



28 April 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to let you know that, after many years of involvement with the Folkestone Academy, I have decided to retire from my position as Sponsor and Chair of Governors.

It is fifteen years since I began the process of lobbying the Government to establish one of their flagship "City Academies" in Folkestone. Our mission was to improve education and life chances for young people in Folkestone by securing significant investment to build a brand new secondary school. The existing Channel School was housed in very run-down buildings, had been placed in special measures and in 2002/3 only 8% of students achieved 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE, which made it one of the worst performing schools in the country. There was no sixth form. We secured early backing for our proposal from the Prime Minister of the day, and during the following five years we worked hard to obtain approval from the Department for Education, to reassure local people about our plans and to secure planning permission. We then proceeded to appoint architects and contractors to build the new school. The Folkestone Academy opened in 2007, representing some £37 million in investment in education for Folkestone's young people, over £2 million of which I was pleased to provide in my capacity as Sponsor.

In 2009 we joined with a local primary school, whose buildings were also in a very poor state, to create the Folkestone All Age Academy, altogether providing places for well over 2000 children from ages 3 -18. In 2013 the Primary Phase moved into new bespoke accommodation costing over £6 million.

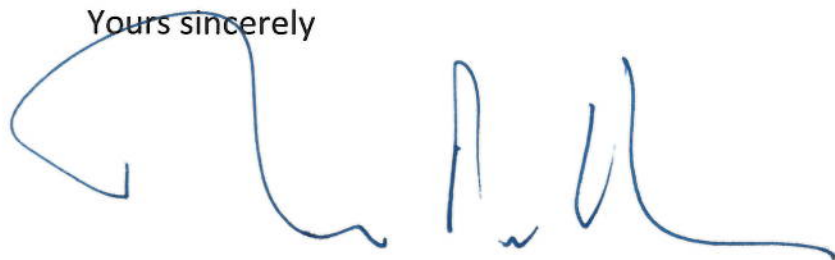
There have been many challenges in these intervening years but the Academy's academic performance has improved significantly in that time. This has enabled increasing numbers of students to leave the Academy with good qualifications and many hundreds have taken up university places, moving on from the sixth form that we established. Our most recent Ofsted inspection

rated the Academy as “Good.” This is a strong position from which the Academy can move forward.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for the considerable support I have received as Chairman from my fellow Governors, and in particular from Trevor Minter, Richard Fraser and Ros McCarthy, who are also stepping down at this time. Their commitment has contributed in no small measure to the Academy’s success. I should also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the broader school community, including teaching and ancillary staff, parents and pupils. I look forward to maintaining close links with the Academy, including through the endowment fund that we set up to help provide support.

Finally, I should like to introduce Professor Carl Lygo, who has taken over as the new Chair of Governors. Professor Lygo has considerable expertise in education and training of professionals, and is committed to widening opportunities to those from diverse backgrounds. He will be joined on the Board of Governors by Alexia Zimbler, a barrister who is highly experienced in issues relating to children. Also joining the team is Dr Jo Saxton, currently Chief Executive Officer of Turner Schools, a new Multi-Academy Trust that currently runs two Folkestone primary schools and will be responsible for the new Free School in Folkestone. I met Jo some time ago when she made a valuable contribution to an important policy review at Folkestone Academy. Since then she has also joined the Academy’s Standards Committee. I hold Jo in very high regard and am delighted that she has agreed to take on the role of Chief Executive of The Folkestone Academy. These new arrangements allow for a powerful collaboration between Turner Schools, Folkestone Academy and its existing partners, The Folkestone School for Girls and The King’s School, Canterbury. This new partnership working and the shared expertise it brings, will deliver tremendous benefits to The Folkestone Academy and the whole Folkestone community

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. De Haan', with a large, sweeping initial 'R'.

Sir Roger De Haan