

Governing Links

Our Lady Governors Newsletter – Spring 2021



Dear Our Lady Parents,

I hope that this newsletter finds you and yours well as we look forward to the start of Holy Week, and ultimately the joy of the risen Christ at Easter. What a term it has been for all concerned, particularly you as parents dealing with the demands of home-schooling for two months with little/no notice! By all accounts, there were lots of smiles in evidence at drop off on the 'full return' to school earlier this month...on the faces of both children and parents alike! On behalf of all of the staff at Our Lady, sincere thanks to you all for your continued support in relation to the home-schooling procedures put in place at the start of this term; your continued vigilance in this respect has contributed significantly to a smooth return to the classroom for the children.

You will have recently received a letter from Mrs Snowball concerning the decision to return to the 'full' school day on Wednesday following the Easter break. Once again, thank you for your support and understanding in terms of the Wednesday afternoon closure introduced during the first lockdown; we are convinced this played a significant part in ensuring that the integrity of the various 'bubbles' was maintained, subsequently minimising any further disruption to our children's education. It will be lovely to see you once again collecting your children at the end of the school day on Wednesday; another milestone on the journey towards a return to 'normality'.

Finally, on behalf of the Governing Body, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the many messages of support and gratitude received during the spring term, both in terms of the home-schooling provision and the subsequent return to school three weeks ago; such kind words and thoughtfulness are truly appreciated by all concerned.

Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Easter.

Tony Gorton (on behalf of all members of the Governing Body)

Governor Roles

As you will understand, at this time there are currently more requirements of our Governing body than ever before and without an appropriate number of Governors in role this becomes even more time consuming for those who do volunteer at Our Ladys. In "normal times" a Governing body has 3 main responsibilities: -

- 1) To set the strategic direction of the school
- 2) To hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school
- 3) To oversee the financial performance of the school and management of finances

Currently there are also additional requirements over and above the regular responsibilities with enhanced regulations concerning health and safety, risk management and wellbeing, together with additional financial considerations. The governments publicized catch up funding to support academic attainment is extremely welcome, however we are still balancing a loss in income with additional expenditure. We currently have six very active governors on the Governing Body with an increasing workload who would be very happy to welcome additional governors to support them, and of course to support our school, its pupils and its leadership.

If you, one of your family or friends could be interested in becoming part of the Governing Body and would like to find out more, please contact any of the current Governors or the Head Teacher to discuss it further. There will also be a parent governor election in the Summer term for you to consider. There is training provided and ongoing support for anyone who wants to get involved, it is a very rewarding role and some employers even provide time off for those who are appointed as School Governors.

"To inspire all to achieve their best every day"

The Mission Statement of Our Ladys School Governing Body

60 seconds with Anne Stevens – Parent Governor & Chair of Operations

What is your connection with OLS?

I have been a parent at the school since 2013. My son, Jamie, left in July 2020 and my daughter Madeleine is currently in Year 4.

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

I have been a governor since January 2020. I wanted to get involved as I had recently started running an app design after-school club for UKS2 and this gave me a small insight into how the school was run. This piqued my interest and made me want to get more involved so I applied when the opportunity came up at the end of 2019.

What's been on your Governor to do list this term?

I have a few different responsibilities as a governor. One is to take the lead on Safeguarding and ensure that policies and best practices are being followed.

The others are to work with the school on how they deliver Spanish, Music, Art and Design Technology. I also sit on the School Curriculum Committee

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

Seeing the wonderful feedback from parents and carers on the most recent round of remote learning. It was lovely to see how happy everyone was with the offer, and how thankful they were for the hard work all the staff put in during these difficult circumstances.

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

My day job focuses on user-centred research and design of digital products. This means that I have skills in understanding how people behave and think and being empathetic to differing circumstances. It also means I am able to carry out research to gain feedback from pupils and parents on life at our school.

What was the last book you read?

The last book I read was The Mirror and the Light. The chaos of 2020 meant it took me most of last year to read it but I loved it! I am a huge fan of Hilary Mantel and a real Tudor history buff.

What's your favourite holiday destination?

Menorca. I have been almost every year since I was 6 and am very lucky that my mum owns a holiday apartment there that we can use every year.

What do few people know about you that you are prepared to share?

I had pink hair for 4 years when I was at university!

Q10. What are your hopes for the future of OLS?

I hope that we see an end to home learning and social distancing so that our children can get back to enjoying the full experience of primary school and all it has to offer.

