

Report from the Trustees of Seva School (September 2017)

The academic year 2016/2017 presented a number of significant challenges for the school especially the Ofsted report in September that placed Seva into Special Measures. Sadly, this category of concern was not unexpected given the rapid changes that had taken place among the senior leadership team, the tense relationships in areas of the school and of course the still baffling failing identified in our safeguarding procedures. I am very pleased to report that our safeguarding procedures have been comprehensively revised and continue to meet all requirements.

Changes have taken place on the Board of Trustees and in the early Spring three of our Trustees resigned, including the Chairman Maureen Martin, to be replaced by Antonio D'Onofrio, Raminder Rig and myself. We all have extensive experience of the world of education and are using our skills to the best advantage for Seva. Parents have been amazingly loyal to the school and we the Trustees and Members would like to say a huge thank you to them. I am pleased to say things are moving forward from the gloom to a brighter and sunnier place.

The new academic year brings challenges for us as we go into the next phase of our move to leave Special Measures. As a school in Special Measures we are subject to regular visits from Her Majesties Inspectors (HMI) and have so far had two such visits, both with many positive comments. We can expect more visits from the HMI responsible for monitoring our progress and this term Mr Chandla and his staff will be focusing on improving the teaching and learning in all classes, making the curriculum more vibrant and interesting and above all improving the achievement of all pupils. The autumn term has begun with training sessions for teachers to make sure they feel informed and confident in delivering the curriculum and recognise quickly and accurately how well each pupil is doing and what they need to do to make even better progress. Our pupils are keen learners and benefit from supportive homes where education is valued so we are sure we can bring out the very best in them.

The senior leadership team is a united and committed group with Tracey McGeever now leading Primary as Deputy Head, Kulwant Atkar leading Secondary as Deputy Head and Naresh Chandla as the acting Headteacher. Trustees will be selecting their permanent Headteacher later in the autumn term and that will be a further step forward in securing a safe future for Seva School.

In all we do we are grateful for the support of our friends and especially the principal and staff at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy and Khalsa Primary who not only provide us with an acting Headteacher but two Trustees who are very committed to improving Seva School. We have the services of a well-regarded consultant available to help and advise as well as monitor developments in the school.

Illustrious guests such as Lord and Lady Singh are visitors to special occasions in our school. Lady Singh will be sponsoring a creative writing prize for Primary and Secondary students later this term and the famous Vitabiotics group will be sponsoring a science prize. Such practical support is very special to us.

The summer holidays saw a number of temporary buildings mushroom on the site, restricting the play space of pupils but providing much needed additional accommodation. Talks and discussions continue about the permanent needs of the school for further accommodation and we all have our ambitions but must be patient to see what can be achieved in practical terms. The curriculum is under constant review and extra-curricular options as well as enrichment through visits and excursions enliven learning for our pupils.

The Trustees are very grateful to the Parents Association and the support that they provide for the school. The school urgently needs to improve the range of books in the library, especially fiction books, to help support and develop pupils reading and general literacy skills. A very generous donation from the Parents Association has got us off to a good start with expanding our books stock. Our aim is to achieve 20 to 30 approved works of fiction for each age group, to support the English curriculum and provide a wide range of choice for pupils to select from. We want to foster a love of reading and will need some special help for this. We will be inviting families to sponsor a book in the autumn term. Class teachers will have book lists from which a family can select a book or two to donate to the school library. Name plates will be available for donated books so that future readers will know who kindly gave them the opportunity to read a special book.

I have touched on only some of the main things we have achieved in the past year and we look forward to more exciting developments to come.

Dr Norma r Ball

Chair of Board of Trustees