

July 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Annual Report to Parents by Governors – July 2019

With the end of term rapidly approaching, I wanted to write to give you the Governors' view of how the year has gone and the challenges that lie ahead for us. It is always interesting looking back over the school year and seeing how much change we have dealt, and coped, with: this year we've had lots!

We started the school year with a "Good" Ofsted rating, a new collaboration with Cromford Primary School and a new Head Teacher, Mrs Foster. Although we had been planning the collaboration for some months before, you never know how well it's going to work until you've started: and looking back on it now, it's gone even better than expected. The feedback that we had from the parent, carer, staff and pupils' surveys in December confirmed that things were going well and they have continued to do so. This is a big credit to Mrs Foster and the teaching and support team who have borne the brunt of making it work. We agreed in February to renew the agreement for a further year. Derbyshire County Council (for Cromford) and DDAT confirmed to us that we could continue indefinitely with the arrangement if both schools agree.

We regularly meet with Cromford governors and senior teaching staff and discuss how we can improve and make things better. We've had a number of joint initiatives and events with Cromford with trips to the Halle Orchestra in Derby and Chatsworth House: sharing resources allows us to do things that wouldn't be possible otherwise. And that includes the training of teachers where DDAT have generously accommodated Cromford staff on courses they have run.

In addition to our new Head Teacher, there have been many other staffing changes especially in the infants. We have been fortunate to have recruited excellent teaching and support staff and also additional resources to enhance the learning environment for the children. In particular, the EYFS area has gone from strength to strength and the recent inspection visits by DDAT have confirmed what a great resource we now have. Mrs Angrave is planning to return from her maternity leave in November so that will strengthen the team further.

We are continuing to maintain our pupil numbers and plan to start the next school year with 87 children on roll. With the new house builds coming on stream in Matlock we are well placed to accommodate increasing numbers without substantial change.

A school thrives on active parent and carer engagement; and it was great to see the PTFA reform earlier this year and start to get support for its activities. We want to see it grow from strength to strength. On the point of active engagement we had 3 new Governors join our Governor body – Mark Kelly as Parent Governor and Alice Heathcote as a Foundation Governor. They have both made very positive contributions right from the outset and have strengthened our Governor body focusing on finance and teaching and learning performance. Simon Edwards stayed on the team for the rest of this (current) year but will step down in July. I'd like to say a big thank-you to Simon for all his hard work over the past years (they have been turbulent and challenging). He will continue to be a friend of the school and pop in to take the occasional STEM lesson with his wacky experiments.

One of the areas that we'd ask you to help us with this year is making the road area outside the school a safer place. We've had a couple of near misses with children involving cars parked close, and in, the school entrance. Whilst we understand the pressures on everyone in setting down and collecting their children, the safety of all children is our paramount concern. So there will be some road safety initiatives coming into play which we would ask you to support, individually and collectively. Mark Kelly, one of our Parent Governors, is spearheading on this. The School Council have come up with a name for the initiative: **Keep us safe, Park in the right place**. I think it sums it up nicely.

One of the initiatives we are promoting is an increase in the number of after school clubs to offer children a broader set of experiences. We have the Forest School Club run by Nick Forster on Thursdays: numbers are increasing and we're getting some wonderful feedback. We have a Dance Club on Monday evenings and RuggerEds on Fridays. We need your active support to grow these and ensure they are successful.

Finally, looking forward, we are growing from strength to strength but cannot be complacent. We need to continue building on our excellent base to deliver and improve the standard of teaching and learning. And once again, thank you for your continued support of the school and the staff.

Kind regards

John Higgs
Chair of Governors