

July 2019



Governing Body Newsletter

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chalfont St Peter

Love – Learn – Grow

'Striving to be an excellent school where children and staff are inspired to love, learn and grow together within the Catholic faith'

Dear Parents, Staff and Children,

Yet again we have come to the end of another busy and successful year. Governors have been busy with the Senior Leadership Team focusing on our priorities within the School Development Plan and each term we map the progress being made. Recently I shared our data with all parents but I have included some graphs to show how well we are achieving, making comparisons to Bucks and National levels.

The reality is, our school is delivering good and outstanding teaching and this is evident in the progress and outcomes that our children have made.

Sadly, I will be stepping down as Chair of Governors, a role I have both enjoyed and been honoured to carry out over the last couple of years. During my term I have had the privilege to witness the great work that all members of the school community contribute.

Under the leadership of Mrs Lovegrove, Mrs O'Kane, Mrs Ford and Mrs Rospedziowska, the school has wonderful, committed teachers and teaching assistants who work so hard supporting children and staff. In addition, we have Paul and his team in the kitchen who continuously produce nutritious food for our children and 10 other local schools. Of course, we can't forget the office staff, who facilitate communication between the school and parents. A special mention to our support staff Mrs Brown, Mrs Tilley and Mr Langston and to Joseph Barrett, our caretaker who has settled so well into the school this year. Mr Langston has also inherited the role of dog whisperer at the school gate!

Our school cannot function so smoothly without the contribution of many others and is reliant on the goodwill, kindness and support of many volunteers. Again, a huge thank you to you all on behalf of the governing board. Not only do you raise significant funds for the school, but you are setting an example to all the children.

I am overwhelmed at the dedication and kindness shown by everyone involved within the school community. Class parents and the Friends Of St Joseph's (FOSJ's) are busy throughout the year continuously looking at innovative ways to raise important funds for our school. Therefore, to Zoe, Barbara and the class parents,

thank you so much for all the hours of hard work you have put in over the years. You are truly amazing and the governors are so grateful for everything that you do.

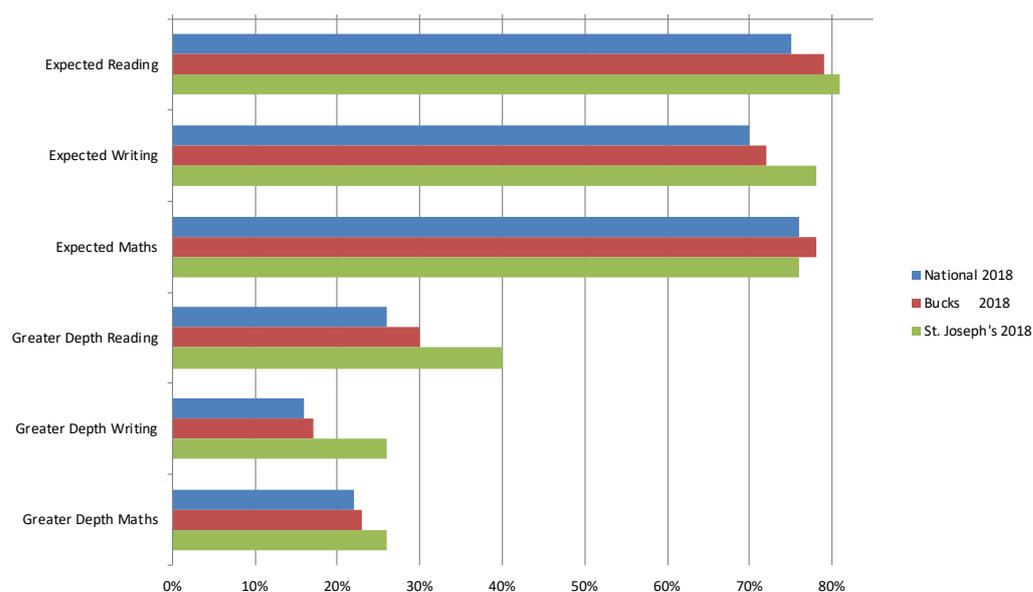
I am delighted to hand over to Barry Moloney as Chair of Governors who assumes his role from September.

Barry has been a Foundation Governor for a year but has had associations with the school for over 24 years. Barry had 4 children at St Joseph's from 1995 through to 2015, and his wife Rosie worked as a Teaching Assistant at the school for much of that period. Barry is a Chartered Accountant and for most of his professional career was working as the CFO of various technology related companies. Barry is now retired and looking forward to working with the staff and parents in order to continue to help St Joseph's to build on its many strengths.

