

GOVERNOR newsletter



Issue 8 Nov 2017

Chair's word – Clare Farrow

Welcome to our first edition of 'Governor Newsletter' for the new academic year. We extend an especially warm welcome to all the new parents and children that joined us in September.

We welcome our new Head teacher, Mrs Sessions who joined us in September following Mr Toner's retirement in July 2017.

The beginning of this academic year brings with it a number of changes to our school community. Mrs O'Rourke takes up her post as Deputy Head and Fr. Tom Finnegan not only joins our parish community at St John's but will also play an active role on our Governing body.



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Farewell Canon Liam

At the end of the summer term we said a fond farewell to Canon Liam O'Driscoll who not only served St John The Baptist Catholic Church as Parish Priest but also served St John's School as our Spiritual Leader and as a School Governor, many of these as Chair of Governors, for 27 years. Once Canon had overseen the extension of St John's Church he turned his attention to obtaining a new school hall for the then St John's junior school – despite many previous submissions the Governors had been unsuccessful in getting the necessary funding.

Canon must have had friends in all sorts of high places as we got the news that our bid had been successful and the new hall was built in 1992, only 2 years after he arrived in Trowbridge.

Canon was also instrumental in the amalgamation of the junior and infants school onto one site later in the 1990's with the building of the infant block as well as numerous other building projects including the replacement of very old mobile classrooms and the pratten hut with permanent classrooms. The school would not have the great facilities it has today without him.

Canon knew the value of education provided by our Catholic schools and he himself set a great example by presiding over many school and class masses and liturgies, nativity and Lenten services as

well as other services throughout the school year. He also organised visiting priests to hear confessions at School during Lent and Advent. He was a dedicated Parish Priest and Spiritual Leader – he visited school many times a week to meet with staff, parents and children on a more informal basis as well as supporting various social events held by the Friends of St John's.

His presbytery door was always open for any staff member who needed help or guidance on any matter and was especially supportive if they needed any clarification on aspects of the Catholic faith. He was delighted to be asked and to give that help and support. If you happened to be in the playground at playtime when Canon was visiting you could observe him surrounded by children all wanting to say hello and chat to him and so it was only fitting that he went on the occasional school outing, most recently with the Reception children on a visit to Longleat, a trip greatly enjoyed by all. He will be very much missed by staff, children and governors. We wish him great happiness and many blessings in his new role as Parish Priest at St Thomas More Catholic Church in Bradford-on-Avon and we thank him very much for his dedication and support for St Johns School.

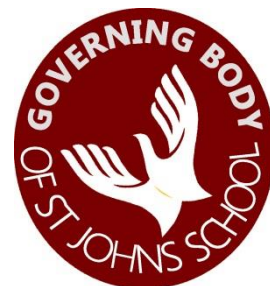
We hope that he will still visit the School, when his time permits – he will be very warmly welcomed.

Inside this issue

Chair's Word	1
Farewell Canon Liam	1
Thank You Adrian	2
New School Website	2
Committee Updates	2
Drop-Offs / Pick-Ups	2
Governor Profile	2
Thank You	2
SIF	2

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Thank you Adrian

We would like to say a big thank you to Adrian Weissenbruch who was a Foundation Governor and became the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Governor.

He was also actively involved in the recent OFSTED Inspection but has now stepped down from the Board.

New School Website

www.st-johns-trowbridge.wilts.sch.uk/

The school now has an exciting new website which amongst other things hosts the schools calendar which may be synched to your own to be kept up to date with important dates covering both the school and Friends events.

We hope to add much more content over the coming terms.

Committee Updates

Admissions:

We are pleased to report that the school had a good intake of pupils starting in Foundation Stage.

We will continue to explore the possibilities of any future expansion potential.

Teaching and Learning:

Following on from our OFSTED inspection back in March the schools focus will now be to address the areas highlighted in the report.

This will partly be achieved through a new School Development Plan to help drive the future direction of the school.

Tracking of pupil progress through the school will also become a key focus.

Resources:

As is often highlighted in the media,

school finances are being stretched and any financial decisions need to be carefully weighed up.

We are pleased to report that over the summer the pathway was widened and renewed at the rear of Lower Key Stage 1 which had fallen in to a poor state of repair. It will now allow children to benefit from more outdoor learning.

We also needed to change the school dinner's provider due to a sudden jump in provision costs. This was achieved within a short time frame mainly thanks to the schools Business Manager, Mrs Pagan.

The New Year will see a shakeup of how finances are allocated to all schools and we wait to see the impact this will have on the school budget.



Drop-off / Pick-ups

Please **do not** use the school entrance to drop children off or to turn the car around in as it is DANGEROUS and OBSTRUCTS the entrance preventing safe entry and exit from the school.

The school continues to get complaints (complete with photographic evidence) of inconsiderate parking all of which require the school to spend time placating our neighbours and the school has unfortunately been forced to write to all parents on this matter.

May we ask you to show consideration to others, especially the local residents when parking. It portrays the school in a very bad light if parents are rude and aggressive – even if you feel you are in the right.

Finally, please do not park opposite the school crossing patrol as this endangers children and parents trying to get to and from the school on the busy Wingfield road.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated as it affects the safety of everyone.

Governor Profile



Father Thomas Finnegan

As the new Parish Priest of St. John the Baptist Church, it will be my delight to serve as a Foundation Governor of St. John's Catholic Primary School.

It will also be my delight to serve as Chaplain to the school and work closely in the parish, school and home partnership.

I hope to get to know all the children, staff, parents and other Governors very soon.

I have been a Governor of many schools over the 22 years of my priesthood and I hope I can be of some help and support to St. John's Catholic Primary School

Thank You

Thank you to all the school staff (including the school office) for their hard work in continuing to provide excellent education and support to all the children attending St John's.

School Improvement Fund

A valuable additional source of income for the school is from donations given to the school by parents and relatives of children.

This enables additional projects to be undertaken directly benefiting children at school. If you are able, please complete the form located under *Parents -> Useful Links -> Gift Aid For School Payments* on the school website or pop into the office. Thank you.