

NEWSLETTER

Governors of Ss Alban & Stephen RC Infant School

- **Welcome and thanks**

Welcome to the Governors' newsletter for the Autumn term. Our aim is to keep you informed on governing issues and up to date on the schools' performance.

As ever, we start with our thank yous:

- Thank you to the staff at our schools for their hard work and dedication to the school. They really value each child and the atmosphere of the school reflects this.
- Thank you to all members of the PTA for their hard work this term. We had an excellent Autumn welcome fair. We know that they need lots of volunteers and support going forwards so please do whatever you can (even if that is only a little) to help them.
- We now welcome Mrs Dempsey as our substantive head teacher. We are sure that with her inspiring leadership the school will continue to improve.

We welcome 4 new governors; Fr TJ Plower, David Miveld, Avril Jenkins (Avril was previously a Junior school Governor) as well as Laura Robertson as a new parent governor.

- **From our Chair of Governors:**

Firstly I'd like to welcome all the new families that joined the school this term, I hope that your children are settling in well to the school and having lots of fun whilst learning. It's been a very busy term for all of us and I'd like to thank all the staff for their continued dedication to the education and wellbeing of all our children, it never ceases to amaze me how much progress the children have made in their work when I look at the school displays around the school.

The governors recently got together to agree our priorities for the coming year and we agreed that we will share more of the outcomes of our school visits with you all each term. Keep an eye on the website for more details! Lastly I'd like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Christian Gallagher, Chair of Governors SsAS Infant School

- **Reconstitution of Governing body**

In 2012 the legislation on school governance changed. Compulsory guidance came from the Department of Education and each governing body was required to reconstitute according to this guidance by September 2015. We have taken the reconstitution process very seriously keeping the interests of the children and our school's drive to build God's community of love and learning and the heart of our actions.

In the past, while Infants and Juniors had separate governing bodies an informal "soft federation" was in place. With this new guidance this can no longer be the case and each governing body runs separately.

The Infant Governing body is now smaller as the Department for Education feels that smaller

Autumn Term 2015

January 2016

Governing bodies tend to be more dynamic and cohesive. For this reason there are now 2 committees instead of the previous 3. They are:

Learning and community: This committee deals with admissions, curriculum (target setting), communications within the school (e.g. the PTA) and in the wider community, the school travel and development plans

Resources committee

This deals with premises, health and safety, staffing, budgeting and finances

- **From our Head teacher:**

We've had a busy term and the children have settled well into their new classes.

The sun shone on our first Autumn Welcome Fair, which was a great success and an opportunity to get to know families new to our school community. The children have settled into their new classes and are becoming increasingly independent. Adults too have been learning this term. Staff have attended first aid, computing, pupil well-being and curriculum training. Parents were invited to find out about Esafety, curriculum changes and how school will organise reports and consultations this academic year. Your feedback on how we keep you informed about your child's progress has been invaluable and we will act on your suggestions - thank you.

The children have told us what kind of school they would like to be part of. During anti-bullying week we learnt how important it is to share a worry and use your 'big voice' to tell someone if you have a problem. The Eco-team asked everyone to write a postcard to the climate change summit in Paris and spoke about how tricky it is to walk on the pavement when cars are parked on it. Parking and road safety have taken up a great deal of time this term and caused distress to our neighbours. The children are enthusiastic about a new campaign we will be launching in January to address this issue.

Sister Anita calls to see us regularly. Father Jimmy celebrated our Welcome Mass in school for the new reception children and we joined with the other parish primary schools for an Advent Mass in the church. The team from the Sion Community led a Mission Day linked to the Parish Mission in October and Father Rod Jones, a former pupil, came to visit and say a Mass of Remembrance for us.

Although young, our children understand their responsibility to care for those less fortunate than themselves. We had a great response for the St Albans Women's Refuge at Harvest and for the refugee crisis. We collected 181 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Staff entertainment for Children in Need raised £500, as did our programme sales at Christmas, which will be donated to the Royal Brompton Hospital in London. Thank you for your continued generosity to these causes.

The children excelled themselves in their Christmas plays, singing, dancing and acting confidently for large audiences. They did this with enthusiasm and real enjoyment. We share your pride in all their achievements this term and are excited about what is to come in the New Year. Thank you for all your support.

- **Committee News**

As a governing body we have been required to reconstitute this year.

We have two committees that meet every term in addition to our Full Governing Body meetings six times per year. All committees have met twice during the Autumn term and been engaged in the following activities:

Resources Committee:

Because the Infant school governing body now acts independently, new Terms of Reference have been drawn-up and this committee will in future deal with premises, health & safety, staffing, budgeting and finances. The Committee met twice this term and some of the issues addressed were

- The application for diocesan funding to refurbish nursery roof
- Governor H&S report received and remedial actions prioritised
- Internally-audited accounts scrutinised and accepted
- The Governors' Building Fund
- Pupil Premium funding discussed including how these funds are spent

In addition Governors attended a number of training courses including Governors roles and responsibilities, School Health & Safety, the recent changes to the Ofsted framework and training in financial matters.

Learning and Community (formerly CAMP and CSN):

This deals with the school development and travel plans, curriculum, admissions and communication. New terms of reference have also been drawn up for this committee. The committee met twice this term.

- The governors had a recent meeting in addition to the usual business meeting to discuss our vision for the direction of the school
- The admissions policy for 2017/18 has discussed and agreed.
- Discussed the new curriculum and the way this was communicated to parents with regard to target setting and the new "life without levels" method of assessment.
- Discussed the plans for improving the progress of children with Special Educational needs and how we can see that the plans are working.
Equality – the governing body will be looking for parents opinion on whether there are any equality issues and for ideas on how to address them

Achievements since last Newsletter

Green Flag Award

The school was awarded the green flag award in July 2015 for the schools tireless work in its aim to protect our environment.

After a visit from Chris White last term Herts County has donated £500 to the school in recognition of the eco-friendly ethos of the school

Governor Training and Assessment of Performance

The governing body has taken the reconstitution as an opportunity to assess our performance and forge ways of working so that we can better support and help to improve the school.

We have had an external review of our governance and are now in the process of acting on the recommendations. The review was on the whole positive but we obviously want to continually improve.

We have all undertaken training in effective governance and many have had e-safety training. We are keeping a record of all governor training so we can identify gaps and further development needs.

- [Attendance data \(to Dec 1st 2015\)](#)

Autumn Term 2015
January 2016

Infant School –	%
Morning Nursery	91.49
Afternoon Nursery	94.75
Class 1	93.78
Class 2	96.46
Class 3	96.2
Class 4	98.48
Class 5	98.04
Class 6	98.54

Happy New Year to You All