

The Governors' News

Federation of St Mary's and St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary Schools



Governing Body Members

FOUNDATION GOVERNORS:

Chair- Katrina Rigby

Vice Chair St Mary's –Dominic Coughlin

Vice Chair St Thomas'- Harry Hare

Fr Emmanuel Oedemene

Fr Steven Restori

Jocelyn Galsworthy

Paul Severn

Vacancies x 2

HEAD TEACHERS:

Maggie Sanderson

Alison Langridge

PARENT GOVERNORS:

Alex Pettitt

Simon Paul

STAFF GOVERNOR- Janey Chadwick

CO-OPTED GOVERNOR- Lynsey Stanton

LA GOVERNOR- Vacant seat

Welcome

The Governors would like to express a warm welcome to all the new families that have joined our Federation of schools. We hope that your children feel settled and that you already feel a part of our school communities. Have you considered joining Fosma or Fosta? This is a great way to get involved in the life of the school and to meet fellow parents whilst supporting school events.

Meetings this term - Key areas of discussion

3rd October

School's Self Evaluation
Pay Policy,
Parent Governor Election

31st October

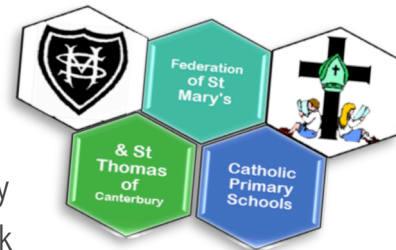
School Development
Plans
Pupil Premium Review
ASP-Data review
Maths presentation St M

28th November

Performance related pay
Mid Year budget review
Maths Presentation St T
Self Evaluation- Review
of governance

Welcome to New Staff and Governors

Following the letter we sent out in September asking for new parent governors to join the Governing body, we were delighted to receive not one but two applications from Simon Paul and Alex Pettitt, both from the St Thomas of Canterbury community. Lynsey Stanton who was Parent Governor at St Mary's has started a work placement in our preschool and has moved across to the Co-opted seat as a member of staff. This enabled us to appoint both Simon and Alex as parent governors.



Lynsey will still happily represent the views of parents at St Mary's.



The community of St Mary's, send a warm welcome to Fr Steven Restori our new Parish Priest. He will celebrate an Advent Mass in school on Dec 8th at 9am. Please do come and join us if you can.

New staff, joining us this term are: Mrs Cory as Reception class teacher and Mrs Magda Nadstawek as a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), Ms Jackson who will be covering Miss Robinson's maternity leave from the end of November and we look forward to welcoming Mrs Whitmore to Yr 4 in January.

At St Thomas' we welcome Mrs Vida Patey and Ms Rebecca A'Court to LSA roles and Miss Lucy Clark who is covering for Mrs Bertie in Yr3.

Governor Vacancies

We currently have vacancies for 2 Foundation Governors. If you are a practising Catholic and would like to find out more about being a governor in a Catholic school we would love to hear from you. Detailed Information is available on the Diocese website - <http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/schools/governance.php>

We meet a minimum of 3 times a term (almost monthly) at alternate schools. Please share this information widely with members of your parish or if you can identify someone for this important role.

Recommendations are also sought to fill a Local Authority governor vacancy.

The Governing Body has three core duties to support the Leadership and Management across the Federation:

- To support and challenge the Headteachers, to ensure that they are driving school improvement forward, with a focus on the attainment and progress of all groups of children within the school.
- Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategy for the schools are clearly defined.
- Ensuring the proper and effective use of the schools' budgets.



Importance of Attendance

You will have noticed real emphasis on improving attendance in our schools with the Attendance Class Cup at St Mary's and Attendanceopoly at St Thomas'. These initiatives are designed to encourage the competitive nature of the class groups in order to improve overall school attendance.



We rely on our parents and carers to assist the children in getting to school on time. Did you know that if your child misses just half a session every week including late arrivals, then their attendance percentage will drop to 90% which across a child's school life is the equivalent of missing a whole year of their education? You may have heard of a Gap year for University students but would you want your primary school aged child to take a gap year? Please help our schools to give your child the best possible chances in life and aim for near perfect attendance if possible.

SOS Isle of Wight - Save our Schools



The Governors would like to thank the wonderful group of St Thomas' parents and their supporters, who organised the SOS Super Heroes - Arms around our school event on 4th October, to raise awareness of the under funding in the education system both locally and nationally. The event even made it on to the Meridian News, did you see it?

