

Woldgate School Alumni

Pocklington and District Local History Group - WOLDGATE SCHOOL HISTORY

We will be trying to fit the history of Woldgate into the context of the development of education nationally since 1945 and locally (the East Riding). We are hoping that the personal accounts and memories that you provide will illustrate these national and county developments on a very local scale.

Name Karen Dow

Date Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Please answer the questions below about your past time at Woldgate School

Date or year you started at Woldgate 1990

Date or year you left Woldgate 1997

My role at Woldgate

Please enter your highlights of your time at Woldgate

As a mature entrant into teaching I had studied for a degree in Chemistry and Education at the University of Hull. I live in Drifffield so I wanted to teach in the Humberside region as it was then, but I was determined that I wanted to teach A level Chemistry which ruled out most Hull Schools. I was thrilled to get the job at Woldgate and couldn't wait to start. The science department had a supply teacher in for the summer term so I was offered the chance to start after May half term and jumped at it. It was a very happy department and my colleagues were helpful, supportive and great fun.

In my second year there, the Head of Music Duncan Siddle asked me if I would consider producing a school musical with him as musical director. He had suggested reviving the old tradition of a school show to Mr Brown, who was very enthusiastic, but he needed a producer. John Brown knew that I was a singer and my hobby was amateur operatics so he suggested asking me. I was very keen to have a go and especially when Duncan suggested doing The Boyfriend, so we started auditioning. At first we struggled to get enough boys and I can remember pleading with some of my GCSE groups. Eventually it was cast and off we went with rehearsals. It was an absolute joy and we had great support from other colleagues in the school with sets, costumes, advertising, ticket selling etc. The show was a huge success and students were immediately clamouring for the next one. During the rest of my time at Woldgate the "school show" became an established part of the school year, every December, and I went on to produce Oliver, The Wizard of Oz, Calamity Jane and Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. The last three were after Duncan had left and Kevin Allen replaced him as Head of Music. SBFBS requires a huge male cast but we had no problem with that as by now we had students who had grown up doing the shows and several stars had emerged. These were very happy times indeed.

When Meryl Skinner retired as Head of Sixth Form, my colleague and friend Karen Maultby and I proposed taking on the role jointly and splitting the responsibility. This was a fairly radical idea at the time but fortunately the SLT took a chance on us and we became Joint Heads of Sixth Form. This was also a very happy time and we boosted recruitment and results. I loved working with Sixth Formers. Just as I was considering my next role an opportunity arose at South Hunsley School for a Director of Post-16 Studies and I applied and got it. I stayed at South Hunsley for 17 very happy years and became Deputy Headteacher and then Affiliate Headteacher, retiring in 2012.

I always remember my years at Wold gate fondly however and all of the people there who guided my career.