

St. Nicholas Foundation

Annual Report

2018/2019



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Opening messages

Chair Message

There has been a hive of activity at St Nicholas during 2018/19. New buildings and facilities have been created to accommodate our expanding intake of pupils and we have had a steady stream of visitors whose time and donations have made a big difference to the lives of our children and their families. We are very proud of the achievements of all our pupils and in particular the wonderful displays of music and dance they have put on for our visitors. Also noteworthy has been the awards given to three of our pupils by the Sailors Society for their Christmas Cards design competition.

In December 2018, our new kitchen dining area was formally opened as part of our St Nicholas Day celebrations. This new complex was made possible through the generosity of the Greek construction company Mytilineous who provided funding for the building and equipment. Further building work to complete the classroom block has been undertaken during 2019 and, once again, we have received funding from our much valued benefactor, Mytilineous.

During the year we received regular donations from international airline crews visiting Ghana. A number of crew members visited the school bringing with them consignments of shoes, clothing, uniforms and learning resources for our pupils and their families. Many of these visitors were so impressed by St Nicholas that they individually initiated fundraising activities in the UK. One of our biggest champions, Derek Tenant, has been instrumental in helping us develop a relationship with Danes Hill, a prestigious prep school in Surrey, who in addition to donating large quantities of second-hand uniforms and sportswear has pledged to raise money for us through their annual sponsored walk.

Whilst we continue to be grateful for all the help we receive, we cannot be complacent. Last year we took the decision to offer the full Ghanaian primary curriculum. This will see an increase in our pupil intake up to 2022 with a commensurate increase in our overheads. We also need to replace our school bus which is on its last legs. Our funding in 2018/19, was down a third over the previous year and we recognise that we will need to re-double our efforts to meet our overheads in the future. Fundraising is one of the key responsibilities of our trustees and we are committed to finding new ways of generating the income necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of St Nicholas.

Headmasters Message

It is a great privilege to come to you once again as we look at our achievements during 2018/19. Our charity operates on the principle that “every child deserves an education,” and every year we add a new class of pupils to meet this ambition. St Nicholas offers free and high quality education to these children, unlike most other schools in the community who charge fees for admission.

We are pleased to announce that during the year, the majority of our pupils achieved good grades in their internal examinations. Eighty per cent had a good grade in Mathematics, 72% in English Language and 70% in Science. This was helped by the implementation of support measures for pupils struggling with their studies including identifying special needs, giving one-to-one help and encouraging them to study at home.

Our teachers are highly committed and during the year enhanced their teaching skills through various study courses. We were also aided by a number of visitors and volunteers who took time out to teach our children, motivating them to develop their talents and increase their knowledge levels. Last but not least, we continue to enhance our extracurricular activities and the children regularly participate in the cadet corps, cultural dance and musical recitals.

As the saying goes, “To every action there is a reaction,” and alongside our achievements we face challenges, the greatest of which is funding. The school relies on donations to cover the costs of feeding our children, paying our teachers and meeting our overheads. Last year we lost one of our major sponsors and we are always looking for new ways to support our work. I urge our readers to help St. Nicholas Foundation provide free, quality education to our wonderful children in order for them to have a positive impact on their lives, community and the nation as a whole.

Our vision, objectives and values

Our vision

At St. Nicholas, we believe that 'Every child deserves an education'

Our objectives are to:

- Educate children well and ensure their well-being
- Provide excellent teachers and staff
- Provide and maintain excellent buildings and facilities
- Provide engaging co-curricular activities
- Recruit excellent volunteers, young ambassadors and supporters
- Ensure strong sufficient charity management

Our values

At Nicholas, we have five simple values that we apply to everything we do and believe they are fundamental to helping our children LEARN:

Listen: When we listen, we learn; when we learn, we grow

Enthusiasm: Children learn better when they are surrounded by positivity and enthusiasm

Achieve: We have high aspirations for St. Nicholas children to achieve their goals

Resourceful: We encourage our children to always be resourceful

Nurture: We nurture our children to help them grow with confidence and resilience

In the sections which follow, we highlight some of the achievements and developments which have accorded with our vision, objectives and values.

Our People

Our pupils

St Nicholas School opened in 2012 admitting 25 children from one of Ghana's poorest urban areas, Tema New Town. Since then our intake has increased annually and at the start of the Autumn Term 2019 we had a total enrolment of 159 pupils (84 girls and 75 boys) between the ages of 3-14 years.

We now have ten classes starting with the Nursery and leading up to Primary Class 7. The average class size is only 15 ensuring that each child gets as much attention as/she needs. Our strategy is to open a new class each year until the children complete the *Ghanaian Basic Certificate of Education* at the end of Class 9.

