

## Governor Newsletter - Review of the Year 2016/17

As the academic year draws to a close, we can reflect on the last year as being one of many improvements and successes at St Mary's. Miss Hunt and the staff continue to drive the school forward and academic achievements continue to rise.

### Premises

The school premises have received a number of necessary repairs and updates over the last year, including repairs to the roof and revisions to gates and security fencing. New fire doors were installed in the classrooms of Years 1 to 4. Ongoing maintenance continues to try to maintain the fabric of the building. A big thank you to our site manager, Simon Burkett.

Sadly, the tree in the top playground, kindly donated by Northchurch Parish Council to commemorate the millennium, had to be removed. We are anxious to resurface the playground and bring it back into use, but thus far costs are prohibitive.

Unfortunately, our grant application to the Diocese for funds to completely refurbish the school's toilets and create an IT room was unsuccessful. However, with assistance from The School Association and additional voluntary contributions, we hope to be able to at least refurbish the toilets within the next 12 months. We know this is a key issue for children and parents.

Suggestions from the School Council have led to the creation of a reading shack, and we thank the volunteers who set it up. The trim trail continues to be well used and new pic-nick tables have appeared on the playground (thank you School Association).

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. 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. The governing body and school association will be working even more closely together next year.

### Personnel

This year we say a fond good-bye to Miss Waterhouse who is leaving us to take up a post at a school in Hemel Hempstead and Miss King who is starting her maternity leave. We wish them both every happiness. In September we will welcome Miss Groves who will be teaching in Year 3 and Mrs. Coleman who will be covering Miss King's post in Year 4.

### Governing Body

We have had two new governors join / rejoin us this year: The Reverend Jonathan Gordon and Owen Lewis. They are very welcome.

Earlier in the year Jana Toon and John Canagasuriam stood down and at the end of this term we lose Peach Berry, Louise Morby and Hannah Horton. This a huge amount of experience to lose in one go. These governors have made a fantastic contribution to the school over many years and we cannot thank them enough. We will miss you.

We would like to thank all the 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, Alan Kemp.

Your school needs you! The school cannot legally function without a properly constituted governing body. It is a worthwhile and rewarding role. As of the end of term we are four governors short, despite advertising

for parent governors and requesting the church for foundation governors. Please seriously consider if you are able to help. If you have any questions regarding the role, please contact the school or one of the governors.

## Academic Achievement

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 with our KS2 SATs, which 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 the children in Y2 and Y6 who took the SATs, and a huge thank you to Miss Waterhouse, Mrs Dobbs, Mrs. Clark and Mrs. O'Dell for their hard work in achieving these great results.

Y1 children undertook the Phonics Screening Check, and we were very pleased that 83% of children passed. Again this is above the national average.

The school's behaviour policy is now firmly embedded and working well.

The many academic improvements this year mean the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (HIP) continues to judge 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 four 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 previously reported, 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 to go with it. This year has seen PE activities taught and managed by Game On, with staff gaining greater expertise by working with them. The school and individual pupils have taken part in many out of school sports competitions, activities and events, with great success and which are documented in the school 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. We will continue to develop the range of extracurricular activities available.

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.

The governors, staff, parents and children would like to say a sincere thank you to Northchurch Parish Council for funding various additional elements within the school, such as swimming and the school crossing patrol (when funding for the patrol was withdrawn by Herts County Council). This has without doubt contributed to pupil safety. Sadly, due to its own financial pressures, the school crossing patrol funding has had to be withdrawn, but the support for swimming remains. We continue to work closely with members of the Parish Council.

### Final Budget Position 2017

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 (school funds are generated from pupil numbers) St. Mary's financial position remains stable.

That said, just trying to maintain the actual buildings is expensive. As previously stated, the school could not manage without voluntary contributions and help from the school association and Parish Council.

We know from announcements made by the DfE that funding will reduce over the next few years, which will make the situation even more challenging, but governors and the school are doing all they can to minimise any impact.

### Stakeholder engagement

A parent / pupil survey will be conducted next term to gauge how well we are doing.

The Parent Forum is 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 more 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. If more urgent, please contact the school or governing body via the school office.

Can we also ask parents / carers to exercise patience and tolerance when dealing with staff in the school office. The staff are extremely busy and often just delivering a message. Please do not shoot the messenger.

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 / Jonathan Gordon  
Chair of Governors