



# The William Henry Smith School

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2019/20

A year of undoubted success, unprecedented challenge and surreal times, William Henry Smith are no exception to the complexities brought about the pandemic, yet Students, Parents, Carers, Governors, Trustees and Local Authorities can be confident that the school continues to provide strong leadership and significant skills and expertise across all its fields of work. We operate with total transparency, with a passion and drive for excellence and a strong and healthy mantra of *there is always room for improvement*. We do this through our open channels of communication, our compassion to listen and learn from each other and make changes in the best interests of our school community.

Whilst we operate a deliberate critical eye on our own practice, it is always good to receive recognition from external governance such as Ofsted, who in March inspected our Social Care provision and judged the school outstanding in all areas. We are very proud to have received 15 consecutive judgements of this standard.

*Children make exceptional progress because staff share their experiences. Staff say to children, 'We can do this together'. This gives children the confidence to learn about their past. Children learn to accept challenge and explore novelty. They begin to identify their feelings and understand their relationships. One child told the inspector 'I have come out from behind the curtain. I can do things I never dared before. I can take on challenge. This is going to help me have a better job'.*

*Leaders and Managers have the highest ambition for what the boys can achieve. Staff work with high levels of co-operation, flexibility and creativity. They find the best way to identify and address children's needs. Such dynamic leadership drives excellent professional practice. Intuitive and capable staff provide excellent support to boys. It helps them to achieve the immense progress they make. (Ofsted, 2020).*

Our value for money and all-inclusive fee continues to be very competitive. The extent of costs such as considerable pension increases, the National Minimum Wage, NJC/Teachers' rise in salaries etc. has posed a financial challenge for the school which we have dealt with innovatively. However, in recognition of the significant pressures Local Authorities are under, we are proposing no increase in fees for 2021/22. It is important to note that, mindful of the pressures LAs were under in relation to spending between 2010 and 2020, the Governors agreed just a 2.43% increase to all fees in the 2020/21 financial year; which was the figure suggested under the national contract formula. In addition to rising costs, there is an increasing need for capital investment, not only to further improve and modernise, but also to invest in the latest technology, advances in practice and ways of working, and utilise the site to its fullest given the school's continued growth and expansion. This includes the investment in Boothroyd House and plans to develop this as a 52-week Children's Home, as well as planned work to swap Lowry and Therapy, enhance outdoor spaces, and the development of an additional car

park with a view to creating more green corridors. It is intended that reserves and capital grants will cover the majority of these works.

We operate with healthy resources and the Trust have this year supported several on site refurbishments. Bigger projects have included an outside play and experiential area for our KS2 boys and a complete refurbishment of a classroom and outside area for our KS1 children. Over the summer, the Trust also approved a significant amount of work to help us develop several outdoor learning and living areas which have also contributed to our responsibility in respect of Covid, providing more opportunities for filling our lungs with fresh air. The Trust continue to provide financial support through the allocation of bursaries and several students have developed an even stronger love for music. With the Trust agreeing to use this support differently, we were able to provide outreach for a 4-week period during the summer holidays, to all but 1 of our 84 cohort.

Our position and reputation in the north of England remains strong, referrals are healthy and our drive to ensure the sustainability and future proofing of the school for many years to come is cemented in our confidence of being in receipt of healthy resources and budgets. Referrals from our 13 core Local Authorities have continued at pace and we are pleased to have some very strong partnerships with all. We are now working with York, Manchester and Rotherham, and are receiving referrals from Doncaster, Rochdale, Medway, Cambridgeshire, Somerset, Richmond and Oldham. We are proud to have a Trust and Governing Body who support our dynamic approach to discovering sources of further investment which provides additional security and stability for the main school site. The BEST provision is a good example of how such an investment in time, gathering data and intelligence, can really pay dividend. This is an outstanding provision catering for the some of our young people who require a greater bespoke package of care, support and education due to their very complex needs.

We started off the year with a spring in our step and big plans for the year ahead. Having undertaken a review of the curriculum, we were confident that our intent mirrored our students' needs and our aspiration to drive forward positive learning outcomes in the widest sense. Whilst this report focusses on the work across the school over a 12-month period, we cannot understate the impact of Covid-19 on our lives, and indeed the influence the pandemic has had on our school community, its functions and practices.

During lockdown, we had a relatively small number of children in school based on need. We also supported parents and carers who were key workers. For all those unable to be in school, reaching out was a priority and staff developed a number of really creative ways to connect, tapping into interests, building skills, and of course maintaining relationships through virtual platforms. We continued to provide therapeutic, occupational therapy and speech and language support, and deliver fortnightly live assemblies. We were also able to support some families with vouchers and food hampers. We feel we have taken a very responsible position, making changes to help protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of our community, and were pleased that our children returned in September to a recovery curriculum; a well thought out plan to enable our children to reconnect, to regain routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom.

