

Governors' Newsletter July 2026



As we reach the end of another year in the life of St Nicholas School, its pupils, parents, staff and governors, we have a chance to look back and see what a busy and successful year it has been once again.

From what I consider to be a very privileged position as Chair of Governors it is wonderful to reflect on the strong relationships between all members of our school community and how these help us to live out our school vision of 'Believe and Achieve':

- Believe in ourselves, those here to help us and God
- Achieve our goals
- Celebrate success in every area of school life

This academic year has been topped and tailed by inspections – the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) which took place back in September as we had just arrived back in school and the very recent Ofsted Inspection a couple of weeks ago, which was due after our last one four years ago in March 2022.

Whilst these occasions can feel like a time of extra pressure and workload for school staff who are still simultaneously maintaining their usual timetable of classroom teaching, activities and extra-curricular events for the children, they are also an opportunity to show our school at its best, demonstrate our strengths and the care and dedication that contribute to the successful learning and personal development of all our pupils.

We were proud to share the glowing outcome of the SIAMS inspection, which highlighted St Nicholas's strong Christian ethos and its unwavering commitment to nurturing a caring, reflective, and high-achieving community.

The report praised school's Christian vision for maintaining a strong focus on mental health and wellbeing, fostering a culture of care and support that ensures both pupils and adults feel truly valued and also recognised the deeply embedded Christian values that shape every aspect of school life.

The positive comments included:

"Wellbeing is a high priority at St Nicholas. The school's core values of kindness, hope and perseverance underpin this. Leaders create a culture in which people feel equipped to deal with any difficulties they may face. This is the school's vision in action, providing the nutrients needed to flourish."

"Four associated core values of hope, responsibility, perseverance and kindness are known well and acted upon by pupils and staff. They are actively and effectively used in discussions between adults and pupils about their actions and choices."

"The words 'I can' and 'the power of yet' instil confidence in pupils and adults to persevere and overcome challenges."

"A wealth of high-quality experiences inspires and sparks pupils' interests, leading to their flourishing. These include vibrant topics, visitors to school and numerous trips."

"Pupils live out the school's vision through the numerous roles of responsibility and leadership offered to them. These include being part of the school council and by acting as ambassadors for sports, worship and performing arts."

"Older pupils particularly take pride in being buddies for the younger ones. They help them to settle in when they first come to school and partner with them for activities during the year."

Meanwhile, we await the final outcome report of our two-day Ofsted inspection carried out under this year's newly defined framework and look forward to sharing those results with you in September.

As demonstrated to the inspectors, our children have continued to work hard and we are proud of the learning progress and attainment of every one of them as they continue their individual journeys:

Year 1 Phonics Check:

Subject	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: St Nicholas:	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: Nationally
Phonics 2025	95%	80%
Phonics 2026	87%	80%

Key Stage 2 Comparative Report for 2026:

Key Stage 2 SATs results by subject	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: St Nicholas (2026)	Percentage of pupils achieving at least the Expected Standard: Nationally	Percentage of pupils achieving Greater Depth: St Nicholas (2026)	Percentage of pupils achieving Greater Depth Nationally:
English reading	96%	75%	48%	33%
English grammar, punctuation and spelling	87%	74%	35%	30%
Mathematics	91%	75%	43%	26%
English writing (teacher assessment)	74%	73%	4%	13%

In addition to their core academic learning, a **broad and balanced curriculum** remains important for children to stay happy and engaged. We recognise the value of these wider experiences to support their personal, social and spiritual development. We are lucky as a school to be able to offer a wide range of **extra-curricular activities** which include choir, chess, football, netball, fencing, boxing, Spanish, Art Club and STEM engineers as well as our continued before- and after-school provision at The Club which remains popular and so important for many of our families.

