



Our Ref: AVS/CH

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2026

## In Memory of Ms Walsh

Dear Families,

**It is with great sadness that I share with families today the news that Ms Walsh passed away over the weekend.**

Ms Walsh was our much-loved Headteacher at Temple Meadow for 15 years. She was incredibly proud of her time here and devoted so much of her life to the school, its children, families and staff. Her commitment, compassion and leadership left a lasting legacy that continues to shape our community today.

Following her retirement, Cathy was unfortunately diagnosed with a Stage 4 brain tumour. Throughout her illness, she demonstrated remarkable courage and dignity.

I would like to share an extract from her final message to the Temple Meadow community when she retired in July 2024:



### The long goodbye!

I have had the most fabulous week with so many beautiful celebrations that have all been part of my leaver events.

It has been an absolute privilege being Headteacher at Temple Meadow for the last 15 years. As I leave, I feel truly cherished by all the love and good wishes across our whole school community.

**The Fun Day** was simply so much fun. The weather couldn't have been kinder and children just loved the inflatable obstacle course, which I managed to complete with Reception children. Children loved the ice cream van and I found the singing and the presentation of a card, for every year of my Headship overall, a 'spine-tingling' moment.

Then today, **my final assembly was just magnificent**. I loved all the usual bits where we reveal the Headboys and Headgirls, present flowers to Miss Jones who leaves on maternity and conduct all the pupil prize draws (details below).



Very many of our Governors joined us and I was presented with a beautiful picture representing the cherry tree containing all the children's thumbprints across the school. I will cherish that forever.

I then had the most amazing poem with contributions across the staff team which was carefully crafted by Miss Hodgetts (see below).



**Temple Meadow Primary School**

Wrights Lane  
Cradley Heath  
West Midlands  
B64 6RH

Headteacher: Mrs A. Van Straaten

Tel: 01384 569021

Web: [www.templemeadow.com](http://www.templemeadow.com)

Email: [tm.admin@meadow.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:tm.admin@meadow.sandwell.sch.uk)

 Temple Meadow Primary School



## An Ode to Ms Walsh

Headteacher of Temple Meadow Primary School 2009-2024

Your journey at Temple Meadow, may have not been a Sensational Start,  
But from day one you didn't give up and that's what sets you apart.  
On a gloomy day in January, you came to visit your new school,  
And much to your surprise you found a bullseye knocking on the door,  
A school that was cold with no heating and uniform hidden away.  
And from 2009 you have pushed for the best, every day.

There's been many a policy to write, and live action plans to read,  
Staff meetings, Lesson observations and Star Assemblies to lead.  
At Temple Meadow you are keen for both the pupils and staff to learn,  
You have educated the educator, challenging stereotypes at every turn.  
You share your passions of protecting our planet, of Art and History,  
Representing all of us and celebrating it through 'Proud to be me'.

You've sat through most of our interviews, watched people come and go,  
You hired many of us as NQT's and have helped us grow and grow.  
There has been lots to celebrate and there has been a few issues,  
But you are always ready in your office with a box of trusty tissues.  
You started the termly rewards draw and our pizza phase,  
To celebrate all of our hard work over the long school days.

We  
had

Through your time at Temple Meadow, you've had many visitors through the door,  
Local MPs, police, animals, authors and many more.  
And who can forget when you were dived over by an Olympic gymnast,  
And recently hugged by Sprinter, although his Sports Days promises didn't last.  
Some of the visitors, less welcome, the dreaded and scary Ofsted,  
But our school has consecutively been graded as good, with you as our head.

A flipchart and some post-it notes and you're ready to make a plan,  
Finding a space, renovating it, anyway that you can.  
A cupboard into a changing room and a cloakroom into The Nook,  
And one too many library moves, carrying each and every book.  
You are always on the lookout for a bid or a grant,  
Helping us fund our red track or remember loved ones with a garden to plant.

The Covid pandemic of 2020 was not all doom and gloom,  
With bubbles for our pupils and for us a pop-up staffroom.  
Some of us were teaching in classrooms and some of us teaching online,  
You had a plan, kept us safe and made sure our families were fine.  
And Covid didn't spoil our Christmas, the Santa Run went ahead,  
Each child smiling on the track with recycled hats on their head.

Phonics Screenings, Year 6 SATs and multiplication checks,  
You always push us and our pupils to aim high and do their best.  
And so, to celebrate your 15 years of leading our primary school,  
A giant inflatable, fun and games and delicious ice creams for all.  
We are grateful for all the memories and of all the things you do.  
So thank you Ms Walsh, Bon Voyage and Happy Retirement to you!

beautiful singing of some of the Year 6 leaver songs and I'm delighted to hear our Fun Day resulted in three twinned toilets for me, which I thought was a brilliant idea; I just love initiatives like this.

Temple Meadow is an incredibly special place; it has the most incredible pupils; the most incredible staff team and a hard-working Governing Board.

As the lyrics say in one of the songs sung yesterday, **'we change the world together, one child at a time'**; and at Temple Meadow, we really do.

My final words go to Mrs Van Straaten, our next Headteacher. She is going to be simply amazing and will take the school from strength to strength with love, care and dedication.

I sign off by sending every single one of you all my love and best wishes.

Ms Walsh

Headteacher (very soon actively retired!)

Cathy held Temple Meadow close to her heart and the school held a special place in hers. She spoke often of the joy she found in serving this community and of the privilege she felt in being part of the lives of so many children and families.

Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with Cathy's family, friends and all those who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside her.

On a personal note, it was Cathy who first saw my potential as a young 26-year-old teacher with little leadership experience. After working alongside her as Deputy Headteacher for 12 years, I was absolutely ready for my first headship, although I knew I had huge boots to fill. She was a fiercely independent woman with strong values and morals and I thank her for everything that Temple Meadow stands for today.

Today, I have spoken directly with our Year 5 and Year 6 classes, as I know many of them will have their own memories of Cathy. All staff are on hand to support any children or families who may wish to talk or require additional support, as we understand how emotional and triggering these discussions can be for some members of our community.

Once again, I want to say what an incredibly special lady she was. Her legacy will live on through the countless lives she touched and she will be dearly missed by us all.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Van Straaten  
Headteacher