The SoS group have been making waves all the way to Downing Street and if you have Facebook you can follow their story here - <https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurSchoolsIOW/>



The Governors' Prayer

*Let us be concerned for one another,
To help one another to show love and to do good.
Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as
some are doing.
Instead, let us encourage one another all the more.*

Hebrews 10:24-25

St Thomas of Canterbury – New Yr 6 Class completed



We are delighted that St Thomas of Canterbury now has a brand new Yr 6 classroom on the site of the old mobile. The classroom, a new staffroom, cloakroom and toilets have been built all on the same level and are attached to the main school. The old staffroom now becomes the Discovery Room; a multi use space for cookery, experiments and group work and the Rainbow Room has been opened up to make another big useful space whilst providing access to the new wing of the school. The project was started back in the spring and was delayed due to the discovery of a main gas pipe under the old mobile which had to be re routed. All good things come to those who wait and we would like to thank Mr Young and the Yr 6 children for making the most of their temporary class in the staff room last half term. Thanks to “Mr Andy” and Stoneham Construction for ensuring safety around the site and for making this vision, finally become a reality. A big thank you is due to all the community at St Thomas’ for working together through this process. We really are blessed to have such a great team spirit in our staff.

May the Lord, bless this extension to our school and bless all the children and teachers that pass through St Thomas of Canterbury, that they may achieve their full potential and use their talents to spread the word of the Lord and live out our school Mission.

Building Fund

For the benefit of new parents and a reminder to existing families, that the responsibility for any major building work to our school premises is shared between the Diocese and the School. As a Voluntary Aided school, the Governing Body has to contribute 10% towards the total cost of any capital expenditure and it is expected that this money is raised by parental contributions and donations. It cannot be taken from the main school budget. This runs into thousands of pounds when you consider the cost of the Mobile classrooms at St Mary’s, the extension for Yr4 and Yr5 at St Thomas’ and now the new Yr6 build.

We ask that all financially able parents support us with regular payments of at least £10 a term for one child or £15 a term if you have more than one child in the school. The Diocese invoices the school every term in order to build up our reserve pot of funding in advance of our next capital project. Imagine trying to fund raise for 10% of a £250,000 project! A regular monthly contribution to the building fund by Standing Order is the best way to help us to pay the required contribution to our reserve pot. Please ask at the school office if you require the school bank details to set this up. Many thanks to all the families that are able to support us.

Diocesan Academy Project - Plans placed on hold

The Regional Schools Commissioner confirmed to the Diocese in September that the furthering of the Academy Programme is no longer an absolute priority for the Department of Education. The Secretary of State is instead minded to ensure that each school has an adequate model for school improvement, that the gap is narrowed for disadvantaged pupils and that there is an academy destination for any school falling into an Ofsted category. The confirmation of this change in political direction was not unexpected and the Diocese pressed the pause button on the project until the Bishop and trustees could meet to discuss it on the 24th October.



The Episcopal Vicar for Education in our diocese made a statement to schools on the 30th October announcing the decision to formally halt the process of compulsory full academisation across the Diocese. He goes on to say -

“As in the Christian Life, we need to keep looking forward, learning from the past and open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit to build something new. Mindful of that, I have asked CASO (Catholic Academies and Schools Office) to engage actively with all our schools, in a truly collaborative manner, with the purpose of establishing how we might still achieve and deliver the original objectives for our schools in the diocese of Portsmouth without the formality of academy conversion

- securing and developing the Catholic ethos of our schools and embedding schools more directly into the Diocesan structure, culture and mission;
- grouping schools together to avoid ‘silo’ mentalities and enabling mutual collaboration, support, governance and benefits for the sake of the whole;
- facilitating structures, programmes and career paths that can help recruit, form, retain and develop Catholic teachers and Catholic leaders;
- enabling wider sharing of resources, good practices and personnel;
- offering economic gains through the purchase of common services etc;
- bringing about school improvement, social mobility and the remedying of disadvantage more effectively.
- ensuring a destination for any school who falls into an OFSTED category.

The governing bodies and headteachers of the four Catholic schools on the island will meet together next month to discuss how our Island schools can move forward with this vision.

Bishop Philip shared his vision in a pastoral letter to his parishes in September. You can find a video of his message here- <http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/bishop/bop-pl-20170924-vision.php>

And Finally-

AUTUMN 2017

Thank you and farewell to: – Rachel Brown from St Mary's, and Learning Support Assistants; Fleur Orchard and Julia Hewison at St Thomas of Canterbury. We also have to say goodbye to Mrs Gordon who leaves us at Christmas and Mrs Bertie who leaves us in poor health, please remember her in your prayers. They have all been with the Federation for many years and enriched the learning of many of our children. Their individual talents will be missed. Good luck to Miss Robinson when she starts her maternity leave next week.



The Governors

How to contact us-

If you would like to contact the governors please do so via the School Office or email us at - federationchair@stmaryspri.co.uk