

SPRING TERM 2017

# The Governors' News

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



## Spring Term News

This is the second governors' newsletter of the school year, aiming to keep you informed of what governors do to support the leadership and management of the school to achieve our vision of two good Catholic schools with their own headteacher, working in partnership on a journey towards joining a Diocesan Multi Academy Trust, whilst maintaining a balanced budget.

### Meetings this term – Key areas of discussion

#### 10<sup>th</sup> January

School Insurance overview

Admissions Policy 18/19

SEF

#### 7<sup>th</sup> February

Preparation for St Thomas Sect 48

Academy Conference Feedback

School Vision

#### 14<sup>th</sup> March

Schools Financial Value Standards

Phase 2 Assessment Data

Recruitment

## Governing Body Members

### FOUNDATION GOVERNORS;

Chair- Katrina Rigby

Vice Chair St Mary's –Dominic Coughlin

Vice Chair St Thomas's- Harry Hare

Fr Emmanuel Oedemene

Fr Anthony Glaysher

Elizabeth Shore

Jocelyn Galsworthy

Paul Severn

### PARENT GOVERNORS;

Iain Robertson

Lynsey Stanton

EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER- Janet Tuck

STAFF GOVERNOR- Janey Chadwick

CO-OPTED GOVERNOR- Melanie Underhay

LA GOVERNOR-Dario Cretella (pending apt)

ASSOCIATE GOVERNOR - Maggie Sanderson



## Staff Appointments

Since our last newsletter we have been able to appoint Mrs Sanderson as Headteacher and Mr Booth as Senior Teacher at St Thomas of Canterbury for September 2017. Congratulations to them both.

For St Mary's, the first round of advertising and interview schedule for a Headteacher was unsuccessful, so we are advertising again and have a new programme of dates for May. We are working closely with the Diocese and the Local Authority to help us find the right Catholic Headteacher to continue Mrs

Tuck's work, in driving forward school improvement.

Poor Mrs Tuck has been plagued with ill health recently and we are fortunate to have secured temporary senior leadership support at St Mary's from Mr Duncan Mills during her absence. Please pray for her speedy recovery so that she will return fit and well after the Easter Break.

## A Governors' Prayer

*O Lord,  
 Grant me your strength, so I will have courage in every situation;  
 Grant me your love, so I may love others as you love me;  
 Grant me your knowledge, so I will show others the path to wisdom;  
 Grant me your mercy, so I will forgive those who have hurt me;  
 Grant me your peace, so I will find the best in everybody;  
 Grant me your hope, so I will never give up;  
 Grant me your joy, so I will be thankful for all my blessings;  
 Grant me your kindness, so I will treat others as they want to be treated;  
 And grant me your grace, so you will always be at my side. Amen*



## Academy Conference 2017

Headteachers, Governors and the Business Manager for the four island Catholic Primary Schools went to the second Diocesan Conference in Windsor on 26/27<sup>th</sup> January, to learn more about the Diocesan plans for Academy Conversion. Much work has been done by the Schools Department now known as the Catholic Academies and Schools Office - CASO to prepare the way for this legal change of identity. Schools that have already converted to Academy Status within the diocese were keen to reassure us, that on a day- to- day basis, children, staff and parents could see little difference in the daily life of the school. More details on the Academy project can be found on the following page.



## National Funding Formula

While politicians wrangle about the amount of spending on schools, it is clear that there will be no significant increase in funding to our two schools in the coming year. We have sent a response to the National Consultation on the National Funding Formula, which closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, highlighting the ways the Government's proposals will most affect us across the Federation. Previously on the Island, there was an above average ratio of funding per pupil weighed in favour of the primary schools, compared to the secondary schools, which will be overridden by the proposed new national formula. This potentially means that there will be even less funding available for primary schools on the Island on top of the additional unfunded costs the Government are placing on schools.



All schools will need to make savings to balance their budgets and increase fundraising wherever possible. We are so fortunate to have two amazing Parent Associations, FOSMA and FOSTA and we are very grateful for all the events they organize to raise funds for our schools. **Your £10/£15 contribution to the Building Fund each term per child/family will become more important than ever so please do support the school with this if you can afford to do so.**

## Academy Conversion



The Bishops of the Catholic and Church of England Dioceses of Portsmouth released a joint press statement recently, which you may have seen in the local news.

As detailed in our last newsletter, Bishop Philip has requested that all Catholic Schools in the Diocese become academies and the four Island schools are set to join with Portsmouth schools across the Solent in MAT 4.

In response to a collective request from the Governors of our four Catholic Primary Schools we had asked if an Island MAT could be set up supporting the tenants of both the Catholic Church and the Church of England because of the distinctive nature of our joint faith Secondary School, Christ the King College and also that of St Francis, which is a joint faith Primary School In Ventnor.