It is pleasing to report an average student attendance of 92% for the period up to March 2020 and this year 77% of our students have reached between 90-100%. Staff attendance reached a splendid 99.20% for the same period, yet another increase on the previous year.

We have continued our focus on the curriculum to ensure it is exceptionally well broad and balanced, and that it meets individual needs, interests, skills and ambitions. The introduction of Digital Leaders has been a real success, and some students are now able to support their peers in sharing and teaching new skills. The Cornerstones topic-based curriculum has been embedded for all Key Stage 2 students and the cross curricular links are supporting delivery both in and outside of the classroom. Music tuition has developed and students showing an interest have had the opportunity for one to one music sessions. The Arts Award has been introduced this year to all students, who can use their creative skills, interests and talents in a variety of ways from fashion to digital art, pottery to poetry. 'Arty Physical' provided some KS2 students with opportunities to express themselves through creative dance and movement, proving to be a popular activity. Some students have been working within our local community and supporting residents at Ward Court (Home for the Elderly), then hosting a coffee morning at school with bingo and a social event. The majority of our KS4 students have been busy undertaking programmes of study leading to formal accreditation and awards, and a few are on bespoke blended timetables.

Our students have enjoyed many visits to places of interest and these real-life experiential situations help bring real context to the formal learning in the classroom, helping our children make clear links and connections to reality. These have included Square Chapel piano recital, 'That Poetry Bloke', a knife crime event, coastal trips and canal walks, and Orange Box music, drama & dance sessions and careers events linked to Gatsby Benchmark. Not deterred by the cold weather, we have used Monday mornings to build up our miles with a stronger focus on the 'Mile a Day' challenge. With the offer of fresh fruit and the occasional hot chocolate, we have often had in excess of 100 people taking part, some running the 16 laps of our school playground and others supported by OT discreetly working on coordination and body awareness, interaction and communication. We have been involved in 'Big Rastrick Local' votes, and with Smart Move (a homeless charity) and our School Choir, Student Voice, Dr Who and Reading Club have been real favourites. Once again some of our students have been successful in the Engage Nationwide Creative Awards, where prizes and awards were presented in the autumn term, for personal progress and outstanding photography and poetry.

It has been another great year in the residential care setting. Despite the challenges of our school nurse retiring after 22 years of dedicated service, and the very sad loss of our dear colleague Janice Hirst, a few adaptations to the leadership staffing structure provided the experience needed to continue to develop a number of projects and further enhance our offer. Our boys have enjoyed the offer of 16 new activities and experiences, more whole school student jobs. Some of our boys volunteered for a community project called #iwill (bringing communities together and allowing young people to highlight the positive impact they can have in their community) where they planned and executed an afternoon tea for residents of Ward Court. It is especially pleasing to note a significant decrease in the number of serious incidents, and this includes children going missing, absenting and the need for physical intervention and support. Under difficult Covid related circumstances, there has been a much more clinical approach to health, with a very clear avenue of practical advice and support being communicated across school. Care, health, catering and occupational therapy have been focusing on the relationship our boys have to food, identifying their dietary needs, assessing related sensory needs, and developing individual care plans.

Outreach and 'reaching out' has been a great success this year with a greater percentage of children and families receiving and engaging in our support. The achievements of FAST continue at pace, and irrespective of restrictions students and supporting staff have found ways to develop a sense of community and charity for those less fortunate. The group have completed a marathon (26.2 m/42.2 km) walk around Hollingworth Lake, a midnight walk in aid of Overgate Hospice, and the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge, and have raised a very impressive £2500!

Our BEST provision has surpassed all expectations and produced outcomes for individual students that no one thought possible. The feedback from Kirklees, Calderdale and Bradford has been quite humbling. We now need to expand the offer, develop remote and home tuition services, and establish even greater knowledge about diverse needs and disabilities to further market the provision and make it sustainable.

There continues to be strong focus on the promotion of the Quality of Life Framework across school. With strong correlations to Positive Behaviour Support, and alignment with keyworking, we are beginning to use the data received through questionnaires to plan interventions and support through the vehicles of 1:1 sessions, whole school drop-down curriculum days, and our offer to families. Staff well-being continues to be an area of high focus, with personal and group fitness sessions, yoga, clinical supervision & coaching, breakfast and treat baskets, Westfield Health Scheme, service awards, and corporate clothing being on offer to colleagues.

Our students continue to access a wide range of Psychotherapy, and Occupational and Speech and Language Therapy. A few new members to the team have added to the diversity and depth of our offer, bringing even more expertise to our work. Our plans to develop a bespoke therapy building (using the skin of Lowry) and adding areas such as a dance and movement studio to its internal design will provide yet another innovative resource. The Family Team have continued to provide a valuable service, and some families have engaged in Systemic Psychotherapy. A number of families joined a group of carers and staff in school, looking at a range of school-based practices. The importance of learning alongside and from each other is so valuable, and we are delighted to have a Parent Governor to help us with the work we started pre-Covid.

