



I believe, I hope, I trust

**GOVERNORS' REPORT TO PARENTS
2016-2017**

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Governing Body of St Mary's RC Primary School. It is an enormous privilege and responsibility for me to continue as Chair of the Governing Body, working with the staff, parents, parish and wider community to do all we can to provide the best possible educational experience for the children in our school.

This report outlines how the governing body has functioned throughout the year, both through our committee structure and our Full Governing Body meetings and what the outcomes have been for the children and the future prospects of the school. I hope that you will take time to read the report and celebrate the successes as well as helping us to identify areas for improvement.

We continue to build on our strong community links and to prepare our children to be successful and caring citizens of the future. As a Catholic school with a very strong tradition handed down to us by our founders and Trustees, the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, we strive to fulfil our Mission Statement and to be "a community whose relationship with Jesus Christ is at the centre of all that we do and where the principles and values of the Gospels are evident". Yes, we sometimes fall short of our high expectations, and we value your feedback on how we can do better in the future.

On behalf of the governors, I thank all the staff, whether teachers, teaching assistants, MDSAs, kitchen assistants, cleaners or whatever their role, for their dedication and commitment to St Mary's school.

Irene Wilkie

Chair of Governors

Full Governing Body (FGB) activities

The Governing Body is responsible for working with the school to ensure that it delivers a good quality of education. Together with the headteacher, who is responsible for day-to-day management, we set the school's aims and policies.

As you probably already know, governors have three main strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

In order to achieve this, we have three committees of the Governing Body - Teaching Learning and Leadership (TLL), Resources, and Personnel. The names are fairly self-explanatory, and you will see reports from each of these committees below.

The main challenges we have faced in this year have been around the Academy agenda, which both the government and the Diocese were keen to promote last year, planning for the dwindling financial resources envisaged by 2020, and the reduced support which will be available from the Local Education Authority in the future. Schools now have to take a long hard look at how we will continue to access adequate training, procure the resources

we need and plan how we will continue to offer a high quality education on a reduced budget going forward. We have to look at different ways of working with clusters of schools to share expertise and ideas, to provide mutual support and 'in house' professional development for staff.

As a Catholic school, we also have to contend with the apparent dwindling pool of Catholic teachers and ensure that all our teachers, whatever their personal faith, are committed to supporting the beliefs and ethos of the Catholic church. In the matter of the Catholicity of our school, we have the enormous advantage and privilege to have a parish priest who is completely supportive of all that we do. He attends assemblies, conducts Masses, works with our children in the First Communion programme and is much more generous with his time than we could reasonably expect. We are enormously indebted to Father Millett for his commitment and generosity to the school.

The Camino Partnership

If you have read the minutes of the FGB meetings over the past couple of years, you will be aware of the Diocesan plans to encourage schools to work in clusters, delineated by the Department for Schools and Colleges. Thankfully the plan to push all schools into becoming part of a Multi Academy Trust has fallen off the agenda, but we have all been asked to sign a commitment to working in partnership. St Mary's has been working for some years as part of the South Clifton Catholic Federation, which comprises 13 schools from Wells, to Bath, Corsham, Chippenham and other points in between. This has now been restructured and renamed as the Camino Partnership - the name being a reference to the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. The schools are committed to working together whilst retaining their individuality - a point which is particularly important to St Mary's as an SMG school with our own Trustees. We are still in the early stages of agreeing in which areas we can realistically cooperate - for example, sharing policies sharing a common vision, sharing training opportunities.

We will keep you informed of the progress of this project and please feel free to contact us at any time if you wish to make your views known.

Teaching, Learning and Leadership Committee

At each meeting the TLL committee has received reports on and has discussed Standards and Progress and Leadership and Management as standing agenda items and in addition has looked at the School Development Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation and Communications.

Standards in St Mary's School have always been high. We consistently aim high and our aspiration is that the progress of every child is good or better. As well as scrutiny by the TLL committee, individual governors monitor each subject area at least twice during the year and report back to the chair of this committee. This is not a case of 'checking up on teachers' but a way of governors being aware of and supporting the work which is going on in the school on a daily basis. We are not experts in every subject area, but we believe it is helpful for staff to articulate to governors what their objectives are, how they will achieve them and how much progress the children are making.

The Communications working group has tried to address the ever-problematic issue of making sure that everybody in the school community feels they are adequately informed of what is going on and in a timely manner. This has proved more difficult than it might have appeared at first, but we hope you will agree that some progress has been made. The website was an area of concern at the start of the year and particularly the fact that the

school calendar was not updated. However, this has been remedied and in general the website is looking much better. It is a never-ending task to keep a website constantly updated and we are indebted to the parent volunteer who has made an enormous contribution to this.

