



February 2019 Message from the Chair of the Interim Academy Board (IAB)



Judith Johnson

Independent Chair of the Interim Academy Board (IAB)
St. Margaret Clitherow Primary School

What a beautiful February it has been weather wise and I am delighted to share with you that the progress and success of the school has more than matched the weather.

We have been developing the Curriculum offer and Lorraine Dudman as Assistant Headteacher has been leading this work – we now have a set of materials and processes that are ahead of many other schools and national requirements and really embedded in the school with staff. More importantly, all the feedback from your children tells us that they are enjoying the new approaches which are helping them make links across their learning. As I sit drafting this message to you on an early Friday morning, I am looking forward to visiting the school later today to see this in practice in Key Stage 1. I will be hearing children read and look at their work over this term and last term and see what a difference that curriculum approach has made.

It has been a boost for all staff to know that at a recent Headteacher meeting, CAST held up our school as a model of good practice for all the other schools to consider – a proud moment for our Headteacher who has worked so hard with all the staff on the curriculum and so many other areas.

As part of this curriculum development work, and in line with some recent national publications we have now set up a list of the learning activities and experiences that is helpful for all children to experience to help them fully develop as young people. This is a form of curriculum passport of activities to help them mature into the next phase of their learning and life. We expect that you will want to share our work on this and help them experience many of these activities from home and during the holiday periods.

Since half term we have the added bonus of a '*Specialist Leader in Education (SLE)*' for Early Years called Lauren Stone, joining the staff and we can already see the difference that is beginning to make – these are experts in their field and can work across several schools to spread their skills and knowledge.

We also have a new Clerk to the Governors/IAB who started with the us for the first term at this February meeting – Katherine Parker. I am sure she will prove to be a great asset for us and the substantive Local Governing Body in the future. Still no news on that front numbers wise I am afraid as not enough volunteers have come forward to form a full governing body. We have had an excellent parent representative come forward who will be a valuable addition to the group but that's not enough. We are exploring other ways forward but are still open to expressions of interest if you want to be part of this school moving forward with its bright future.

We have had some new admissions to the school, so the pupil numbers are starting to improve which is helpful.

Two positive visits took place in February on the Catholic Life quality in the school in readiness for our due Section 48 (Faith) inspection. Both praised the provision and found no gaps against the expectations. One of these was from Helen Brown – Headteacher from Sacred Heart primary school and an experienced member of our IAB and the other was an external consultant headteacher - so its good to know that internally and externally we have a match of opinion on the quality on the school.

Finally – thank you for continuing to help us with the push on full attendance and with the positive feedback you keep sharing – it all helps lift the spirits amongst the hard work. All in all – a really good month!

Judith