Latest Performance Data

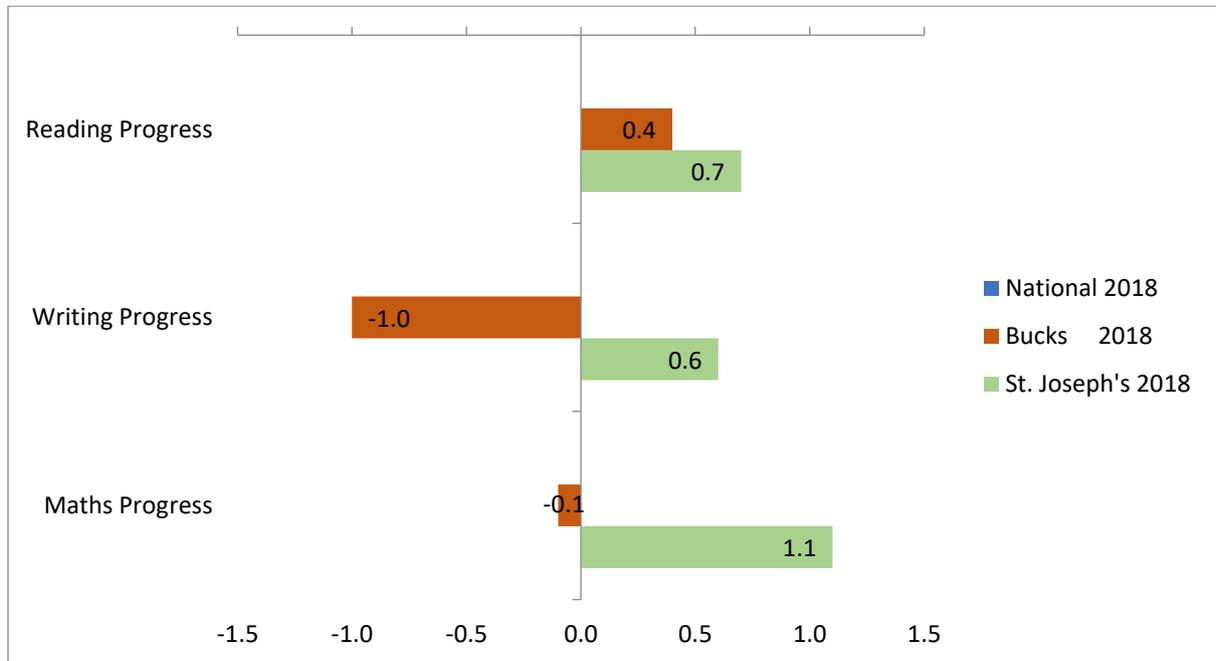
As a Governing Board we scrutinise all the information available about the attainment and progress of all children in the school on a termly basis and challenge the action plans of the Senior Leadership Team, with a particular focus on any areas where improvement may be required. The most important metric is "pupil progress" which measures the rate of progress that children are making by the end of primary school compared to children with comparable attainment levels at the end of Key Stage 1. It is pleasing to see that children at St Joseph's are making greater progress than is generally the case across Buckinghamshire and nationally.

