8th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am delighted to be able to introduce myself to you as the new headteacher of Walthamstow School for Girls. It is a real privilege to lead such a fantastic, high-achieving school which also has a wonderful ethos, valuing every young woman and striving to ‘bring out the gift’ in each of your daughters.

I thought I would begin by telling you something about myself and my background. I am originally from the North East Midlands: I grew up in Derbyshire, went to my local comprehensive school and was encouraged to apply to Cambridge University for my degree. I was surprised, telling my English teacher “People like me don’t go there!” However, I was successful at interview and went on to read English at Churchill College, leaving with a BA Hons, a university prize and later a Masters. You will not be surprised to learn, then, that I believe that there are no barriers to what young women can achieve.

I began my career as an English teacher, progressing to Head of English and then worked as a senior leader in a number of schools, including in Waltham Forest. My most recent post was as Co-Headteacher at Little Ilford School, an outstanding school in Newham, where I had previously been Deputy Head, responsible for Teaching and Learning.

I am thrilled that a key part of my role is to address issues of gender inequality and to empower young women to become leaders of the future. As a mother of two teenage girls, I understand the challenges which our daughters face and the concerns we have in supporting them. These have been exacerbated by COVID where young people have faced even greater dislocation and isolation, and where we know the disadvantaged have suffered most. The Walthamstow approach of putting the child at the centre and developing your daughters into well-rounded young women will continue to be important. It is more vital than ever that girls’ voices are heard, so that they can feel valued and understood by the adults around them, and that we develop them as critical thinkers. WSFG has a strong sense of community, where everyone supports each other, and I have already been impressed by the levels of individual care demonstrated by the staff working in the school. It is important that we ‘bring out the gift’ in each individual girl, whatever that might be. It is so important that we work together in partnership, particularly during this difficult time.

I am passionate about education being a vehicle for promoting equality for all, and that was a major reason why I have come to Walthamstow. I really do believe, and know from experience, that education offers life-changing opportunities.

This is already a fantastic school, with Ofsted Outstanding status, which shares its excellent practice with other schools locally and nationally. The high academic standards which the girls achieve is testament to the diligence and commitment of the school staff, the achievements of your daughters and the support and

encouragement from you as parents. It is important to me that we maintain those high standards and we continue to strive to be better. I want to work with you, with our governors and with our local community, to ensure that your daughters have the best possible future, every possible opportunity, because of the excellent education which they receive.

I look forward to introducing myself to you and would encourage you to attend one of my Headteacher Surgeries which take place between 5.30 and 7.00 every Monday. You can book a remote meeting through the info@wsfg.waltham.sch.uk school e-mail address.

Yours faithfully



Helen Marriott

Headteacher