

Urmston Grammar School

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14th July 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

After 36 years in education—including 20 unforgettable years at Urmston Grammar; 12 as Headteacher—it is time for me to say goodbye. Writing this letter is one of the most difficult tasks I have faced, not because I am uncertain about retiring, but because it is so hard to put into words just how much this school and your children have meant to me.

Over the past year and especially over the last few weeks, I have been quietly experiencing many 'lasts' - my final reading session on a Wednesday morning, my last Open Evening, my last Induction events for our new Year 7s, final Primary and Work Experience Visits, my final production performance, the Celebration Evening, and right back in December, the last Festival of Christmas. Each one has come with a wave of emotion. Still to come are my final lesson with my brilliant Year 8 group, my final activity with the PTA Ambassadors, my last staff briefing and one final assembly. And yet, what touches me most deeply are the last conversations—the quiet, everyday moments with a student, a colleague, a parent—many of which I may not even realise are the final ones.

How do I begin to thank you for the trust you have placed in me and my colleagues over the years? It has been the greatest privilege of my professional life to lead this extraordinary school and to help shape the journey of so many remarkable young people.

When I first joined Urmston Grammar in 2005 as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, I thought I might stay for four or five years. I had already worked in four schools in 16 years, but something different happened here. This school reached into my heart and never let go. And the reason for that is simple: it is the people. UGS is not just bricks and mortar—it is a living, breathing community filled with kindness, ambition, laughter and resilience. Every student, every member of staff, every family has left their mark on me.

Together, we have celebrated successes, faced challenges, and grown in ways that cannot always be measured by data or league tables (however, I am incredibly proud that we are now the top GCSE performing co-educational school, not just in Trafford, but in the whole of the North West!). What we have built here is a community rooted in care, aspiration and achievement. Your support, your trust and your partnership have been the foundations of that work. Thank you for every conversation, every encouraging word, every shared moment of pride.

As I step into this next chapter of my life, I do so with full confidence in the future of Urmston Grammar. Mr Kennedy-Fowler, the senior leadership team, and the entire staff are deeply committed to continuing the school's journey with the same passion, integrity and care that have always defined it.

Please know that I carry Urmston Grammar with me—in every memory, every lesson learned, every colleague I have worked with and every student who reminded me why I chose this path in the first place.

With heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R S Wall". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Riffat S Wall
Headteacher