



St. Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

St James' House, Derby

Tel: 01332 554831

Email: admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk

Web: www.stmarys.derby.sch.uk

Governor Newsletter 10

November 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Saint Mary's Governor Newsletter. We are now well into Advent term and, like you, the governing body is looking forward to the challenges and triumphs of the coming weeks and months.

Already, it has been a busy term with lots going on. It has been wonderful to see the children bedding down in their new (albeit temporary) home and school life slowly getting back to normal. As governors, we are aware that there are still obstacles associated with the ongoing issues of Covid and the temporary nature of our school residency but we celebrate the efforts of pupils, parents and staff to embrace our new reality and to build a school full of joy, nurture and learning, bearing witness to Christ.

Emma

School News

NEW BUILDING UPDATE

On Thursday 18th November, the governors were delighted to spend time with representatives of the DFE, specifically our new school design team, to find out more about our new school build.

It was an informative afternoon, where we were able to join with the KS1 children in watching computer generated projections of what our new school might look like. A similar session had taken place with KS2 children earlier in the day.

It promises to be an exciting project, rooted in a more sustainable and eco-friendly future with the natural world forming a central plank to their vision. A core aim is to enhance the health and well-being of all staff and pupils and to lay the foundations for a learning environment suitable for all kinds of learners. The design ideas (that are still subject to planning permission) received a unanimous 'thumbs up' from all the children across the school!

Of course, we are only part way along the journey with still a long way to go but it is thrilling to know that the new St Mary's school will provide our children with a great new home to learn and thrive. We are also reassured that the whole school community including parents and neighbours are to be central to further planning, with consultations taking place in due course.

PARKING

In the interests of the safety of all our children, we respectfully ask that parents/carers park away from the school building and walk their child a short distance to the school gate. Details of alternative parking areas have been sent out, at regular intervals, on Class Dojo.

Unfortunately, a number of worrying incidents have already been reported to school and governors regarding unsafe parking along and around Fox Street. All governors are increasingly concerned about these increasing dangers and risk of injury. Therefore we ask, in the strongest possible terms, that everyone shows renewed consideration to help us safeguard our children in the way they all deserve.

Emma



Monitoring Visit Summary

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Hello Everyone, I hope this report finds you all safe and well.

This article is for your reassurance and confidence, to know that all Governors at St. Mary's take safeguarding extremely seriously. This mirrors the school Leadership Team, who continue to ensure the highest standards around safeguarding for all the pupils. I am honoured to hold the extra responsibility of reporting to every governing body meeting. Furthermore, I carry out extra safeguarding visits when I meet with relevant staff.

Talking about updates, the Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2021 introduced new guidance that came into effect on 1 September 2021. I have now read the amended document that includes more guidance and resources on the following:

Online safety, peer on peer abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. It also outlines what we need to include within our policies and procedures.

All staff and governors are aware of these amendments and all relevant training has now been completed. We firmly believe that everyone of us has a duty of care for every child.

Thank you and keep safe.

Sara

Meet a Governor

My name is Paul Burrows and I was elected as parent governor in October 2020. In fact it was the very day before the devastating fire on Broadway; as you will imagine, that event changed the immediate priorities of the Governing Body and the support offered to the school's leadership team, staff, pupils and wider community.

My background is in education— I have been a secondary science teacher for many years in various parts of the country. I am currently a Deputy Headteacher in one of the largest Special Needs Schools in the country that caters for children with autism. My wife, Lisa, is from Derby and went to St Benedict's School as a young person.

I have 2 boys at St Mary's, one in reception and one in Year 2. They certainly live life to the full and I am impressed with how St Mary's has brought out their individuality and personality whilst providing them with a fantastic education within a Catholic environment. I still find it amazing that my eldest literally came home from school one day able to read—and he has not stopped since!!

Paul

Governors' Coffee Morning

The first coffee morning post lockdown/fire has finally taken place. As the newest member of the St Mary's Governing Board, I had no idea what to expect or what I was expected to do. I had previously attended a coffee morning at the St Mary's building, in what feels like a lifetime ago.

The aim of these coffee mornings is to facilitate communication between, parents' staff and governors, in my role as parent governor I endeavour to ensure this takes place.

On this occasion it was held at St Mary's church hall. It was a pleasant sight to be greeted by Mrs. Greaves pouring coffee, and an impressive collection of cakes. Several parents and carers attended; it was an absolute pleasure to chat amongst them. Listening to why parents had chosen St Mary's school for their children.

Sharing experiences, from parents that had not only recently moved to the city but also into the country. Their hopes and expectations for their children not only academically but also socially, and spiritually. St Mary's SPIRIT was certainly shining through. The wealth of culture and diversity was felt throughout the morning, discussions around overseas education, opportunities to the common language of food and football.

It is hoped these coffee mornings/afternoons will continue to ensure effective communication between parents, governors, and staff, especially as the exciting future of St Mary's evolves.

Rebekah



Our next coffee afternoon is Monday 6th December 1-3pm,
everyone is welcome for an informal chat and cake.





Monitoring Visit Summary MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

I met with Mrs Brentnall (our school Mental Health Lead) to talk about what's been going on in school around Mental Health and wellbeing. Mrs Scott, our PSHE lead, has ensured that mental health is now covered in all of our PSHE topics.

As we all know, sport is great for our overall health and wellbeing. Miss Cutts (Sports Lead) has introduced lots of new sports activities and ideas this year, and Mrs McCready, as well as being our wonderful SENCO, is now a trained 'Pound' drumming teacher! All of the children will have a chance this year to have a go at the very popular activity once again.

It was lovely to hear about how the children use their colour charts and learning spaces to help them recognise and understand their feelings. When working hard, sometimes we all need a break and the 'Brain Breaks' in class are a great way to step away from the desk but to still keep the learning going. All of our school staff also have their 'Spirit Buddies' to support them, and ideas and best practice are being shared across the Trust during regular meetings for Mental Health Leads.

This week has been anti-bullying week – lovely to see those getting involved in odd-sock day on Monday! It's great to see the activities and work that the children have been involved with as well as raising money for Children in Need.

It is wonderful to see how the staff at St. Mary's are working hard to care for our whole school community's mental health and wellbeing.

Leonida

Governing Body Update

In the past few months, we have been thrilled to gain two new governors at St Mary's. Mr. Paul Burrows and Mrs. Rebekah Maguire have both been elected to serve as Parent Governors. We welcome them to the governing body and know they bring with them valuable skills and knowledge. Indeed, they have already proved to be valuable assets to our team!

Remember, they are elected by you to be your voice. Please feel free to contact them, or indeed any governor, if you wish to learn more about our roles.

Emma

Current Governing Body

Emma Farmer	Foundation Governor	Chair of Governors Pupil Premium Governor
Sara Bolton	Foundation Governor	Vice-Chair of Governors Safeguarding Governor
Leonida Bandura	Foundation Governor	Mental Health and Well-being Governor
Paul Burrows	Elected Parent Governor	SEND Governor
Rebekah Maguire	Elected Parent Governor	GDPR Governor

Governors' Meeting Dates 2021/22

29th September 2021

23rd November 2021

26th January 2022

8th March 2022

4th May 2022

21st June 2022

