

## **Message from the Chair of Governors of Our Blessed Saints**

On behalf of the Governors of the Roman Catholic federated primary schools of St Luke's and St Peter & Paul, I am pleased to provide information on how Governors have discharged their statutory duties over the past academic year.

We have 3 core functions:

- Setting the vision and strategic direction of school
- Ensuring financial resources are well spent
- Holding the Headteacher to account for educational performance

The academic year: 2021 to 2022 was once again disrupted by Covid 19, notably around Christmas 2021 due to the Omicron variant. Staff in both our schools continued working through extremely challenging circumstances and generously covered classes as required.

The position of Executive Headteacher remained vacant at the start of this academic year; our Acting Headteachers leading each of our schools. In the autumn term, despite a vigorous recruitment campaign, we were unable to attract a suitable candidate to be our Executive Headteacher. Governors then worked with colleagues from the Shrewsbury Diocese and Telford & Wrekin Local Authority to establish a recruitment process which set a series of challenging tasks to our Acting Headteachers. Following a capability based, in-depth interview, we were pleased to offer Miss Staniforth the opportunity to become our Headteacher at St Peter & St Paul and Miss Evans the Headship at St Luke's. We were delighted when both accepted the positions and thank them for their excellent work since being confirmed in place. Governors have been pleased to see both our Headteachers grow into their headship roles, providing timely reports on school progress and improving learning opportunities for our children with diligence and enthusiasm.

We have since been able to appoint a Deputy Headteacher at St Luke's with Mrs Francesca Rovizzi due to start with us in September. We thank Miss Holmes for being our Teacher in Charge at St Luke's and the whole of the staff team over the last academic year whilst Miss Holmes was on maternity leave. We have been particularly pleased to see the improvement in outdoor facilities available to our children. We were also delighted to receive a donation from the Luke Lively Out of School Club on its closure; this part funded the very well used Pirate Ship. Having spoken to children recently as part of our pupil voice responsibilities, it was wonderful to hear of their excitement at the improvements at break times.

At St Peter & St Paul we have been grateful to Mrs Wickett in continuing her role as Teacher in Charge, providing expertise and support to Miss Staniforth over this academic year. Children at the school were keen to tell us of the breadth of their curriculum and the enjoyment they gained from mini adventures and trips to places of interest.

We have worked hard to produce a draft Strategic Plan for the forthcoming 3 years, setting our objectives and agreeing our priorities. We have identified risks arising and will take action accordingly as the Plan reaches final production. We have participated in a Board Effectiveness Review which has resulted in various improvements being taken, the most notable of which, is the creation of a confidential shared Governor drive. Here, Governance documents can be stored and various reports by individual Governors can be shared freely for all Governors to read. We have participated in a range of training including becoming Ofsted Ready, Equality & Diversity and mandatory safeguarding and Child Protection training.

We have continued to meet virtually over this past year for main Governor meetings, but, as Covid restrictions have lifted, Governors have once again been more active in both our

schools, meeting teachers to discuss curriculum areas and children to ensure they feel safe, happy and enjoying their school life. We have welcomed one new foundation Governor over the last year and each Governor has played their part in taking responsibility for elements of either the curriculum, finance, safeguarding, special educational needs or health and safety. Governors also adopt, review and monitor a range of policies that govern the operation of the school including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Behaviour and Curriculum.

Our twice termly, full Governing Body meetings have remained in place as follows: one in the early part of the term to agree our monitoring activities and later in the term to review school performance. At the first meeting of the academic year, we receive and comment upon each School's Annual Development Plan, prepared by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team in each school. Each Headteacher submits a comprehensive termly report to provide an update on progress in priority areas, on the termly plan. The reports from our HTs are received prior to the second termly meeting, enabling Governors to submit questions in advance of the meeting. If Governors are unable to attend meetings, apologies are submitted and fellow governors determine whether to accept or decline.

Governors are dedicated in giving time freely to serve on our committees: both our Finance and Health & Safety Committees take their duties seriously and report back to full Governor Meetings on a termly basis. Members of the Health & Safety Committee conduct annual inspections. Our School Business Manager is a staff Governor and is a member of both Committees. We have experienced, Designated Safeguarding Lead Governors, for each school

We are pleased to say both schools are operating balanced budgets at the end of this financial year. Both schools offer wrap around care, which also contributes to our school budgets. Standard Assessment Tests for KS2 have been reintroduced this year and we have been pleased with the achievements seen in our schools. The children have tried their best and we are proud of them and thank their teachers.

We will keep in touch with developments resulting from the Education White Paper which intimated that "families of schools" will become the norm by 2030. We are part of the consultation process, led by Shrewsbury Diocese, regarding the future of Catholic education in Shropshire. With this in mind, we will continue to build links with other schools in both of our local areas and our Catholic primary schools across Shropshire. We will continue to develop our relationship with Holy Trinity Academy, plus other local secondary schools to enrich our curriculum. We do all we can to ensure the smooth transition of all pupils as they progress to the next stage of their education.

We will continue to fully support Miss Evans and Miss Staniforth in the highly effective leadership roles they play in both of our schools. We are also grateful for the skills and experience of Miss Russell in her role as our SENDCO. As ever, we very much appreciate, the time and effort of our Senior Leadership Team in making our schools, welcoming, caring, excellent places of learning.



Pauline Heffernan Chair: Our Blessed Saints School September 2022