

Governing Links

Our Lady Governors Newsletter – Autumn 2019

As we are about to take a rest and spend time with our families to celebrate Christmas, the Governors at Our Lady School would like to take this opportunity to share with you what's been happening with the Governing Body since September. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, please feel free to engage and feedback to us via our email governors@ourladys.herts.sch.uk. All of us would like to wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.



Governing progress

This academic term has seen a number of enthusiastic new joiners to the Governing Body. Following our successful parent governor election, and whilst we work on updating the website here are the details of the current Governing Body for your information:-

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| • Tony Gorton | Chair of Governors |
| • Catherine Davis | Vice Chair of Governors and Chair of School Curriculum Committee |
| • Louise Worbey | Parent Governor and Chair of Operations Committee |
| • Domanic Lavery | Foundation Governor |
| • Elisabeth Wills | Foundation Governor |
| • Fr Tom O'Brien | Foundation Governor |
| • Fr Norbert Fernandes | Foundation Governor |
| • Anne Stevens | Parent Governor |
| • Joanna Martarano | Co-opted Governor |
| • Roger Kennedy | Co-opted Governor |

At this time we would like to recognize and thank those Governors who left this term, all had been Governors for some years and their contributions have always been appreciated in working collectively together for the benefit of the school and its pupils.

Positive feedback

At the end of a successful year, the Governors would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Mrs Nicholson and all staff. The progress the school has made within the past calendar year has been seen first-hand through our frequent school visits and the children are thriving. Despite the fact that this is not reflected in the league tables yet, in 2019 we were measured against an unreliable baseline from KS1 data from years ago, we are sure that next year and the year after we will see the trend move upward in line with more accurate baseline data.

We have also had a number of external visitors to the school reporting on all aspects of school life, the quality of teaching and pupil development. Their reports, which Mrs Nicholson has referred to in her newsletters throughout the year, have without exception validated the current, accurate judgements around data and the school continues to shine in every visit.

Notable comments include:

"Attainment and progress across the school is high. The school has created a supportive, inclusive environment where all staff and pupils show determination to move forward. The leadership creates a relentless drive for improvement and ultimate success."

"Early Years Foundation Stage data represents a strong profile with improved attainment levels on 2018 data – 83% of children reach a good level of development and this is above national and Herts averages. The phonics screening check scores for pupils at end of year 1 are high (90%) and are also above Herts and national averages"

In looking at the work of our pupils, the progress achieved for most is good, however the data does not look strong due to the inaccurate high standards recorded at the end of KS1 four years ago. Please be assured that the entire Governing Body closely scrutinise all progress reports and data and welcome qualified external visitors at any time to do the same.

"To inspire all to achieve their best every day"

The Mission Statement of Our Lady's School Governing Body

Getting to know our new Chair of Governors – Mr Tony Gorton

How did you agree to become a governor?

Whilst my association with Our Lady's only dates back over the last 12 months, it has been a particularly positive relationship for me on both a professional and a personal level. Indeed, when the opportunity to become a member of the Governing Body of Our Lady's presented itself recently, I needed no time to consider my options; this was an opportunity that I simply could not miss.

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

My role as an RE adviser provides me with the opportunity to visit many schools in the diocese, sharing in their successes and providing support as required.

I became the diocesan adviser for Our Lady's in January 2019 and was privileged to be able to play a small part in the school's ongoing preparations for its RE inspection in May 2019 in which the school was graded as outstanding for its Catholic Life and good for Classroom RE – a marvellous outcome for all concerned.

Having visited a large number of schools during the last 12 months, I can say without reservation that Our Lady's has a special place in my heart for many reasons, the foremost being that it is quite simply a wonderful school.

I consider the successful RE inspection mentioned earlier to be a significant stepping stone on the school's current journey to excellence as senior leaders and all members of staff strive to provide the best possible learning experiences for our pupils on a daily basis. These are exciting times at Our Lady's!

Other than RE, is there a subject close to your heart?

Music plays a significant part in school life, with many pupils at Our Lady's choosing to learn an instrument, as well as the music offered through the curriculum; music is an integral part of my life, and whilst my preferred genre (based on lots of guitars and drums!) may not be to everyone's taste, it provides that much needed 'release-valve' which we all require in life.

The personal welfare and well-being of its pupils is something that Our Lady's school is passionate in promoting; and this I consider to be one of our key strengths, ensuring that the children in our care are able to flourish in a nurturing environment where every unique individual is truly valued.

Going back to my love of music; with Aerosmith touring the UK in July next year (I'll see you there hopefully!) I cannot help but draw parallels with Our Lady's when I hear the lyrics from one of their songs as follows: ***'Life's a journey...not a destination'***.

I am extremely honoured to be a part of the continued journey that Our Lady's is presently on, and whilst there is no specific 'destination' in mind, the potential that the future holds makes that journey all the more exciting for all concerned.

Merry Christmas to all.



SEND at Our Lady's School

On December 9th the school welcomed parents to learn more about the school's approach in supporting those with special educational needs. Also in attendance were representatives from ANGELS - a local support group for families of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or ADHD.

The evening received great feedback from the attendees and the staff and governors will continue to look at future opportunities to share this information with the parent body for the benefit of all our families. If anyone has any individual questions please contact Mrs Marinho as our SENCO or Tony Gorton as our link governor to SEND.

We were also pleased to welcome Lesley Casey to the SEN team with her many years of experience.