

The William Ransom Primary School

Governing Body Annual Report

2019-2020



“At William Ransom, we are committed to providing our children with a safe and nurturing environment that will enable all children to reach their potential, academically, socially, physically and emotionally. Our vision is that every child becomes a confident, self-motivated, resilient and independent learner with a lifelong zest for learning.”



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Governing Body

2019-2020

Funda Shibli (Chair)

Ian Hankin (Vice-Chair & Chair of Personnel)

Mary Driver (Headteacher)

Nina Achal

Ian Albert

Jane Buchanan (Chair of Finance)

Bob Chohan

Andrew Fennemore (Chair of L&T)

Anna Jackson

Ann Light

Perry Maranian

David Massey

Jack Wells (Chair of Premises)

Victoria Wheat

Alison Wood

Elaine Phillips (Clerk)



Please see the school website for further information on the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body.

...from the Chair

Well, what a year it has been for us all! Certainly, a year like no other.

On March 20th, all schools closed their doors to the majority of pupils except key worker pupils and a new way of schooling was embraced by parents and staff. In true William Ransom spirit, parents and staff rose to the challenge of home-schooling and I would like to start by saying a huge thank you to all our staff for the tremendous work they have carried out and are continuing to carry out for our pupils.



It has been wonderful to see all the work pupils have



been doing at home with lovely examples on the school's website and Twitter. It shows how we have been living our school values of *'encouraging all our pupils to work hard, give their best effort whilst also teaching them to be compassionate, caring, responsible and resilient members of the community.'* I would also like to thank all our parents for their hard work and continued support whilst trying to juggle home-schooling and their own work.

This has been an incredibly demanding and stressful time for staff. They have had to steer through uncharted waters these past few months and Mrs Driver has had to deal with the succession and barrage of daily Governmental guidance and documentation. However, the safety of pupils and staff has always been at the forefront of her planning. Mrs Driver and staff have responded to these demands with courage, compassion and commitment for which the Governors are incredibly grateful. William Ransom is so fortunate to have such a fantastic staff team and Headteacher.

Whilst we all adapt to the new 'normal', it is important not to overlook all the wonderful things our pupils and staff also achieved before March 20th.

I hope this report will give parents and carers an insight into the work of the Governing Body and reflect on some of the things which make our school such a remarkable and inspirational place for our pupils.

My sincere thanks to my colleagues on the Governing Body for their continued support, dedication and giving of their own time. A special thank you to Ian Hankin, my Vice-Chair, for supporting me through my first year as Chair.



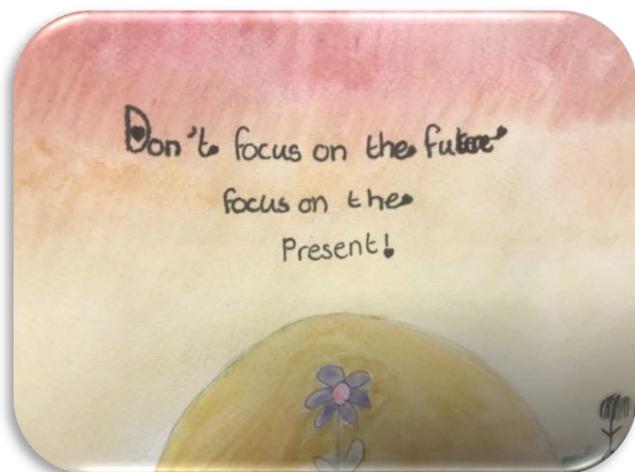
It is important to remember that Governors are volunteers and through the year, we meet at full Governing Body meetings, Committee meetings and training sessions. Before partial closure, Governors visited school on a regular basis to see it in action and to look at key focuses set out in the School Plan for Evaluation and Development. You can read more about our visits later in this report. Since March 20th, Governors have continued to carry out their roles and responsibilities remotely and have been in regular contact with Mrs Driver and staff through remote meetings, emails and phone calls.



In September, we welcomed two new Governors, Dave Massey, Co-opted Governor and Nina Achal, Parent Governor. Each of them bring their own area of expertise and experience to complement those of the existing members. Look out for 'Meet the Governors' in this report to find out more about them.

