



# Gracefield Preparatory School

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## INDEPENDENT PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BRISTOL ANNOUNCES CLOSURE

After 74 years operating as an independent primary school in Fishponds, Bristol, it is with great sadness that Gracefield School has announced its closure at the end of the academic year, Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July. Falling pupil numbers, the challenging economic outlook and pressures from the cost-of-living crisis has meant that it is no longer financially viable for the school to operate.

Gracefield has been educating 4- to 11-year-old children since 1950, and has been run by the current Proprietors, Elizabeth and Ivan Morgan, since 2002. As a small, independent school it has been committed to providing an excellent education for its pupils within a supportive, family environment. The school has consistently been rated as 'Good' by Ofsted and praised for its pastoral care and nurturing nature. In the most recent Ofsted inspection in June 2023, Ofsted observed that:

"Pupils are happy at Gracefield Preparatory School. Many of them use the word 'fun' when they describe school. They find learning 'interesting and exciting'. Pupils are very proud of their school and work hard."

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/27/109343>

The Proprietors had hoped to be able to hand over the school to new owners and despite earnest endeavours over a number of years, were unable to find a viable option that could secure the school's future.

Ivan Morgan said: "It is widely recognised that the last few years have been very difficult for most independent schools across the UK. Navigating inflationary costs and continually reducing numbers of pupils is a significant challenge facing the entire education sector. The Covid pandemic put an additional burden on school budgets, however I am proud that Gracefield remained open to pupils throughout, in addition to offering an excellent remote service to all its pupils."

The primary concern for the Proprietors will now be ensuring the well-being and future prospects of pupils and their families. The school will work closely with families to provide guidance and full support throughout the process, ensuring that every child's educational journey continues as smoothly as possible.

Elizabeth Morgan said: "We are working with local authorities and other independent schools so that parents can make the right choices for their children and we will be liaising with parents throughout the process. We are also fully committed to supporting our dedicated staff members during this period of transition and will do our utmost to assist them in securing new roles where they will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of young learners."



The school Senior Leadership Team will now begin a programme of talking to the pupils, giving high priority to their mental health and wellbeing. Gracefield has continuously been commended by Ofsted and parents for its pastoral care and the team will continue to look after the children with compassion and understanding over the next few months and beyond, as they begin their new school year.

In concluding, Elizabeth Morgan said: “As we navigate this challenging time, we remain steadfast in our belief in the resilience of our school community. We are extremely proud of the countless students who have graced our classes and are immensely grateful to everyone who has been a part of Gracefield School’s 74-year journey”.

Gracefield School currently has 65 children on roll and 18 members of staff supporting them in various roles.