Resources Committee

As the name suggests, the Resources committee is responsible for ensuring that the school has the resources needed to fulfil its function of helping each child to achieve his/her full potential. The committee is also responsible for ensuring that the fabric of the school is maintained and improved in order to make the learning environment as inspiring as it can be.

Resources and maintenance are obviously costly, and it is the responsibility of this committee to make sure that funds are well spent according to the school's priorities. This year there have been significant building works involving the pre-school, where the kitchen has been taken out and improvements have been made to the toilet facilities to give the children more useable space. Slightly less glamorous, but none the less essential maintenance works such as boiler replacements, improved security alarms and replacement taps in the toilets have also come under the remit of the Resources committee this year.

The committee receives a budget update at every meeting detailing how much money has been spent and on what. The School Business Manager attends meetings to answer any questions. In addition the chair of this committee, in collaboration with the SBM has to produce an annual Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) which is submitted to the Local Authority

Personnel / Staffing Committee

This is the committee which oversees the recruitment of new staff and is responsible for ensuring that due process is followed. This year the committee has focussed on ensuring that all job descriptions are clear and that governors have an accurate overview of the staffing structure. This is essential so that if a member of staff leaves, we know exactly what skills will be needed to fill the vacancy.

Staffing the pre-school has been an on-going process this year, as numbers are more volatile than in the rest of the school. As this was our first full year of operation, it has been something of a learning curve, but we are confident that the school has provided a quality experience for the children. Many of the pre-school staff have to be employed on fixed term contracts for the reasons mentioned above, and this makes for some difficult conversations at the end of the academic year, as the numbers on roll in September will inevitably be lower than those in July as we lose the older children to Reception classes.

The Personnel / Staffing committee also has to keep a close eye on staff well-being and morale. This has been a difficult year in many ways and we are losing some very valuable and long-standing members of staff, if not immediately, by the end of the next term. We will be sorry to lose them and will be conducting exit interviews to see if there are any lessons which we need to learn for the future.

Standards and progress

The validated SATs results will not be available until September /October and at that time there will be a full analysis and an honest appraisal of where we are as a school.

At the moment it looks as though our KS2 maths results are lower than we would like and measures have already been planned to remedy this, including investing in a new Maths resource.

The other area which we will have to look at more closely is the spelling component of Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS), and a new spelling scheme has been purchased to address this.

Internal monitoring and evaluation suggests that progress has consistently been good or better.

Budget forecast for 2017-18

Total revenue for 2017-18 is £1,114,631 and there is a c/f of £34,537 making a total of £1,149,168. Total expenditure is projected as £124,989.

The in-year revenue surplus will be £10,358 and a c/f end of year surplus of £24,179.

These figures are based on the revenue from 284 pupils in the previous year. There are other factors which may affect this such as where our new staff figure on the salary scales.

2018-19: The projected budget is that there will be a small in year surplus of £554 and a c/f balance of £24,733.

Some other statistics

Number on roll for next year : 293, (327 including Early Years)

Exclusions: None

Bullying : no incidents reached the threshold for reporting, although some minor incidents have been dealt with by class teachers.

Safeguarding: There have been 3 safeguarding referrals made. One has resulted in a Child Protection order, The other two are in the hands of multi-agency teams and are strictly confidential under the direction of the Safeguarding Officer.

Comings and goings

We have lost 3 governors in the course of this year for various reasons:

- Claire Crosby Cole (Foundation Governors,resigned in November)
- Rob Dowling (Parent Governors, term of office finished in May)
- Angela Butts (Foundation Governor, stepped down in July for personal reasons)

- Claire Crosby-Cole has been replaced by Maggie Rae, who was a governor in the school some years ago and has returned for a second term
- Rob Dowling will be replaced by a new parent governor in September (the process is already underway)
- Angela Butts will be replaced by a new Foundation Governor in September (the process is already underway)

There have also been or will soon be a number of staff changes:

- Señora Merry left during the year to take up a job in Ivy Lane School
- Mrs Mallinson has gone on adoption leave
- Mrs Smith will be leaving at the end of this term to take up a job in Prior Park prep school
- Mrs Crew will be retiring at the end of this term
- Mrs Hall will be retiring at the end of September
- Mr Bracey will be leaving at Christmas to take up a new post in Bristol
- Mrs Kempton will be leaving at Christmas to take up a new post in Trowbridge

We wish them all well, whether taking up a new post or starting a different life.

We will welcome Mr Dawkins and Miss Szerencses in September and hopefully some other new staff in January.

Parent Survey

Thank you to the parents who have filled in the parent survey. We value your feedback . Thank you also to those parents who have used the post box in reception for Comments and Suggestions to Governors. Please continue to do so.

Finally - Enjoy the summer break!!