

## **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

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 to ensure we are holding our HTs to account. If Governors are unable to attend meetings, apologies are submitted and fellow governors determine whether to accept or decline. We have continued hybrid Governor meetings this year. Those of us who can meet in each school (with meeting venues rotating through the school year) do so. However, those joining at the end of a working day, find it far more convenient and an effective use of time, to log on by clicking a secure link.

We have had a number of changes within the Governing Body, bidding farewell to some experienced Governors whilst welcoming others willing to serve. At the close of the academic year, we have vacancies for Foundation Governors and a Parent Governor at St Luke's and will be seeking to fill these roles in the autumn term. Our clerking has been provided by an experienced and effective clerk provided by Telford & Wrekin Council.

Whilst the impact of covid has lessened and our attendance is generally good, we do have some children who are being educated at home: we also have a small number of school refusers. Our Headteachers report on attendance each term and all aspects of absence are always the subject of Governor challenge questions. We have also been interested in the changing school population at SSPP: it is a far more diverse school than previously and reflects the evolving community which we serve.

Our Governor committees have remained active: Health & Safety Governors met with Local Authority representatives early in the academic year to undertake a premises audit and took action as necessary. Our Finance Committee met regularly throughout the academic year working with Miss Evans at St Luke's and Miss Staniforth at St Peter & St Paul, to agree spending and future budgets. Governors also adopt, review and monitor a range of policies that govern the operation of the schools including Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Behaviour and Curriculum.

Governors have continued to discharge their duties in a number of other ways: meeting with children for termly pupil voice discussions and meeting with Miss Russell as our SENDCO. We are also fortunate to have a highly experienced and skilled Designated Safeguarding Lead Governor who gives time to each school as required. We also meet with our School Improvement Partner, who we have appointed to advise us on specific areas of school life. This includes assisting and advising us with Headteacher Performance Management and giving us advice to ensure we keep abreast of Ofsted requirements.

The Chair and Vice Chair have spent considerable time over the past academic year ensuring all procedures and processes were effectively discharged relating to our planned conversion to become academy schools within Our Lady Help of Christians. Various meetings have been held, including with officers of the DfE, Diocesan Solicitors and Senior Officers of the Trust. We are following a timetable to convert in the autumn term of 2024.

We met with members of the School Council at St Luke's. They demonstrated how they had a good understanding in considering the needs of others when they told us they ensured, a child in a wheelchair, was always able to "have a go" at each different game and sport. They also asked us, as Governors, how we spent "their" money – as in how we invested in their future.

Younger children at SSPP told us they enjoyed Year 6 children helping them – especially on the playground. All children were animated when talking about reading – and could explain Everyone Reads in Class: with favourite authors being quoted. Trips out and exciting lessons were mentioned: Governors participated and accompanied several of these visits.

In December 2023, St Luke's had an Ofsted visit: it continued to be a "good" school. Governors felt the inspector captured the school ethos in some of the comments made:

*"Pupils are happy, motivated and well behaved. Lessons are calm. Pupils work hard and do well in many aspects of their education. There is a strong sense of community, and pupils are keen to participate in whole-school activities. The school's distinctive strengths include the strong sense of community and the values that guide everyday life. A united team approach means that all staff model responsible and thoughtful behaviour. At lunchtimes, for example, catering and supervisory staff take a caring interest in pupils' lives. Throughout the school day, staff follow the school's behaviour policy with consistency. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and the value of kind words and deeds. Parents appreciate the school's work and refer to the school as a 'lighthouse in the community'."*

Staff at SSPP continued to work hard to ensure that the school is "Ofsted ready": the curriculum is always kept under review to ensure it meets the needs of the children. External experts are regularly invited into school, with resulting reports fed back to Governors. Action is taken as necessary.

We will continue to fully support Miss Evans and Miss Staniforth in the highly effective leadership they give to 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 all those within the Senior Leadership Teams in our schools to ensure they are welcoming, caring, excellent places of learning.



Pauline Heffernan Chair: Our Blessed Saints School October 2024