

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School Governor's Newsletter

Summer 2015

Issue 3



Special points of interest:

- We need a new parent governor. Could this be you?
- The removal of National Curriculum Levels
- Help boost our school funding.
- Ofsted Update

Looking Forward.....

Next term, our governing body is being 're-constituted'. This is a government requirement and is happening in every school. The hope is that governing bodies will be smaller and work smarter, all over England. In our case, this

will create another parent governor post. You will have the opportunity to apply from September 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 and we will let you have further details at the

start of our next school year.

We hope that you have found our Governor's newsletter interesting and informative this year. Let us know what you think and if you have ideas for improvement.

Revised Ofsted Framework

From September 2015 Ofsted are introducing a common inspection framework to standardise its operations over the whole of its educational remit from Nursery to Adult Education. The changes are being made to allow the Ofsted inspectors to focus more on those schools identified as being in need of improvement.

The new framework will have two levels of inspection. Level one, the Full inspection, with increased emphasis on quality of written feedback to pupils; progress data; performance of disadvantaged pupils; stretching the most able pupils; behaviour for learning and the impact of any interventions. With the inspectors making graded judgements in the following key areas: - overall effectiveness; effectiveness of leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; outcomes for children: personal development, behaviour and welfare: effectiveness of Early Years provision.

The second level is the short inspection for schools already judged to be good. These schools will no longer be subject to the full inspection every 3-5 years. Instead they will receive a short inspection approximately once every 3 years. The short inspections will focus on whether good quality provision has been sustained, they are not 'mini' full inspections and the focus is mainly on the performance of the school and on the leadership and management. Where the inspectors find that good quality provision has been maintained they will produce a short formal report published in letterform setting out their main findings.

Should a significant concern arise that the school may no longer be categorised as good then the inspectors may recommend that a full inspection be undertaken. Similarly, if the inspectors consider that a school may have improved and there is a likelihood that it would be judged as outstanding then they may recommend that a full inspection be undertaken.

So for good schools the new framework seems to catch them both ways, full inspection if they slip and full inspection if they improve!

As you know at our last inspection St Mary's was judged to be a good school with outstanding aspects. Therefore, we will from September, be subject to the new short inspections.

Colette Winterburn, Chair of Governors

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Report from Children's Achievement & Premises Committee

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Our recent meeting focused on ensuring that our procedures and policies regarding keeping our children safe in education were up to date and in practice. Mr Hughes takes the lead in school and continues to ensure that we adhere to our procedures. There has been a focus on the increasing number of young carers in Cheshire West and Chester over the last few months and it is important that we encourage anyone who knows a young carer to come forward so that we can ensure they have the right support in place.

Did you know that youngest carer in the UK is just 6 years old?

Curriculum & Premises

During our last meeting, we discussed how

we could improve some of our facilities such as providing more educational areas outdoors and additional resources and storage and over the last few weeks we have made some improvements to our outdoor areas. Some of our staff have attended a course to look at the new curriculum and ensure that it is embedded into our system. Our School in collaboration with Little Angels Childcare have developed a policy for managing unacceptable behaviour from parents and other visitors. This is in line with Local Authority guidance and it is to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Pupil Progress

As usual, all our pupils continue to make great

progress across the school. All classes did assessments recently and overall have done very well. We wish them all the best as they get ready for high school. Our Year 6 Spanish trip took place recently and it was a great success again. A big thank you to all our staff who accompanied the children who we are all so proud of.

Following a consultation that went out to all parents regarding proposed changes to the school holidays, we have received the responses and once all the information has been reviewed, we will let you all know.



Francis Kwateng, Chair

The new Depth of Learning Index will enable us to teach our children in more depth and will give them lots of confidence as they learn!

Report from Finance & Personnel Committee

The latest committee was held on the 19th May 2015.

We reviewed the spend over the financial year 2014-15, which was within budget but highlights the financial pressures the school faces in the future. The school continues to be managed superbly in line with its planned forecast and budgets. The school business manager Mrs Mills puts

in a great deal of hard work to ensure this, ensuring the schools gets best value for what it spends.

We also reviewed the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS), which ensures the school is following policies and procedures correctly and so makes sure we use the money and other resources properly for the benefit of our children.

The Schools Fund includes cost of school trips, uniforms, etc. and is independently audited and continues to be well run.

Mark Lightburn, Chair



National Curriculum Levels: What Next?

In my role as headteacher governor, I have been guiding our governors through a difficult current issue – the removal of National Curriculum Levels.

Parents were just getting used to whether their child was at, for example, Level 1 in the infants; or perhaps Level 4 in the juniors...and so on. But the government has been looking carefully at this and has decided that pupils need to learn subjects in more depth, instead of a system which encourages racing onto higher levels. This can lead to pupils' being insecure at their current level of attainment. The government also raised doubts about the national accuracy of levels.

We have looked carefully at alternatives, as the government wants us to do. We have decided to adopt a system called the Depth of Learning Index; the preferred choice of many primary schools.

It will enable us to teach children in more depth and to give them lots of confidence as they learn. At the same time the system enables teachers to report half termly on progress in reading, writing and maths; and this can be shared electronically with parents. It will also keep governors highly informed about pupils' progress across the school; and show clear progress to third parties, e.g. the Local Authority and Ofsted.

The system is ready to launch and we hope to be well in the swing of it in the autumn term. The school has been chosen as a 'pilot school' and will be strongly involved in moulding this exciting system.

Whilst this change takes place, the teaching and learning within our excellent curriculum will stay the same, so please be assured...**the children will not even notice the difference!** It's simply a new system of assessing them, and we will keep the best of what we currently do, in our marking etc. Of course, we will share what we are doing with them too.

Every school is currently developing a system away from 'levels'. We promise to keep you fully informed; and we are really excited about the future. We believe this will really enhance what we provide for the children.

Rob Hughes, Headteacher

Pupil Premium is additional funding that the government gives to schools for each pupil on roll where they are deemed to be disadvantaged. The money is spent in supporting their education and the school determines how it is spent.

Pupil premium is allocated to pupils from low income families who are registered for free school meals (FSM), or who have been registered for FSM at any point in the last six years, together with children who have been in care continually for 6 months or more. Service Premium is for pupils who have a parent serving or who have left the service since April 2011 in the armed services. Unlike the Pupil Premium, this-

grant is not solely for raising attainment but for providing additional (mainly pastoral) support .

As your governing body we want to impress upon you the importance for families who are eligible to register for their entitlement to FSM and the pupil/service premium. This is because registration brings more money into our school to help our children achieve. For example, in 2013/14 we received funding totalling £28,120 and in the current academic year we have received £46,700. This is significant additional funding for our school.

Registration is a quick, simple and confidential process. You can register through the Local Authority by ringing 0300 123 7039. Alternatively, type this link into your browser:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education_and_learning/school_meals.aspx

As Governors we have an obligation to publish information on the school website every year on the Pupil and Service Premium expenditure.

We encourage you all to have a look at our website to see how the school has used the funds in order to benefit our pupils.

If you think you might eligible please do speak confidentially to Mrs Mills and apply!

**Joanne Heffernan,
Parent Governor**

Summer is Coming!

(Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." Mark 6: 31)

During much of the season of spring we have taken part in that great British pastime....complaining about the weather! However, as I write these few words the sun is shining brightly through the office window and our beautiful church is bathed in light, a sign of the ever changing seasons.

In my visits to school I sense that the staff, pupils and families are beginning to look ahead to the summer break, and why not. We all need a break from our work and daily routine, it enables us to step back, refresh our energy, to enjoy some leisure time, and when the time comes to start anew. The scriptures remind us

that even Jesus in his humanity needed to occasionally escape from the crowds, to find some solitude, some peace and then return to his ministry with a renewed strength. With this in mind I want to wish you all a wonderful summer and when the time comes, a relaxing and enjoyable holiday.

The life of the Church is however a bit like our seasons, ever present and always moving along. Please know that you remain always welcome in YOUR parish of St Mary of the Angels and we love to see you at Holy Mass or whenever you are able to drop in. At the end of July our LPA Youth Group will once again travel as pilgrims to the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France. As always they will enjoy a pilgrim experience and work in the service of our sick and elderly pilgrims from across the diocese. During our time in Lourdes the 'School family' of St Mary of the Angels will be in our

thoughts and prayers. There will also be a box for petitions placed in the school, if you have any special prayers or intentions please write them down and place them in the box, these petitions will then be taken with us and offered up in prayer at the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes.

As always I pray that together we will all strive to keep Christ at the very centre of our family life and daily routine. That we will try to find time for prayer and a visit to church.

Once again I repeat that Fr Louis and myself look forward to continuing to serve the 'school family,' and we remain always available and open to you all.

Wishing you and yours the joy, blessing and the light of Christ.

Deacon Tony



"The life of the Church is however a bit like our seasons, ever present and always moving along"

Governor in the spotlight

I was appointed by Cheshire West and Chester Council as the Local Authority Governor in May 2012 and became the Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee. I am a Chartered Public Accountant (CIPFA) and I work for Wirral Council, dealing with education and project accountancy.

I was born and raised on the Wirral where I went to Wirral Grammar School before studying accountancy at John Moores University. I've been married to my wife Monica for 13 years and our son Eric is 7. We moved to the area four years

ago and Eric attends our school and is currently in Year 2.

I enjoy racket ball (which is played on a squash court, but with a bigger racquet and a bigger ball – which despite my wish, doesn't make it any easier!).

As Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee I work closely with our Headteacher Mr Hughes, as well as our Business Manager Mrs Mills and with their valued help continue to make sure the limited resources we have for the school are spent in the best way possible for the children.

Mark Lightburn, LEA Governor



And Finally.....



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As another school year draws to a close it's a chance to look back and remember some highlights. I'm sure that we all have our own highlights but some of mine were:-

- The Spanish exchange visit in October when our friends from the Marista school in Pamplona spent a very happy week with us. Friendships that were made continue and were strengthened when our children visited Pamplona in June. This is such a great opportunity for the children and we should be very proud that our school is leading the way on exchange visits in Cheshire.
- The Christmas celebrations, as always, were very enjoyable particularly the infants nativity and junior pantomime. I'm sure I saw some budding RADA candidates!!
- The children's first Holy Communion in May was a wonderful occasion and it was a privilege to be able to share in the celebration. The children were fantastic and a real credit to their proud parents.
- The success of our great football and swimming teams, who did brilliantly well this year.
- The achievement of all our amazing pupils who have again exceeded the national averages in the three R's of reading, writing and maths.

Very well done to all pupils and their great teachers for all their hard work. A special well done also to all the mums and dads because without you, your help, support and encouragement they couldn't have done it and neither could we.

On behalf of all the governors and staff I wish you all a very relaxing, happy and hopefully warm and sunny summer break.

Colette Winterburn, Chair of Governors

Your School Governors

Chair

Mrs Colette Winterburn

Vice Chair

Mr Francis Kwateng

Foundation Governors

Mrs Maria Lavelle

Ms Gemma Fleming

Mrs Kathleen Leahy

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. 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 Head-teacher. Mrs. Mills or Mrs. Wilson in the office will always forward your emails confidentially to the intended recipient.

Our school email address is 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 & email message: Tell us your mobile number and email address and we'll keep you informed of all urgent or important messages by text & email.

Website: We've got a great website that is 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.

Post: Our address is set out on the left hand side of this page.