



Headteacher: Mrs Helen Pye
**Sutton-on-the-Forest Church of England
Voluntary Controlled Primary School**
Main Street
Sutton-on-the-Forest
York YO61 1DW
T: 01347 810230
E: admin@sutton-on-the-forest.n-yorks.sch.uk
W: www.suttonontheforestschool.org

7th September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

As the newly elected Chair of the School Governing Body, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you and to provide you with a little background information about myself, and some details about how I come to find myself in what I truly believe to be a privileged position as Chair of Governors at Sutton on the Forest Primary School. My wife, Catherine, and I have lived in Sutton on the Forest since December 2009, and our son Luke started in Reception class at this time last year. Following playground conversations with other parents and governors over the course of the year I was persuaded to become a parent governor, and prior to the summer I agreed to become Chair of Governors when Stephanie Windsor stepped down from the position at the end of August. While I fully appreciate the challenges that lie ahead, I believe that this is an exciting time to take on this role, especially with the recent appointment of an exceptional Headteacher, a dedicated staff team, a positive Ofsted inspection upon which to build, considerable experience on the governing body and an opportunity to recruit new governors who will be able to contribute their expertise to the school's future development as an exceptional place to learn and where all pupils are able to fulfil their potential.

While I clearly have a vested interest in helping the School to realise these aspirations, the broader motivation behind my agreeing to take on this role has its roots in my own education and a 35 year career in the University sector as a researcher, a teacher and a senior manager. This experience has not only helped develop, but has reinforced deeply held beliefs in the empowering influence of education and the benefits that can be gained from fostering learning environments that stimulate both curiosity and personal mastery and where all can achieve. It is the opportunity to help shape the learning environment at Sutton on the Forest Primary School that draws me to this role. At this time I feel able to fully commit to the role as Chair of Governors because in August 2017 I was in the fortunate position to be able to retire from my position as Professor of Sport and Exercise Psychology and University Head of Research at York St John University, where I had been employed for almost 10 years.

Although I finished my working life in a senior leadership position in higher education, I began my career studying social geography at University. After completing my degree, I was able to indulge my real passion, and so I played professional football for a short while. It did not take me long, however, to realise that I was unlikely to make it beyond the lower echelons of the English football league, and so I returned to education and trained as a PE teacher. While I didn't put my teaching qualification to use in the UK, I was given an opportunity to teach in the USA while undertaking post-graduate study. During this time I earned an MSc in Sport and Exercise Psychology from the University of North Texas, a PhD in Kinesiology from the University of Illinois and I held academic positions at both the University of Colorado and Syracuse University. However, after ten years in the USA, I chose to return to the UK where I held professorial positions at various Universities before moving to York St John University in 2008.

One of the distinct advantages of working as an academic in a University setting is that it enables you to indulge your own curiosity about your chosen subject. In my case it allowed me to pursue personal interests in social psychology, and conduct research on motivation and achievement, and more recently my research has focused on the influence of perfectionism on both motivation and psychological well being. Throughout my career I have been an active researcher and I have written about the findings of this research in numerous journal articles. I have also published book chapters on the subject and I have co-authored a statistics text book for use by undergraduate students. However, if one was to talk to my primary school teachers about where they believed my career path would take me, I don't believe any of them would have anticipated the direction that my career took (other than the football). I have been able to have a wonderfully fulfilling career because those responsible for creating the learning environments at school, at University and beyond have challenged me, encouraged me to have high aspirations and enabled my curiosity and my interests to flourish. It is this type of learning environment that I desire for my own child and for all the children at Sutton on the Forest Primary School and in my role as Chair of Governors I am looking forward to supporting Helen Pye and her staff in fulfilling this aim and building on the School's success.

If I can help with anything please ask. As I am at School for morning drop off and afternoon pick up, please feel free to speak with me in the School playground about issues that you feel are relevant to the School Governing body, or if you wish to communicate anything in writing to the Governing Body, the Chair of Governors e-mail address is CofG@sutton-on-the-forest.n-yorks.sch.uk I look forward to serving the school in this role over the coming academic year and I hope that I can count on your support.

Best wishes,

Howard K. Hall

Professor Howard K.Hall
Chair of Governors