

Fern Academy Trust



CEO : Tracey A Kneale CBE

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Dear Parents / Carers / Colleagues

After more than 20 years working for Marlbrook, St Martin's and more recently Wellington, I have decided to 'finally' retire at the end of August 2026. As many of you are aware, I have been part-time for a number of years, but now that Fern Academy Trust is successfully 'up and running', with an amazing team of very talented staff, it feels like a good time to step down completely.

Since 2004 I have met so many wonderful children (many of whom are now adults with children of their own !), families and colleagues, and I will be forever grateful for the fun, laughter and support I have received over the years; and whilst incredibly sorry to leave, it is time for a new CEO to take the schools on the next stage of their journeys.

As an Academy, over the past year we have established some great partnerships with other Multi Academy Trusts, sharing expertise, ideas, resources and a few staff and we will be seeking to strengthen these links over the next 2 terms to ensure that the children and staff of Fern Academy Trust continue to thrive.

Our schools will continue to be managed and led day-to-day by their Headteachers (Claire Smethurst, Rachel Matthews and Emma Blankley), but Emma Blankley has agreed to take on the role of Interim CEO from September 2026, in addition to her Headteacher role at Wellington, whilst the Board of Trustees appoint a new CEO.

I know I will see many, if not all of you before the end of the Summer term, but I wanted to ensure that our children, families and staff knew of my decision before it was shared with the Local Authority, the DfE and colleagues from other schools across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

With best wishes

Tracey Kneale
CEO of Fern Academy Trust

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Wellington Primary School

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St Martin's Primary School

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