



"Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration"

Governors' Newsletter – Summer Term 2019

I cannot believe yet another year has flown past but what a year it's been! The usual challenges in terms of our school budget continue and I will come to that later, but I feel it's only right to start with the very many things that we have to celebrate.

Firstly, I have to congratulate all the staff and children throughout the school who have worked so hard to achieve all that they have this year. It's not just the headline news of the SATs results & Phonics screening, but the evidence from every year group of the progress that has been made – the results are something that we should all be proud of, but especially the teachers and the children.



The Mass on 27th June to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of our school was a very special occasion that our whole community was able to be part of. It was lovely to see all our current children and staff as well as many staff, parents and children from years gone by. To have Fr Willie and Msgr Seamus join Fr Nigel and Bishop John, was lovely. I'm sure the photos from the day will become part of this school's history for generations to look at in years to come. And if anyone hasn't had a chance to see the artwork 'Tree of Hands' that was created by everyone in school to celebrate our 80 years, you really should! It's on the wall outside the ICT Suite and is really very special.

Something else which must be celebrated is our new IT hardware and infrastructure. I know it's not exciting, but it was a serious financial commitment that could not have happened without support from our fantastic parents and also the Parent's Association. Governors spoke to class teachers on Governors Day (27th June) and also watched presentations from Mr Kennedy and some of the children. The feedback from everyone was how much the improved IT provision has impacted:

- The children's access to the IT curriculum and various apps and tools to enhance their learning across a wide range of subjects
- IT life around the school, from the staff in the school office through to the class teachers.

Everyone in school is delighted with the transformation that our investment has made, and we are pleased to be able to report this back to you and say an enormous THANK YOU!

There have of course been many more achievements by individuals, teams and classes during the year, but for fear of missing someone out, we say to you all, congratulations!

The Governing Body during 2018/19

The Governors have had a busy year. We began with a round of recruitment for 2 new Foundation governors and 2 new parent governors. We were impressed with and grateful for the many people that offered their time and skills to serve as a governor and there will be opportunities again in the future for those that were unsuccessful this year. All our new governors – Susan, Sean, Louis and Clare have settled in to their roles really well and Clare has very kindly agreed to be interviewed for this newsletter:

1. What made you want to become a governor at St Edmund's School?

I wanted to give something back to the school and the community, Also, I have 2 children at St. Edmund's who love being at school, so I was interested in knowing more about the school and how it provided for the children.

2. What skills do you have that might be useful to the GB at St Edmund's?

I can review, interpret and draw conclusions from data, I like working in a team and I'm always willing to learn new things. As a parent I understand the importance of ensuring our children receive a great education alongside the right level of pastoral care. Part of my role is to bring a 'consumer' point of view to the GB.

3. Have you been able to use these skills yet?

Yes, I am on the Curriculum and Achievement Committee and this involves reviewing attainment and progress data and asking questions to ensure the school is on track to meet its targets. The governing board also review and endorse school policies so there have been opportunities to input here to.

4. What do you think is special about St Edmund's school?

St Edmund's is a school that is much loved by its children, parents, staff and governors. I collated the recent parent, teacher and children feedback and was genuinely moved by the overwhelmingly positive comments the school received. I have only been a governor for a short time but it is evident that the well-being of the children is at the heart of all the decisions the staff make. Reading the Year 6 exit interview feedback really endorsed the fact that the children feel secure and cared for at St. Edmund's.



5. What do you gain from volunteering as a governor?

I feel happy and proud to be a governor at St. Edmund's. I'm pleased to be contributing to school life and enjoy working with the other members of the governing board. I've gained insight and knowledge of the education system and a greater understanding of the challenges schools face in today's world.

Over the Summer we will all complete a skills audit and so we can make a training plan for the new school year and make sure we are up to speed with all the knowledge we need to do our job well.

Curriculum & Achievement

Domini Bingham is Chair of the Curriculum & Achievement Committee and summarised the year as follows: This past year the Curriculum and Achievement committee have received presentations on some exciting school initiatives; Thinking Maps, where we saw examples used in RE, English Maths and Science and phonics support. This year too we gained an understanding of the work being done on auditing the interventions used to support children with additional needs. There has also been a focus on writing across the year groups including an initiative to increase moderation of books throughout the year.

