

Dear Parents,

Following a successful recruitment campaign, in partnership with Peridot (educational recruitment specialists), the Board of Trustees and I are delighted to announce the appointment of **Helen Barsham as the new Headteacher for Hollygirt School from September 2021.**

The Trustee interview panel held interviews and presentations with three very strong candidates over two days in December. Candidates also met with Mrs Hutley, a group of Hollygirt staff, and a group of junior and senior school pupils. As it was such a key appointment for our school, it was important that we gathered as much feedback as possible about the candidates.

All three candidates had their own strengths and a lot of experience, making the final decision difficult. However, one candidate stood out to us for their mixture of relevant experience, forward thinking and innovative ideas, plus a genuine care for their pupils, the staff they work with, and the school they lead.

Now that all the necessary contractual paperwork has been completed and our formal offer has been accepted, we are delighted to begin to welcome Helen into our school community.

Helen brings with her a wealth of teaching and leadership experience from both the state and independent school sectors. Working most recently as the headteacher at an independent co-educational school in East Anglia, she successfully prepared staff for a compliance inspection, led pupils to achieve positive performance improvements and excellent exam results, as well as managing the school through the initial stages of the pandemic and delivering remote learning systems throughout the school. Helen is also currently completing a doctoral degree in Psychology in Education at Cambridge University.

The Board of Trustees are committed to supporting a smooth transition as the headship is handed over to Mrs Barsham, ensuring the legacy of Mrs Hutley's hard work and dedication to Hollygirt will be the foundation of an exciting new phase in the school's story.

We will be arranging an online event in the coming weeks to allow Mrs Barsham to introduce herself to all our parents, plus giving you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. More details to follow shortly. We will also be arranging opportunities for our staff and pupils to get to know their new headteacher over the coming weeks and months.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch by [emailing Mrs Bamber](#) and she will pass any queries on to me.

On behalf of the whole Board of Trustees, I would like to thank all our pupils and their families for their continued support and co-operation. Everyone has had to adjust to the changing pandemic situation and such rapid change can be unsettling, but I hope we can continue to work together to provide an engaging and supportive education for the children throughout the school.

Ever onwards and upwards in 2021.

Best wishes,

Dr Debra Costley  
Chair of the Hollygirt Trustees