

Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School
Message from the Governors – December 2016



Dear Members of the School Community,

The first term of the school year has flown by. It has been a great start for Mrs Ritchie and the new school leadership and administrative team, coping so well with the challenges of any significant transition while still ensuring the 'show is kept on the road' – literally, as we again had such a wonderful Christmas production of 'Super Star'.

A huge **thank you** to all those that support the school in whatever way – staff, our children, volunteer helpers and activity leaders, PTA organisers, ambassadors, and those that engage in the school's community events. Recently, we were hosting visitors from another school and they were struck by the fantastic atmosphere and community engagement that we have here at St Augustine's – it is indeed the people that make the place.

Your governing body has continued its work through the summer and this term and we wished to provide just a brief update. Do know that, just as Mrs Ritchie and her team are, your governors want to know your views. You are welcome to provide constructive feedback at any time. We will also be circulating a questionnaire in the new year.

We hope you have a joyous and peaceful holiday season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Best wishes,

Yvonne Salter Wright

Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Kenilworth

Strategic Vision and School Improvement and Development Plan:

Our strong ethos and values being developed and enhanced

Each year in the Autumn term your governors hold a strategy session to consider key issues and the priorities for development for the school in the coming year and how these align with the our strategic vision. This year we had an inspiring presentation from Mrs Ritchie as to her 'Vision 2020' which fed into our further discussions. In addition to a range of learning improvement plans, the key areas of focus for development in our School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) are: improving outcomes in Maths particularly for the most able and disadvantaged pupils, further strengthening middle leadership across the school, working with staff and pupils to develop positive learning behaviours, and giving staff and children a greater understanding of Catholic values.

School to School Partnerships:
Considering guidance on becoming 'academy ready'

Governors also have discussed in a range of forums our strategic approach to partnerships and potentially becoming part of a Multi-Academy Company (or Trust). As highlighted in the governor newsletter last July, St Augustine's has developed and deepened partnerships with other local schools over recent years in a number of ways. We value our partnerships with both the schools in our Kenilworth cluster as well as the family of Catholic schools in a slightly wider geographical area of Warwickshire. Earlier this term, the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service has published new guidance for Catholic schools and are actively encouraging schools to become 'academy ready' this academic year (<http://www.bdes.org.uk/latest-news.html>). Your governors and School leadership team continue to be actively engaged with our partners about what this means for us and how best we can ensure St Augustine's retains its unique community ethos while taking advantage of the significant opportunities that can be accessed through formal partnerships with other Catholic schools. Any future proposals to become an academy will be consulted upon and discussed with the school community. If you would like to know more about this or have any queries, please do contact Mrs Salter Wright and Mrs Ritchie.

School Categorisation:
Highest A category

Once again, St Augustine's was notified of its status as a 'Category A' School (schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding, with no significant concerns) in the periodic assessment based on a range of evidence following a risk assessment process undertaken by Warwickshire's Learning and Performance team.

School Financial Position:

School continues to have a sound financial position in a challenging public funding environment

The School continues to be in a sound financial position despite the extremely challenging funding environment. While small overspends for the next two years have been approved to support our strategic plan, the School is still projected to be in a positive financial position at the end of the planning period (2018/19). This week there was another announcement by the Government in relation to the School's funding formula and the Resources Committee and Full Governing Body will continue to monitor closely the implications any changes will have for our School and adjust our planning accordingly.

The most significant aspect of funding for our school is calculated on the basis of the number of children on roll at a particular point in the year. Given our School community, we do have a number of families who move out and into the area. This does leave us with a small number of places in a number of year groups. In addition to families that have younger children who will start School next September, if you are aware of any families moving in the area, do recommend that they come and visit the School and find out if there are places in the year groups for their child or children.

Learning Walks: Mathematics

Governors continue to work in partnership with staff to consider ways to further enhance the teaching and learning experience

This year's first Learning Walk by governors focussed on how greater depth is being supported in Maths and how gender differences in attainment are being reduced. Governors met with four children from each class, reviewing their books and the learning environment, as well as had brief discussions with class teachers. There was a real enthusiasm for maths that was expressed by the children and a number of 'golden nuggets' were identified for sharing more widely – including 'working walls' in some classrooms that support the learning environment as well as children having the freedom to choose the mathematics tasks that they engage in.



The School's Standards Committee in particular will continue to reflect on, monitor and evaluate the areas identified for further review and development. These included identifying supplemental materials to facilitate greater depth of learning in maths; exploring how much thinking time is given, in particular for girls; and how we can continue to build but also retain in the juniors girls' confidence in maths.

Your Governors:

A diverse and extensive range of experience and skill applied to supporting our School and our children

In addition to having a skilled and committed team of staff led by Mrs Ritchie, we are privileged at St Augustine's to have an experienced and actively engaged governing body. Many other schools are finding it increasingly hard to find individuals with the relevant experience and skills who are willing to volunteer their time in this way. As a reminder the core functions of school governing bodies are: 1. Setting the strategic direction and vision for the school, 2. holding the school's leadership to account, and 3. Ensuring financial probity. These are supplemented by a range of statutory accountabilities.

This year, after many years of sterling service by Mrs Kirwan, we are pleased to have a new clerk to the governing body, Claire Jackson. We also have recently welcomed a new Foundation Governor to the governing body, Felicity Chapman. Your governors for this year are:

Foundation governors:

- Sue Berti (Chair of Standards Committee)
- Felicity Chapman
- Sylvia Clifford (Foundation Stage)
- Kari Gordon (Vice Chair of the Full Governing Body)
- Jennifer Hill (SEND)
- Father Kevin Hooper (RE)
- Colin Macdougall (Safeguarding)
- Yvonne Salter Wright (Chair of the Full Governing Body)
- Mike Swinburne (Chair of Resources Committee)

Parent governors:

- Richard Staveley (Health & Safety)
- Alvin Tan (IT)
- Gary Travers (Governor Training)

Staff governors:

- Mrs Lesley Ritchie (Head teacher)
- Helen Scott (Deputy Head teacher)

If you are interested in finding out more about what your governing body does, or potentially may be interested in becoming a school governor, please do contact Yvonne Salter Wright, who has recently become a National Leader of Governance, who would be pleased to discuss this with you (ysalter@aol.com).

We live, love and learn together in the light of the life of Christ.

www.staugustineskenilworth.co.uk/

As at 16 December 2016