



15<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## AN END OF YEAR MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Dear parents and carers

At the end of the year, it's good to look back and reflect on life at St Mary's, and what a year it has been!

School opened after the summer break with a new, more secure entrance, new boiler and replacement internal doors - all very necessary. We welcomed Mr Brine as our interim head who brought enthusiasm with increased PE and music, staying for 2 terms until our substantive head, Mrs Chadbourne, could be appointed. Mr Russell and Miss Dalton completed the class teachers, with extra teaching assistants and office staff also employed, the school was always buzzing on my visits.

The greatest challenge for governors this year, was that of finding a permanent head to give stability to the school after many leadership changes. The process of appointing a head is a long and challenging one, both for the governors but more especially for candidates, and so we were very pleased that Mrs Chadbourne successfully undertook a very full and thorough interview process and accepted the offer of becoming headteacher at St Mary's. After just one term, she has made a significant impact with her warmth, her calmness and her knowledgeable understanding of school processes, brought from years of experience in other schools. On behalf of the Governing Body, I look forward to working with Mrs Chadbourne to achieve the best for our children. The appointment of Mrs Banat-Rinz as Deputy Headteacher from Assistant Headteacher strengthens the strategic leadership of the school. This is further developed through the appointment of Mr Gillespie to the Leadership team, bringing expertise in computing and music to enhance our specialist teaching.

Governing Body actions this year to support the leadership of the school

- Held 10 evening Governor meetings
- Appointed a substantive headteacher
- Appointed Mr Gillespie as part of the leadership team
- Undertaken monitoring visits to cover Catholic life, Phonics, Special Needs, Computing, safeguarding, Art & DT, Early Years, Music, Book Look in English and Foundation subjects
- Updated agreed policies
- Appointed new Teaching Assistants and office staff
- Monitored the school budget, School Improvement plan and Self Evaluation form
- Continued to meet with "Our Lady of the Magnificat" Academy
- Reviewed parent and pupil surveys



- Discussed extending hours of the Before and After Club, and its charging system
- Agreed improvements in decoration in the older building
- Attended school masses and assemblies on many occasions
- Advertised for and welcomed a new parent governor and foundation governors

The year has led to us saying goodbye to some valued people and I would like to thank Mr Russell for all he has done for the school through his short time with us. He always has a smile on his face and has been a pleasure to see around the school. I wish him good luck as he changes his role from teacher to student in his further MSc studies.

We also say goodbye to Mrs Watson. Whenever St Mary's has had a need over the last few years, she has willingly answered our call, with patience, dedication and attention to detail at all times. Her lead in preparing masses and teaching children about the sacraments will be greatly missed, her faith showing that she truly walked St Mary's mission statement. I wish her all the best in her new learning challenges ahead; another one swapping the role of teacher for learner.

Lastly, we say goodbye too to a very valued member of the Governing body, Briony Walster, as a parent governor has often spent her free time in school monitoring and supporting music, Early Years and Special Needs, and never missing an evening meeting. As her term comes to an end, on behalf of parents, staff, children and governors I would like to take this opportunity to wish her all the best for the future.

It was with great pleasure that I received 2 applications to take on the role of parent governor. Sadly we only have room for one and so elections have taken place and the new parent governor is Lucy Leech, mum to Ivy in Reception Class.

Thanks are extended to both applicants Lucy Leech and Emma Hitchcock, going out to a voting process is a huge challenge, both candidates have great skills to offer the governing body.

One of the main challenges of being a governor is being a "critical friend" to the head. In this role, we have had many difficult conversations regarding school finance and ensuring the best outcomes for the children. Class organisation being a main discussion point. I know Mrs Chadbourne has spent many hours ensuring our plan for combining some classes has been well communicated with relevant parents and carers. School funding continues to be a headache for all governing bodies.

The other area of significance is that of academisation, and I'm pleased to say that progress is taking place in this area. After consultation with parents, staff and the wider community, our application to join the Our Lady of the Magnificat Academy has been accepted by the Department for Education and should be finalised by 1<sup>st</sup> December. Parents should see little difference when this happens, but having a strong group supporting the school through teacher development, finance, purchasing and Catholic life will be a great help.

So at the end of the year, there are many to thank!

To the whole staff body Mrs Chadbourne and the teachers, the teaching assistants, the office staff, cleaners and site manager, who welcome your children and work with them tirelessly to get the best for them - a huge vote of thanks and please enjoy a very well-deserved rest.



To parents for choosing our school to be educators of your children - enjoy some quality time with your precious offspring.

To governors, who continue to work quietly behind the scenes where work often goes unnoticed - enjoy a few weeks with no meetings!

And last but not least, to our Year 6 leavers who have been the role models for the younger children over the last year - take our school values into your next stage of learning. Keep Jesus in your heart as you face new challenges and be the person that He wants you to be. Remember the word GOODBYE means "God be with you!"

And to everyone - remember our school is a Catholic school for ALL children! Spread the word!

Have a very happy and restful summer break. See you back in September

Yours faithfully

*Angela Scull*

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Chair of Governors

