

# **Profiles of Avonreach Academy Trust Members, Trustees and Headteachers**

## **March 2019**

### **Our Members**

- Suzanne Clarke
- Patricia Steele
- Worcestershire Diocesan Academy Trust (Corporate Member)

### **Our Trustees**

- Clive Corbett (Executive Officer) - ELT
- Andrew Longdon (Chair)
- Ian Cumming - Chair of AAT Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
- Ann Derbyshire
- Rob Philips - Vice Chair, and Safeguarding and GDPR Trustee
- Karen Rutter
- Mark Slater - School Performance Trustee
- Bob Stanton
- One vacancy

### **Our Chief Financial Officer**

- Karen Bevan - GDPR Officer

### **Our Headteachers**

- Sarah Bitcon
- Julia Dean - Ethos
- Phil Hanson
- Heather Thomson

# Members

**Suzanne Clarke**



Suzanne is pleased to be a Member of the Avonreach MAT, as she has had many connections with the schools involved over the past 15 years. She has two boys, aged 17 and 19, who have both successfully progressed through the Pershore Pyramid system. She is currently a Governor at Cherry Orchard First School and Chair of the Friends of Pershore High School.

She is an active member of Pershore Abbey, and co-ordinator of the children's work and worship; because of this role thoroughly enjoys her time going into schools to take regular assemblies, usually bible stories with lots of eager younger helpers, willing to take part.

It is important to Suzanne that every young person is given the opportunity to achieve their individual best, enabling them to develop as confident young people in a safe, caring and supportive environment.

- **Patricia Steele**
- **Worcestershire Diocesan Academy Trust (Corporate Member)**

# Trustees

**Clive Corbett** - Executive Officer Avonreach Academy Trust and Ex-Officio Trustee

**Date of Appointment:** 1st August 2017



In August 2017 Clive retired as Head teacher of Pershore High School after 15 years in the post, and 38 years in education altogether (including senior leadership roles in 3 secondary schools and a Deputy Headship). Since retiring Clive has established an educational consultancy and publishing business which provides support to schools, and has taken on the role of Executive Officer of the Avonreach Academy Trust.

In addition, Clive is the Lead Director of the Schools of Tomorrow Fellowship, and is also a Local Leader in Education and a Fellow of the University of Worcester. Clive believes passionately in the need to secure the well-being of young people, through the support of local communities, so that they are prepared for the future in the broadest sense of the word. This is evidenced through his work with the Schools of Tomorrow Fellowship; his Teacher Advocate work and his role as Local Facilitator/Coach/Mentor for the NPQH.

**Andrew Longdon** - Chair of Avonreach Academy Trust

**Date of Appointment:** 1st August 2017



Andrew first became a Parent Governor at Norton Juxta Kempsey C of E First School in October 2005. At the time his first son was a Year 3 pupil and his second son had just started in Reception. Over those first few years of experiencing the modern education system as a parent, it became apparent to Andrew that things had changed since he was in the system as a pupil, some twenty plus years before. The main reason for Andrew wanting to become a Governor was to have a greater understanding of these new ways of teaching and, to be honest, to use that knowledge to help support his children with their education whilst helping the school in whatever way he could.

Andrew certainly had not expected to still be a Governor over 12 years later, let alone Chair of Trustees of a Multi Academy Trust. It is a very different role to the one that Andrew gets paid for (Technical Manager for a company making seals for cars, aircraft and all sorts of industrial equipment), but what drives Andrew to stay involved, through sometimes very difficult times, is the amazing dedication of the education professionals and the volunteers that support them to provide the best possible education to the children in our schools, essentially maximizing their potential for their lives to come in an increasingly competitive world.

On a weekly basis, Andrew sees examples of that dedication throughout all four schools that make up the Avonreach Academy Trust, where collaborative working at all levels is bringing very tangible benefits and he looks forward to doing whatever he can to help the Trust flourish, develop and grow over the coming years.

**Professor Ian Cumming OBE** - Chair of AAT Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

**Date of Appointment:** 1st August 2017



Ian started his career in the NHS as a Biomedical Scientist, and later worked as a Research Scientist in coagulation disorders before moving into NHS Leadership in the early 1990's. He has held a variety of NHS general management posts, including over 11 years as Chief Executive of acute hospital Trusts, followed by three years as the Chief Executive of a healthcare commissioning organisation prior to being appointed Chief Executive of the NHS in the West Midlands in 2009.

