

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

Well summer has well and truly arrived, and long may the sun continue (although a little bit of rain wouldn't go amiss to stop Bristol looking like the south of Spain!). It was certainly a hot one for Health and Fitness week and the children coped amazingly with the heat, as did all the staff. We also hosted the first St Bonaventure's Church Feast Day celebration at the weekend – a huge success which we hope will be repeated in years to come.

Chair's overview

This time of year is always a bittersweet one – while everyone is I am sure very pleased that it is the long summer holidays at last, we do have to say goodbye to our Year 6 pupils as they go on to secondary school. Seeing them now, it is sometimes hard to remember when they joined the school in Reception as 4 and 5 year olds – 7 years later, they have grown into amazing young people who I am sure are ready for the adventures ahead – we wish them all the best as they enjoy a break before the next step in their educational lives.

We also have to say goodbye to one of our Foundation Governors – Ciara Mullen. Ciara has been on the governing body for a number of years now, and in that time has provided a hugely valuable voice, challenging the school to improve in all areas, and has been an active member of the Finance committee. We will all miss her and wish her well.

We are very pleased to welcome Neta Roylance-Smith onto the board to fill another Foundation Governor slot – Neta has a wealth of experience in Early Years education, and has a long association with both the school and the parish, as all of her children have at one time been pupils at the school. We look forward to working with her.

There are always a myriad of thank-yous to say at the end of the school year, the main one being to each and every one of our amazing staff team - the teachers and LSAs, the admin staff, caretakers, SMSAs, extended schools team, cleaners and more. The school wouldn't be the place that it is, and the pupils wouldn't receive education they do, without you. The governors could not be more grateful for all that you do. I do not normally like to single one person out, but the governors would like to extend their particular thanks to Mrs Meucci – she goes above and beyond to help out with all aspects of school life, and gives up her own time to be there for the children. I personally cannot remember a time at the school where she hasn't been an ever-present face and we are very grateful for all that she does.

I hope everyone has a lovely summer holiday and we look forward to seeing you in September, ready for the challenges of a new school year.

Jacob Preisner, Chair of Governors

Sport in the school

“Sport is not only a form of entertainment, but also – and above all I would say – a tool to communicate values that promote the good that is in humans and help build a more peaceful and fraternal society.”

Pope Francis



As we come to the end of the school year and with Health and Fitness week having just finished it seems appropriate to recognize and celebrate that each and every one of the children is a sporting champion in some shape or form. Be it through their courage to try something new, their desire to participate, their determination to succeed and not to mention their incredible achievements.

Children of all abilities are actively encouraged to experience as many different sports as possible, with a view to maximizing the health and wellbeing of all and enabling the development of any specific interests that they show. We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of teachers, whose enthusiasm, hard work and efforts in promoting participation in all sport means that this element of the health and wellbeing of the children is a key element of school life.

It is fair to say that there is no lack of competitive spirit amongst the staff and pupils, ably demonstrated by Mrs McGrath who ensures that the children have the opportunity to participate in as many internal and external competitions as possible. This year these have included, to mention just a few:

- KS2 cross country races at QEH and St Bede's;
- athletics at St. Bede's;
- the national swimming championships in Sheffield;
- the Percy Smith swimming gala;
- cricket competitions for Years 3/4 and Year 5/6 ;
- triathlon for Years 4-6 (where every child took part);
- tennis competitions for Years 3-6;
- the County Golf championship;
- Athletics county finals;
- Sports hall athletics county finals; and
- Tag rugby county finals.

The school run a number of clubs open to children throughout the school, including cricket, running, yoga, dance, circuit training, netball and fencing – all of these encourage the children to stay active, but also to try sports that they may not otherwise be able to find readily available elsewhere.

The governors would like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff for their continued hard work and efforts in promoting sport to all of the children in school.

Niki Hawke

Foundation Governor and Chair of MECP committee



Topic weeks

In the Standards committee this year, we have heard from the several of the curriculum leaders about the school's topic weeks. I am sure that all of you will have heard a great deal about the goings on during these weeks from your children, but for those whose children are less forthcoming about what they get up to on a daily basis, I wanted to share some of the Governor's observations from what we have seen.

While the aim of each topic week is to concentrate on a specific subject, for example Science, History or Geography, clearly there are basic skills that need to continue to be taught throughout the school year, whatever subject the children happen to be concentrating on that week. We have been very impressed to hear how this is covered by the teachers, most likely without the children even realising it. We have seen examples of maths being used to capture and present data and using English writing skills to write up conclusions to the topic work.

In each subject there are certain skills that need to be taught – for example in History there is chronology, compare and contrast, cause and consequence, interpreting evidence and speculating – it was an eye-opener for many around the table at the meeting to discover what our children are expected to learn, but also the creative ways in which our teachers approach this. One that particularly stuck in my mind was the “rubbish challenge” – looking at the items that an individual disposes of to teach you about that individual, their habits, hobbies, what they eat – all of this exercise stretches the children's imaginations but also teaches them valuable interpretation skills.

It is all very well the school running topic weeks, but one of our key objectives as governors is to ensure that the school can demonstrate how the children benefitted from the topic, and how they can demonstrate the skills and information gleaned over the course of the week. Each of the teachers put together a folder, taken from throughout the school, highlighting how each class approached the tasks and including examples of the work produced. I would urge you to look at these as and when they are available at parents' evenings, as they really and truly show the strength and depth of learning within the school – a very impressive record of what has been done.

Ali Duckett

Co-opted Governor, Chair of Standards Committee

“The evidence of the Spirit's presence is given to each person for the common good of everyone. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. The same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge.”

*1 Corinthians 12:
7-8*



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And finally

July is the month in which we celebrate the feast of St Bonaventure. St Bonaventure was born in Italy and joined the Franciscans. He is regarded as one of the greatest Doctors of the Church and one of the greatest philosophers of the middle ages, and has written "on almost every philosophical subject considered by Schoolmen". His very beautiful prayer is set out below.

Pierce, O most sweet Lord Jesus, my inmost soul with the most joyous and healthful wound of your love, with true, serene, and most holy apostolic charity, that my soul may ever languish and melt with love and longing for you, that it may yearn for you and faint for your courts, and long to be dissolved and to be with you. Grant that my soul may hunger after you, the bread of angels, the refreshment of holy souls, our daily and super substantial bread, having all sweetness and savor and every delight of taste; let my heart ever hunger after and feed upon you, upon whom the angels desire to look, and may my inmost soul be filled with the sweetness of your savor; may it thirst after you, the fountain of life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of eternal light, the torrent of pleasure, the richness of the house of God; may it ever compass you, seek you, find you, run to you, attain you, meditate upon you, speak of you, and do all things to the praise and glory of your name, with humility and discretion, with love and delight, with ease and affection, and with perseverance unto the end; may you alone be ever my hope, my entire assurance, my riches, my delight, my pleasure, my joy, my rest and tranquility, my peace, my sweetness, my fragrance, my sweet savor, my food, my refreshment, my refuge, my help, my wisdom, my portion, my possession and my treasure, in whom may my mind and my heart be fixed and firm and rooted immovably hence forth and for ever. Amen.
