

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

As another academic year draws to a close, we as a governing body wanted to use this edition of the governors' newsletter to celebrate some of the highlights from this past year. In what is a difficult financial environment for schools, with funding cuts affecting schools across the country, but most acutely in Bristol, the wonderful staff and community we have at St Bon's continue to ensure our children fulfil their potential and to strive to be the best they can, guided by the light of Christ.

Highlights of the year from the chair of the FPHS committee

In February it was with much anticipation that we opened our doors to Ofsted. I'm sure you will have read the findings of the report for yourselves but I will pick out the following comment made by the inspector *"The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leaders have a clear vision for the quality of education that St Bonaventure's will provide for its pupils. During my discussions with senior leaders, formal and informal, and during our visits to classrooms, what came over was a strong commitment to do the very best for your pupils"*.

For many of us 2017 was a bit of a watershed as it saw the end of our building programme to transform St Bon's into the school you see today. Believe it or not we started this project back in 2008, with initial discussions about a new school kicking off in 2002! And many a sleepless night have been had in the intervening years worrying if a particularly phase would be complete before the children returned from a holiday, or whether our funding partners would deliver. For those new parents I'm sure there are some photos of the school before we started – you'll be amazed at the transformation.

If this wasn't enough, governors have started talking with other Catholic Primary Schools in the Diocese about the creation of a Multi-Academy Trust. We are hoping this new structure will be in place in the not too distant future and help us focus on the challenges ahead.

With the difficult funding environment that schools now find themselves in, the governors have been considering what other funding streams the school can tap into, to ensure that we continue to offer our children the best start possible to their education. We will be putting forward a fundraising strategy in the autumn, and we look forward to sharing our plans with you as soon as we can.

It was good to welcome some new governors to our team in recent months and I'm looking forward to working with them as we face up to the challenges the new school year will bring in September. But first it's time for a well-deserved HOLIDAY!

Jonathan Rogers
Vice-Chair of Governors and Chair of FPHS Committee

*"The family is a community of love where each of us learns to relate to others and to the world around us."
Pope Francis*



Parent community

One of our many key stakeholders at St Bon's is you, the parents of our wonderful children. You support your children in their school lives throughout the year, from attending parent/teacher evenings to coming out in force to make props and costumes for the wonderful drama productions. School trips would not be possible without parent volunteers, and the children benefit hugely from parent volunteers in the Book Buddy and Reading Recovery programmes. We are blessed at St Bon's to have pupils from all around the world, and the EAL group, which aims to support those families for whom English is not their mother tongue, is flourishing – long may that continue.

We are lucky to have such an active, and indeed proactive, PTFA – as a separate charity, it runs a number of events throughout the year to raise funds, which in turn will be used to support our children in a wide variety of ways. The threats to funding have made support of organisations such as the PTFA even more invaluable, and I would urge you to continue to attend, and indeed volunteer at, the discos, fairs, cake sales, ice cream sales and other initiatives run by the PTFA. These events raise valuable funds and cannot happen without parent volunteers.

Finally, as a governing body we have been joined by two new parent governors this term – Jenny Kittow and Jonathan Kidd. Jenny has a background in education, having worked as an assistant head at a Bristol school in the past, and Jonathan heads the IT department at one of the largest financial companies in Bristol. Both are bringing valuable skills to the governing body and we look forward to their input over the next few years. The fact that we had more candidates than we had places on the board, and therefore had to hold an election, is testament to the active involvement of parents in the school at every level.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ali Duckett and Marie Harkin for their work over the past 4 years as parent governors – I know I speak on behalf of all the governors when I say that we have valued their input enormously, so much so that we are reluctant to let them go! We are very pleased that Ali has agreed to serve as a co-opted governor on the board for a while longer, and Marie is also involved as an associate member of the board.

Jacob Preisner
Chair of the Governing Body



*Volunteers from 2W
getting to grips with the
candy floss machine
on Sunday*

Broad and balanced curriculum

Our pupils have excelled themselves academically this year – the results from the year 2 and year 6 SATs are higher than the previous year, and this is testament to the hard work and dedication of both the pupils and staff throughout the year.

However, school should not be, and indeed St Bon's is not, simply about the core subjects. At St Bon's we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for our children, ensuring that they have a full grounding in English, Maths and RE, while letting their light shine in a wide variety of other ways throughout the year.



From school trips to M-shed, the Zoo, Wild Place, the Steam Museum, SS Great Britain, Tyntesfield, St Andrews Park and Bristol museum, to name but a few, to the residential trips for years 5 and 6 to Kilve and Kintbury, the children are given as much opportunity as possible to explore areas outside the core curriculum.

Trip to Bristol Zoo



*“Be joyful in hope,
patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer”*

Romans 12:12

This term, the children looked at science “big questions” – each class made a film to look at a scientific topic and all the films were shown in assembly. History was brought to life throughout the year by the whole school looking at the history of Bristol – from John Cabot to interviewing past pupils at St Bon's, and everything in between.



Countryside day

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We have just come to the end of our annual health and fitness week, led by Mrs McGrath, during which the children are given opportunities to try a wide range of activities that they may not otherwise be able to do. The KS1 and KS2 sports days were a testament to this – all the children participated in at least one event, and it was fantastic to be able to use the newly finished grounds for sports day for the first time (and we are very grateful that the rain stayed away for once!)



A yoga class during health and fitness week.

Children are given the opportunity to benefit from professional coaching in cricket, athletics, gymnastics, dance, swimming and tennis and the school has had some notable successes this year – for example our team in the Bristol Schools swimming gala went on to the national finals in Sheffield, and the SS Bloodhound team reached the national finals.

Arts are flourishing at St Bon's. The walls are covered with paintings from all year groups, and music is also an active part of school life – from choirs to the variety of music lessons available for those who wish to participate. All year 1 and year 2 children are given the opportunity to learn the recorder, and all year 6 learn a brass instrument. Drama is a big event at St Bon's, with the annual production being a sight to behold – this year's Jungle Book was a huge success and everyone involved worked very hard to make it so.

We have an active selection of clubs that are run by staff at lunchtimes – art club, choirs, bible study, debating club, knitting club – the list goes on. It is testament to the effort put in to these clubs by the staff that many of them have a waiting list!

I could go on for considerably longer with more details of what we strive to do to ensure that our children develop into well-rounded young people by the time they leave year 6 – however I hope that this gives you an idea of what we do both inside and outside the classroom!

Stephanie Woolley
Staff Governor

And finally ...

- Just enough room to say thank you to all our wonderful staff, fantastic pupils and brilliant parents and carers for all your support and hard work this year. You are all amazing and we are incredibly proud to be part of this School.
- As always, do feel free to let us have your ideas for areas you'd like us to cover in the future by contacting our Clerk.