In 2012, Ian was appointed Chief Executive of Health Education England (HEE). Ian has a particular interest in the development of leadership skills in clinical staff, and is an Honorary Professor of Healthcare Leadership in the Medical School at Lancaster University. In 2003 Ian was awarded the OBE for services to the NHS and in 2010 Ian was made an honorary Fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners. Ian has a special interest in sports medicine, an area in which he holds an MSC. Ian became a board member of Sport England in 2016. Outside of work, Ian is a qualified level 3 swimming coach, working closely with young people to develop their swimming abilities, a keen snow skier and enjoys sailing, walking and watching rugby union.

**Ann Derbyshire - Avonreach Academy Trust Trustee**

**Date of Appointment: 1st August 2017**



Ann has a background in education, having been Deputy-Head, and also Acting Head, at Stratford High School prior to her retirement. Ann has also undertaken Governance Roles at a number of local schools throughout her career, and is currently the Chair of Governors at Inkberrow First School - having joined the Inkberrow First School Governing Body in 2007.

Ann has a personal connection with Inkberrow First School, one of the founding schools within the Avonreach Academy Trust, as her children and her grandchildren have all attended the school. Ann believes that everyone can excel at something, and that schools' should provide the opportunity for all pupils to explore their abilities and that they should support all students in achieving their potential.

**Rob Phillips** - Vice Chair Avonreach Academy Trust and Safeguarding and GDPR Trustee

**Date of Appointment:** 1st August 2017



Rob's background is in business and lecturing. He was employed in Further and Higher education for over thirty years, during which time he helped many small businesses to develop, and taught on post graduate and professional courses. Rob has also written a number of degree level open learning programmes.

In addition to the above, Rob has been involved in running three small businesses and has worked overseas as a manager on British Aid and United Nations development programmes in Fiji and the South Pacific region. Rob retired from full-time employment in 2010, but continues to work as a part-time consultant.

Rob's four children attended Pershore High School, where he has been a governor for over 25 years and where he was Chair of Governors from 2005 until 2017. Rob is pleased to be able to continue his contribution to local education as a Trustee of the Avonreach MAT.

**Karen Rutter - Avonreach Academy Trust Trustee**

**Date of Appointment:** 1st February 2019



Karen is an experienced finance professional having qualified over 25 years ago and has worked in NHS finance throughout this time. She has held a variety of finance leadership roles across NHS bodies and currently heads up the Midlands and East regional finance function in Health Education England. Experience gained in her career to date has resulted in a focus on effective financial governance recognising that efficiency, transparency and improvement are key to delivering services within available resources.

Karen is a trained coach and mentor with the aim of helping to develop the next generation of finance professionals. Karen lives in Worcester and is married with one teenage son. She has no links to any of the schools in the Trust so can add an objective viewpoint as a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.

## **Mark Slater - Avonreach Academy Trust Performance Trustee**

**Date of Appointment:** 1st February 2019



Mark became a qualified teacher in 1978 and has worked in first, middle and primary schools in Worcestershire and Birmingham. He has headship experience in three primary Schools and in the most recent role in Birmingham was, until the end of August 2018, the Principal of Harborne Primary School a 630 place, three form entry, school for pupils aged 4 to 11 in Birmingham, West Midlands. He worked as a National Leader of Education [NLE] and Harborne was a National Support School [NSS] providing help and support to other primary schools in Birmingham. His school had close links with Birmingham University where it provided teacher training routes for students through the Schools Direct access to teaching. He was appointed to the post of Principal in January 2008, leading a team of 28 full-time equivalent teachers and a total of 90 staff working in a wide range of roles including administrative, catering and teaching support.

He started his teaching career in Redditch, Worcestershire in 1978 after graduating from Wolverhampton University [West Midlands College of Education]. Mark initially worked in the middle and first school education system specialising in mathematics and ICT. He was appointed Deputy Head Teacher of a primary School in 1991, and started his first primary headship in 1996 in Hollywood, Birmingham. Mark is married, has five children and six grandchildren. He has a daughter who is a teacher and a son who is vice chair of Governors at his children's school. He is still involved in and passionate about education and the opportunities it can provide and the skills children can develop working with talented and committed teachers. He enjoys spending time with his family, travelling, cycling and playing golf.