Two of our Parent Governors: Andrew Fennemore and Alison Wood will come to the end of their four-year term of office in September, and both are eligible to seek re-election if they so wish. I would like to thank them both for their contributions to the school and Governing Body over the last four years. Letters will be sent out to all parents in September inviting nominations for the two places. Details will also be provided about the role and responsibilities of a Governor and the skills we are looking for to complement those already on the Governing Body. If you are interested in becoming a school Governor, please visit the school's website for the Governors' Code of Conduct or you can contact The Governing Body at: governors@wransom.herts.sch.uk

Life has been very different for us all but especially for our pupils. Sadly, Year 6 were unable to sit their SATs nor go on School Journey, and the end of their time at William Ransom will feel very strange but they will have a different story to tell in many years to come. I wish them all the very best in their secondary schools in September. We are incredibly proud of them all and I am sure they will have the opportunity for a leavers' celebration in the future. Good luck 'Lockdown Leavers 2020'!



Well done to **all** our pupils for their achievements this year both in school and at home.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a safe and restful summer break. All being well, we look forward to welcoming everyone back in September.

Funda Shibli

Finance

Governing Bodies are responsible for the financial management of their school. At William Ransom, this is delegated to the Finance Committee which reports to the full Governing Body. Our remit is to set financial priorities for the school through the Improvement Plan, approve the annual budget and monitor income and expenditure against each budget line. We meet half termly to review the monthly financial statements of the school. Each year, the Finance Committee conducts a benchmarking exercise comparing expenditure with similar local schools. It completes a skills' audit to ensure we have adequate financial skills within the Committee as well as attending finance related training courses.

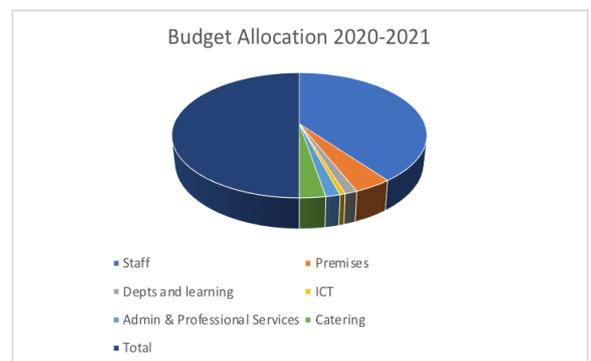


For the financial year 2019 – 2020, the school submitted a deficit budget to Herts County Council due to the ongoing cost of expansion. The deficit is actually less than anticipated based on the modelling undertaken to assess the financial impact of the expansion. This is all the more impressive considering 80% of the budget is accounted for in staff costs. We believe it is largely due to staff diligence and good financial management, very much a team effort.



I am pleased to say that, in spite of this, William Ransom continues to maintain high standards of education, improve its facilities and is able to offer a wide range of activities and learning experiences. The Governing Body is grateful to the SPA for their support and fundraising that enables the school to keep IT up to date. It also facilitates many other purchases such as books, equipment and the annual Year 6 theatre trip.

I should address the financial impact of COVID-19. The Head is closely monitoring expenditure related directly to the pandemic since the Government has indicated schools will be recompensed for any unbudgeted expenditure due to Covid-19. Here at William Ransom we do not feel that we will be “financially disadvantaged” in terms of the budget but we do acknowledge that curtailment of the SPA’s fundraising activities, and particularly the school fete this summer, will be felt over time.



Lastly, I would like to remind you that the school is eligible to receive additional funding, called the Pupil Premium, for any child who receives free school meals. Please visit the School website to see how the Pupil Premium is being spent at William Ransom. The school will support any families who meet the criteria through the application process. Please speak to the school office for further information.

Jane Buchanan

Learning and Teaching

The main role of the Learning & Teaching Committee is to monitor and challenge the provision of a varied, balanced and engaging curriculum, that meets the needs of all pupils, including any specific needs they have.

Each Autumn, we review the School's aspirational goals for the coming year and agree how we will challenge and monitor the areas of the School Plan for Evaluation and Development that have a particular Learning & Teaching focus. For 2019/2020, these were:

1. Clear progression of skills across all foundation subjects
2. Development of reasoning skills in Maths
3. Sex and Relationship Education



Good progress has been made on all of these. Subject leaders have been working together to ensure that progression in individual subjects takes into account other areas of the curriculum (for example, not covering grid references in Geography until coordinates have been covered in Maths). They have also produced Jigsaws, showing (at a high level) what each year group will cover, and you can view these on the school website.



There has been significant progress in developing reasoning skills in Maths; classes have been applying Maths skills to real-life problems which has had a positive impact.

The ability to make greater progress in these two areas was limited when the school closed for all but key worker and vulnerable children in March. Nevertheless, our initial progress was positive, and we will look at how to carry forward any parts of the plan into next year.

With the Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) focus, we were pleased that around 70 parents joined us to attend the SRE evening in November where the School's proposed approach was shared, and questions taken. The approach is very similar to what already exists and was unanimously endorsed by all those who attended; it is ready to be introduced from September.

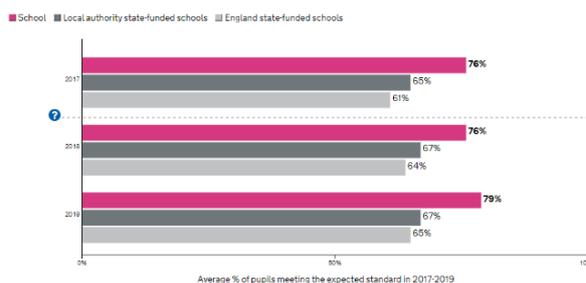
Schools' performance data is published by the Government in the autumn term. Although the school data has been analysed at the end of the previous school year, it is at this time that we take a deeper look at the school's performance as we can view it alongside data for other schools in Hertfordshire and England as a whole.

It is part of the Governing Body's role to have a clear understanding of the data and to challenge the school; to learn from our strengths, to improve further and to predict future trends.

Last year's results showed that a greater proportion of William Ransom pupils met the expected standard in all three aspects of reading, writing and maths when compared to Hertfordshire and England as a whole. This is a picture that has been consistent over many years.

Progress made by pupils is also an area of ever-increasing focus and it is pleasing that our progress scores in reading, writing and maths are all positive. This means that – given pupils’ prior attainment – the results they achieve at the end of Year 6 are above the average (in old terms the school has “added value” through its teaching and ethos).

Pupils meeting expected standard in reading, writing and maths



This is in large part due to the rigor, structure and

support that is put in place as children join us in Reception and carried forward during their time at William Ransom. As a parent of children in Reception and Year 3, I know the homework regime can be hard (and it does not come without grumbles from child or adult alike!) but through your support and working in partnership with the school, we hope our pupils will have a desire to learn and will do well in their future studies.



Our data also showed that girls had a notably higher progress score than boys in 2019 and this is an area we are monitoring carefully.

This year, Covid-19 has meant that SATS were cancelled so data will not be available for 2020. However, through the Learning & Teaching Committee’s regular meetings, we are confident that this year’s Year 6

would have performed well

and that they have a really solid foundation for their secondary education.

But it is not all about data and the National Curriculum. School is so much more than that and it was made clear to all Governors that – until the early Spring - barely a week went by without an educational trip, a visit by a motivating speaker or another inspirational activity taking place that develop the children in so many different ways. Not to mention the huge range of sporting opportunities that are available. Just a selection that represents barely a quarter of such events during the first half of the Autumn Term include Reception’s visit to Wimpole Farm, Year 1’s Fire of London day and a (you will be pleased to hear) separate visit by Hedgehog Rescue. Feeling Good Week was held for Years 5 and 6 (who also attended the Cabinet War Rooms) whilst Year 6 went on a trip to Cadbury World and Willow Class visited Harry Potter Studios. And this does not even touch on the charitable activities that take place regularly.



All of these activities take a huge amount of planning and work behind the scenes and it is testament to the dedication, commitment (and often the ingenuity) of our staff (and the parent helpers who join trips) that such a variety of activities took place. We are also fortunate enough to have a number of volunteers who help in school on a regular basis to give additional support and opportunity to the children at our school. To each and every one of you, thank you.

Andrew Fennemore

Personnel

I do hope you remembered that on Wednesday 20th May, it was National “Thank a Teacher” Day?

We certainly have a lot to be thankful for this year, in even more abundance than normal – for our teachers who have shown flexibility, resilience, tenacity, togetherness and positivity as they deliver their prime goal: the outstanding provision of education. And at William Ransom, we are so thankful for the fantastic efforts of all the staff.

As you know, school staff have remained on the front line, looking after our vulnerable and key worker pupils, enabling those key workers to continue their important jobs.

Beech Home Learning 15th-19th June

June 12, 2020



Dear Parents/Guardians and Children, I hope you're all well and ready for Week 8. It looks like we are set...

[Read more](#)

In addition, staff have been busy preparing lessons/activities to engage pupils remotely at home.

Staff have used the school website as a median of communication for parents and children. The relaunch of the website in January could not have been more ideally planned.

I am just so glad that my three “children” have grown up and left home so unlike you, I did not have to sit down each day and take on the role of teacher for home

schooling. I have enjoyed looking at the school tweets showing what parents and pupils have been up to!

The Governing Body would like to thank all parents and carers for your support of Mrs Driver and all the staff during these challenging and worrying times.

The Personnel Committee have met as usual throughout the academic year, with the latter meetings being held via Webex. I continued as Chair of the Committee with Jane Buchanan as Safeguarding and Child Protection Governor; Funda Shibli as Staff liaison Governor and Andrew Fennemore for bringing the appropriate policies to the Committee for review. As usual, in November, three members of the Committee carried out the Headteacher’s annual Appraisal and the interim review in March.

A first for the school, as we held interviews via Webex on 30th April, for the recruitment of new members of staff for September 2020. This was another aspect of school life which could not be delayed. Luckily, the potential candidates had been to look around the school and informally met Mrs Driver just prior to lockdown. The interview panel on the day consisted of Mrs Driver, Mrs Shibli (Chair of Governors), Mrs Wheat and Mrs Hall (Assistant Heads) and myself – so it was far from an easy ride for the interviewees! I am pleased that we were successful in appointing Miss Swinburne, Mrs Bassindale and Miss Corcoran from a strong pool of candidates.

And finally, it would be remiss not to record our immense thanks to Mrs Driver for all her additional time, commitment and long working hours over these last few challenging months. The guidance from Government and Herts County Council seemed to change on a daily basis and on occasions, conflict. Mrs Driver has had to read numerous multipage directives to ensure pupils and staff have been kept safe, and that the school has adhered to the guidelines.

The William Ransom spirit has certainly kept Mrs Driver going – as demonstrated by one parent’s email – “Hello Mrs Driver, thank you for your information letter, but what I would like to ask is: how are you? Are you Ok?”

Ian Hankin 8

Meet the Governors

I was fortunate to be elected as a parent Governor this year and what a year it has been! Who would have thought that when I was first elected, we would be experiencing unprecedented times of the school being partially closed and for many parents, schooling our children at home!



I was lucky enough to visit the school and attend school trips in my capacity as a Governor several times before partial school closure. These visits gave me a great insight into the working of the school and the constant and amazing work of the teaching staff. It is great to see the values and ethos of the school embedded throughout all year groups.

I am looking forward to continuing my work as a Governor and upholding the excellent education that William Ransom school, the staff and the Governors all strive to achieve together.

Nina Achal



Child Protection

Child protection and safeguarding are key areas of Governor responsibility. Our designated Child Protection Governor (currently Mrs Buchanan) has termly meetings with Mrs Driver to help fulfil the monitoring role of Governors. All Governors receive child protection and safeguarding training which is updated every few years.

Premises

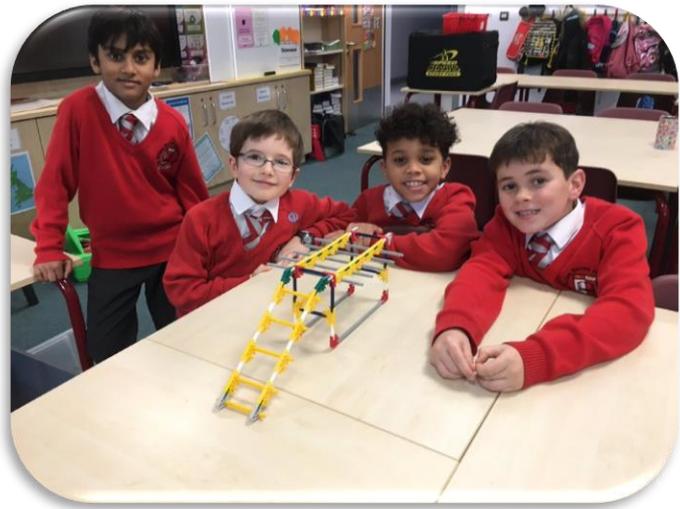
As like all elements of life, priorities have changed during this pandemic. The facility of this school, in regard to how it is used and cleaned, has become key to protect against the spread of this virus. The Premises Committee have tried to help the facilities management team of the school with guidance and advice from other sectors of industry but without overloading the team with information due to the amount of change they are already going through.

We are extremely lucky at William Ransom to have such a conscientious and dedicated team that has worked tirelessly to achieve a massive transformation on the running of the school with limited resources and budget.

This year, we have also had the unfortunate setback of having our application for the replacement of windows and doors rejected by HCC but we won't give up and will continue to apply for their replacement until the benefits, such as increased security, reduced heat loss and making the building more aesthetically pleasing, are realised.

We have had another diverse year within the Premises Committee and as usual, we have been supporting the school on many issues including:

- Improvement to the drainage to reception playground
- Maintenance to the ventilation system
- Resolving drainage issues
- Introduction of anti-climb paint
- Improvements to lighting
- Covid-19 advice and support
- Advice on roof repair and safe access
- Ensuring safe environment for Brighter Days wraparound care
- Advising on additional hard standing to entrance gates



Some of these might seem insignificant but having the best facilities is key to providing the best learning environment.

Thank you to everyone for helping to looking after our premises but a special thank you to our Premises Manager, Mr Carmody and Assistant Caretaker, Mr Philipson for all their hard work and tremendous dedication in making the school safe and secure during these challenging times.

Jack Wells

Governor Visits



The Governors regularly make visits to the school to monitor progress and performance. These visits are used to reflect upon the strategic management of the school and evaluate its progress. It is also a great way to see the school in action! This academic year, the Governors completed over ten formal visits along with weekly 'drop in' visits to speak to various staff. They were also present at Parents' Evenings, Meet the new Reception parents' evening and of course, the sweet stall at Winter Wonderland!

Many of the formal visits have a focus which supports the School Plan for Evaluation and Development so that Governors can pose questions to staff and pupils in order to be 'critical friends' during these visits. The visits in 2019-2020 have focused on the key priorities in this plan: seeing the learning and teaching of mathematics in action; SEND provision; learning engagement; Curriculum progression and enrichment and trips.

A number of Governors also met with members of the School Council in January 2020 to take questions from pupils and to explain the role of Governors. They also met members of the school's 'Eco Team' to hear about the Eco Team's aims and ambitions for a better environment. It was wonderful to speak to so many pupils and it is a visit we intend on organising every year.



Anna Jackson & Alison Wood

Governor Training



Training is a vital component and taken seriously for the development of Governors' experience – particularly for first time Governors with no previous experience of working in education. It provides the foundations for Governors to perform their duties by bridging initial gaps and thereafter, continually broaden knowledge throughout the Governing tenure and support the effective contribution to the Governing Body.

Understanding the educational and financial performance data can be challenging to begin with but the training

support provides Governors with guidance of what they need to know and, very importantly, the basis to scrutinise the school's strategic and daily functioning.

Training for newly appointed Governors commences with an Induction course introducing the best way of providing a framework for what it means to be a school Governor. This is followed by Safeguarding of Children training which must be attended every 4 years. Once a year, the full Governing Body attend a Herts for Learning (HfL) in-house Governor training course on a chosen area of Governance. Sessions are delivered by qualified trainers – many of whom have worked in education for many years and are able to pass on examples of their invaluable experiences.

At William Ransom, all training for the Governing Body remains on track for 2019/20 with the Governors having collectively attended an in-house training workshop and several online modules covering a wide range of topics including Effective Governance, Financial Monitoring and social issues which are increasingly topical within the wider schools' domain. The Governing Body have additionally been delivered presentations on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) from our SENDco, Mrs Delaney, and Ofsted training from Mrs Shibli, our Chair of Governors who is also a HfL Governance trainer. All Governors are up to date with their Safeguarding training and our new Governors have both attended their Induction training.

Bob Chohan

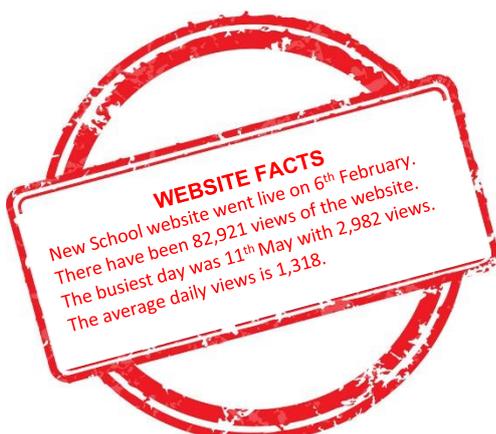
Meet the Governors

I was immensely proud and honoured to be co-opted on to the Governing Body in September 2019. Having had two children go through the school (now 24 and 20) and having my wife work there, I have strong connections and a desire in seeing the school continue to develop.

My first year has been a real eye opener. I always knew how dedicated and professional Mrs Driver, the teachers and support staff were, but to find the same level of commitment and professionalism in the Governors has been a real pleasure to see. It has been a steep learning curve, getting to grips with all areas of school running and the governance structure supporting it, but I have fully enjoyed the challenge and camaraderie of being a school Governor.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we have all had to adapt to new ways of working and this has been challenging for all of us. Our last few meetings have been conducted over video conferencing, whilst not ideal, it does show the resilience within all of us. I am very much looking forward to assisting wherever I can, working with Mrs Driver and the other Governors in ensuring that we uphold the traditions of William Ransom Primary School and witnessing the continued development of all children who pass through.

Dave Massey



PE and Sports

Despite a disappointing end to our sporting year, William Ransom has still managed to have another incredibly successful year. There have been a lot of changes and we are very happy with all of them. The biggest and most important change has been the addition of Mr Vincent to our team. Mr Vincent has supported all PE lessons this year and been a vital contributor in running all of our clubs. He has been an excellent addition and we are very excited that he will be continuing in his role in September.



We have also managed to transition our clubs' booking and payment to an online system. This drastically reduces the admin time required and removes the possibility of letters and money being lost between school and home. In doing this we have also been able to create a completely fair waiting list which has worked well when children have been unable to attend clubs. We are very happy with how clubs have worked this year and have been excited about offering Cheerleading and Dance as new clubs.

Our Football teams have had another successful season with both teams reaching the Wix Cup finals. Our A team were successful in their final making them the District Champions. They were due to progress through to the County stages but sadly these were cancelled. They also completed their second successive



undefeated season in the League, meaning they have achieved a double over the last two years. This is an incredible achievement especially when we are competing against bigger schools.



Our Netball team had excellent training sessions this year and began competing in their league fixtures. Unfortunately, they were unable to complete these and they missed out on their end of season rallies. The children were able to gain a great

understanding of the game and improve their skills throughout the year.

We were very excited for our dancers to compete, for the first time, in The Great Big Dance Off. They had to submit a video entry and were chosen to participate in the finals at The Gordon Craig Theatre. They did extremely well and managed to come 4th in the competition. This was a wonderful opportunity for the children to perform on stage in front of a large audience.



Although we have not been able to complete all events, we are still very proud of all the achievements this year and we are excited for next year.

Perry Maranian

Staff Governor

...from the Head

I do not think we will ever forget the academic year of 2019 – 2020.

The year started as we would normally expect with the challenges of more children, a bigger staff and a new emphasis on the wider curriculum, but it is ending in a way that none of us could have foreseen.

We held a 'Welcome to William Ransom' evening for our new Reception parents which was a lovely way for them to get to know some of the staff they perhaps had not previously met and to meet some of the Governors. This was very well received and is something we will repeat if, and when, we are allowed to! Classes went out and

about to places like Celtic Harmony, Harry Potter World and the Cabinet War Rooms.

We have engaged with our local community and the Global community through activities like Children in Need, supporting our child in Nepal through Action Aid and starting our project with The Garden House Hospice. It was unfortunate that this was cut short by the pandemic.

The main reason children attend school is to gain the skills and education needed to live independently and successfully. School also teaches them social skills they will need in their future lives and careers. The 2020 lockdown has made some of us value these reasons more than ever. Many

parents have taken on the role of teacher and have been incredibly successful which is great! It will be interesting to see if the number of applications for teacher training increase as a result of the lockdown! Remember, teaching two or three children is very different to teaching a class of 30!

We have all had a very different lockdown experience and I believe many of us will come out of the situation with a changed outlook. Remember 'Time' has a wonderful way of showing us what really matters.

Thank you for the amazing support you have shown me over the whole school year, but especially the last 5 months. I am very proud to be the Headteacher of

William Ransom, never more so than now, and I look forward to us all working together for the benefit of the William Ransom Community.



Mary Driver

The William Ransom Primary School

Roll of Honour 2020

Ali Antar
Ella Atherton
Biran Bhangoo
Reece Bryan
Zak Bryan
Jessica Busolini
Isobel Chapman
Harriet Clarke
Arsh Davit
Josephine Fleming
Martha Ford
William Fox
Ishaan Garg
Bryony Holder
Callum Houlihan
Eleanor James
Tamer Karadeniz
Zachary Le Coze
Benjamin Lindsey

Emily Liu
Dylan Marriott
Kareena Minhas
Chloe Morgan
Sebastian Poliakoff
Milly Puffett
Emma Salmon
Imogen Schultz
Janya Singh
Manasvi Singh
William Taylor
Raphael Udu
Marley Watts
Isabella Webber
Elena Whyman
Ellie Willis
Jamie Wilson
Dan Wood
Joshua Wright