Key Stage 1

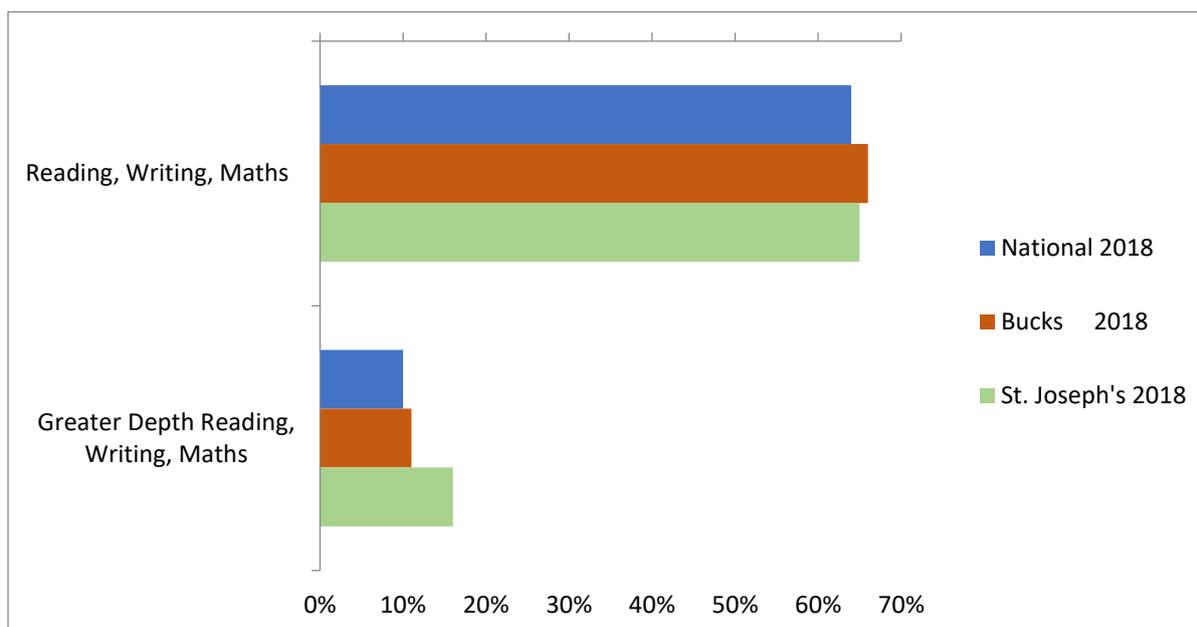


Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 Progress

A positive number indicates that children are progressing at a greater rate than progress being made nationally, by children with comparable attainment levels.



Key Stage 2



Governor's Engagement Plan

As a governing body we regularly review our annual engagement plan which enables us to meet all members of the St Joseph's School Community. Throughout the year, governors have again attended various meetings within the school and within our partnership Catholic schools. We have:

- Had lunch with the pupils
- Manned a stall on Feast Day and Parish Day
- Attended Parents' evenings
- Had a stall at the Christmas Bazaar
- Attended learning walks and met with subject leads
- Joined the audience enjoying the Year 6 Production
- Met with the school representatives: School Council, Faith Ambassadors, Junior Leadership Team, Eco-warriors and House Captains

We are astounded at the confidence and maturity shown by the children. They are great ambassadors for the school.

Promoting our School

We have plenty of reasons to be proud here at St Joseph's – our school has been prominent within the local community competing in sports events and competitions in other schools. Many parents, staff and governors attended the Remembrance Day Parade, Christmas shopping night, and had stands at the Chalfont St Peter Feast Day and Parish day. The school choir during these occasions sang beautifully under the guidance of Mrs Fallon and Mrs Pugsley.

The school continues to use Twitter to keep people informed of school activities, so please follow @StJosephsCSP. Of course, word of mouth and the testimonials of pupils and their families remain the greatest form of promotion available to us, so please do continue to share your pride in St Joseph's.

Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

I wish you date you on some new developments in Catholic Education in the Northampton Diocese. The Bishop has requested all Catholic Independent schools to consider joining a Multi-Academy Trust by 2020. Two new Multi Academy Trusts will be formed, one in the North of the Diocese and one in the South. These MATs are being formed as a merger of the existing Catholic Mats to further protect Catholic Education across the Diocese. At present, St Joseph's and other local catholic schools within our Bucks Partnership group are not in the position to join a MAT but it is something Bishop Peter and NORES (Northampton Office for RE & Schools) wish us to consider. We will update you on this in the Autumn term.

Health & Safety and the Environment

At St. Joseph's School staff and Governors ensure that the children's safety and welfare is at the centre of all decision making. The governors' responsibility for Health & Safety is monitored by a nominated governor reporting to Full Governing Body meetings. Members of the committee carry out termly H&S inspections of the school as well as ensuring policies and procedures are up to date and adhered to, and that areas of improvement are identified and acted upon. Additional assessments have taken place during the recent building work to ensure safe operation of the school and also that emergency evacuation routes are clear. Children have rehearsed evacuation and lockdown successfully.

The school kitchen is an important focus of both H&S and finance and continues to be 5-star rated. With strong competition from catering companies the hub kitchen has continued to make a profit for the school by finding new business to replace the schools which have sourced meals elsewhere.

The school is blessed with excellent external grounds and we endeavour to utilise these to their full potential. Governors attended two 'learning outside the classroom' days when almost all lessons were outside, as staff took advantage of the grounds. Children are always prone to bumps and scrapes while playing but we think the school has found the right balance of excitement and safety.

As part of the termly inspection the accident records are checked to ensure that no premises or procedure changes are needed for safety reasons.

