

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT 2014

It has been a busy year as always. We have been taking steps to pursue our 5 to 10 year plan to re-build the school and make it a 2 form entry school. This would provide an additional 15 spaces per year which we could fill now if we had the room. We have just received confirmation that the Diocese of Westminster is willing to support us in this endeavour. We are busy putting in a bid for funding. This will involve careful negotiation with many interested parties. If we were able to achieve this goal we would not have to worry about the roof that desperately needs replacing; the boiler and heating system that needs replacing; electrics and many other items in our school that we do not have the funding to replace. In the mean time, we use the money that we receive annually to keep the building standing and to make improvements when we can afford it. Most of the detailed work is carried out in our Sub-Committees and by our individual Governors with specific responsibilities. We meet as a Full Governing Body twice per term to make decisions as a corporate group. A short report from each Sub-Committee Chair follows:

Premises, Finance, Health & Safety and Critical Incident Committee

It is the responsibility of this Committee to provide assurance and monitoring of the spending of the school within the current budget year by reviewing the monthly accounts. This knowledge is put to good use when approving the 3 year Budget to be presented to Herts County Council. The Committee also reviews all contracts and insurances to maintain best value for money and potential savings for the school. In the last 12 months the committee has been heavily involved in maintaining the school premises in terms of improving lighting, drainage, playground repairs, roof, hall and extension of resources room and, as importantly, producing bids for available monies from the local authority for these projects. There is a continuous review of all issues to provide a safe school. It is the committee's role to be in contact with any external parties on issues which could potentially impact the safety of the school, including road safety. In addition, the committee tries to control energy emissions by a variety of projects including energy conservation, collections of materials for re-cycling and reduction in the use of vehicular transport to and from school e.g. Walk to School initiatives and the Walking Bus.

Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee reviewed and amended the School's Admission policies in light of Westminster Diocese and Local Authority requirements. The Committee also administered the School's admissions criteria for applications for Nursery and for Reception places for 2014-15. There are 45 places in Reception for which we received 90 applications. We very much regretted that we could not offer places to all the Catholic families or families with siblings in the school who applied this year. We were able to offer a place to all who applied for Nursery though as there are 45 places and 43 applications. Nursery and Reception places are considered separately because Nursery is not compulsory and some parents opt for a full time Nursery due to work commitments. Attendance at our nursery therefore never guarantees a place in Reception.

Personnel Committee

The legal status of our school is a Voluntary Aided Church School. As such, the Governors are the employers of every member of staff. We are responsible for hiring and firing and performance management and pay of all staff, including our Headteacher. This is a huge responsibility (requiring confidentiality) and is very time consuming.

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee's main role is to review, challenge and support teaching and learning at St Joseph's school. We meet three times a year and, in the course of a two year cycle, review every subject taught in the school and the Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND) provision. We also consider school policies such as Assessment and Children Looked After before they are approved and placed on the school website. To carry out a subject review, we examine the policy, results, development plan, reports on work sampling, differentiation, training, resources and any other updates submitted by the subject leader prior to the meeting. At the meeting itself, we question the subject leader about their work and any issues arising from the above documentation and interview another teacher about their experience of teaching this subject. We also speak to two children about each subject and have them show us their work and explain it to us. I find this last part of the process particularly rewarding; it is always a joy to speak to our enthusiastic and engaged pupils about their learning. The subjects we have reviewed this year are Maths, RE, English, SEND, Science and ICT.

Promotions & Publicity Committee

Along with the usual updating of information, such as the Prospectus, and encouraging positive publicity in the local and Catholic papers, the Committee's main objective this year has been looking at the various options available to create a new school website. Although this is still in the planning stage we are hoping to have it up and running early in the new academic year.