

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Governor News

Issue Two

December 2014

Welcome to a second edition of the St. Francis School Governing Body Newsletter. We wish to mark concisely the end of an extremely busy term for us and you as parents and carers, mindful of the demands of this time of year. We hope you will take a few moments over a coffee, or indeed a mulled wine, to share in some of our efforts and successes these last two Autumn terms.

Our priority this term was to build on strong foundations and ensure we are a visible presence in school, drawing up an effective monitoring schedule across all fundamental areas and asking challenging questions of our Senior Leadership Team. During these monitoring visits we meet with children in a 'Pupil's Forum', conduct book scrutiny and observe lessons. All link Governors have an individual role and Mr Ashton, our Religious Dimension Governor has penned an article below to give light on RE and some changes taking place.

May I also take the opportunity to illustrate the extremely pleasing results of school league tables released by the DfE on 11th December. With a combined 92% of our children attaining level 4 or above in Maths, Reading and Writing, our school is placed at 73rd out of 608 schools in Kent, an astounding achievement; in stark contrast to the combined 65% and 63% respectively attained in the last two previous years. Thanks must go to the staff who show continual, unremitting commitment, parents and carers, without who's support this would not be possible and of course the children themselves who should rightly be extremely proud of their results. For detailed results please visit www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance

May we wish you a peaceful, restful and joyous Christmas break; and warmest wishes for the new year.

Miss Sarah Whitbread - Chair of Governors

The Catholic Life of the School - Richard Ashton

At the start of the new school year we were delighted to welcome Canon Luke Smith, our new parish priest. He is already a familiar figure about the school, and we very much look forward to building up the links between the school and the parish.

The Way, the Truth and the Life

There have been big changes in the classroom too, with the introduction of new teaching materials for RE. The new course offers two important advantages: it presents a fuller picture of the Catholic faith which lies at the heart of the work of the school; and it helps and encourages the pupils in their literacy skills to produce work of greater depth and fluency.

When Miss Whitbread and myself conducted a monitoring visit in November, we were very pleased by the positive response of both staff and pupils, and we were impressed by the quality of the work we saw.

Liturgies

The school has been delighted to welcome families to the many school liturgies which have taken place since September. In Term 1 there was the service of dedication, followed by the Mass for the Feast of St Francis. More recently we have had the Harvest Festival and the Advent service, and as Christmas draws near, the Infant Nativity plays and the Service of Lessons and Carols at St Francis Church.

A Christmas Prayer

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring
out your joy.
Sing psalms to the Lord with the
harp, with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of
the horn acclaim the King, the
Lord.

Psalm 97, 3b-6

Governing Body Membership

It was with reluctance that I accepted the resignation of my Vice-Chair, Mr Craven, in August this year. Alex was a governor for 12 years, witnessing many fundamental changes and was instrumental in founding our new, rigorous governing body.

But, it is with great pleasure that I welcome the appointment of Mr Godden to the role. Nigel has a wealth of experience in property which is well suited to his role as Chair of the Finance and Premises Committee. Nigel has six years of experience in governance, and is firmly committed to providing challenge to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children.

I would also like to welcome Mrs Margaret Baynes, as a Foundation Governor; the retired Headteacher of Our Lady of Hartley Primary. Margaret is well suited to her appointment on the Curriculum Committee and we look forward to hearing more from her in the future.