

Death of popular head teacher announced

Parents of pupils at an East Lothian primary school were today told its popular former head teacher has died.

Helen Gillanders, who retired two years ago at the age of 61, was head teacher at Scotland's biggest primary school Dunbar Primary, for 15 years and a much loved figurehead.

Current head teacher Jacqui McKinnon sent a letter to parents and carers letting them know of her passing and providing them with a link to advice about how to break the news to children if they felt it was appropriate.

Mrs McKinnon said: "It is with the deepest sadness that we write to inform you that Mrs Gillanders has died. She was the head teacher at Dunbar Primary School for 15 years and throughout the time spent all her energy ensuring the school was the best place it could be for all the pupils and staff.

"I have known Mrs Gillanders as a colleague and I am privileged to say as a personal friend for 18 years. I know how much she loved her job and her school family.

"We felt it was right initially to inform you, as parents and carers, to ensure everyone is aware and appreciate the impact this will have on everyone who knows her."

Mrs Gillanders, who was a grandmother and lived in Edinburgh, stepped down as head teacher in the summer of 2023.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter