

***Sue's Tribute from the School***  
***Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019***

Sue was an inspirational, courageous and extraordinary friend and Head teacher to us all at St Andrew's. Our school motto is, 'Learning for Living – Life in all its Fullness' and in her unique and technicolour way, Sue embraced this throughout her ten years.

Sue has created not just a wonderful school where children are front and centre but she has nurtured and led a whole community. We often refer to ourselves as a Family with Sue as the ultimate Mother Hen or 'Captain Kirk' she may prefer – at the helm of the Starship Enterprise!

We have spoken a lot about Sue in the last few weeks and what she has meant to each of us. There is wholehearted agreement that she was bonkers – as all the best people are – a wig, a fairy costume, the annual staff panto, regular soakings in assembly, something wild to send you on your way if you were expecting a baby or leaving for new adventures! But more than this, we all agree that Sue truly made a difference. She championed children, campaigned for their Rights; creativity, inclusion, diversity and equality were at her very core and are woven through the school. Yes she could be formidable and challenging – in the very best way - but teamed with gold shoes, an array of sparkly brooches and earrings one can't help but fall in love with her and the school she so proudly lead.

Sue knew what mattered and she exuded huge love for everyone in her care. She knew your 'story' and she knew when to drop everything to be with you. Meeting for a coffee on a Sunday, a short perfectly timed text or being swept into her office – just because she 'knew' something was up – was simply what Sue did. We can all recall moments when she gave her time, wisdom and support so generously. She made every one of us feel special.

Sue was never afraid to challenge or be challenged...woe betide if someone ever said, 'That's not possible!' She thought BIG and she made things happen – this is why St Andrew's held a huge Georgian Ball at the Assembly Rooms in full costume for everyone with refreshments and band, and why we travelled to Braunschweig in Germany to sing, and why the teachers ended up in a dragonboat racing down the River Avon and why children have memorable and magical experiences. It is no surprise that people move house to work and play at St Andrew's!

Whether you knew Sue for weeks or years, families often chose St Andrew's because of the warmth, positivity and passion that Sue exuded from the moment she opened the door. She took time to check in on families that were going through tough times and was truly transformative in many children's lives. As one parent said, 'she is a superb human being'.

Sue knew that having the right adults working in the school was essential to enable children to flourish. The recruitment process at St Andrew's has some notoriety these days! But Sue was masterful and instinctive when selecting and building her team – within moments she would have discovered if you played Grade 8 Piano, taught Karate in your spare time, spoke Japanese or had a relative who worked for NASA. Listening to Sue talk about the team, she was always so passionate and full of pride.

Sue's impact beyond the walls of St Andrew's is enormous. She was often a mentor and an ally to other Heads and Senior Leaders within Bath and she gained great strength in the collaboration and friendships she developed. It is fair to say that Sue was a pioneering creative force in primary education, often at the forefront of research sharing her expertise at a national level.

Her passion for learning drew people in and ignited new partnerships and created possibilities to collaborate with artists and academics amongst many. She knew the value of children learning outside the classroom. As a co-founder of School Without Walls she ensured children had real learning experiences across the City and beyond.

Sue nurtured our partnership with St Swithin's Church and this continues as an important part of our school community.

We (Tam & Jayne) feel so privileged and thankful to have been part of what we three called 'The Dream Team' – that's not to say we had all the answers! In fact, the name is more of a reflection that Sue always had big hopes and aspirations. She made us all feel that we could do it – whatever 'it' was! When Sue first became ill she set up a WhatsApp group for the three of us – aptly named 'Chief Fairies'. There was much talk of fairy dust and, of course, even when she was not in school, she was so very present. We still feel she is with us today.

She was an extraordinary learner and researcher and she knew the value of taking risks and being brave. Countless times she pushed us out of our comfort zone – sometimes literally! – making us face the things we didn't want to. But in so doing, Sue empowered us all – she knew we would fly.

Sue was not invincible! But her attitude towards making and embracing mistakes and showing vulnerability, created a school of people who are united, honest and full of love and joy. Sue had many mantras, but the one we have often quoted is, 'All Shall Be Well'.

She also said "There's no point of there is no joy, learning needs to be joyful"

Everything Sue did was about the young people in her care. She fought for those who could not, and she stayed true to the values she truly believed in.

It seems most appropriate to finish by sharing the children's memories of Mrs East. Or creatures as Sue referred to them!

The best storyteller

Kind, gentle, lovely and fun

The best teacher ever

Colourful, glittery, joyful and exotic

Caring and curious

She poured water over us in assembly

She is special

She taught us to believe in ourselves

She encouraged us to do our best

She helped me to be brave

She sprinkled fairy dust everywhere

When she smiles, she lights up the room

She kept us safe

I love Mrs East

When we were sad she always brought joy to us

Even though Mrs East isn't here right now, she will always be helping us through our wonderful journeys

She said every child is special

We must remember the words Sue left us with in her letter to the children – "Never forget there is fairy dust to be found in every situation, no matter how difficult."

Sue loved to celebrate – she was quite the Master of Ceremonies - and relished an occasion that showcased creativity and collaboration.

The tribute by Tamsin Stephen and Jayne Rochford-Smith was followed by a performance of 'The Living Tree', the song was composed by children in 2013 alongside Will Gregory as part of a huge creative project that culminated in a performance here at the Abbey.