



Hanley St Luke's C of E Aided Primary School

Learning, Laughing, Loving at Family St Luke's

14th January 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

Many of you may have seen the Stoke on Trent School League Tables published in the Sentinel yesterday. If not, then you can [Click here](#), if you are interested. Schools are aware of this information well before they are published, so our 59th place out of 66 schools is no surprise but does deserve some explanation as it really is a meaningless statistic. We are very proud of the work we are doing in school and are working tirelessly to give your children the best education possible. Such simplistic number crunching is interesting on the surface but even OFSTED now recognise that this system of judging schools purely by data is entirely flawed as it has led to some schools narrowing the curriculum in order to achieve high test results but at the expense of a full curriculum offer and indeed long term learning. **This is not the case at Hanley St Luke's.** However, the greatest disservice the league tables do to our school and those like us, is they take no account of our vastly different contexts. If all schools in the country opened their doors to every child regardless of Special Educational Need, or if all schools embraced without question the many, many children who arrive throughout the year with no English so that our last census recorded over 40 home languages spoken, or if all schools had the high numbers of families who live with challenging circumstances, then perhaps the data might be worth a second look. As it is, some schools in the country and indeed our city, know nothing of these things and their children arrive in school well ahead where even mediocre teaching will produce decent test results. That's also without factoring in those schools where so many parents are able to buy additional tutoring for their children outside of school- fine if that's what parents want to do but please don't compare results with schools whose families can't do this or feel their children's time is best spent on other things. How is that a level playing field?

Of course, test results are important and rightly of interest to parents and to the school. We strive to ensure ours reflect the children's wider achievements and pupils do as well as they can. Since 2017 our Y6 Reading scores have improved year on year from only 50% of pupils achieving the expected standard to 64% achieving that in 2019. Our Grammar Spelling and Punctuation scores have also risen from 47% in 2017 to 68% in 2019. Writing tells a similar positive picture rising from 48% in 2017 to 68% in 2019. Maths was only 46% in 2017 and rose to 64% in 2018 taking a slight dip in 2019 to 61%. There is lots to celebrate here and frankly, the Sentinel handing out 1 star ratings is an insult to your children, our staff and our school community as a whole.

Of course, your children have to be here for us to teach them well and it is quite telling that the league tables show our attendance figures are lower than the national but that is also an unfair comparison. We work hard to ensure attendance is as high as possible and you will be aware that we do not authorise holidays in term time. Some of our families however continue to take extended leave to visit relatives abroad which we strongly discourage and do not authorise but it happens and our figures take a hit as a result and children lose chunks of learning time. You'll have your own views on whether that's right or wrong but again some schools simply don't have that as an issue to deal with.

Finally, we congratulate schools at the top of the tables and wish them continued success. Where there is best practice to be learned from which is transferrable to our context, then you can be sure we are already on to it and working with colleagues from across the city and beyond to support our ambitious plans for improvement. We will never rest on our laurels and are striving to serve your children and our school community in the best way possible

in line with our vision and values - it is why our brilliant team here at school turn up in the morning and they really do deserve more for their efforts than this demoralising style of reporting. They certainly get five stars from me!

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Williamson
Headteacher