We are also very grateful to all staff involved in organising and running some **amazing school trips and workshops** this year. These include:

Year 6	PGL residential away trip, Crucial Crew visit, Peace Day service
Year 5	Burwell House residential overnight trip, Cycling Proficiency training
Diamond	Duxford Imperial War Museum
Sapphire	The British Museum, Verulamium Museum
Diamond and Sapphire	Citizens' Advice Money Workshop, Minecraft Workshop
Emerald	Kew Gardens
Topaz	Ashridge Boxmoor Trust, St Albans Cathedral for Victorian workshop
Garnet	Eric Morecambe Centre, Harpenden Fire Station
Topaz, Emerald, Sapphire and Diamond	Pantomime trip to EMC

Other **special events** celebrated in school have included the HSMA Spring Festival Concert at the EMC, Diamond class attending the Peace Day Service, World Book Day and National Poetry Day, Christmas Jumper Day and Red Nose Day, as well as occasions to explore, support and celebrate our children's **diversity, wellbeing and mental health** such as Children's Wellbeing Week, Neurodiversity Week, Safer Internet Day, "Odd Socks Day" in Anti-Bullying Week and the Children's Health Day "Jump for Joy" event.

Parents and governors alike have enjoyed numerous class assemblies celebrating the children's learning and personal development, as well as Garnet and Topaz classes' Nativity and the Year 6 end of year production... and of course the very special and impressive annual Talent Show, which governors had the privilege - and onerous responsibility - of judging!

Parental support for all the above - and throughout the year - cannot be underestimated and your support and engagement is hugely appreciated by staff and pupils. Not least is this shown through the amazing work of **the PTA**. The executive committee as well as many other families have given their time, talents and creative energy to organising a wide range of events from the Welcome Back picnic at the beginning of the year through to the recent Summer Ball (which raised just over a fantastic £7,000!). Other highlights include Film Night, School Disco, Love Yourself Day, the Second-Hand Book sale, Lunar New Year and of course the incredible Christmas Fair - another great fundraising event that also brings the whole school community together. A heartfelt thank you to all involved.

I would also like to personally thank the PTA executive for their generous time and commitment, especially the outgoing Chair, Siobhan Morton, and to welcome Stuart Roberts who is kindly taking on the role next. Please do consider how you could give some of your time, in whatever way you are able, to help sustain our busy and successful PTA.

At this point I would also like to thank all our **Governors** who also give a significant amount of time as volunteers, bringing their skills and experience to the board to give support, oversight and strategic direction to the school. This year we have said farewell to Catherine Harvey after 8 years of committed service, especially in Safeguarding, as well as Ken Burgess, who gave particular support as a link governor for RE, Collective Worship and Christian Ethos, and Simon Caunce who was Treasurer to the Board and also worked on our budgeting and premises management. We have welcomed both Rebecca Paradine as a new Parent Governor who brings much appreciated communications and PR expertise, and Barbara Rodel as a Foundation Governor who has a wealth of experience from her own long career in teaching. We are delighted to have them both on board. You can read more about all the governors on the school website.

Finally, I would like to say a huge **Thank you to Mrs Crouch and all our members of staff** - teachers, TAs, office and support staff, our caretaker, cooks and midday supervisors - for their continuous care and commitment to St Nicholas and the children. At the end of this year we are saying goodbye to Ms O'Connor, who after taking maternity leave from Garnet class has decided to take more time for her family, and to Miss Becca Brown who is finishing as a TA in Garnet and Topaz class - though you will still see her at The Club! We thank them both for their contributions to St Nicholas and wish them every success in their futures.

The staffing for the new academic year 2026/2027 will be:

Garnet:	Mrs Bryant and Mrs Williams
Topaz:	Mrs Lee and Mrs Jayes
Emerald:	Mrs Wild and Mrs Hammerson
Sapphire:	Dr Cherniaeva
Diamond:	Mrs Kennett

And so, here we are again, on the verge of the long summer holiday, no doubt breathing a sigh of relief in contemplation of the hard-earned period of rest and relaxation ahead. As you do so however, I urge you also to take a moment to reflect on your own school experiences this year, particularly those for which you are thankful.

As, once again, we say goodbye to a wonderful cohort of year 6 children, remembering their journey through St Nicholas from when they were very small and looking forward with excitement to their continued development both personally and educationally, I would like to leave you all with a blessing that is particularly appropriate for them at this stage, but one that is also fitting for us all:

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Wishing you all God's blessings for a very happy summer.

Lucy Parr
Chair of Governors