As well as a quality education, our pupils receive free meals (breakfast and lunch), uniforms, learning materials, health checks and access to medical care.

Our staff

Our team of 17 teachers enables us to provide a high teacher to pupil ratio unheard of in most Ghanaian primary schools. On-going training is offered to all our teachers and during 2018/19 staff attended courses in Montessori, educational psychology, accounting and science.

The teaching team is led by Headmaster Mr. Emmanuel Donker, who was recently awarded an MA in Human Resources, and who is assisted by his deputies Madam Aisha and Mr. Morfo. We also employ seven support staff to cook, clean and provide security at the school.

Management of the school is overseen by its two founders, Deborah Eleazar and Captain Alkiviadis Kappas, who make frequent visits to Ghana to liaise with staff, oversee building work and meet with distinguished visitors. Local management is provided by Patrick Mensa and Roberta Mensah Amo.

Our trustees

The St Nicholas Foundation Trust, which is based in London, was set up as a charity to oversee the running of the school and ensure good governance. The board of seven trustees meets regularly and is largely responsible for raising the funds to develop and run the school.

Our Learning and Support Programmes

Early Learning

Providing a good education for our disadvantaged children is the top priority at St Nicholas so they are encouraged to start as early as possible. Children enter Nursery as young as three where the emphasis is on learning through play, creative activities and acquiring pre-literacy and numeracy skills. At Kindergarten level, which covers two years, the children go on to develop writing skills.

Primary School

Our Primary School Classes (1 to 7) follow the syllabus set by the Ghana Education Service (GES). Core subjects cover:

- Mathematics
- Science
- English Language
- Social Studies
- Religious and Moral Education,
- French
- Ga (a widely spoken Ghanaian language)
- Information and Computer Technology

We will be adding our final two classes (Primary 8 and 9) over the next two years. At the end of Class 9 pupils will be eligible to sit the entrance exam for senior secondary school, of which there are several in the Tema area.

Extracurricular Learning

Greek language and culture

Because of the school's close ties to Greece our pupils study Modern Greek. They are also taught Greek songs and dancing and regularly give displays to visitors and at the annual St Nicholas Day celebrations in December.

Music and dance

With Ghana's rich heritage in music and dance, these feature prominently in the curriculum. We are fortunate in having some talented staff to tutor our pupils on a range of instruments donated to the school and oversee our brass band and drumming groups. Traditional music and dance are regularly showcased at school events.

Naval Cadets

The school has a thriving cadet corps made up of both boys and girls who receive training twice a week from a professional naval officer. Our cadets put on impressive displays at the formal openings of our new kitchen/dining complex and new learning block and at the Annual Maritime Day.

Sport

Friday afternoons are devoted to sporting and recreational activities at St. Nicholas. Our sports programme covers football, athletics, high jump, handball and volleyball. During the 2018/19 school year our children participated in an inter-school football competition with four neighbouring schools.

Environmental activities

We are committed to fostering environmental awareness amongst pupils and are proud to have instigated a programme to clear-up rubbish on the nearby beach. During the year, our children teamed up with staff, parents, local residents and other voluntary organisations to clear the beach of plastic and effluent.

Learning Support

We recognise that some of our children struggle with their studies, often because of their home circumstances. Our policy is for teachers to identify pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in particular subjects and for these pupils to be given extra support after school hours. Numeracy is one of the subject areas for which some pupils may need help.

Pastoral Care

St. Nicholas is particularly concerned with the welfare of its pupils, sixty per cent of whom are wholly dependent on the meals they receive at schools. Where there are concerns about homework, health, absenteeism or behaviour our teachers visit parents or guardians to discuss these problems. Children who are identified as vulnerable are closely monitored and second-hand clothes and shoes are made available to them and their families.

Medical Support

Many of our children are predisposed to a number of acute medical conditions as a consequence of their impoverished backgrounds. Our first priority is therefore to ensure that they receive a healthy diet by giving them breakfast and lunch during school hours. We arrange for all the children to be issued with a National Health Insurance card which gives them free and fast access to medical centres in Ghana. We also pay for any medication. The Ghana Health Service visits the school twice a year to administer vaccinations for polio, rubella and measles.

Parent involvement

The school has an active Parent Teachers Association (PTA) which holds meeting twice a term at the school with attendance averaging 80 to 90. The meetings keep parents and guardians informed of the school policy and pupils' progress. PTA meetings are also used to distribute donated clothes and shoes.

Governance

Governance of the school charity is overseen by the St Nicholas Foundation board of trustees who set and review policies in number of areas including pupil behaviour, health and safety, risk assessment and equal opportunities. These policies are implemented and monitored by the headmaster and his senior staff. Locally, the Ghana Education Service carried out inspections during 2018/2019 which assessed that the school was meeting their operating standards.

