staff and children. Governors were happy to hear that educational visits will be starting again and welcome the return of this valuable aspect of the school curriculum.

My visits have reminded me again of why I wanted to be a governor and I feel privileged to be involved in the education of such fantastic children and young people. Please do consider joining us on our active and friendly academy governor team!

With best wishes

Lynn Weeks

Chair of Governors