The Committee also have a focus on additional support in booster interventions in Maths across Year 4-6. We have continued our emphasis on attainment and progress for PPG and SEND children to include 1:1 maths tutoring in Year 5. We have also had a focus on Year 3 children who are on track to meet individual targets, showing good progress. Year 6 have had booster sessions across the year. The Lead School Performance Advisor, Matt Brown, from the AfC undertook training with the committee members on understanding the large amount of data that the school collects or is collected on it. We hope this training will be provided each year to support our decision-making.

Resources

Gary Cole is Chair of the Resources Committee and summarises the work of that committee. This year we have continued to focus on achieving as much as possible with our budget and ensuring that the progress and attainment of the children is unaffected by budget restrictions, as well as monitoring the workload & well-being of everyone in our school community. We have looked at our school buildings and premises and made decisions about upkeep and refurbishment within the available funding and budget, and we have monitored the impact of our new IT contract and provision. We spent much time discussing additional parental contributions to assist with the funding of classroom materials and whilst this is something none of us wants to introduce, we understand that it is a sad inevitability of our current funding situation.

Spreading the news about St Edmund's

Clare Jones is part of the Marketing Working Party and here is her summary of what has been happening this year: We have spent the last half of the school year thinking of ways we can better promote our school, while we know St. Edmund's is a fantastic school we became aware that we needed to let the wider community know about us too. We collected feedback from our children, our parents and our staff and have used this feedback in many ways to positively promote our school, the feedback is used on promotional materials, the school Twitter and Facebook pages and our school website.

Using your feedback, we also reviewed the schools Mission Statement to make sure it's still relevant for today and the future - we will introduce this in September. We have made improvements to the school website and our on-line presence in general and are considering a bigger sign at the front of the carpark to make our school more visible to our community.

Our school choir sang at this year's St George's Day Parade and the St. Marks Choir Festival, we are thrilled to have our school represented at community events and will continue to look for opportunities to do this.



Please follow us on Twitter and Facebook and spread the word, St. Edmund's is an amazing school loved by its children, parents and staff!



St Edmund's Primary School & Nursery Whitton



StEdmund's@TW2

Money, money, money!



An enormous THANK YOU to all the families that have been able to support our school financially during the past year, whether this is through the Governors Fund, the Christmas Raffle or the Spring Auction which we helped the PA to organise. Your support is greatly appreciated by the staff and governors and we could not achieve what we do without your help.

As Gary already mentioned, school finances continue to be a source of stress for all school leaders and governors as we try and continue to provide the same level and quality of provision for the children, but on a budget that doesn't grow to match rising costs and reduced local authority services. We will continue to explore all ways of saving money and spending what we do have wisely and most efficiently but I would urge all families who currently do not contribute to our voluntary Governors Fund, to consider if they are able to. It is currently a minority of families that contribute, but the reality is that ALL children receive the benefits. Even if you are only able to contribute a small amount, as the saying goes, every little helps! A statement detailing all that your donated money has achieved is attached and sent with our gratitude.

Over the Summer

During the Summer break, we will be refurbishing the year 6 classrooms (thanks to the money donated at the Auction) and will also resurface the playground and fill in the final missing bits of secure fencing. It will be lovely for year 6 next year to have a nicely refurbished and fresh environment to work in and for the whole school to be able to play safely on a new playground surface. Thank you for your help in achieving these things.

Goodbye



We have to say goodbye to Mrs Miles who is leaving us after 13 years. Mrs Miles has such a long association with our school, right back from when she came here as a child, but we wish her every happiness as she takes it a bit easier for a while and hope she'll be back to see us soon.



Also goodbye to Miss Maynard who has been with us for 3 years. Miss Maynard is taking up a receptionist post at one of the local surgeries so if you need to pop along for an appointment it will be nice to be greeted by a friendly face.

Of course, we must say goodbye to another year group of children that are moving on to secondary school – they have worked hard, and we hope they are all proud of their achievements and feel ready and excited as they move on to their new schools – we wish each and every one of them a happy and successful future.



And to other children and families that are moving on – we wish you all well and hope that you keep in touch.

And so it goes on! The governors wish you all a very well-deserved break over the summer and look forward to seeing everyone back again in September as well as welcoming new staff, children and families to our community.