**Bob Stanton** - Avonreach Academy Trust Trustee

**Date of Appointment:** 1st August 2017



Bob has eleven years of experience as a Governor at Cherry Orchard First School where he was chairman for four years during the transition to the MAT and the Change of Age range consultation. He has a daughter (19) and a son (17) who both went through the Pershore Pyramid starting at the Cherry Orchard Pre-School, and his son currently attends Pershore Sixth Form.

Professionally, Bob is a Business Process specialist, and owner of a mobile software business. He is also a STEM Ambassador and assistant secretary of the West Midlands branch of the British Interplanetary Society. In his spare time Bob plays the cornet and helps in a local training brass band, and enjoys cycling.

# Chief Financial Officer

**Karen Bevan** – GDPR Officer

**Appointed** – 10th June 2018

## Head teachers

**Sarah Bitcon** – Cherry Orchard First School



Sarah began her teaching career in Cornwall in 1991 teaching in a single form entry primary school, she has since worked in primary, first and infant schools across Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. Sarah has been head teacher at Cherry Orchard since 2006 and in that time the school has seen many positive developments, moving from a satisfactory to good OFSTED rating and being rated an Outstanding Early Years setting in 2010.

Sarah strongly believes in making sure that their children have as many opportunities as possible, steering the school to approach the curriculum in an innovative way and ensuring the school continually challenges itself to provide the children with the very best. All at Cherry Orchard are excited about the opportunities that being part of Avonreach Trust will provide for their children, families and staff to develop and continue to learn.

Sarah is married with two grown up daughters that have benefited from attending schools within our local pyramid. Outside of work Sarah tries hard to keep fit.

**Julia Dean – Norton Juxta Kempsey First School**



Julia began her teaching career in 1993 and has worked in schools in Birmingham and Worcestershire. Julia was appointed as head teacher of Norton Juxta Kempsey C. E. First School in 2008. She thoroughly enjoys the role of head teacher and states: 'I am deeply committed to providing the very best education for all children in a supportive, happy and caring environment'.

Norton Juxta Kempsey is a church school and Julia welcomes the support of the diocese and local clergy to ensure that the school is at the heart of the community. The school was recognised as an outstanding church school following the SIAMS (Section 48) inspection in February 2016.

Julia is delighted that the school is now part of the Avonreach Academy Trust as she feels this will continue to improve the educational outcomes for all pupils. Julia is married with two sons. She loves running, reading and planning exciting holidays for the family to enjoy.

**Phil Hanson – Pershore High School**



Phil has taught in secondary schools in West Sussex and Worcestershire since completing his Geography Degree and subsequent PGCE qualification in 1991. He has been in senior leadership roles in a number of schools for 19 years, most recently at Pershore High School, where he was Deputy Head teacher until August 2017 at which point in time he was appointed its head teacher.

Phil believes that the education that we provide for those in our care should be recognised in the broadest sense – exam results are important, but developing well-rounded young people with a desire to find out more is at the heart of his personal educational philosophy.

### **Heather Thomson – Inkberrow First School**



Heather began her teaching career in 1979 in Norfolk working in a small 8-12 middle school, and has since worked in a number of other local authorities including Herefordshire, Surrey and Gloucestershire in first, primary and middle schools. Heather has been head teacher at Inkberrow First School for the last fourteen years and has helped to move the school from a satisfactory to outstanding OFSTED rating (2014).

Heather is trained as a National Leader of Education (NLE) and has enjoyed supporting a number of schools in that capacity. With regard to her NLE work Heather states that “It is a privilege to work with other colleagues across the country. Inkberrow First School has benefitted tremendously from the professional dialogues we have had as part of the on-going support”.

Heather advises that Inkberrow First School is always looking for ways to improve the education for pupils and that the school is delighted to be working with the Avonreach Academy Trust in moving the school forward. Heather is married with four children between them (all girls!) and has an elderly Chocolate Labrador. She enjoys walking, baking, painting and going on holiday!