

Governing Links

Our Lady Governors Newsletter – Autumn 2020

As we are now at the end of another term, and the start of our holiday celebrations, we wanted to bring you up to date with news from the Governing Body.

As we reflect on the last term we have been absolutely delighted that the school has remained open throughout when most other schools in the area have needed at some point in the term to send at least one year group bubble home, for a two week period of isolation. This is testament to the excellent practices and behaviours of all our staff, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and wish them all a restful Christmas.

Merry Christmas to all our pupils, parents and families. God bless you all over the holiday season, and stay safe.



Back on Track support

- ❖ You may be aware from the press, of government announcements about extra funding for schools to help pupils catch up from the period when schools were closed to the majority of pupils earlier this year. Our Lady School has been allocated an amount which Governors and Leaders have agreed to use to fund an additional staff member who can support group interventions and deliver catch up initiatives within the school.
- ❖ When children returned in September, their teachers were able to understand their knowledge levels following the period of lockdown and understand what specific support each child required to help them get back on track. This is already been delivered in practice by the class teachers and teaching assistants, with additional interventions and small group work supporting areas of need. The Governors have supported the school in investing in additional materials for this learning recovery programme.
- ❖ Whilst we continue to focus on the core curriculum we have also been able mid way through the term to reintroduce additional topics such as Spanish to our pupils to enrich their development.

Looking ahead to 2021

- ❖ As you are aware, the school leadership will be going through a transition in early February as Mrs Snowball becomes our Acting Headteacher, supported by Mrs Davies as Acting Deputy Headteacher. Both have been attending and actively participating in our Full Governing Body meetings for some time and as Governors, we have every confidence in their abilities to guide the school through the remainder of this academic year. Our Congratulations to Tom and Ciara for their new arrival due in February – enjoy a peaceful Christmas!
- ❖ With the advent of a vaccine, the management of COVID in 2021 seems a more realistic and positive prospect than when this term began. However, when children return in January we will need to maintain our current precautions including staggered start and end times, as well as early closure on Wednesdays. We appreciate the latter has proved challenging for some, especially working parents, and we will keep this under active review. The fact that we have had no positive COVID cases amongst staff this term, and no year groups have been sent home to self isolate is reassuring us that our current approach is working and should remain for the Spring Term.
- ❖ A reminder for those in financial difficulties in these difficult times, please feel free to speak to the school office to find out how school can support you and what you may be entitled to.



“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 both before and after our previous Ofsted inspection. This term the Governors have been meeting with subject leaders virtually to understand and scrutinize how the curriculum continues to be delivered to the standard we expect. Additionally, external moderators continue to meet with Leadership and Governors, and we have been able to provide evidence, even remotely, to reflect the progress that is still being made. Our leadership have reviewed extensively the Ofsted criteria and are confident that the school is fulfilling the criteria for Good, but we will have to wait for Ofsted to regroup, post pandemic, to resume its schedule of inspections.

During our December visit from an external moderator they commented;

“There has been considerable improvement since the Ofsted Inspection in June 2018, including;

- *A strong, permanent staff*
- *Strong leadership capacity, enabling a smooth transition when the Headteacher goes on maternity leave*
- *Well managed behaviour and personal development*
- *A broad, balanced and evolving curriculum”*

60 seconds with Louise Worbey – Parent Governor & Chair of Operations

What is your connection with OLS?

My eldest son, Sean, started at OLS in 2009 and his brother Kieran in 2011. Both are now at John Henry Newman and my youngest son Alex is now in Year 4, so I have spent a lot of time at the school gates.

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

I was elected as a Parent governor in June 2017 for 4 years, beginning September 2017. I stood for election as I wanted to ensure the school continued to be somewhere that was inclusive for all pupils. I had also been critical of the previous Head, but have a personal view that whilst it is easy to be “on the outside throwing stones in” if you feel strongly about something you should be prepared to get involved and make a positive difference.

What committees do you sit on?

I Chair the Operations Committee which looks at finances, health & safety and our school risk assessments among many other things. The latter has kept us all very busy this year.

I also sit on the Admissions Committee and attend meetings of the Full Governing Body. I am the subject link governor for English and Phonics.

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

There have been many, but in particular, the mass with Bishop Paul McAleenan in September 2018 was a special occasion. I can’t believe it was that long ago. I also always enjoyed talking with the pupils during their feedback sessions to Governors when I was part of the School Curriculum Committee.

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

I work in Global Mobility for a professional services firm. We provide tax, immigration, education and relocation support to our employees and their families in 150 different countries on international assignments. Previously I worked for over 15 years as an International Tax Accountant. My finance background has helped me significantly in understanding the financial side of my role on the Operations committee, and my current role provides an HR perspective.

What was the last book you read?

I like autobiographies, and have recently read both *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, and *How to be a Champion* by Sarah Millican.

What’s your favourite holiday destination?

As a family we have had very happy holidays in Biscarosse, France, but I also loved a trip to Mauritius (pre children!), and would hope to go back sometime in the future .

