

Penelope Talelli statement

I have no experience in school governance, other than listening to my father-in-law, who has been a governor for a primary school in an underprivileged South London neighbourhood for the past 40 years. He has shared the challenges but also the achievements of the governing body with me; his stories have been really inspiring.

I am a Consultant Neurologist and have been working in the NHS for over 15 years. I have always been interested in development and improvement projects, to improve outcomes for both patients and members of staff. My work in neurorehabilitation means that my working life mainly involves working within multidisciplinary teams of nurses, doctors, therapists and managers and this has helped me to learn in practice how to listen, include and inspire.

I am a strong believer in education, for academic achievements and excellence but also beyond that: for empowering the next generation whatever their path or profession might be. I have always told my daughters that they are free to choose whatever vocation they believe is suited to them, but first they must acquire knowledge and skills to become intelligent and decent adults with intellectual weapons to back up their voice and pursuits.

I was not born British and only came to England from Greece about 20 years ago. I became a British Citizen a few years ago, but still I have never been through the British education system; in this way I can identify with the increasing proportion of non-British parents in our school, their uncertainty, sense of insecurity and worries.

Finally, and very importantly, I have had first-hand experience of the importance of well being and mental health for all children. Both of my daughters have benefited from the school's SEND and pastoral care and still are; hence, I am very passionate about protecting, and when possible, improving these services in these harsh economic times. Thank you very much for your consideration.