

EXTENDED SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Hearing 3

Wednesday 12 May 2010

Martin Absolom, Principal, Oakley Special School, Tunbridge Wells

Biography

Martin Absolom is the Principal of Oakley Special School, in Tunbridge Wells.

Martin began teaching in 1976, completing two years as a teacher in a mainstream school, before working until today in Special Education. He was also employed in part-time youth work in the Inner London Education Authority for a number of years at the beginning of his career.

In 1990 Martin moved to Kent and became Deputy Headteacher of the Harbour School in Dover. In 1996 he trained as an OFSTED inspector, before returning to teaching in 1997.

In 1998 Martin was seconded to a school in special measures, and was subsequently appointed as Headteacher, but the school was closed in 2000. He was appointed again to head an amalgamated new school, Oakley – a school which was reorganised and rebuilt on 2 sites 7 miles apart in the Tunbridge Wells area. Under Martin's leadership the school has gone from strength to strength, despite a number of challenges. The development has been complemented by widening partnerships and extending services.

In 2006 the Oakley school was re-designated again, and it was promised to re-build it on one site, but the plan was hindered as a result of the financial crisis. In January 2010 the school achieved a successful OFSTED inspection review.

Martin is married and has 4 children aged between 18 and 31, one of whom has severe cerebral palsy, communication, learning difficulties and challenging behaviour.