

# GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

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

## Notes from the Chair

Christmas and New Year are receding fast and yet we still feel the benefit of those two festive events.

It is often said that Christmas is for children, but judging by how the faces of grown-ups also light up during Christmas Day, perhaps the day means far more to them than we realise. Personally, I love looking at the scene of the crib; despite its familiarity and simplicity it holds enormous redeeming power. New Year's Day gives us the chance to re-invent ourselves and attempt a new start; more than a few of my colleagues have said that they feel reinvigorated. So, despite being several weeks late, let me wish you all a Happy New Year.

The new year began with HM Government having a very large majority in the Commons. I await their new budget with expectation that they will make good on promises made before the election and that education will be the recipient of a generous settlement. You will not be surprised if I state that our children's education should have been better funded than it has been in recent years. It would also be good to have a vision for education; one always wonder if a vision is needed until the day that you do and there isn't one.

When you read this, the first stage of 'Brexit' will be over and the UK will be on its way out of the EU. Irrespective of what we all think about it, we have to recognise that many families in our school will be directly affected by the process and perhaps regard it with much concern. To them I want to re-iterate that they remain very welcome and that we hope that they will continue to be a key part of the School community. At the risk of paraphrasing Fr Tom or Fr Colin, it is worth reminding ourselves that since the school is part of the family of the Church it recognises no boundaries.

The pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in the middle of their preparation for their end of Key Stage standard tests also known as 'SATs'. I would like to encourage everybody to do their best and to excel their own expectations.

I would like to thank Mr Giovanni Maniglia, one of our longest serving Foundation Governors for all his hard work all round and particularly as Health and Safety Governor. His connection with the School goes back quite a number of years because not only did his children attend the School but so did he. In fact there is a cupboard off the hall, which should be named after him. Thank you as well to Ewa Bubnicka-Gyde who has stepped down as a Foundation Governor after 18 months and has made a great contribution to the governing body in that time – we will miss her expertise and good humour, even at 8am finance meetings.

**Eddie Romero**

**Chair, Governing Body**

*“You cannot love  
God without  
loving your  
neighbour and  
you cannot love  
your neighbour  
without loving  
God.”  
Pope Francis*



## Governor visits

As well as regular meetings and reports from Mrs Ballantine and others around the school, the governors carry out a number of visits throughout the school year (known as “AGMEP visits” – annual governor monitoring and evaluation programme). Each visit has a particular theme, whether that be a particular subject such as RE, or an area of operation such as SEN provision. The governors gain a great deal from the reports that are prepared after these visits, and were interested to hear from the staff on their take on the value of governor visits to the school. Jenny Kittow, a parent governor, sat down with Mrs Addleman, year 4 teacher and Geography lead, to find out more.

*Why do you think it's important for governors to spend time at St Bon's during the school day?*

Only by coming into school, does a person get an insight of what a school day really looks like. It's a small snapshot, but by being in the school, talking to teachers and pupils and visiting classes, the governors gain a greater understanding of what life at St Bon's is actually like.

*From your perspective as a classroom teacher, in what ways are governor AGMEP visits to the school useful?*

They are useful in that they encourage us to analyse our practice and how best we can develop and improve it. By examining our time in the classroom and putting it under the microscope, we can sharpen and refine what we do. It is good to be challenged and scrutinised (even if it does not always feel this way), because it helps us to learn and become better practitioners. And of course, it is helpful preparation for future Ofsted visits!

*As Geography subject leader, you've been involved in many of the discussions we have before and after the classroom visits. Can you describe how these discussions have an impact on your work as a subject leader?*

I have found these discussions extremely helpful, in that they provide me with validation that we are doing a good job. They also provide me with constructive feedback and suggestions of how to move the subject forward and further develop it.

*As well as AGMEP visits, what other parts of the school day would you encourage governors to see?*

A school assembly is always worth attending, particular the Praise assemblies, and seeing the children's engagement in these. From a staff perspective, governors would always be welcome at a staff meeting!

Many thanks to Mrs Addleman for her time – the governors welcome all feedback and will be taking her suggestions forward!

**The Governors of St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School**  
 Egerton Road  
 Bishopston  
 Bristol  
 BS7 8HP

**Phone:**  
 0117 3532830

**Email:**  
 clerk.st.bonaventures  
 @bristol-schools.uk

**Website:**

<http://www.st-bonaventures.bristol.sch.uk/>

## Love thy neighbour

The Governors heard at a recent meeting how this theme has been taken up enthusiastically by the children, who appear to be taking the positive message on board. We enjoy seeing how the teachers have woven this into lessons and look forward to seeing how it develops over the next term. It is a very positive message that the entire school community should take on board.



As governors we are often complimented by visitors to the school of the atmosphere of respect that permeates the school, and this is always good to hear. However, we are also on the receiving end of some complaints from our neighbours that suggest we might be slipping once we are beyond the school boundary. Please can we encourage everybody to make an effort to demonstrate that respect to all.

*“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.*

*The second resembles it: You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets too.”*

*Matthew 22:37-40*