

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School Governors' Newsletter

Spring 2015

Issue 2



Special points of interest:

- Track the progress of our children?
- Helping your child's school
- The Headteacher Governor

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Raising Standards In Our School

Each year the Governing Body is responsible for reviewing our school performance data and holding our school leaders to account for results achieved. Have you ever wondered how we do this?

What is RAISEonline?

A secure web-based system that provides schools, local authorities and inspectors with a range of analyses including:

- Attainment in the age 6 phonics check and at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 (KS1 and KS2)
- Pupil progress from KS1 to KS2
- Performance of different pupils groups and subjects within a school
- Absence and exclusions
- The characteristics (often referred to as 'context') of pupils.

For each type of analysis our school is compared to national averages for primary schools.

What is it for?

It is an important (but not the only) source of data for school governors to use in retrospective self-evaluation and school improvement planning. We use it alongside other sources of data such as the Ofsted Data Dashboard, FFT Governor Dashboard, FFT Self Evaluation Booklet and the schools' own pupil tracking data. The analyses are used by Ofsted

inspectors during inspections of schools. It is therefore critical that we are able to interpret our school's data from an inspector's perspective and are able to identify any areas of under-performance in order to explain why they occurred; or demonstrate that we recognise them and have set out the action we are taking to address them.

How governors use RAISE-online?

Both Ofsted and the Department for Education have made it clear in recent years that school governors play a pivotal role in providing support and challenge to school leaders. To do this effectively, our governors have access to good quality, timely data from the headteacher enabling us to ask challenging questions and get the answers we need.

Ofsted evaluate how well governors hold the headteacher and senior staff to account for the achievement of pupils. We work hard to ensure that we understand the available data and the strengths and weaknesses of our school.

So how is our School Performing?

The overall performance is excellent. In KSI, (all subjects) results exceed the national average for expected levels at KSI. In all subject areas, we have seen a significant improvement in results over the last 3 years. Writing continues to be a whole school focus, with a view to achieving a higher number of L3 writers. (ie. exceed what is nationally expected for Y2 pupils). KS2 results across the board are above national average.

Progress between KSI and KS2 has increased consistently over the last three years. This period has seen the introduction of the schools own curriculum plans in numeracy and assessment and a more consistent assessment approach across the school.

Attendance this year has been exceptional and is way above national average.

We are fortunate to have such committed and skilled teaching & support staff. On behalf of the Governing body I thank them for their continued hard work with all of our children,

Joanne Heffernan
Parent Governor

Report from Children's Achievement & Premises Committee

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Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding and protecting our children in school is a top priority and as such, we carry out a regular review of our policy in line with National guidance and Legislation.

At our recent meeting, we discussed some of the various ways in which children could be harmed such as through the internet. Governors will be attending e-safety and safeguarding training.

Curriculum & Premises

To ensure that we are meeting the

curriculum, we review all the tools available and this includes making sure we have the right IT equipment such as i-pads etc. We discussed areas of the school where we could improve the facilities such as providing more educational areas outdoors and additional resources and storage.

Pupil Progress

Following on from the fantastic review we had from our school improvement partner, we continue to monitor the progress of our pupils.

Each week the whole staff team meet to discuss pupil progress across the school. Our teachers use this opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other. This exercise has proved to be very beneficial and it is intended that this practice will continue as it benefits of all our children.



Did you know that

Catholic Schools

have to pay for the

ownership, building,

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their own schools?

Report from Finance & Personnel Committee

I am a Chartered Public Finance Accountant in the public sector. As a School Governor, I am the Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee.

The committee looks after the resources of our School, in relation to money and people. We work closely with the Headteacher, the School Business Manager and the Full Governing Body to ensure our school continues to have a

strong financial footing to support our children. The committee also monitors our schools performance and sets targets for the Headteacher for the year ahead, so that we continue to aim for the best outcomes for all of our pupils.

As part of the budget process we continuously review the spend for the current year, as well as projections for the next few years.

We are looking at continuing the improvements to the outdoor areas of the school, as well as investing in new technology for use by the children (such as i-pads).

Mark Lightburn, Chair



School Building Fund: Helping Your Child's School

Did you know that Catholic schools have to pay for the ownership, building, repair and maintenance of their own schools?

County schools don't have this responsibility. Plus, on average, Catholic schools receive approximately £500 less per pupil in state funding, yet still manage to spend more per pupil than many county schools. How do we manage this? Well that's a good question. First of all, by very prudent stewardship of all the available finances and, secondly, by the support of the Diocese of Shrewsbury, through the School Building Fund.

The School Building Fund was established by the Diocese as a means to help support all Catholic schools. St. Mary of the Angels in particular has benefitted greatly in recent years from the fund; the most obvious example being our beautiful, modern and well maintained school, which provides a wonderful learning environment for our children and is the envy of many other primary schools. Without this Building Fund support, the school governors would have had to take a massive

loan for our liability for our new building – which would have meant considerably less teaching assistant support and certainly less resources. The support of the fund is a vital component in the financial make-up of the school; and it is therefore imperative for the future wellbeing of our Catholic schools and pupils that the Fund's income stream be maintained. Parental contributions are a very important part of the Fund's income. However, in recent years there has been a decrease in the number of parents making the annual contribution; and this obviously has a negative effect on the fund and its ability to render support to schools at the desired

levels. In these times of austerity, it is understandable when families are experiencing pressures on their finances but just consider this; an annual contribution of say £15.00 works out at about 28p a day - not much really when you consider the benefits to your child's education. We would strongly encourage all parents to do their best to make this small annual contribution to the Diocesan School Building Fund. Please help us to maintain the high quality of education and facilities that all our children deserve both now and in the future. Thank you.

Colette Winterburn, Chair of Governors

The role of Headteacher Governor

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As Headteacher Governor I provide reports to the governing body. This enables governors to check that all children are being tracked correctly each term; and that the school finances as in order. I provide a report on events/pupil celebrations, and their impact each term; and I let all governors know about any staff training or new initiatives within school.

Whatever roles governors have, once we join the Governing Body, we are all the same. We all have one vote each, on each issue. I am not there to represent the staff, just as a parent governor is not there to represent parents...and so on. We are all elected or appointed governors, who vote on a case by case basis, with the

widest interests of our school as our sole motivation. Every decision we take is aimed at improving our school.

Next term, the governing body is being 're-constituted', as required by the government. This is happening in every school. The hope is simply that governing bodies will be smaller and work smarter, all over England. In our case, this will create another parent governor post, and **you will have the opportunity to apply from September 1st 2015**; so please do think about joining us, if you have skills to offer us. The election will be very early in the autumn term. Many thanks for your ongoing support this year.

Rob Hughes, Headteacher

The Joy of Easter: The Light of Christ

My last few words for this newsletter were penned as we began the Season of Advent. Here we are already, over the Christmas Season, well through Lent and getting ready for Easter, time moves so quickly!

The children as always, have been well prepared in school to celebrate Easter, the greatest and most important feast in the calendar of the Church. I have no doubt that they are all well aware of the true meaning of Easter, it is certainly not all about chocolate and cuddly toys!

My hope and prayer is that as the school holiday begins and Holy Week is upon us, that we as a

school community and family of faith, will all stay focused on the true meaning of the Easter Season.

On Good Friday we commemorate the death of our Saviour and you are all invited to the 'Family Stations of the Cross' being held on Good Friday Morning, 10am at St Mary of the Angels Church. (Weather allowing we will be on the field) The service will be followed by refreshments & hot cross buns in the parish hall.

During Holy Saturday the Church falls into darkness and silence, remembering the time that Christ spent in the tomb.

Then from the Vigil Mass of Holy Saturday into Easter Sunday morning the Church springs back into life, the new life, hope and joy of our Risen Saviour.

This Easter I pray that we will all keep Christ at the very centre of our family life and routine. That we will find time for prayer and a visit to church. Built on this foundation of true meaning and the joy of our faith, we can all the more appreciate our Easter Eggs and even a few days of relaxation before the new term begins.

Once again I repeat that together with Fr Louis we look forward to continuing to serve the 'school family,' and we remain always available and open to you all. Please be assured that during the forthcoming Season of Easter and into the new school term you and your families will be very much in my thoughts & prayers. Wishing you every joy & blessing of the Risen Christ.

Deacon Tony

"As a school community and family of the faith we should all stay focused on the true meaning of the Easter Season"



Governor in the spotlight

I was appointed Foundation Governor in 2010 and was elected as Vice-Chair in 2014.

I was originally born in Ghana in West Africa where I had my primary and secondary education. My family moved to London nearly 20 years ago. I then attended Coventry University where I studied a degree in Civil Engineering. I moved to Ellesmere Port nearly 11 years ago when I met my partner Hayley. We have 3 children, Gabriel, Christiana and Jerome. The older two, who are currently in high school attended St Mary of The Angels Catholic Primary and the youngest, Jerome is currently in year 4 at our school.

I enjoy most sports especially football which I play regularly and I am a passionate supporter of Arsenal Football Club, I have a love of flying light

aircraft and also enjoy cooking in my spare time.

I am an active member of the parish and the local community. I am also a member of various governing bodies and associations in Cheshire West and Chester including West Cheshire College and the Schools Funding body where I represent primary schools. I am also involved in local government as well as a Science and Technology ambassador in the construction industry.

Since my appointment as Vice-Chair, I have worked closely with and supported the Chair, Mrs Winterburn and the Headteacher Mr Hughes to ensure our school is run effectively and achieves outstanding results. I continue to work will all the governors and staff to ensure the continued success of our school.

I am in school regularly so please come and have a chat or say hello when you see me,

Francis Kwateng, Vice- Chair

Other Governor News Highlights

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*Holy Week
&
Easter
Schedule*

A big thank you to three of our longest serving governors, who are stepping down Firstly, many thanks to Ian Atkinson, who has been on various committees over the years, and who left us recently. Secondly, two of our staff governors, who have served for over ten years are leaving the governing body this summer. They are Mrs Davies and Miss Thwaite. They have brought a multitude of skills and expertise to us, and we wish them both well, and thank them greatly for their service.

A reminder of the Easter services and celebrations this week;

Thursday evening 6.00 pm - Junior Youth Club at St Mary's church hall, with Rob Smith. All welcome; and **hopefully you can stay for the Easter Vigil mass at 7.30 pm in church.**

Friday morning 10.00 am - Children's Stations of the Cross, hopefully on the parish field if dry; followed by hot cross buns in the church hall. (Christ's Passion service also at 3pm.)

Easter masses at St Mary's; Saturday night Vigil Mass for Easter at 8.30; and Sunday morning at 9.30 am. WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US FOR SOME OR ALL OF OUR EASTER CELEBRATIONS!

On behalf of all our governing body, may we wish you all a Happy and Holy Easter.
Colette Winterburn, Chair of Governors.

Your School Governors

Chair

Mrs Colette Winterburn

Vice Chair

Mr Francis Kwateng

Foundation Governors

Mrs Rose Price

Mrs Maria Lavelle

Ms Gemma Fleming

Mrs Kathleen Leahey

Deacon Tony Hunt

Staff Governors

Mrs Anne Davies

Mr Robert Hughes

Miss Karen Thwaite

Mrs Christine Atkinson

Elected Parent Governor

Mrs Joanne Heffernan

LEA Governor

Mr Mark Lightburn

Our photographs have been put up in reception and are also on the Governor page on the school website. If you see us... come and say hello!

Communication

Good Communication is vital to our school and we are constantly striving to make it as easy as possible to stay in touch:

In person: If you just need a quick word, please feel free to approach your class teacher at the start or end of each school day. If you would like a bit more time to discuss something in particular you may like to book some time with your teacher to suit you both. If you would like to meet with our Head-teacher, Mr. Hughes you can pop into the school office and make an appointment.

Email: This is a great way for you to contact the school office, your teacher or the Headteacher. Mrs. Mills or Mrs. Wilson in the office will always forward your emails confidentially to the intended recipient, via admin@stmaryoftheangels.co.uk.

By Phone: One of the office staff will always be available to answer any query, pass on a message or arrange a good time for your teacher to call you back.

Our telephone number is 0151 338 2430

Text Message: Tell us your mobile number and we'll keep you informed of all urgent or important messages by text.

Website: We've got a **great new website** that is now kept right up to date. Please visit it regularly to see the latest pictures of school trips, terms dates, calendar of events, school successes and Governor information. www.stmaryoftheangels.co.uk

App: Will keep you informed of news and events in school

Post: Our full address is set out on the top of this page.



And Finally.....

The new school year is up and running and you may have noticed some changes around school like the new benches and the external seating areas and the new signage on the front of school which we think looks really good. We also have launched our school app which will help you to keep informed of school activities. The app is available for iPhone and Android phones and can be downloaded for free. So, if you haven't downloaded it yet go to your app store and search for 'ourschoolapp'. Please do let us know what you think.

We hope that you find this issue of our newsletter interesting and informative and may we say a big thank you to all of you who responded so positively to issue one, we are always grateful for your comments.

On behalf of all the governors and staff may I wish you all a very happy and Holy Easter break.

Colette Winterburn, Chair of Governors