



Friars Primary Foundation School
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Monday 29th November 2021

Dear parents and carers,

We are writing to inform you of the plans we have put in place for the leadership of Friars from January 2022. The children have also been told today in assembly.

Governors have held succession planning meetings and discussed different scenarios. Following Mr Burt's resignation, we have had to take a number of factors into account. These include:

- maintaining the nurturing environment of a small school in a climate where many London one form entry schools are struggling to stay viable;
- ensuring that the school remains judged as Good;
- the difficulty, nationally, of recruiting headteachers;
- pupil numbers falling across Southwark and London, forcing some schools to close or amalgamate;
- retaining a strong staff team whilst providing opportunities for continued development;
- supporting the curriculum in the broadest sense to enable all children to flourish.

After a great deal of discussion and deliberation, the majority of governors have decided that the best course of action is to enter into a soft federation, and we will join The Bridges Federation. This currently consists of three schools: Snowsfields; Tower Bridge and Robert Browning. All three schools are Ofsted rated as Good.

There are two types of federation, 'Soft' and 'Hard'. A soft federation is less binding than a hard federation and lasts for an agreed length of time before the decision is made whether or not to form a hard federation. The schools work together, overseen by an executive head, but a school can decide to leave the federation at the end of the term of the soft federation, should it so wish. However, we enter into a soft federation hoping that following a trial period, further research and consultation with stakeholders, Friars will move into a hard federation in the future. The length of the period of soft federation between Friars and The Bridges has yet to be decided, but will almost certainly be at least a year.

Headteacher: Justin Burt

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The Bridges Federation is led by Kate Wooder, Executive Head. When Friars joins the federation, overall responsibility will be that of the Executive Head. Jo Wratten, currently Friars' Deputy Head, will become Co-Head of School along with one of the leaders from The Bridges Federation – Zohra Benotmane. The Co-Heads will undertake the day to day running of the school and report to the Executive Head.

We understand that you may have many questions regarding this news. We will be available at the school for a coffee morning/question and answer session on Thursday 9th December, starting at 09:00, along with some members of The Bridges Federation senior leadership team. For parents who are unable to attend the coffee morning, a Zoom meeting will be arranged in due course. Please keep informed through the school newsletter.

In the meantime, we hope you share our excitement as the school enters into this new phase.

Best Wishes,

Maddy Webb

Maddy Webb – Chair of Governors

Joe O'Neill – Vice Chair of Governors

Pauline Hinchliffe – former Chair and link governor for federation liaison

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