

Governor Newsletter - Review of the Year 2015/16

As the academic year draws to a close, we can reflect on the last year being one of many improvements at St Mary's. With our new headteacher settling in, the school premises received necessary updates and academic achievements are rising.

Premises

The school premises have received a number of necessary repairs and updates over the last year, including repairs to the roof and the flint walls by the Year 6 classroom, and new doors and windows were installed at the rear of the school for classrooms Year 1 to Year 4 during the summer half term. During the summer classrooms will be receiving new doors to the corridor; they will have windows to satisfy safeguarding requirements.

Suggestions from the School Council have led to the creation of a reading shack, and we thank the volunteers who set it up. A number of KS2 parents and children have told us that there isn't enough to do for the older children at playtime, so we have installed new trim trail play equipment with Sports Premium money we have received.

A big thank you to all the parents who have paid their voluntary contributions. These are continuing to help us to improve the fabric of the building. We would also like to say a big thank you to all volunteers who give their time so generously to improve the school building, particularly Mr Draper and Mr Kemp, our Chair of Governors. A huge thank you also goes to our amazing School Association for their dedication, hard work and fantastic ideas. Not only does their fundraising make an enormous difference to the children, but their events enhance the school ethos and play a big part in making the school community the friendly and welcoming place you have told us it is.

Personnel

This year we say a fond good-bye to Mrs Hurley, who has been working in the school kitchen, and Mr Macey, the PE teacher. In September we will welcome Game On, a company which will not only provide PE lessons but also enable us to offer more extracurricular sports clubs -- something many of you have told us you would like to see.

Governing Body

We have had four new governors join us this year: John Canagasuriam, Jamie Walker, Louisa Osmond and Stuart Goss, all of whom have already made a huge contribution to the work of the governing body. The Reverend Jonathan Gordon will be returning from his sabbatical in September.

We would like to thank all governors for the work they have done this year, which is so important to the school. In particular, we would like to say a huge thank you to our extremely hard-working Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors, Alan Kemp and Louise Moorby.

Academic Achievement

The introduction of a new National Curriculum and new assessment levels last year was followed this year by a change in the KS1 and KS2 SAT exams. We are very pleased with the results this year, as the KS1 results came in above the Hertfordshire average, and we are particularly delighted that our first ever KS2 SATs scored above both the national and the Hertfordshire averages. The national data is expected to be published in September, and we will inform you of the exact results then.

Congratulations and well done to all children in Y2 and Y6 who took the SATs this year, and a huge thank you to Miss Waterhouse, Mrs Dobbs and Ms Forsyth for their hard work in achieving these great results.

Y1 children undertook the Phonics Screening Check, and we were very pleased that 90% of children passed, which is the highest percentage we have ever achieved.

82% of parents and carers agreed in the recent parent survey that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school, however, we think we can improve further and have therefore introduced a new behaviour policy. Both staff and children have taken to it with enthusiasm.

The many academic improvements this year mean the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (HIP) now judges the school to be 'good moving to outstanding', which we are very pleased about and proud of. A big thank you to all the staff and especially Miss Hunt.

Sports

Over the last three years, the school has used the Sports Premium funding to improve the provision of physical education (PE) and sport. Please see the update on the website for an update on how this funding is being used: <http://www.stmarys916.herts.sch.uk/about-our-school/sports-premium/> As reported above, this year the funding enabled us to purchase much-needed equipment for the older children, but we have also purchased other sports equipment and specialist teacher training with it.

In the recent parent survey, 67% of parents felt that there were sufficient sporting activities available for their child and 25% disagreed. We continue to address this area and have this year again ensured that various sporting and PE activities are available for all year groups, including competitive and inter-school events for KS1 and KS2. The school now reports on these achievements in the weekly newsletter and Mr Potter and Mr Macey have introduced a sports newsletter.

Pupil Premium

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, he or she will get free meals automatically under the 'Universal Infant Free School Meals' scheme. However, your child could be receiving a 10% discount on all school activities and £1,300 extra funding if you are eligible for free school meals and apply anyway, as we get up to £1,300 Pupil Premium to support your child's education.

For more information and to check if you are eligible, please follow the link to our website. <http://www.stmarys916.herts.sch.uk/about-our-school/pupil-premium/>

Extra Curricular Activities

We remain committed to increasing the choice and availability of extra-curricular activities. Only 59% of parents agreed that St Mary's offers a good range of extracurricular activities, down from 78% last year. We will continue to develop the range of extracurricular activities, and are pleased that new provider Game On will provide after school sports clubs as well as PE provision.

The school now communicates a list of all available clubs to parents and carers early on in the school year. Our thanks go to the parent volunteers and to the staff who give their time to run the activities, which are so enjoyed by the children.

Financial Report

Our end of year financial report is available on the website

[Final Budget Position 2016](#)

Like many other schools across the country, St Mary's is facing pressure on school finances, however, thanks to the dedication of the staff and their creative management of the budget, as well as increasing pupil numbers this year (school funds are generated from pupil numbers) St. Mary's is in a better financial position this year than last.

Stakeholder engagement

Many thanks to those parents who completed the online questionnaires this term. Thank you also to the staff for allowing pupils to fill theirs in at school and to the children for telling us their opinion. We are currently analysing the results and are in the process of designing an action plan to address the issues raised. The staff and governors will review the analysis, which will feed into the School Development Plan for next year. We will publish the survey results and action plan early in the autumn term.

The Parent Forum is now held once a term and we thank the parent representatives who form this vital link between parents and Senior Leadership Team and Governors. When there is no Parent Forum meeting coming up, parents can also use the feedback box in reception, the notes provided at open events and Parent View (<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>) to give the school feedback.

The children are considerably more engaged through the invigorated School Council, whose members are now much better visible through the red sash they wear over their uniform and whose suggestions have contributed enormously to improvements made at the school this year. Thank you to Mrs Bates for helping to run the School Council.

If you would like to provide us with feedback on this newsletter, or any of the issues raised in it, please forward it to your Parent Forum Representative, ready for the first meeting of the forum in the autumn term.

Thank you to the staff, pupils, parents and governors at St Mary's, who work together to make our school a unique community. We would especially like to thank all volunteers, whether they read with the children, run a club, are a parent rep, attend fundraising events or any of the many other ways in which they volunteer their time and skills. We look forward to working with you next year, to continue to develop and improve our school, for the sake of the pupils, who are at the heart of everything we do.



Miss V. Hunt
Headteacher



Alan Kemp
Chair of Governors