

Governors' Review of the School Year 2018-19

A community of Church and School.

The start of the school year in September 2018 was a time to welcome new families and staff but also to say goodbye to Reverend Alison. Reverend Alison was such a valued member of our school community supporting Mrs Magiera, the staff, children, families and also playing a very important role as a member of our Governing Body. A special service took place on Friday 28th September which many families attended, this was followed by a coffee morning for Macmillan and later a very special outdoor lunch.

In the Autumn 2018 newsletter Reverend Alison wrote about the ***'very special relationship that the school and church share together'***, she went on to write ***'This school is a very special place! It is one where God's love is daily lived out; where every child is valued, cared for and given the opportunities they need to thrive; where every door is open and every gift unlocked.'***

The close bond with Reverend Alison meant that the relationship between our school and church flourished, something which has continued in the 'inter-regnum' whilst we awaited the appointment of the new vicar. We are delighted that Mrs Magiera and our Head boy and Head girl will be representing our school at the special service of induction for our new vicar Reverend Andrew Ridley on 24th November, we look forward to warmly welcoming him into our school community.

The role the children play in developing our school's distinctive Christian Ethos was recognised in our recent SIAMs inspection report. Our Ethos Group pupils were involved with a very successful Ethos Conference in June which governors who attended said was 'brilliant'. We can be particularly proud of the children on the Ethos Group who addressed a room full of 80 school leaders on a 'Christian Leadership Course'.

'Where every door is opened and every gift unlocked'

From the beginning of the year our school worked hard to ensure that the children experienced an exciting and stimulating curriculum, with a broad range of activities which allowed all children to learn and grow in confidence as they worked on our whole school themes of 'Only one you'; 'Growing up Global' and 'Where is Paddington Bear?'.

The success of this approach which exemplifies our school motto 'where every door is opened and every gift unlocked' is recognised in our recent 'excellent' SIAMs church school report where the inspector wrote that this approach leads to:

'learning opportunities of outstanding breadth and quality, enabling pupils to taste life in all its fullness'

Further evidence of our broad and balanced curriculum was the news that we successfully gained the silver quality mark for science, silver quality mark for PE and the gold quality

mark for RE. All three had extremely challenging external assessments which we had to meet. Thanks to all those involved in working hard to ensure our high-quality curriculum was recognised in this way.

The variety of learning opportunities offered to our children included residential trips for children in year 2 to Beeston, Year 4 to the Mount Cook Centre in Derbyshire and Year 6 to Menai.

Outdoor learning happens at school too. Year 6 relish the opportunities provided by 'Forest School' with Mr Green in the summer term and we now have an early years forest schools area which the children love to use. There have been many developments and improvements in our outdoor area over the last year, with new raised beds, fencing, recycling station, friendship bench and most recently our new polytunnel.

School trips enhanced curriculum work with visits to Cheshire Ice Cream Farm for nursery, Legoland for reception, Key Stage 1 visited Tatton Park for a Traditional Tales experience in the woods and Year 5/6 visited Quarry Bank Mill.

Learning in the broadest sense also included all children visiting the pantomime in December; children taking part in the 'Young Voices' concert in Manchester, the Key Stage 1 Nativity, Christingle Celebration at Chester Cathedral and of course the Key Stage 2 Music performance at UCAN.

The focus of our school on the curriculum, building self-belief and resilience in our children and aiming for everyday excellence in the classroom has resulted in significant improvements in attainment at the end of all our Key Stages over the last three years which has been something to celebrate. Maths has been a focus of improvement for the school for a number of years and whilst we are now seeing a three year rising trend at the end of KS2 (Year 6) we will continue to strive for continuous improvement to ensure our children excel and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. An external review of maths in our school in April 2019 recognised the positive impact of our new 'Mastery' approach to the subject which had resulted in improvements to children's progress and attainment.

