## St Luke’s CofE Primary

Governors' report 2018

My name is Mark Smitham and I am the chair of governors of St Luke's. When I think about 2018 my overarching view is that it was a period of reconstruction for the governing board as, for various reasons, several members left us and new members were welcomed.

This coincided quite naturally with a period of self-reflection for the board, culminating with a governor skills analysis after the final meeting of the year, which we will get the results for in the next few weeks and which will tell us where to concentrate our training efforts.

Whenever this happens it always takes a little while for an organisation to find its feet again, but I’m happy to report that the new members seem to be integrating well.

Additional needs have been of increasing importance during 2018 with a number of pupils needing extra support. The governing board have made it a priority to ensure school has the resources and support needed to help these pupils and give them the best start to their education possible.

This has been made more difficult by the cutting of council funding to various family support services outside of school. We also sadly lost Kim, one of our school crossing ladies who retired after funding cuts to her role. I know she was very popular with the children and parents, and she will be missed.

One of the themes for this year has been to increase our feedback from parents and carers. To that end several governors were at the parents evening to promote Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire. Around 20 very positive responses were received, which matches the positive pattern when we have an inspection.

This year we also ran a leavers’ survey of year 6 pupils and parents. Again extremely positive results, and such lovely comments from the children:

**“We are [not] thought of as a class, we’re thought of as individual people and everyone is supportive towards us, whatever we think or aspire to be.”** and

**“At St. Luke’s we do well because we help each other and have lots of smiles.”**

I certainly saw lots of smiles on the House challenge day, which I came in to observe and photograph. The house captains were briefed as I arrived and then they split off to lead their houses in various project activities which were then presented to the rest of the school at the end of the day. It was lovely to see the older children mentoring the young ones and what a terrific example they set. A personal favourite was a play written and performed by the children - some in year 1 - about staying safe online. Fantastic!

Our school tries to be outward looking, and a special focus for us is to cooperate and collaborate with other schools. We are a member of PEGs - the Peak Edge Group of schools, based in New Mills - and recently I attended the inaugural meeting of CoGs which is the Glossop group of Chairs of Governors. This allows us to share best practice, problem solve and get more for our children and is well worth a few evenings a year.

Speaking of cooperation with other schools, Mrs Clayton made an epic journey to Kolkata to work with an Indian school there. The St Luke’s children have learned a lot about their culture and practices and have expanded their horizons a little more. Imagine being so little and knowing so much about people on the other side of the world!

Sadly, Mrs Nichols left us in the summer to become a Headteacher at another school, which is testament to the nurturing and encouragement the school provides to staff as well as pupils.

I feel a little like a broken record recently, but unfortunately one of the things which keeps coming up in Governor meetings is the small number of children who are persistently late. The school has tried and continues to try various strategies to tackle this, but we know that it negatively affects the outcomes for pupils involved, so we keep trying.

On a more positive note, our new split library comprising the ‘Bookwormery’ (fiction) and ‘Questionarium’ (non-fiction) had their grand openings. This has taken a lot of effort and planning by the staff and is a terrific addition to the school. And speaking of additions, I am sure you have also noticed our new big red bus which is gracing the playground and has been kindly donated by Stagecoach.

Both these projects have had significant input from the PTA who have contributed £3000 to books for the library and have also offered to pay for the refit of the bus once the children have decided what they'd like it to become! Thank you to all the parents and carers who have contributed to PTA events who made these possible.

We are employing a lunchtime PAS coach to encourage the children to be more active at break times. This feeds into our sports and games strategy for which we have won a GamesMark Gold award. Well done everyone!

I was privileged alongside other Governors to attend a work scrutiny session in the summer months. This is a great opportunity for governors to speak directly to the children about how they think their work is progressing and about what they think of the marking schemes school uses.

These informal interviews spanned students from every year and revealed pupils who are confident when talking about their class work and sure of what they need to do next to improve. The governing team looked through their books alongside the children and asked them to comment on progression through the year. What a fantastic afternoon!

Next year will see me step down as chair of governors, having done four years it is time to pass the reins on to someone else. This is being done in as orderly way as possible, and I look forward to continuing as a governor, with a slightly decreased workload.

Some good news in the offing is that OFSTED have begun the process of updating their inspection framework to concentrate much more on school activity rather than just on results. They will focus on the need for a broad education with as much enrichment activity as possible.

This is a framework which reflects much more closely the ethos and practice of our school, to the extent that I’m beginning to wonder whether it wasn’t written by Mrs Littlehailes!

Our children get, and will continue to get as broad an education as we can give them. After all, our motto is: **Opening Eyes, Hearts and Minds.**

Mark Smitham

Chair of Governors

**St Luke’s C of E Primary, Glossop**