



St Michael's Church School

BOARD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2019 - 2020

Introduction

Last year, the then Chairman, Mr Paul Marsh, noted that the school had moved from survival mode into an exciting 'take off' period. Roll accumulation during the remainder of the 2019 continued to reflect that optimism. Unfortunately, the dark shadow of COVID-19 has brought that growth to an abrupt stop, and as a result focus has had to switch from recruitment to retention. Like many other businesses across New Zealand we are very disappointing in the loss of our hard-fought-for momentum.

Throughout the Alert Levels' lockdown, the wellbeing and pastoral care of our pupils, parents and staff was the priority, guiding all our actions. The Board acknowledges the tremendous work and communication by the staff during the Level 4 lockdown period as they delivered a most impressive and very well planned 'at-home' programme.

School Board of Governors

Bishop Peter Carrell	Warden	
Mr Paul Marsh	Chairman (April - Dec)	Invited
Prof. Spencer Beasley	Chairman (Dec - present)	Invited
Fr Chris Orczy	Vicar & Vice Chairman	
Miss Penny Tattershaw	Principal	
Mr Michael Graveston		Vestry
Mrs Rachel Watson		Vestry
Mr Richard Peters		Parish Trust Board
Mrs Margaret Yorke		Synod (until 7 Sept)
Ven Lynnette Lightfoot		Synod (since 7 Sept)
Mr Matthew Slater	Chairman, Finance Cmtte	PTFA
Ms Erin Reeve		PTFA
Mrs Anne Tucker		Staff
Mr Stephen Harteveld		Invited

I wish to formally record our sincere thanks to Mrs Margaret Yorke for her decade of devoted service to the Board and school as Synod representative, 2010-2019. Her wise counsel and valuable guidance, drawing on her impressive teaching career and educational experience, were always greatly appreciated.

Having resigned from the position of Bishop's representative in March 2019, Archdeacon Lynnette Lightfoot was voted back onto the Board as Synod representative in September 2020. The Board had missed Archdeacon Lightfoot's sage and considered advice, and welcomed her return.

In December 2019, Mr Paul Marsh completed two years as Chairman, having been asked by Bishop Victoria to step into the role at a crucial and dangerous time in the school's history. His vast experience overseas as an independent school headmaster, and trainer of school governors, was invaluable in laying the foundations of the school's regrowth which began under his guidance in January 2018. I wish to formally recognise his successful leadership.

Staff & Roll

With an increase in roll from 42 in January 2018 to 80 in January 2019 and 100 in January 2020, the efforts of the teaching and administrative staff deserve recognition for the unprecedented and rapid success in rebuilding the roll. The 2020 year opened with single classes in Y1-6, and only one remaining combined class in Y7&8. Mrs Jo Eason moved into the new Y5 classroom, and Miss Stefanie Innes joined the staff to open the new Y4 classroom.

Miss Jillian Kerr joined the staff in Term 3, 2019, to take senior class music and resurrect the orchestra. Miss Kerr is an Old Girl of St Michael's.

The Education Review Office (ERO) visited the school in May 2019, their first visit in seven years. The Board was delighted to receive their glowing report, a reward for a great deal of hard work by the staff. The Board was particularly thrilled with the significant acknowledgement of the school's special character in the final report:

St Michael's...Christian special character is based on an historical connection with the Anglican Church. The relationship with the church and parish community is central to the virtues and values that the school promotes and models.

The governing body supports the principal and staff to achieve the valued academic, cultural, physical, emotional and spiritual development outcomes for students. The values of Faith, Love, Hope, Respect, Integrity and Community underpin the school's actions and define its moral purpose. The school's vision is to empower students to be compassionate, responsible and resourceful citizens.

The site and facilities include heritage and newer buildings that reflect the history, traditions and identity of the school. The caring ethos is characterised by initiatives including before and after school care, school holiday programmes, a religious education curriculum component, and full school participation in the life and ceremonies of the onsite church.

The special character includes strong alignment of the school's values, religious education and the enactment of the broad local curriculum...There is a strong focus on holistic approaches to meet individual students' wellbeing and learning needs. This is well resourced and supported by a nurturing and inclusive school climate.

Finances

The bursar, Mrs Jocelyn Richards, and Mr Matthew Slater, Chairman of the Finance Committee, are to be thanked for their work in preparing this year's annual accounts amid the challenges of the COVID-19 lockdown.

After annual increases of 7% in each of the three years, 2017-2019, the school fees were raised by 5% for the 2020 academic year. This accommodated the staff 3-4% pay increase as per the state sector teachers' award for 2019-2021. After years of disparity, fees remain too low, and unfortunately it is almost impossible to close the gap without jeopardizing roll retention. Fees will need to be increased for 2021, to accommodate the second year of the teachers' award, but the Board will need to be cognisant of the financial fragility of the School Family in post-COVID. (Seven pupils have given notice for the end of Term 2, 2020.)

The school remains indebted to the St John's College Trust Board for their grant to fund the new Y4 class teacher position for one year (2020). The Trust continues to receive quarterly financial and marketing reports. Having been extraordinarily generous to the school over the 2016-2020 period, essentially ensuring the school's survival, St John's Trust advised the Board in November that no further funding is available for St Michael's.

The Board continues to work towards complying with the auditor's wish for six months' liquidity, especially with the closure of the St John's Trust funding option.

PTFA – Parent, Teacher, Friends, Association

The Board acknowledges and thanks the members of the PTFA, led by Chairman Mrs Katrina Anderson, for their efforts on behalf of the school to engender goodwill and support the School Family. Several events and social gatherings raised targeted funds to purchase new equipment and in particular a generous number of new junior reading books.

Health and Safety

Several serious H&S incidents occurred during the year including a burglary at the school; a bag of marijuana found on the church steps; a second lockdown of the school, occasioned by the distressed man who barricaded himself in the church; and in the gravel car park, theft from the workshop and of a keypad lock from a school gate; the smashing of a teacher's car windows and theft of belongings; and extensive graffiti on the wooden fences and school-end wall.

School security remains a matter of paramount concern for the Board. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the police and Justice Precinct Security staff.

The Board commends and thanks the Vestry for the attractive new car park on Durham Street, which has greatly improved the first impression to visitors. Sadly, the undesirable trespassers who enjoy the free parking for the police station and courts were only briefly deterred. We look forward to the completion of the front fence.

Royal Commission into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 1950 - 1999

The government launched the Royal Commission into Historical Abuse in 2019, and as a faith-based institution the school is required to comply with the commission's investigations. To date, this has consisted of responses to official Notices requesting data and policy documents, and reports of any known incidents of abuse. Our research to date has not revealed any evidence of such incidents.

Conclusion

The Board values its relationship with Vestry, and thanks Fr Christopher Orczy and the Vestry members for their ongoing support of and interest in the school. We look forward to continuing to develop this relationship to the future benefit of both the school and church.

*Prof Spencer Beasley
Chairman, Board of Governors
17 June 2020*