

Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Infant and Nursery School

Governors Newsletter Summer 2018

From our Chair

Well, this is not a usual end of term, as we are sadly saying goodbye to our wonderful Head Teacher. Mrs Dempsey has worked at the school, in a wide variety of roles for over twenty years.

Her story is truly inspirational.

She has given complete dedication to our school and to putting the children's, education, welfare and happiness above all else. The Governors and I are incredibly sad to be saying goodbye but we do know that under Mrs Dempsey's stewardship the school is in a very strong position now and for the many children who will come through the doors in the years to come.

My words will never do justice to what I had hoped to say. The hundreds of parents, children and well-wishers who recently packed into Ss Alban & Stephen Church for her celebratory mass will more eloquently bear testament to those who had the good fortune to have come into contact with her over the years.

David Miveld

Interim arrangements September 2018

Miss Cannon will step into an Acting Head Teacher role from September. We are very fortunate to have excellent senior staff as well as supportive wider staff team and Miss Cannon has been attending relevant meetings and taking a thorough hand over from Mrs Dempsey throughout this Summer term.

The Governors and all the staff will be supporting Miss Cannon in any way we can as we start the new term.

Updates on both the recruitment of Executive Head and the Federation process will go out as frequently as possible to both staff and parents.

From our Head Teacher

The children have had a busy and productive year and we can feel very proud of our school community.

Staff: We will be saying goodbye to Mrs. Chandler at the end of the year. She has done wonderful work supporting pupils with English as an additional language but is now embarking on an interior design course. We wish her every success. Mrs Cooper is almost ready to start her maternity leave; we send her all our prayers and best wishes. Miss Cannon will step up to acting Head from September. As a result, we welcome two new teachers, Miss Murray and Miss Holmes. I know you will make them welcome.

Pupils: The children have worked very hard across all curriculum areas. We have seen progress in our school priority to improve writing, especially for our boys. Whilst we have seen an increase in the numbers of pupils exceeding the expected standard in Maths at the end of Year 2, we still have more work to do with those pupils who are just missing the expected standard. We will continue to build on the good work done this year around challenge and questioning.

We have seen a very positive impact on behaviour and emotional well-being from our PSHE work with Mrs. Rees, using the JIGSAW scheme. Mindful of the growing concerns around child mental health, it has been our priority to teach the children how to recognise emotions and teach strategies to manage them. We need to start early! Some children tell us they use their breathing and relaxation techniques to help them get to sleep or when they feel nervous about something, which is great.

There have been many highlights this year. Our Mexican expressive arts inspired everyone and the school was vibrant and colourful for open evening, one of the hottest we've had! We raised money for many worthy causes including £560 for Children in Need, £250 for Catholic Children's Society, £241 for Royal British Legion Poppy appeal, £330 for STEPS, £325 for Dementia UK, £400 for Mary's Meals and 130 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. What a generous community we have!

Parents: We had great support for our Phonics and Reading workshop in the Autumn term and for Maths in the Summer term. In response to parent requests, we arranged an Anxiety workshop in the Spring which proved popular. Please let us know if there are any other themes you would like to explore. We are planning a workshop on growth mind set for early next academic year. Thank you all for your contributions; reading in class, PTA support, model building, Green day volunteers, attending masses and assemblies– we appreciate it all.

On behalf of all the staff, thank you for all your support over the year. Thank you for entrusting your children to our care. We wish our Year Two and their families every blessing for the future. The staff are looking forward to welcoming everyone else back in September. I will remember you all in my prayers as the new school year begins. Have a wonderful summer holiday and God Bless you.

Mrs Dempsey

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

RE

The children were very busy this term preparing for Mrs Dempsey's goodbye mass which was wonderful.

Year 2 children spent an afternoon working with students from St. Columba's College secondary school to create posters on how we can look after God's precious world. They also made treasure chests of things that are precious to them and some of the children shared these in our Goodbye mass on Wednesday.

Maths

This year, the school have taken on a new approach to teaching maths recommended by the Hertfordshire maths team. It follows a concrete, pictorial and abstract approach where children are encouraged to think deeply about key mathematical concepts and explore these through the use of concrete resources and drawings.

Maths lessons are busy, children are constantly challenging their thinking and proving their understanding. Feedback from the children is highly positive and they thoroughly enjoy this approach. The approach will stay the same next year with the added dimension of daily maths fluency focus where children will revise key aspects of number on a daily basis.

Science

In the spring term, we held an 'investigation morning', all children worked as scientists to problem solve and investigate - the children had a great time experimenting!

In Year 1, the children were busy designing and making a nappy suitable for an astronaut.

In Year 2, the children designed their own experiments to see what food would dance in lemonade.

Foundation Stage children will enhance their understanding of the world when Ark Farm visited us this week.

English

All children have enjoyed a wide range of exciting writing lessons this year using real life events as a stimulus.

Phonics has been taught in all classes and the children have been applying new sounds that they have learnt in their reading and writing.

The school have invested in many new books, particularly guided reading materials to ensure children are receiving a broad and varied diet of high quality texts. All children also visit the school library once a week to choose a new book to enjoy at home with their families.

Many children participated in the reading challenge at half term and took fabulous photographs of themselves reading in a variety of places!

Committee News and Works Program

The Resources and the Learning & Curriculum committees continue to meet regularly to further the necessary work in supporting the school.

They have continued to revise and update policies, engage in training on new initiatives in school, take part in statutory processes such as safeguarding and monitor the financial position of the school with Mrs Dempsey throughout the year.

A number of refurbishment and improvement projects have taken place. These have included:

- New Nursery roof surface and guttering
- Drainage works; a new soak away to prevent flooding on the FS playground and repairs/improvements to drains in front of school to improve sewage flow and prevent flooding of the main entrance
- New skylights and extractor fans in classes 3, 4 and 5, where safety and light have been improved
- Refurbishment of the Nursery block taking place over the summer

Of course, these works would not be possible without your ongoing donations to the Governors' Fund. All donations, large and small help to keep the school buildings in a good state of repair for the benefit of your children. Thank you for your continued support.

The school budget has also allowed for the installation of a new fire alarm system in KS1 and we are undertaking a rolling program of fire door replacement.

Attendance

Morning Nursery & Flex 1	94.9%	Class 3	96.4%
Mrs Smith & Mrs Duffey		Mrs Cooper & Mrs Murphy	
Afternoon Nursery & Flex 2	93.9%	Class 4	95.6%
Mrs Smith & Mrs Duffey		Mrs Adams	
Class 1	96.7%	Class 5	97.1%
Miss Meloy		Mrs Watters	
Class 2	95.2%	Class 6	97.2%
Miss Ketley		Miss Cannon & Mrs Tennant	

Wishing you a very happy summer and look forward to seeing you all in September