

Governing Links

Our Lady Governors Newsletter – Summer 2019

With the end of term fast approaching we wanted to bring you up to date with news from the governing body as well as focusing this newsletter on the work undertaken within school to support our Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) children and to ensure the school retains its culture of inclusion.



SEND at Our Ladys' School

- ❖ Although a number of children may have been identified as benefitting from Individual Support Plans (ISP), and a small number have more formal Education, Care and Health Plans (EHCP), the school actively supports any pupil that requires additional assistance, regardless of any pending diagnosis or assessment, based on their needs.
- ❖ In the current academic year @13% of pupils have either an ISP or an EHCP. Many more receive more informal support through small group work and targeted interventions.
- ❖ The range of needs can vary significantly but includes, dyslexia, dyscalculia, autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), sensory difficulties, speech and language issues, general learning difficulties and wider concerns around a child's social, emotional and mental health.
- ❖ Whilst it is true that the school receives additional funding for children with identified SEND needs, the sum is relatively small and support from external agencies often comes at a fee that can easily exceed the additional funding.
- ❖ Although we employ a teacher dedicated, part time, to support the SEND provisions of the school, all teachers and teaching assistants receive ongoing training, including external training courses where some attend and then feedback to the wider teaching staff.
- ❖ There is a lot of detail on the school approach to inclusion and support for SEND on the school website we would encourage you to read but please contact the school directly if you have additional questions.

Parent perspective

- ❖ Supporting a child who is struggling for any number of reasons is always approached best when the school and parents work in partnership to understand the child's needs and what will work for them. This may be informal support or more structured interventions, and needs to be consistent at home and school.
- ❖ If you have concerns regarding your child, you should first discuss this with the class teacher, and then the SENCo may be involved further if appropriate. For some children support is ongoing for others it may only be needed for a temporary period, or revisited later in their school development journey.
- ❖ It's not always just the children who need support but also the parents, so feel free to ask the SENCo for information on support groups or if there are other parents with children of similar needs who may be prepared to share their story with you.

The role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

At the end of this academic year we will say farewell to Suzanne Steadman who has supported the school as SENCo and who will transition her work to Mrs Marinho. The role involves:-

- Meeting with parents to agree the additional provisions to be put in place for their children
- Liaising with the local authority and external professionals, as appropriate, to ensure the correct support is accessed where available
- Ensuring all staff are aware of their role supporting each child, as part of the Senior Leadership Team of the school as a whole.

“To inspire all to achieve their best every day”

The Mission Statement of Our Ladys School Governing Body

Governing progress

This academic year has seen a continuation of the detailed plan of work put in place by the School Leadership Team and Governing body before the Ofsted inspection last academic year. As Mrs Nicholson has reported the school has had a number of external visitors and moderators who have clearly recognized the ongoing progress being made and the achievements of the staff and leadership have been praised.

Most notably since our last newsletter, the Diocesan RE Inspection took place in May. Three inspectors appointed by the Archbishop of Westminster conducted a formal inspection observing 7 lessons, an assembly, an act of worship and a review of pupils work. They also interviewed staff, pupils and governors. Parent feedback was provided in the form of the RE questionnaires parents were previously asked to complete and return. The express purpose of the inspection is to report back on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

Whilst the governing body are delighted with the report, we take pride that our role has also been recognized – “Governors play an active role in the school and make a significant contribution to its success”. Collectively as a school we should be proud of the fact that the Catholic ethos of the school has been maintained to a high standard and remains at the heart of the school itself. Congratulations to all who have played a role in this significant achievement.

60 seconds with Jo Chico – Foundation Governor & Inclusion Governor

What is your connection with OLS?

I taught at the school quite a few years ago as a supply teacher and I have known previous and present staff members through the parish.

How long have you been a governor and why did you want to get involved?

I have been a governor for 4 years. After completing my Masters in Development Management in 2014 I looked for an opportunity to use the skills and knowledge gained, together with my teaching background, and was approached to become a governor. It has been a wonderful way for me to give back to education and help shape something I believe passionately in.

What committees do you sit on?

I sit on the School Curriculum Committee as well as the Full Governing Body.

What have you been working on this term?

As the governor aligned to our support for our SEND pupils I have met with Mrs. Steadman to discuss current and future SEND provision. I have also met with the subject leader for history to help support and develop this curriculum subject as link governor for history.

What’s your day job and how does that help you be an effective governor?

I am a primary school teacher, and have taught all primary age groups during my career. I have a good understanding of the changes in education, the importance of SEND provision and the need to allow children to shine with their gifts and talents by providing a broad and enriching curriculum.

What’s been your highlight so far of being a governor?

I have enjoyed all my visits to school. However, during my recent visits with Mrs. Steadman we met with pupils to discuss their work. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and their pride in their achievements. They explained to us how the adults in school guide them when they are unsure of a task and that this has given them the confidence to try to work more independently. I was pleased to hear they felt both supported academically and had grown in self-belief and confidence.

What was the last book you read?

Miracles do Happen by Sister Brieghe McKenna

What’s your favourite holiday destination?

I love Latin America and hope to visit Chile and Argentina soon to sample the wine and improve my tango.