

## **Governors' Review of the School Year 2019 -20**

After the pleasure of welcoming into school new children, and in some cases new families, the last academic year got off to a good start in September 2019 as the school began to address the challenges of providing a revised curriculum whilst at the same time meeting the demands of the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, as well as building upon our successful delivery of RE and Collective Worship

The priorities the Governors held after our last Ofsted Inspection in May 2017 still hold true and we and the staff of Witton Church Walk CE Primary School maintain a shared vision in wanting our children to enjoy learning and to feel valued and supported. To repeat what I have said in the past, we have a holistic concern, to include not only academic development and progress and the acquisition of skills, but also children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The school maintains this focus through the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child together with British Values and HeartSmart. This is central to our aim of equipping children with the information skills and confidence to become aware of the links between what is local and what is global and to recognise their global citizenship. Through the re-invigoration of the curriculum to embed breadth and balance it is our aim to challenge and support children as they become critical thinkers and develop independent learning skills. We want our children to learn about their rights and how to respect them and also to learn to respect others' rights in all relationships in the community including mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, the importance of democracy and the rule of law, respect for others and individual liberty. The school continues to engage with Anti-bullying and inter-faith weeks to support the richness and variety of human existence. A good way in which to follow this emphasis is to look at the displays of children's work which are, in themselves, an illustration of how effectively this works within the school. Not, of course, that there is much opportunity for this currently.

The Autumn Term 2019 is now, on reflection, remarkable for its normality in view of everything that has gone on since. The school diary was filled with wonderful opportunities for children with WOW Days (Key Stage 1 International Day of Democracy) and the Year 6 visits to Gadbrook Park and the Barclays Bank workshops. There were the enrichment days – one with an art focus, and the range of sports activities – football and hockey to name but two. There were the usual links with St Helen's Church led initially by Revd Jane Millinchip but then there was the welcoming of Revd Andrew Ridley and his wife Carol into the school family and community in late November. They have, in a sense, had a baptism of fire as they were just getting their 'feet under the table' when the pandemic threw all our lives into disorder. The importance of family and community has been strongly demonstrated through a variety of Autumn Term events: Eco and Nature Family Community Afternoons, Grandparents Day, the MacMillan Coffee Morning and Family Cookery. Of course, last December we all enjoyed the usual children's Christmas performances and their commitment to entertainment. Their confidence is amazing –and this reflects something of their general behaviour within school. From personal experience I can proudly continue to

state that children are invariably welcoming and polite and willing to share their news and talk excitedly about their work – or at least that was an exciting reality until March 2020.

National Tests targets are constantly being changed and Government expectations and floor standards have been raised on an annual basis but this year the school, like every other school in the country, has found itself in challenging circumstances with the pandemic throwing much into disarray. The emphasis was on teacher assessment and we are fortunate to have a practical and effective system of monitoring pupil progress and attainment within the school. This has stood us in good stead.

Lock down brought many challenges, for our school this was to ensure that children and families were supported with home learning, and to provide practical help and signpost advice for those families struggling with financial hardship and the distress this can cause. I would like to pay tribute to everyone for the way they have met these challenges. Staff put a tremendous amount of effort, time and skill into addressing the demands the pandemic placed upon supporting home learning. I observed the originality of the ideas shared by staff with pupils and a great deal of credit must go to the senior leadership team in school for the breadth and scope of opportunity provided for all children. The level of contact between home and school was exemplary – so thank you everyone.

The return to school in the Summer Term was equally challenging and the Governors were happy to support the work the staff had put in to ensuring the focus on children's well-being before engaging with a full curriculum. For many adults this period has been traumatic so for our children we have to look at the impact of such a major event on their young lives and address issues of safety, security and confidence. Above all this there was also the logistical issue of ensuring that children and staff within school were safe within their organized 'bubbles' with staggered lunch and playtime arrangements and emphasis on hands, face, space. Constantly having to amend arrangements as new guidance came out from central government was very demanding.

Throughout this period governance continued virtually on Microsoft Teams. The Full Governor Body met in both the Spring and Summer Terms but the governors also meet in using Teams for their sub committees and continue to have regular updates on the monitoring of teaching and learning. Our virtual 'Back to School Day' for Governors was both informative and challenging. As Governors we continue to take seriously our role in supporting Mrs Magiera and the teaching and support staff in raising attainment. Together, we are all committed to providing the best for the children in our care.

Pupil Premium children's progress is closely monitored by Mrs Kenyon who discusses the use of funding with Mrs Ruth Cannon, the designated governor. I refer back to that 2017 Ofsted statement which recognised that pupils in this category are making good progress in their learning. *"..leaders identify the barriers to learning faced by these pupils and address them by providing additional academic and pastoral support."* Children with special educational needs are also well supported and this was also praised by Ofsted. Mrs Johnson, as SENCO, works with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure appropriate interventions and this obviously works effectively. Our

monitoring shows that this continues to be the case, regardless of the challenges of the pandemic.

Safeguarding continues to have a high priority within the school. Mrs Parr is our Safeguarding lead and ensures that all staff and governors are trained and kept up to date with Safeguarding expectations and procedures. And special mention needs to be made of Mrs Jackie Ellison who, as Family Support Worker, has worked solidly and dedicated so much time to ensure that our families were contacted and supported during lock down and over the Summer. Her commitment has been greatly appreciated.

Through the School Council children have a role in addressing concerns. Children continue to have a good understanding of different aspects of safety, including fire and road safety, and understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils are also aware of precautions to take when using the internet, such as not revealing personal details online, and know how to report inappropriate content.

The Governors are indeed committed to the school and details about the Governors and the committees etc. can be found on the school website.

### **And finally**

We sincerely welcome all new parents and children into our school family this September. A welcome to our new governor – Miss Harrop, Parent Governor, who has already begun to take a full role on the governing body – a steep learning curve sometimes! Tremendous thanks to Mr Edd Williams who contributed much to the work of the Governing Body and will now become an associate member. Welcome also to new members of staff. We hope that they will quickly feel part of the school family.

I continue to be grateful to all the School Governors for their support and their commitment.

I hope that this report, very different I appreciate, is both informative and useful. Thank you for the interest you take in the school and for your support which is gratefully valued.

Every blessing

Graham Sheen

Chair of Governors.