

FAIRFAX'S DIAMOND CELEBRATION

1959-2019

A Sutton school is appealing for former pupils to come forward as it prepares to celebrate its 60th birthday next year.

Fairfax Academy, in Fairfax Road, is planning a year of celebrations to mark the milestone, from reunions to an exhibition, and wants former pupils to join its new alumni association to share memories and keepsakes from their school days.

This week two ex-pupils from different eras visited Fairfax to launch the appeal and urge others to get involved.

Lesley Green, 68, attended Fairfax from 1961 to 1968, when she was called Lesley Hughes.

Lesley, who lives in Walmley, is one of the Fairfax Chums, a group of former classmates who have already got together three times – but are hoping to hold their next reunion at the school, as part of the anniversary festivities.

"It is great fun to see old school friends, and we have had people come from as far as America," she said. "We are really hoping to be able to get together again to look around the school next year – that would be perfect."

Lesley, whose daughter Alice, also attended Fairfax, says the school was 'competitive but happy' during her time there.

"The first Headteacher, Mr Philpott, was determined that Fairfax, a comprehensive, was going to be as good as John Willmott over the road, which at the time was a grammar school," she remembered.

"We were one of the first schools to do the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and had our own swimming galas. The parents raised money to build the school's own swimming pool too".

"It was a strict school but very happy. Everyone remembers their time at Fairfax fondly."

Esther Brittan, 41, from Walmley, went to Fairfax from 1988 to 1995, when she was called Esther Finnemore.

"I loved my time at Fairfax, and while the buildings may have changed, the atmosphere is the same. It's still a really positive place, and a school that offers something for everyone," she said.

Esther went to Fairfax with the boy who would grow up to be her husband, Paul, and now the couple's son, 12-year-old Bobby, is a pupil there.

"Since Bobby started I have been involved in the Parents' Association, and there is a real interest in the 60th anniversary. So many people want to get involved, but we want to reach out to as many former pupils as possible," she said.

Head of Academy Deborah Bunn said: "We are so excited about marking Fairfax's 60th anniversary – it is a great opportunity to reach out to former pupils and staff and bring them back to the school.

"A lot has changed over the years, but our commitment to providing a traditional and happy environment with learning at its centre is the same as it was in 1959.

"I would like to encourage anyone who has memories of Fairfax to share to get in touch."

If you are a former pupil and would like to know more about Fairfax's 60th birthday plans, email alumni@fairfax.bham.sch.uk