Our Buildings

One of our key developments during the year has been the creation of a new kitchen and dining facility which is large enough to facilitate other indoor school activities. Funding for this construction project together with kitchen and dining equipment was generously provided by the Greek construction company Mytilineos SA which operates a West African office from Ghana. This wonderful new facility was formally opened at our St Nicholas Day celebrations in December 2018.

As our intake of pupils continues to grow so too does the need for more accommodation. In 2017 the ground floor phase of our new classroom block was completed providing four dedicated classrooms together with a computer laboratory, library, toilet facilities and administrative office. During 2019, further building work was undertaken to create the upper level of our classroom block. This was made possible once again with funding from our generous sponsor Mytilineous SA and we hope to have the work completed during 2020 which will enable all our children to have a dedicated classroom.

Alongside these big building projects, maintenance work continues to demand attention and resources. In particular, heavy rainfall during the period caused extensive damage to the school's perimeter wall. Fortunately, on this occasion, it did not extend to the school buildings.

Our Supporters

Underpinning our work, we are fortunate in having a network of friends and supporters in Ghana, Greece, the UK and other parts of the world who have provided funding, food, clothing, learning resources, teaching support, advice and other contributions to help ensure the viability and success of the school.

Donors

During 2017/18 the school has been fortunate in receiving donations in funding or in-kind from a number of organisations and individuals. Below we have listed key donors and their contributions

| Donor | Type of support |
|---|---|
| Mytilineos SA | Funding for major building infrastructure and equipment |
| Sea and Shore Services | Management support and transport |
| Maria Tsakos Foundation | Annual Grant |
| International airline crews | Clothing, shoes, school uniforms, toys etc., |
| Tsakos Hellas visiting ships: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Irene's Remedy- Irene's Rainbow- Irene's Resolve | Bulk food supplies |
| UK schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Danes Hill School- Bedford Modern School- Leighton Park School- Worth School- Marist School- Gordon's School- Danesfield Manor School | Uniforms, sports equipment, learning resources etc. |
| St Nicholas Pupil Sponsorship Scheme | Regular donations for individual pupils |

Honorary associates and visitors

Over the years, St Nicholas has developed a network of associates and partners. During 2018/19 we are particularly grateful to the following for their help and support:

Kira Amin, daughter of one of our trustees and a graduate of University College London, spent six weeks at the school re-organising our library, cataloguing resources and training staff.

Ivan Quashigah, a frequent visitor to the school, has produced a film about St Nicholas and the lives of its pupils which will be a useful PR tool for generating interest in the school.

SOS Hermann College (a prestigious local secondary school) has provided on-going practical support to our pupils in various aspects of their learning including spelling and numeracy. SOS has also donated a large collection of books to our library.

Professor Andrew Owusu, of Tennessee State University and a former Ghanaian Olympic athlete, assisted the school's sports department to identify and train pupils with a special aptitude for athletics.

Finances

Income

The school is funded exclusively by donations from a range sources in the UK, Greece and Ghana. In 2018/2019 our **total income** was £64,296, which represents a fall of 35% over the previous year. As shown below, just over two-thirds of our income came from UK and Greece sources, although the share of income generated in Ghana more than doubled in 2018/19.

| Regional income (£) | 2018/19 (%) | 2017/18 (%) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| UK and Greece | 42,128 (65.0) | 88,967 (90.1) |
| Ghana | 22,168 (35.0) | 9,796 (9.9) |
| Total | <hr/> 64,296 (100) <hr/> | <hr/> 98,763 (100) <hr/> |

Source of UK /Greek Income (£)

Our main source of income from the UK and Greece in 2018/19 was from corporate sponsorship and for the first time we were able to recover Gift Aid from earlier charitable donations. Contributions from fundraising events were significantly down on the previous year.

| | 2018/19 (%) | 2017/18 (%) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Corporate Sponsorship | 15,147 (35.9) | 23,781 (26.7) |
| Gift Aid | 9,240 (22.0) | - |
| Individual Small Donations | 6,946 (16.5) | 2,981 (3.4) |
| Individual Large Donations | 3,378 (8.0) | 1,999 (2.2) |
| Pupil Sponsorship | 3,325 (7.9) | 2,940 (3.3) |
| Legacy Giving | 2,500 (6.0) | - |
| Trusts and Foundations | 1,442 (3.4) | - |
| Fundraising Events | 150 (0.3) | 57,245 (64.3) |
| Other | - | 21 (0.1) |
| | <hr/> 42,128 (100) <hr/> | <hr/> 88,967 (100) <hr/> |

Sources of Ghanaian Income

Two Ghanaian-based companies accounted for nearly 90% of our Ghanaian donations in 2018/19. **Mytilineous SA** was the major contributor towards our building work and **Sea and Shore Services** provided management services and transport for the school.

