

*Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School*  
**Message from the Governors – 2016/17 End of Year**



Dear Members of the School Community,

What a fantastic and busy end to this academic year, with so many activities going on both within the School day and outside it – following sunny sports day and picnic as well as the awards ceremony last week (with a presentation on screen throughout showing every single child in our school), this week there has also been multiple events every day including the performance of *Oliver* by Year 6 on Tuesday that left all those who saw it saying 'more please!' Mrs Ritchie, Miss Scott and the full staff team have just thrown their all into providing such a wonderful range of experiences for our children (including amazing inter-school sporting and talent successes!).

Your governing body wished to give you a brief update on the highlights of their work undertaken over the year. Importantly, we wished to give the sincerest of thanks to all those in the community that have lent a hand of support, volunteered or engaged in school, PTA or parish activities, and acted as positive ambassadors for our School community.

***We wish you a rejuvenating and joyful summer holiday and look forward to seeing you back at School on Tuesday, 5 September 2017.***

Best wishes,

***Yvonne Salter Wright***

Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Kenilworth CV8 2JY

**School Improvement and Development Plan:**  
*Significant progress against planned objectives in a challenging and changing environment*

There has been a lot of change over the last year - within our school we have a new school leadership team, new administrative and financial support team, lovely new facilities (including our year 6 classroom, information technology suite, and art/dt/cookery room) that we are putting to good use to support and extend the curriculum. There is also a dynamic and challenging national environment for schools and changing approaches to be taken for our Catholic Schools across the Diocese. Within all of that, Mrs Ritchie, together with other members of her team, have achieved significant progress this year and have sought to identify and capitalise on opportunities presented - developing innovative and creative ways to improve the provision for our children, aligned to the School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) agreed at the start of the year. Progress against the Plan has been monitored at each meeting of the governing body and its Standards and Resources committees. There is of course hiccups that come with such significant change and challenge, but there has been a lot of learning and a real desire to take things further forward at pace next year.

**School Financial Position:**  
*School continues to have a sound financial position in a challenging public funding environment*

We are pleased to report that our school continues to maintain a stable financial position. This has been achieved despite increasing budgetary pressures and the lower than planned pupil numbers that the school has experienced in the last couple of years. We have managed to submit a balanced budget for the three year period 2017/18 through to 2019/20, noting that we have a full reception class joining us this autumn together with a number of children joining us in other year groups. During this last year our school has also benefited from the appointment of Jacqui Whiting as a part-time School Business Manager, and we are grateful for the contribution she is making to the effective management of financial resources and in working with Mrs Ritchie and governors to sustain our positive financial position. Your Governors remain confident that with continuing careful management the school will be able to maintain the appropriate level of current expenditure whilst at the same time continuing to make carefully targeted investment decisions for the future to support continued school improvement for the benefit of all our children within the School. We will continue to monitor closely the funding position for schools and any implications changes to the national funding formula will have for us.

**Learning Walks:**  
*Collective Worship in the school provides positive and joyful experiences for our children & Sparking interest in Science*

Governors continued to undertake learning walks on key themes of development aligned with our School Improvement and Development Plan, which involves governors hearing views directly from children across every year group, visiting the classrooms and other learning environments, speaking to class teachers and agreeing key considerations for future action with Mrs Ritchie and the school leadership team. As set out in the December 2016 governor newsletter, the Learning Walk last Autumn focussed on how greater depth is being supported in **Maths** and how gender differences in attainment are being reduced.

**Collective Worship:** In the Spring term, the learning walk had an RE theme and focused on the collective worship element of the new Diocesan Section 48 inspection framework. The findings showed that it was evident that Prayer and collective worship are at the centre of daily school life and there is much to celebrate within the school in the practice of this. It is a key part of every school celebration and is evidenced in very positive and joyful experiences, which take into account the ages and aptitudes of the children. Children and staff greatly value collective worship. Children have heartfelt responses to the opportunities afforded to them and are motivated and engaged, participating with reverence and enthusiasm. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to pray and develop their understanding of liturgy, reaffirming the ethos and mission of the school and strengthening the sense of community, belonging and inclusiveness. The school greatly benefits from the exceptional involvement of Fr Kevin and his highly-valued input is an integral part of both formal and informal collective worship within the school. Music is used very effectively in collective worship to enhance the prayerful experience for all children, both in reflective music and in participation through the playing of music and the singing and signing of hymns. Steps forward include the opportunity for all children to be involved in the prayer areas, opportunities for all children across both Key stages to involvement and take leadership responsibilities for collective worship and the development of mechanisms for evaluation of collective worship.

**Science:** *'I love science a lot it's very interesting'*: Most of the children interviewed love science, they find it exciting and are inspired and enthused by much of their science work. It is evident that children's curiosity in science is encouraged and valued. This is in no small measure down to the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the staff to the teaching of science. There were many excellent examples of inspirational science teaching and learning using a range of approaches. Most children interviewed talked of how much they appreciated the hands on investigative science. Older children also valued the student led learning in science. Children interviewed evidenced the desire to research more on the topic or think of further questions they would like answered; it may be helpful to ensure that there is time for children to be able to discuss and question after having had time to reflect on their investigation work. There was no gender difference in attitude to science within the children interviewed.

