

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

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“Striving to be the best we can guided by the light of Christ”

Welcome to our Easter Newsletter!

Spring has definitely arrived and it is wonderful to see the children enjoying the St Francis garden. If you haven't had a chance to visit it yet, I would thoroughly recommend you do so – it is a lovely peaceful oasis in the playground for everyone to enjoy. I hope as well that you managed to catch one of the performances of the Jungle Book. A huge thanks to Mrs McGrath and her team of staff and parent volunteers for putting on another wonderful play, and an even bigger congratulations to the cast and crew for a hugely successful event. We are lucky at St Bon's to have such enthusiasm for drama, and the facilities to put on a play each year.

Ofsted Inspection

You will all have been aware that inspectors from Ofsted visited St Bon's during the week before half term – while a visit was on the cards, it is always sprung on the school at the last minute and can be nerve-wracking for everyone involved in preparing for the inspectors. The Governors work closely with Mrs Charles and the rest of the senior management team to ensure that we are all ready for when the inspectors arrive, and the professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm of all the staff shone through the very positive report that was published in March.

I think one of the key elements of the report for me was the comments the inspector made about the emphasis that the staff have on nurturing pupils' wider personal development, as well as their academic well-being. This to me has always been one of the strengths of St Bon's – academic attainment underpins everything that we do at the school, but our dedicated staff provides so much more than that for our children.

As the inspector recognized, “Striving to be the best we can, guided by the light of Christ”, is prominent, not just visually but in underpinning everyone's work. The shared commitment to educating the ‘whole child’ shines through wherever you step. It is a distinctive feature of the school and was one of the strengths that parents singled out when I spoke to them before school started.” She went on to say that “Parents appreciate the caring and supportive atmosphere in the school and many who added written comments to their questionnaires praised the way that the school promotes pupils' emotional well-being and safety.”

It was gratifying as well that the inspector recognised the input that the Governors have in working with the senior management team. The Governors are all volunteers who have taken on the role because they are passionate about the education that our children receive at St Bon's, and we look forward to continuing our work to make the school the best environment we can for our children's education.

Jacob Preisner, Chair of Governors

"We proclaim the resurrection of Christ when his light illuminates the dark moments of our existence, and we are able to share it with others"
Pope Francis



R.E. in the School

We have a wonderful school. We have fantastic children and amazing staff. It is a great place to be. At the heart of our school and what makes it especially wonderful is its Catholic ethos. This ethos shapes everything about our school, from the physical signs on our buildings to the way the staff go about their work, the way the children are treated and the way they are taught to live their lives. In the Catholic Church, the parish school plays an essential role. The church teaches that parents and carers are the first teacher of their children in matters of faith and morals; that is every parent and carer's right and duty. But the church provides schools to assist in this mission. Our school offers an environment where each child is treated as a person, with gifts and weakness to be developed.

A Catholic school differs from other schools in the way it educates children. The Catholic ethos aims to look at the whole child, to see them as a person. It can be very tempting in today's educational climate to treat a child as a commodity that has to get amazing grades. A school can simply become a results factory. But when you look at forming a person rather than simply pushing for grades you create a special school environment. That is what exists at St Bon's. Our staff go to great lengths to teach the Catholic faith in the school. I am in constant admiration of the non-religious and non-Catholic members of staff who embrace our ethos and teach the Catholic curriculum, making it their own.

Religious education at St Bon's is at the heart of teaching and learning. All schools get inspected by Ofsted, but Catholic schools have an extra inspection, known as a 'Section 48'. This is where the Diocesan inspectors come in and examine the quality of delivery of the R.E. curriculum and look at how deeply the Catholic ethos is lived within the school. At our last inspection we received an 'Outstanding' award for R.E. and ethos. It is my hope that we continue that work and achieve that recognition again. The staff work so hard in our school and as parents, carers and governors I hope we are all very grateful for that. As we know the stars of any school are the pupils. I hope St Bon's will go from strength to strength in making their school experience as wonderful as possible.

Fr Tom Smith, Foundation Governor and Parish Priest, St Bonaventure's Church



Pupil Premium

For those of you that don't know me, I am a Secondary School Teacher at Winterbourne International Academy. A part of my role is Data and identification and support of our vulnerable groups, which includes Pupil Premium students. From speaking to other parents, it is my understanding that many of you have heard of the phrase 'pupil premium' but where less clear as to what this actually meant. Please find below a brief overview of what I understand Pupil Premium to mean, and why it is so important we, as Governors look to support these children.

Pupil Premium- The Facts

- After Prior attainment, poverty is the most important factor in predicting a child's future life chances.
- The highest early achievers from deprived backgrounds are overtaken by lower achievers from advantaged backgrounds by age 7.
- A non-deprived pupil is more than twice as likely to go on to study at university as their deprived peers.

Who are Pupil Premium students?

- Those known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the previous six years, as indicated in any termly or annual school census.
- Children looked-after by the local authority for one day or more;
- Those adopted from care, or all those who left care through other routes

Why Free school meals

Pupil premium has been targeted at pupils from low income homes using known eligibility for FSM as a proxy, since all the evidence and facts make it abundantly clear that poverty is the single most important factor in predicting a child's future life chances (DfE Website Oct 2012)

How can we make a difference to disadvantaged pupils

- Sharing success
- Accountability
- Performance measures
- Effective governance
- Evidence based
- Strategies
- Funding

Pupil Premium Funding 2016/17

- Pupils in Year Reception to Year 6 (Ages 4-11) receive **£1,320 per child**
- Pupils in Years 7-11 recorded as FSM (Free School Meals) (Ages 11-16) receive **£935 per child**



“According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”

1 Peter 1:3

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Spending the premium?

- Schools should have a plan to spend the pupil premium to raise standards and minimise the difference in performance between disadvantaged pupils and others in the cohort
- Schools are free to spend pupil premium as they see fit. They are accountable for how they have used funding to support disadvantaged pupils and its impact.

Success with pupil premium

- Ensure teachers know who 'disadvantaged' are
- Ring-fence funding so that it is spent on the target group of pupils
- Analyse which pupils were underachieving particularly in English and Mathematics, and why
- Draw on research/evidence from their own/others' experience to allocate funding to activities most likely impact on improving achievement
- Allocate best teachers to teach intervention groups
- Use achievement data frequently to check that interventions are working and adjust accordingly.

Pupil premium at St Bon's

Details of the school's strategy on pupil premium and how it is spent to support pupils throughout St Bon's is available on the school's website:

<http://www.st-bonaventures.bristol.sch.uk/school-information/sports-grant-and-pupil-premium/index.1.html>

Chris Jackson, Foundation Governor and Chair of MECP Committee

And finally ...

- Just enough room to say thank you to all our wonderful staff, fantastic pupils and brilliant parents and carers for all your support and hard work this term. You are all amazing and we are incredibly proud to be part of this School. Have a wonderful Easter!
- As always, do feel free to let us have your ideas for areas you'd like us to cover in the future by contacting our Clerk.