Expenditure

Total spending in 2018/19 was £79,150, which is only marginally higher than the previous year. As in the past, our main item of expenditure was staff salaries whilst food accounted for 41% of our spending on the children. As a charity we are proud to have a policy of keeping our administration costs to a minimum, reflected in the very low figure for support costs.

| Type of expenditure £ | 2018/19 | 2017/18 |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <u>Charitable activities</u> | | |
| Staff costs | 38,923 | 31,204 |
| Children's costs | 21,920 | 19,973 |
| Buildings & maintenance costs | 14,695 | 6,619 |
| School operating costs | 3,793 | 2,874 |
| Building development | - | 21,250 |
| <u>Support costs</u> | | |
| Insurance | 564 | 2,007 |
| Bank charges | 195 | 13 |
| Exchange differences | (940) | (7,326) |
| Total costs | <u>79,150</u> | <u>76,614</u> |

Commentary

Comparing our finances for 2018/19 with the previous year we can see that:

- Our total income fell by more than a third although our expenditure increased only marginally.
- Whilst most of our income came from UK and Greek sources, donations from Ghanaian corporate sources increased by 25%.
- Our income from fundraising events in the UK fell substantially
- Our staff costs, which remain our highest item of expenditure, also increased with the expansion in pupil enrolment and annual increases in staff salaries.
- Similarly our pupil costs increased, with food accounting for the main item of pupil expenditure.

With the fall in income, we made a **net loss of £14,854** in 2018/19. This was offset by funds carried over from the previous year, giving us a balance of £53,373. However, it is clear that we will need to re-double our fundraising efforts over the next two years to provide the necessary resources for us to offer the full Ghanaian Primary Curriculum

Our Charity

Registered name: The name of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (the "CIO") is St Nicholas Foundation

Registered charity number: 1164193

Registered Address: The principal office of the CIO is:
First Floor
10 Lower Grosvenor Place
London SW1W 0EN
United Kingdom

St. Nicholas Trustees:

The charity trustees are as follows:

Joanne Milne – Chairperson (appointed 2.11.15 – resigned 1/4/19)

Elizabeth Dutton – Acting Chairperson (appointed 2.11.15)

Patrick McLachlan – Secretary (appointed 2.11.15 – resigned 31/10/19)

Jacqueline Amin – Treasurer (appointed 2.11.15)

Deborah Eleazar (appointed 2.11.15)

Alkiviadis A Kappas (appointed 2.11.15)

Vivienne King (appointed 2.11.15)

Andreas G Bisbas (appointed 2.11.15)

Bankers: NatWest, Victoria, PO Box 1357, 169 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 5NA

Independent Examiner: Douglas Wadkin, 11 Amwell St, London EC1R 1UL

Governing Document: The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Charitable Objectives

Through the St Nicholas School in Tema, Ghana (the "School") which was established in 2012, the CIO aims to advance the education, health and community development of students of the School by providing the funds, facilities, staff and/or materials to:

- (i) provide high quality education for infant and primary up to school leaving age children at minimal cost to families and ensuring that the students acquire the necessary learning skills to progress to higher levels in the education system, including competencies in English and mathematics;
- (ii) provide financial support to students and their family members as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee and according to a defined set of criteria;
- (iii) Improve the students' health and well-being by providing nutritious meals, drinks and snacks whilst the students are at school and access to medical care where necessary;
- (iv) ensure that the students acquire social and life skills and foster the development of the local community; and
- (v) develop links with local people and organizations including parents, community activists, local dignitaries and food suppliers, in order to improve both the living conditions and levels of education of the students.

Risks and Reserves/Financial Health

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. During the first year of operation as a registered charity, a Reserves Policy was implemented with the aim of holding at least three months of operating costs in reserves. This policy was achieved during the financial year October 2019/2020.

Activities, developments and achievements

A detailed account of the charity's activities, developments and achievements is set out in the earlier sections of this report.

Charity management

Trustees

- Three meetings of the trustees were held during 2018/19
- Four trustees (Deborah Eleazar, Alkiviadis Kappas, Elizabeth Dutton and Vivienne King) made visits to the school during the financial year.

Policies

The following policies/documents are in place:

- Code of Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessment
- Conflicts of Interest
- Equal Opportunities

Annual Accounts

- Annual accounts were produced, audited and submitted to the Charity Commission in June 2020

Newsletter

- Two newsletters were produced circulated by the school during the academic year 2018/2019

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees

Elizabeth Dutton

Elizabeth Dutton (Chairperson)

Approved by the Board of Trustees on – 1st June, 2020