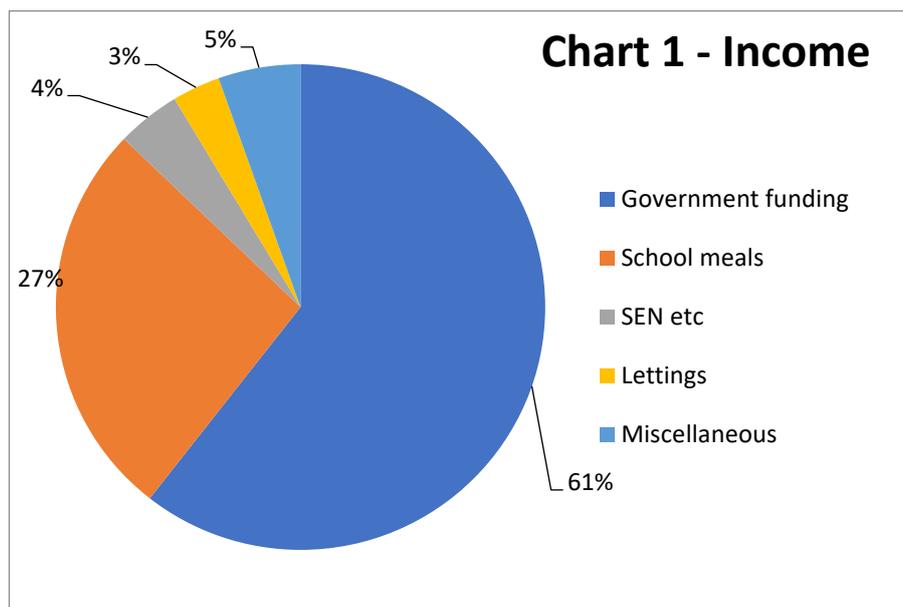
The work to secure the flat roofs has continued and some areas of the school have been out of bounds until the building is totally safe again. We are hoping the work will complete during the summer break. We are also planning to replace the boilers and heating system which are showing their age. The governors thank all the staff for taking the considerable extra workload in their stride during the changes and ensuring that the pupils continue to get the best education.

We continue to monitor the school drop off and parking arrangements. Whilst on the whole this continues to work well, we are aware of the impact on the local residents and would request all staff, parents and governors continue to be mindful of this when visiting the school. St Joseph's parish is working with the school and the neighbours as well as the Bucks Highways Authority and Chiltern District Council to find ways to improve the flow out of Priory Road at busy times. With so many parties involved this is a long process but there is a willingness on all sides to reach an accommodation.

We believe the school building and grounds provide an excellent environment for teaching and learning. To maintain this quality, the Governors are continually looking at ways we can make further improvements for the benefit of all our pupils and teachers.

Our Financial Position

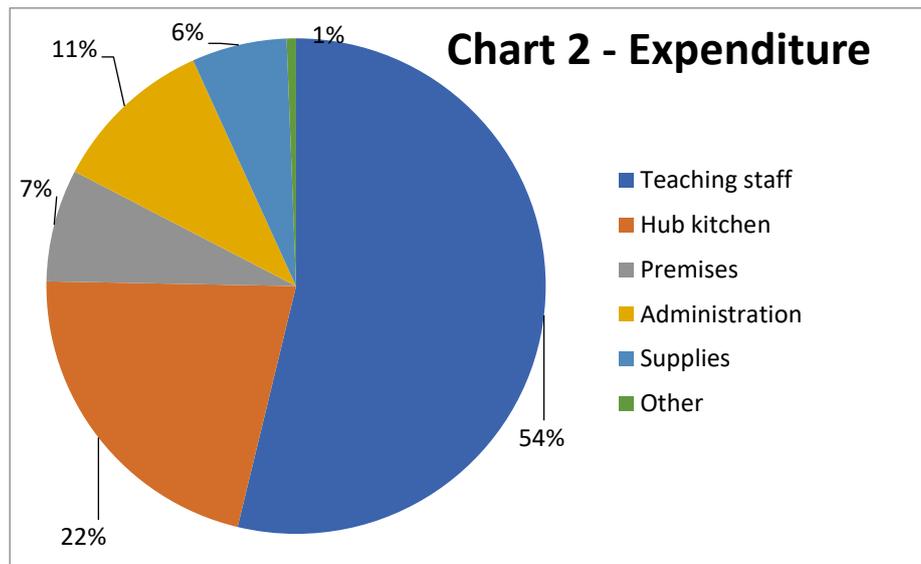
One of the important responsibilities of the Governing Body is to ensure that the school's financial management remains strong. Governors meet regularly to review the financial position, supported by the School Finance Team. Financial budgets and returns are sent to Buckinghamshire County Council quarterly.