Only one you

Work on our Christian values and ethos are integral to all we do in school. Work to help children learn about valuing difference, celebrating everyone's uniqueness and recognising that every one of us can make a difference to the world we live in was the focus of 'Only one you' in the Autumn Term. The river of painted pebbles at the front of school is a lasting reminder of this curriculum work and the importance in our Church school of recognising that every child should be loved valued as a unique child of God.

We encourage our children to grow in self-esteem, understand others, learn how to be a friend and to be a vital part of the whole school community. We support every child in developing their full potential and in doing so encourage them to grow in to rounded

individuals capable of making a positive contribution to society and the environment in which they are to live.

This approach was further enhanced by the work in PHSE on 'No Outsiders'. By being a 'No Outsiders' school, this means that we celebrate diversity and are committed to the principles of inclusion and equality, we are fulfilling our duty to promote diversity and preparing our children for life in modern Britain.

Growing up Global

The theme of our spring term curriculum provided children with so many opportunities to learn and share knowledge about the world around them, how they can look after the world, how the world can provide for them, about the Commonwealth and about how choices they make or lead on can create 'big' changes in the wider world around them.

For example, Reception celebrated 'UNICEF – Day for change' talking about how they could help other children around the world and our school is represented on the local Youth Parliament, looking at ways to improve our local community.

The school's eco-council works to reduce our schools' impact on the planet. They talked to Mrs Foulkes and Mrs Magiera about reducing the amount of paper we use in school, resulting in a change to greater use of electronic communication. The use of ParentMail to communicate with parents by email, combined with Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as well as OurSchoolsApp, hopefully mean that nothing is missed and far fewer paper letters go astray in book bags!

We were delighted that the replacement of our old lights with more efficient LED lights has led to a significant reduction in the energy used in school.

Reducing waste continues with a change to children in EYFS having their milk in re-usable plastic beakers rather than the large quantities of individual milk cartons and straws which had been used previously.

As a Green Flag school the eco-council is always looking at ways we can reduce our impact on the planet and encourage us all to live in a more sustainable way.

Charity fundraising continues to be a feature of our school's calendar. Recognising that there are many families less fortunate than ourselves both at home and across the world. Charities supported included Children in Need, Comic Relief, Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Christian Aid, MacMillan Cancer Care, Mid-Cheshire Food Bank and Save the Children.

Our PTA, now Friends of Witton Church Walk, continues to make a great contribution to our school community. The events they organise provide lots of fun for families as well as raising funds for our school to help with a whole host of things from transport costs for school trips to buying equipment and Christmas crackers.

Families – learning and partnership.

From the first meeting for parents of new reception children the importance of school and parents working in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for our children are emphasized.

The opportunity to enhance this partnership approach was provided with a new format for parents' evenings which was introduced for Key Stage 2 children in November 2018. 'Home School Partnership' meetings now take place with the class teacher, parent/carer and the child. It is an opportunity for parents/carers to receive information on their child's achievements and targets but it also a chance for them to discuss concerns/goals for their child and provides an opportunity for children to share their views too. Governors attended parents evening to gain feedback on the new format and it was overwhelmingly positive. This format is now being extended to Key Stage 1 meetings this term.

Mrs Mageira invited parents and carers to contribute thoughts and ideas for the future development of our school in a questionnaire sent out in November 2018.

Family learning and involvement has gone from strength to strength. Courses were run on maths, phonics, english and cooking. Parents were also invited to join their children for breakfast during a very successful 'Healthy Schools Week' in June. Each day was themed and was chosen to allow parents and children to reflect on our school vision and Christian values. Activities included story reading, yoga, mindfulness, craft and board games.

There was so much more we could have included in this look back at the life of our school. The role of Governors is to challenge and support our school to achieve the very best for our children, you can be assured we take our role very seriously and are very honoured and proud to have this role at Witton Church Walk Primary School.

If you have any comments or questions for the governing body please contact us via the school office or by email to chair@wittonwalk.cheshire.sch.uk.

Kind regards,

Sarah Merison – Associate Governor on behalf of the Governing Body

