

St Michael's School 2015

The most important role Governors play is in recruiting staff, whether it be teachers or the supporting personnel and at St Michael's we are extremely fortunate that we have a marvellous team led by Mrs Lisa Dale, our Head teacher, who has now been in her permanent post for a year. With her **SLT (Senior Leadership Team)** she is able to offer all that we expect from a high performing Church school and all staff, including teaching assistants, the administrative team, cooks, cleaners and the caretaking team work together to create a happy and welcoming atmosphere to parents and pupils alike. This, therefore, makes our input so much more enjoyable and we, then, are able to carry out our responsibilities carefully and knowing that we, too, have support from all the staff.

We all read, in the national press, of the difficulties of recruiting staff at secondary level but it is no less easy at Key Stages 1 and 2 and, particularly when teachers are on eg. maternity leave, there is great pressure on the Head teacher to find good replacements for one term or more. Until one is involved, even on the fringe, one has to appreciate, once again, how important it is to find that one suitable person to look after and teach the children at every level of their education.

Having said that, **our** children do not miss out and are given every chance to succeed in their daily life in School. Every term there is a Christian focus and one of the highlights was **The Easter Project** delivered by Springs Dance Company to Year 5. They worked together to create a dance that told the Easter Story and they performed part of it beautifully at the end of term Easter Service. The plus side was that the children agreed that the drama of the dance added to their understanding of the Easter story. Another first was when Year 4 visited the Church in June to launch the new **Church Trail** which had been organised by the Bishops Stortford Decorative and Fine Arts Society and, whilst the children participated in it on the day, it has been used by other visiting groups during the year.

A new approach: **Building Learning Power (BLP)** has been launched which is linked to the growth mind set work being undertaken in the School. There are now some pupils in Year 6 who are the school's **Learning Champions** and they work with children across the school to help build BLP and promote resilience, perseverance and positive thinking. They also recognise that charity starts at home and they continue to raise funds for their partner school, **Nabakabala in Uganda** and recently received the news that their efforts are helping the roof to appear on the school's hall. They have also taken part in a sponsored skip which raised well almost £3000 for **The British Heart Foundation**.

On a lighter note the children have enjoyed many outings on a wide variety of subjects: the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, Mathilda the musical, the National Theatre, Knebworth House and Paradise Wildlife Park to name a few. Extra-curricular activities enjoyed include Spanish, French, FUNdamentals, Treble Recorders, Orchestra and a wide range of Sports and Library participation. It is, therefore, recognised that school does not end at 3.20pm and especially for the staff who are often still working when we, as Governors, attend evening meetings. **The School/Church link** is very strong and, as such, the Governors also have a separate committee which looks at the partnership and also with the Diocese. Teaching staff put in an enormous amount of work to uphold the best Christian values for every child in their care. Governors are each allocated a class and they will follow that class throughout the years to Year 6, plus they are also responsible for a particular subject (I count myself very lucky as I have Music!).

The school strives to maintain a rich, broad curriculum whilst maintaining high academic standards. This is not easy to do! Despite the pressures of recruitment, significant changes to the curriculum and assessment, they achieve excellent results across all phases and Key Stages. The results in reading, writing and maths, for the end of **Key Stage One** (Year 2) were above national figures for Level 2 and 3 (Level 3 being above national average and beyond expectations for their age). In fact, in reading half the class achieved this.

Recently, the school received a letter, congratulating them on their most recent Key Stage Two results and the local newspaper reported that St, Michael's gained the highest number of **Level 5s** across the town. This again represents achievement beyond expectation for the average year 6 pupil.

Rosemary Thomson
Foundation Governor