

## Kettleshulme St James CE (VA) Primary School



*Life in all its fullness*

### **Governance Statement 2020/21**

As it is so close to the end of the school year, we thought it would be a good time for the School's governors to share some thoughts with you. We have looked back over the last year and what has been achieved and hope this update will be of interest.

Of course, we welcome any feedback as it is important to us that we hear from all those involved with our wonderful school and we want to work together to make it the best it can be. Before we begin here is a summary of the key responsibilities of school governors, our role is to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold the School's leaders to account for the educational performance of the School, its pupils and staff
- Oversee the School's financial performance and make sure money is well spent

Our role helps to establish and maintain the School's vision and priorities; working as a team to challenge, support and contribute to the strategic leadership of Kettleshulme St James.

#### **Strategic direction**

A major event for us was saying 'Goodbye' to our long standing Headteacher Mr Quirk and then welcoming into our school community our new Headteacher, Mrs Bellshaw.

The Governing Body invested significant time in the Headteacher's recruitment, which culminated in a robust and rigorous two day interview for our shortlisted candidates. We were hopeful that our small school in the hills, its pupils, community, staff and ethos would work its magic and, we were not disappointed. The recruitment process ran smoothly and we were delighted with the outcome; Mrs Bellshaw joining us in January 2021.

As governors we feel the selection criteria and process we agreed upon helped the smooth transition from one Headteacher to another.

Mention of Mrs Bellshaw's arrival leads us neatly to consider the School's continuing response to Covid-19, as on her first day the Government announced school closures due to the pandemic. As governors we have continued to meet virtually and satisfied ourselves that the School's programme of remote learning enabled every pupil to progress, and that despite the restrictions imposed upon the School a broad and balanced curriculum was delivered.

The wellbeing of staff and pupils remain of paramount importance and we continue our vigilance regarding health and safety and safeguarding during this unusual time.

We are full of admiration for the team spirit in school and how everyone has pulled together when faced with challenges. The way new initiatives have been embraced, such as yoga and forest school, has been great to see.

### **School finances**

We made our annual financial submission to the Local Authority in May and subsequently approved the School's budget and three year financial forecast. We continue to manage a deficit budget but are encouraged about the future and the positive impact the potential increase in pupil numbers from September will have on funding. Scrutiny of all expenditure is a given, with value for money and pupil outcomes foremost in everyone's minds. It is wonderful to see the resourcefulness and enthusiasm shown by the team at our School to ensure funds stretch as far as they can, with creativity, networking and community support all playing an essential and beneficial part in the School's financial position.

We continue to monitor and agree the action plan for Covid Catch Up funding.

### **Educational performance**

We approved the appointment of a Diocesan School Improvement Partner to work with Mrs Bellshaw when establishing her first-year objectives which, in turn, are reshaping the direction of the School Development Plan. There is renewed focus on maintaining standards in teaching and learning at the highest possible level, enabling our subject leaders to have greater impact, and with particular importance placed on standards in literacy and maths throughout the school.

### **What Next?**

We are looking forward to exciting times ahead for Kettlethulme St James. So it will be a case of 'Watch this space'.

Work has just begun on a review of our School's vision and set of values. As part of this we wish to see the School further enhance its Christian distinctiveness, recognising and celebrating each individual child and encouraging all to achieve their full potential, surrounded by God's love and care. This project will be back in full swing in the autumn term and the aim is to co-create a clear, shared vision for the future across the community of staff, pupils and parents.

We hope that by the autumn we will all have access to a new school website. This will give us, as governors, the opportunity to stay in touch with you, but it will also enable the School to streamline some day-to-day processes and improve school communications.

In the meantime, we wish you a lovely summer and hopefully some respite from the challenges associated with Covid-19. For those who will be saying 'Farewell' to the School as Year 6 children leave us, you have our very best wishes for the future. Do please keep in touch if you would like to. The School's website, newsletters and Facebook posts will keep you up to date with everything that is going on, even, I expect, updates on the guinea pigs.

On behalf of the Governing Body at Kettlethulme St James,

July 2021