

## Governor Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of the academic year, I am writing to you to highlight some of the things the school's governors have been doing during the past 12 months.

Before I do that I want on behalf of the governors to thank you, our pupils and the school's magnificent staff for the efforts you have all made throughout the many difficult months of the Covid-19 pandemic. The resilience demonstrated by everybody in the face of hardship and uncertainty has been truly inspiring. The governors recognise that St Nicholas School could not have functioned as well as it has without your co-operation and support, your active and constructive involvement, and your willingness to adapt to new arrangements as government regulations have changed. We must all hope that the lifting of restrictions on 19 July will result in something like normality returning in the new school year starting in September. Thank you again.

Here are some highlights of the governors' activities during the year:

### Governor Monitoring

Although our usual monitoring activities were severely curtailed by the pandemic, governors examined in depth the following crucial areas:

- We received assurances from Daniel Lewis and his team that the measures in place for **managing risks** worked effectively and that **safeguarding** remained the school's highest priority.
- We spoke to school leaders and others to understand the impact that Covid was having on pupil and staff **mental health and wellbeing**, and looked at the effectiveness of the support being provided.
- We looked at what the school was doing to deliver good quality **home learning** to pupils. Despite this being a new area for staff and parents/carers alike with many complexities not found at mainstream schools, governors have been impressed with the adaptability of everybody involved and the success of the programme.
- We examined how **continuity of learning and the curriculum** were being maintained, seeking assurances on how well the arrangements were responding to the needs of pupils.
- We recognised that despite the best effort of the school to provide continuity of education for all pupils, there was a risk that **disadvantaged pupils and their families** could experience greater challenges. We therefore looked closely at what the school was doing to reduce any impact that the pandemic could have on disadvantaged pupils.
- We monitored the implications that Covid could have for the **management of resources**, including the potential pressures on school leaders to change how resources were allocated.
- We kept abreast of the capacity in St Nicholas to deliver **COVID-19 testing for all pupils and staff** based on government guidance and the financial resources available.

## **Financial Management**

The Finance & Resources Committee continued to oversee financial performance and ensure St Nicholas spends its money well. Performance in the 2020/21 financial year was excellent and the school's financial position as reflected in the 2021/22 budget is very healthy.

## **Learning, Curriculum and Students (LCS)**

The LCS Committee met throughout the year and focussed on a number of important areas, including the quality of education, the School Development Plan and the partnership with parents.

### **Strategy**

The Strategic Working Group met regularly in 2021 to consider how to strengthen the ability of governors to anticipate the future and develop methods and initiatives to secure the long-term sustainability of a thriving, outstanding and well resourced school. As things return to normal we will take steps to improve our engagement with parents, carers and others involved with the school to make sure the decision-making process takes account of your views.

St Nicholas is also working with other local schools to help make sure that the full spectrum of provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is available in the Canterbury district.

Looking to the immediate future an important task for governors will be to recruit a new Headteacher to fill Daniel's shoes from September 2022. As I told you recently, the governors do not underestimate the importance of the job ahead of us. We have already put recruitment plans in place and opened discussions with the Local Authority.

That is all for now but I will write again to update you on developments in September. In the meantime, I am looking forward to presenting prizes to school leavers at the assemblies on Monday 19 July.

I hope you have an enjoyable summer break. The weather can only get better.

Nigel Wootton