



GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email: info@garstang.fcat.org.uk

1st September 2022

Dear Parent

My name is Sean Bullen and I am Director of Education for FCAT, as you know Garstang Community Academy is part of Fylde Coast Academy Trust.

Before I write about anything else, may I express my deepest sympathy to the family of Karen Ashcroft after she sadly passed away just before the end of summer term after a battle with cancer. She was a much respected and well liked member of our community and taught Maths for many years here. Our thoughts are with her family at this continuing sad time. The community has had a tragic loss, and support has been offered to colleagues and children if they wish to access it.

I do have an important update to share with you as Alasdair Ashcroft has left his role as Headteacher at Garstang on 31/8/22 and has asked for the following statement to be shared with colleagues:

Unbelievably, I have spent nearly half my 30 year career at Garstang (High School and then Community Academy); first as Deputy Headteacher for 8 years and for the last 6 years as Headteacher.

Through many, many highs, and only one or two lows, it has been an absolute privilege and honour to be involved in leading the growth and development of what, I believe, has become a reliably really good community school (better progress made by GCA children than in any other Fylde or Wyre school and better than LRGS the last time these things were actually measured in 2019).

However, I have found that the pressures placed on me as Headteacher of GCA have required me to have almost bottomless reserves of energy and resilience and, unfortunately, as I am not as young as I once was, the events of the last couple of years have depleted my reserves of both of these to such a degree that I no longer feel in a position to continue to drive this wonderful school forwards, which has always been my goal. This realisation, together with an overwhelming need to review my work/life priorities, means therefore, that with a heavy heart and in the belief that I am doing what is best for the school, and others, I announce that I am stepping down from my role as Headteacher and stepping away from GCA from 31st August 2022.

I will miss the amazing and committed GCA staff; and I will especially miss the really wonderful young people who are the *raison d'être* and the lifeblood of everything which happens at the school.

So, with a tear in my eye, I bid you adieu.

Alasdair Ashcroft

We thank him for his enormous contribution to the school and wish him all the very best for the future. I will be Interim Headteacher from September.



GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY

Bowgreave · Garstang · Lancashire · PR3 1YE · Tel: 01995 603226 · Email: info@garstang.fcat.org.uk

My role as Interim Headteacher will be to lead the school calmly after what has been a challenging year, both with Covid and the tragic loss of Karen. I bring a wealth of experience, as I have been a Headteacher or Executive Headteacher for 16 years. Whilst Headteacher at Millfield SPAC in

Thornton I led a team that won the National Pupil Premium award in 2014 and I was Fylde Coast Headteacher of the year in 2015. More recently in my role at FCAT, I supported the improvements at Montgomery and I operationally led the Trust during the Covid pandemic, which you can imagine was a challenge.

I only write these things to indicate that I wish to bring that experience to GCA, to have a productive Autumn term, part of which will be to appoint a new Headteacher for Garstang Community Academy. I visit the school regularly and I know what a lovely school it is. I look forward to providing stable leadership for the term ahead and working with a strong SLT and indeed the whole school community.

I will still be completing some aspects of my Director of Education role for FCAT, but I aim to be at Garstang four days a week. I am looking forward to it, especially as being a local man I visited the school hall on a number of occasions many years ago when my Mum worked with the local amateur dramatic society.

As well as offering experience in the new term my other major task will indeed be to support with the appointment of a new Headteacher to take the school forward in the coming years. I look forward to helping our Academy move forward in September and meet many of you. Please call me in September if you wish to have anything clarified and I will keep in regular communication with all of you.

Yours in partnership

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sean M. Bullen'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'S' and 'B'.

Sean M Bullen (BA Eng/Dra, Masters in Education, NPQH, SSAT Executive Headteacher qualification)