*In a statement issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, Catholic and Church of England Bishops; the Rt Rev Philip Egan, Rt Rev Christopher Foster said: "Our commitment as diocesan bishops to taking a lead in advancing the spiritual, economic, social and wider flourishing of communities on the Island continues, and we are acutely aware that this is demonstrably evidenced in our support for schools and all they can bring to families and society.*

*"As part of our considerations as to how we might best work with schools in achieving the best outcomes for our children on the Island, we have decided to commission a feasibility study on the potential establishment of a joint Anglican-Catholic multi-academy trust (MAT).*

*"This is not a signal of intent to definitely set up a MAT, but is an initial exploration of the options, challenges, opportunities and issues that need further consideration."*

*The director of education for Portsmouth and Winchester's CE dioceses - Jeff Williams said: "We have already set up the Portsmouth and Winchester Multi-Academy Trust, but it is hard for Island schools to receive support from this trust because of the distances involved.*

Governors welcome the news of this feasibility study, which will explore the possibility of such a MAT for the Island. The study is due to be completed by May Half Term, when they will report back on it's findings. Governors just want to be sure that all avenues are considered to provide the best possible Catholic Education for our children and ensure that all support structures are in place to do this in any academy structure.

## The School Mini-buses

The two school mini buses that we currently share between our schools, have served us well over the last five years. Sadly their lease expires very soon and as we have been looking to save money we thought we would be unable to replace them.



However our finance team have looked at the figures and decided that it is in fact cheaper to take out a new lease for two new mini buses than to hire transport for every school trip and outing that enriches the children's educational experience.

The new lease will include maintenance and servicing and is for the lighter style of mini

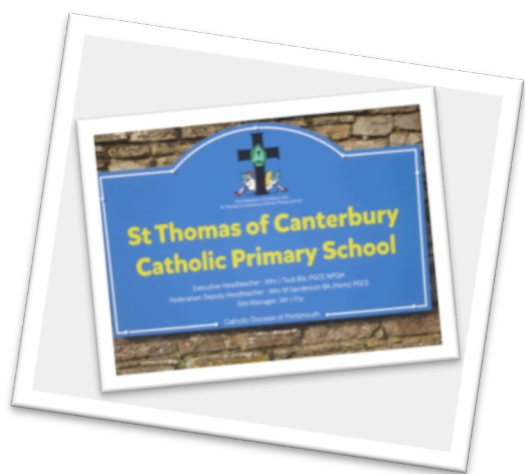
bus meaning that younger members of our staff can be trained to drive them whereas the old heavy style of buses we currently have, you had to have passed your driving test prior to 1997 to gain automatic entitlement to drive a mini bus or take a special test in excess of £1000.

We are very fortunate that the Parish of St Mary's Church Ryde contributes significantly to the cost of one of the buses and the rental income from hall hire at St Thomas of Canterbury should pay for the other one.

Moving forward all school trips will have a £2 travel cost added to the voluntary contribution requested. This additional transport cost will be much lower than it would be if the school had to hire outside vehicles to transport the children to their trips. The revenue will be used for fuel and other running costs to make the mini buses self funding. Thank you to all parents for their support of this cost.

## Online payments

Talking of money..... We are working towards becoming a cash free school and would be very grateful for your support by making payments for dinners and school trips using our online system Tucasi. Presently we protect our staff from the responsibility of banking by hiring a secure cash collection company to collect money from the schools. We could save time and money if all parents could please pay online if they have access to do so. The office staff will be happy to advise how to set this up on your phone or device.



## Monitoring Visit

January brought another Section 8 HMI Monitoring Visit to St Thomas's. The governors and staff were very pleased that the inspector recognized the steps made since the last visit. The report states that the school is making good progress towards being judged as a GOOD school at the next inspection. Well done to all the staff for their team effort and to all the children for the progress they have made on their learning journeys.

Safeguarding our children is a crucial part of the Governors role and we have a designated governor with specific responsibility for monitoring this area, Mrs Lynsey Stanton. However, safeguarding is a responsibility for all members of the school community; governors, staff and parents alike.

## Safeguarding

**See it – Say it – Stop it!** is the phrase we use as a school to keep the focus on the children's needs.

There is a safeguarding board in the entrance to both schools where you can find information about safeguarding, including the key people to speak to if you have concerns or other issues surrounding safeguarding such as the PREVENT programme.

If you have any questions about Safeguarding or Prevent please do get in touch with the school.

# And Finally-

Congratulations to all the children in Yrs 4 and 5 who took part in the Be your Best Foundation Global Rock Challenge. Mrs Tuck and I rushed over to the Guildhall after work to see the students perform their wonderful interpretation of Jonah and the Whale, bringing to the stage Jonah wrestling with his conscience to do the right thing even though sometimes it seems too hard, reminding us all of our own daily struggle to make the right choices.

It was obvious that all the children who took part had a most exciting day and although they were very tired at the end they will have had a wonderful experience of performing in a live theatre.

A HUGE THANK YOU to all the staff who made this opportunity possible, from concept, to costumes, to choreography, to rehearsals, to logistics, you were all amazing, Thank you, Katrina Rigby

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](mailto:federationchair@stmaryspri.co.uk)