Science is taught once a week. In Reception science is taught as understanding of the world and integrated into much of the class teaching. It is variable in being integrated into other subjects throughout the rest of the school and there are plans to ensure that this occurs going forward. There is a vision for the teaching and learning of science throughout the school which is in the process of being developed, it is currently at the beginning of a journey. Assessment of science is being further developed. Working scientifically is to become a core focus within the school, the Can they do? Do they know? replaced by What evidence is there? How did we find it? How do we evaluate it? How does it support what we think? and the ability for children to work scientifically and generate their own questions. There will be a science focus in the middle term of next academic year.

The following have been proposed for future consideration:

- Working towards ensuring a coherent learning experience across year groups supporting and developing previous work in specific areas of science;
- Developing links to our local scientific community and investigating the possibility of utilising 'experts' to enrich scientific understanding [So if you know of anyone who could engage in this way, do let Mrs Ritchie know.];
- Further developing children's understanding that science touches every aspect of their everyday lives and encouraging further engagement in science.
- Providing additional support for practical science lessons (TA/parent helpers); and
- Further exploring the use of the external environment in the teaching of Science.

There is a working scientifically poster on display in all classrooms but a shared understanding of the importance of science could be more evidenced within the public areas of the school.

Again we would like to sincerely thank all the children and staff involved in these learning walks and in following up the proposed considerations. Governors will again next year be holding a termly learning walk and topics will be identified in the Autumn Term to align with our agreed strategic development plans.

**Friends of St Augustine's PTA:**  
*Fostering a strong and inclusive community spirit*

We must give a huge thanks to our School PTA and all those who support the community activities they run in whatever way – whether volunteering to spend an hour at a stand at the school fair or coordinating an entire event. While much needed and beneficial funds for our children are raised, these events and the community spirit they create are part of what makes St Augustine's so special. While there is too many to mention here, of special note this year are:

- International Fiesta, turning the foyer into an international departures lounge and gateway to learn about the many many countries and cultures we have represented at our school as well as have a taste of local cuisine and treats.
- The School's first ever Kenilworth Carnival float, achieving success with 'Where's Wally?'

**A Fond Farewell:**  
*Care, Cheerfulness and Colleague – Mrs Marian O'Leary retires after 27 years*

This past Tuesday, there was a lovely mass followed by an afternoon tea for Mrs O'Leary, attended by a range of those who have benefited from the significant and sustained contribution she has made throughout her 27 years at St Augustine's. Father Kevin eloquently described the kaleidoscope of ways she has engaged with and supported the school community, particularly highlighting three 'Cs' – care, cheerfulness and colleague. As governors we wish to give her our sincere and heartfelt thanks for all that she has done for our School and no doubt will continue to do as one of the School's strongest ambassadors in our wider community.

**School to School Partnerships:**  
*Further work being undertaken to become 'academy ready'*

Mrs Ritchie and your governors continue to grow our partnerships with other schools and have been endeavouring to identify further ways in which this can be done effectively. There have been a number of meetings of the governing body's 'Academy Ready' Working Group held over the year and significant work undertaken to collect and analyse relevant information and data to inform our approach. As previously highlighted, the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service has published new guidance for Catholic schools and are actively encouraging schools to become 'academy ready' (see <http://www.bdes.org.uk/academies.html> ). While there is not a precise deadline or prescriptive set of other schools with whom we must join, there is an expectation that in the coming years all of the schools in the Diocese will become part of a formal Multi-Academy Company. We will continue to build relationships with schools with whom we could potentially develop a shared vision and ethos, ensuring we are in a position to make the right decision for our school community and its future as well as securing Catholic education.

As highlighted previously, while any future proposals to become an academy will be consulted upon and discussed with our school community, please do let us know if you have any questions or thoughts in relation to these developments.

**Thank you for your Continued Engagement:**  
*Your contributions and views are valued*

There are many ways that your views, suggestions and concerns are collected, reviewed and acted upon. The School leadership team and governors greatly value the constructive relationships that we have at our school. One important way views are systemically collected is through the periodic questionnaire to parents and carers. If you have not already completed the End of Year Questionnaire, we would be grateful if you could by Saturday 22 July 2017: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/StAugustines2017Survey> Responses will be reviewed over the summer and early Autumn term and will inform developments for next year as well as the School's SIDP (School Improvement and Development Plan).

You obviously don't need to wait until the next survey to provide your views and feedback, however. It is particularly important for you to raise any matters relating to your child with the School, typically through your class teacher in the first instance or indeed with Mrs Ritchie.

You may recall that Ofsted also publish survey responses for schools which are fully open to the public via the Ofsted Parentview survey available on the following website: <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>. Click 'give your views now', then 'register now', and register using your email address – then you can complete the survey for 'St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, CV8 2JY (or type in 125713 in the school name field). You can also see information from other schools. This information will be referenced by inspectors in advance of our next Ofsted which is expected during the 2017/18 academic year.

The School is also continuing to develop its communications and information available on our website - <http://www.staugustineskenilworth.co.uk/> - and we hope this is a useful resource which includes the latest school and governor newsletters, curriculum overviews for each year group, school policies, links to Ofsted information and will soon incorporate more detailed information about the work of your governing body.

**Best wishes and take care over the summer as we . . .**

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

[www.staugustineskenilworth.co.uk/](http://www.staugustineskenilworth.co.uk/)

As at 21 July 2017