The school is a substantial financial enterprise with total income of over £2m. Of course, the most significant element of income is the per child grant that the school receives each year from Central Government funds, including additional income specifically to support children with particular needs. The government's primary school education budget has been spread across a larger number of children in recent years, leaving less per pupil. This has challenged staff and unless the government restores funding the school will be in deficit in a couple of years, as many others already are. Governors have been involved in lobbying parliament and writing to the education minister via the school's MP. Unfortunately, the government has other priorities for the foreseeable future.

The school also derives important self-generated income from the Hub Kitchen operation which delivers meals to a large number of other schools. The kitchen has added almost 10% to the amount received from the government, which is why we are financially better placed than many other primary schools. We also generate income from out of hours letting activities and constantly being on the 'look out' for

additional, predominantly County led, funding opportunities. These produce extra income that can be directed towards educational activities.



As with all primary schools, the greatest element of expenditure was on staff, including their training. Further significant amounts were spent on running the premises and on supplies. Hub Kitchen expenditure relates to food and staff costs and is more than covered by the income we receive from participating schools. The Headteacher scrutinises expenditure closely, supported by the finance team, to ensure that any discretionary payments are well spent so that maximum amounts are available to support educational provision. They have managed to cut expenditure by almost 2% while improving pupil progress and attainment. This allows the school to meet its obligation to submit a financial plan for this year without a deficit. The headteacher and school finance team continue to report to governors their plans for future years should the government not reverse its cuts to school funding.

Capital Improvements/Building Fund

The main school budget deals with the day to day expenditure. Separately, the school is responsible for capital expenditure - to maintain and improve the buildings and grounds. For this, further grants are received, and the school has to bid for these in competition with other schools in the Diocese. In recent years the school has been successful in bidding for funds and has been able to complete some important projects to improve the fabric of the buildings, such as the replacement of all the old windows. This year we have been forced to spend a significant amount on the roof beyond what was expected because of the structural problems which were uncovered.

Parents will be aware that as a Voluntary Aided school 10 per cent of the capital spend each year has to be found by the parents through the Friends of St. Joseph's School. The school continues to benefit greatly from the activities of FOSJ's (and, in turn, the generosity of parents), which have made capital improvements possible.

Unfortunately, the number of families contributing to this scheme has fallen, and unless more parents start to contribute it may be impossible to pay for the additional planned improvements.

The suggested donation is £10/month to FOSJ's. Direct debits are the easiest way to make regular payments and allow planning of regular expenditure. Taxpayers can claim Gift Aid from HMRC which returns the tax to FOSJ's adding 25% to any donations. This meets the school's obligation to find 10% of the cost of projects, with the Diocese and Local Education Authority making up the other 90%. So, for each £120 donated by taxpayers we are able to claim £30 in Gift Aid, which allows us to bid for £1,350 in grants. In this way a family's £10/month donation grows to £1,500/year to be spent on improving the school buildings This is why we are so grateful to all the parents who contribute in this way and ask other families to give serious consideration to starting a regular contribution via Parent Pay.

FOSJ's also raise money to provide additional facilities for the school. In recent years the school has received whiteboards, laptops and play equipment among the many contributions of FOSJ's. This is quite separate from the 10% contribution to the building fund.

This is why we are so grateful to all the parents who contribute in this way and ask other families to give serious consideration to starting a direct debit.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount and we take great care all necessary procedures are in place. As the safeguarding governor, I regularly meet with Mrs Lovegrove and the school Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Ford. Communication is key. Therefore, if you have any concerns at any time, please contact the school and we will ensure these are followed up and resolved.

Governing Role

My thanks to Shelley Rahman Haley and Mrs Fallon who both stepped down as Governors this year. Thank you for your contribution to the Governing board.

We therefore have two Foundation Governor vacancies; if you are interested in this rewarding and fulfilling role, please contact the Clerk to the Governors at governors@st-josephsprimary.bucks.sch.uk for further information and a description of the role.

Finally, on behalf of the governing body I would like to wish all pupils leaving us this term all the very best for the future in their new schools and to their parents—thank you for all your support. May you all have a restful and enjoyable Summer holiday.

Debbie Dry

Chair of Governors