

Dear Parents and Carers

As we draw near to the end of the summer term, we wanted to write to you, as Governors, to look back at some of the highlights of the year, and to look forward to some of the changes and challenges ahead. This letter builds on the content of the impact statement which shares the main activities of the Governing Body over the past year. This letter is more forward focused, although it would be remiss not to pause and celebrate some of the successes from the 2017/18 year.

Fit for the future

Writing to you allows us the opportunity to highlight some of the exciting changes to our school to ensure that it continues to thrive for both current pupils and those who will join our school community in the years ahead. These changes are part of the Governing Body's strategic plan to ensure that St Nicholas remains a successful school which can meet the challenges of tighter educational budgets alongside the current local fall in pupil numbers.

The plans to relocate the school entrance, the redecoration of the hall and investment in new computers, outlined in the impact statement, will improve not only our learning environment for current pupils and staff, but also security and all-important first impressions. We recognise that these changes are necessary not only to move the school forward but to ensure we benefit financially from maximum pupil admissions. Given the shortfall in applications this year, we are looking at ways of raising the profile of the school in the local area and of course our children, staff and parents are our greatest advocates. We will work to ensure that prospective parents know the strengths of our school and to maximise the appeal of the school.

We manage our budget carefully, and we will continue to scrutinise every area of spending and look at additional ways to generate income. We would like to thank the whole school community for their generosity in supporting PTA fundraising events and especially to thank those who give their time helping to organise events – as budgets tighten, your support is genuinely invaluable. Particular thanks to Lucy Parr for her commitment as the outgoing Chair of PTA and we look forward to working with Emma Roberts as she takes up this role.

Teaching staff

We would like to personally thank Mrs Crouch and all her team for their dedication and hard work over the year. Mrs Crouch has continued to work tirelessly to achieve her vision of excellence for all aspects of the school and she has shown passion and sustained effort in a number of areas, including the detailed planning to strategically move the school forward as described in the impact statement. She is ably supported by Mrs Johnson and Mrs Birss as members of her senior leadership team and we thank them all for their leadership time and commitment.

Whilst thanking all members of staff, we would particularly like to pay tribute to two long term members of our teaching staff who are retiring this Summer. Mrs Smith has been teaching alongside Mrs Kieran in Class 4 for the last 17 years, and she has made a significant contribution to RE as subject co-ordinator, particularly during SIAMS inspections.

Mrs Bannister taught here for 4-years from 2005 to 2009 and then again from 2011 until now. During the first part of her teaching role, she supported the teaching assistants to set and achieve appraisal targets and very ably carried out the role of Special Needs Coordinator. Over the last two years, we have been very grateful that she has not only taught in Class 3 with Ms Mortimer, but that she has also covered other classes where teachers have been spending time on planning. Her outstanding dedication to supporting the school in various extracurricular events and the promotion of the Christian ethos has been remarkable.

Thank you to Mrs Cullinane for teaching in Class 5 over the last two terms. She has engaged well with the children delivering fun learning activities and we wish her well in her new school.

We are also saying farewell to two long serving teaching assistants, Mrs Crosland and Mrs Miller and we thank them for their commitment to St Nicholas since the year 2000. Mrs Crosland has shown very high expectations of behaviour and she always ensured that the interventions for specific children were implemented which made a great impact on the children's learning.

Mrs Miller has supported different year groups to enable children to make progress, such as boosting groups in Year 6. She has been a great support during several residential and overnight trips as she has such a caring and positive approach. Mrs Miller has also worked with a number of SEN children to develop their individual skills in order to prepare for secondary school.

We thank them all for their contributions. They will be greatly missed and we wish them all well in their new chapter beyond St Nicholas.

As people leave, we are delighted to welcome new members of staff to our school family. Mrs Addis will be joining Mrs Weldon in Garnet in September. Mrs Addis is coming to St Nicholas with a great deal of experience of teaching in the Early Years. She has led teams of Early Years staff in several schools and she is looking forward to joining our staff team.

Mrs Jayes will be joining Ms Mortimer in Emerald and comes to us with experience in both KS2 teaching and teaching abroad.

Both are experienced teachers and we are very fortunate to welcome them to our community.

We also welcome back Mrs O. Williams who is returning from maternity leave and who will join Mrs Kieran in Topaz.

In summary, our teaching arrangements for 2018/2019 are

Diamonds - Mrs Johnson

Sapphire - Miss Lincoln / Mrs Birss

Emerald - Mrs Jayes / Ms Mortimer

Topaz - Mrs Kieran / Mrs Williams

Garnet - Mrs Addis / Mrs Weldon

Governing Body

We are fortunate to have an experienced set of Governors and this year we welcomed Catherine Harvey to the Governing Body as a parent governor. In October, we took the opportunity to celebrate a remarkable 40-years continuous service to our school by Gill Hill. Gill joined as school secretary in 1977, a role she carried out for 23 years, and she continues to serve as a Governor. Gill commented in the weekly newsletter, "we have an amazing school, and the children, staff, governors and parents make the commitment so worthwhile".



Short profiles of each of our Governors are on the Governors' section of the school website.

Pupils

The school simply wouldn't be what it is today without our wonderful children. We would like to personally thank each and every pupil for their efforts and personal achievements over the year. We wish the Year 6 pupils well as they move on to secondary school and hope they take fond memories of their time at St Nicholas with them as they leave.

Highlights from 2017/2018

You will all take away your own memories from the year. Some personal highlights from the Governors include:

- The pride and delight on pupils faces showing their families around at the recent school open afternoon
- Reading the well deserved Ofsted SIAMS inspection report, rating us 'outstanding'
- Receiving a letter of congratulations from our local MP following St Nicholas featuring in The Times top 10 schools league table in Hertfordshire
- Reading the pupils' stories in the weekly newsletters from one of the many trips or sporting events they have attended over the year.
- Hearing we had been awarded a Diocesan grant for the entrance door project
- Listening to members of the School Council and Collective Worship Team at the beginning of some of our Full Governing Body meetings
- Seeing the colourful artwork from pupils showing the core concepts of Christian faith, and seeing this published as an article in the local paper



Onwards to September 2018 and beyond

2018 marks the **160th anniversary** of education on the Church Green site. Whilst this isn't close to the 800 years recently celebrated at St Nicholas Church it is still a significant anniversary which we plan to mark in the Autumn term. There is some interesting history on the school website if you haven't read this before. <http://www.stnicholasce.org/history/>.

The Governing Body are fully committed to work with Mrs Crouch and all of the teaching staff to continue to build on the success of our school to ensure it continues to prosper for our current pupils and those who join us in the years ahead.

We will continue to count on your support and we are extremely blessed to have such highly engaged parents who support the school in a multitude of ways. The PTA continue to provide magnificent support and we would personally like to thank everyone who has been involved over the year.

We look forward to continued work together when we start the new academic year in September. For those moving on, we wish you all the very best and we hope St Nicholas remains in your hearts for many years to come.

Wishing you a wonderful Summer holiday,

The Governing Body