We had 12 different qualifications and a range of awards (at several levels) on offer this year and are pleased to report an increase in the number of passes compared to the previous year's results. Of those entered, 100% of students achieved a pass in GCSE English, Maths and Art, 47% achieved Functional Skills Level 2 in English, Maths and ICT, and 56% achieved a Functional Skills L1. 47% achieved a level 2 Skills Entry Level Certificate in History and a Step up to English pass. There were also successes in Construction, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Life & Living Skills, Unit Awards, Hospitality & Catering, RE, PSHE, and Food Safety & Hygiene. This year we introduced the school's very own bespoke EBacc, designed to incorporate and recognise the breadth of achievements, experiences, life-based skills, awards and qualifications undertaken throughout students' school careers.

Our younger students, and those on very specific learning pathways, continue to build up an impressive number of unit awards based on a real broad spectrum of learning areas and experiences-121 in total, and with the introduction of 100 things to do before you leave, there are some exciting life and learning challenges ahead. Several of our year 11 young men chose

to stay on and move in to our post 16 provision and are accessing further education at local colleges in the following areas: Construction, Plastering, and Game Design. We are continuing to provide 1:1 tuition in English, maths and IT, and an independence programme which includes developing key life and living skills, developing hobbies and interests, and learning to drive. One of our year 11 leavers has signed up to a career in the Army-Engineer Infantry, and one of year 13 leavers is going on to study a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Computing. It is heart-warming to share that two of our ex-students having finished their degrees in Ancient History, and in Sport, are doing really well.

170 delegates joined us for this year's conference focussing on Cognitive Science and with 58 from local schools and some colleagues, travelling across the country, it was a successful event. We have worked with approximately 155 schools this year; 86 local Primary and Secondary Schools and 36 nationally, and through our work with national organisations, NASS and Engage, we have reached out to a further 33. We are keen to provide support to others through the work of the Specialist Cluster which continues to go from strength to strength, having delivered virtual courses and surgeries during the Covid 19 period (bringing mainstream Heads and SENCOs together with our own panel of experienced and knowledgeable team), and delivering and coordinating training across Calderdale. It is vitally important that we continue to learn from each other to ensure we constantly seek ways to improve and develop our work.

It has been quite a remarkable year. Our families have done an amazing job in very different and difficult circumstances, as have our staff team who have, despite challenges, continued to provide our children and young people with some truly amazing life experiences. Our boys continue to take things in their stride, adapting to changes beyond our control, and working hard to become the best they can be.

**Sue Ackroyd**  
**Principal**  
**November 2020**

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*BEST-Bespoke Education, Support and Tuition*

*PSHE-Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education*

*RE-Religious Education*

*ICT-Information and Communications Technology*

*LAs-Local Authorities*

*QoL-Quality of Life*

*OT-Occupational Therapy*

*FAST-Friday and Saturday Team (a group of students and staff taking on challenging physical activities in the aid of charity)*

*Community-students, their families & staff*

*Blended Learning/Support-A combination of face to face tuition, virtual learning and off-site/outreach*

*Systematic Psychotherapy-A focus on relationships, interactions of groups and their interactional patterns and dynamics*

*WHSS EBacc- A performance indicator that measures students' success and attainment at the end of Year 11 based on a range of achievements, experiences, life-based skills, and qualifications.*

### Senior Leadership Team

Sue Ackroyd	Principal
Martin Gibson	Deputy Principal
Caroline Booth	Deputy Principal
Damien Talbot	Vice Principal
Rajinder Randhawa	Vice Principal

### Governors' Summary

There is not much more that I can add to Sue's very comprehensive and informative report. In it she reflects on the considerable challenges we have all faced and how they have impacted and been overcome. The report details the numerous innovative and successful ways that the SLT, students, parents and carers, staff, Trustees and my fellow governors have risen to the challenge and continue to deliver outstanding service focused on our students. Not only that, but there are plans for continual improvement, continued support and commitment to be the best.

On behalf of the Governors I would like to thank everyone involved in or at the school for their continued dedication and commitment in the past year. I have every confidence that in spite of the challenges we all face at the present the desire to continually improve and exceed expectations will continue into next year and an exciting future.

**Roger J Tilbrook**  
**Chair of Trustees/Governors**  
**November 2020**

Governors of the school as of 9th November 2020 are as below:

Roger J Tilbrook	Chair- Trustee /Governors
Andy Fairbairn	Chair- Finance Committee and Trustee
Kate Wilson	Governor (Teaching & Learning)/Vice Chair- School Committee
Netta Goldthorpe	Governor (Families)
Graeme Genty	Governor (Safeguarding)
Matthew Crowther	Parent Governor
Sonia Stewart	Representative Governor (Non-Teaching Staff)
Barrie Campbell &	Representative Governors (Teaching Staff)
Karl Adamski	
Sue Ackroyd	Principal/ Chair- School Committee/Vice Chair-Governors
Vanessa Talbot	Clerk to Governors