

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome
 A Cause for Celebration
 Update from our MECP
 Committee
 Collaboration with other
 schools: New Educational
 Framework
 Working with Parents to
 maximise learning outcomes
 for their children
 And Finally



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

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

As we look back at the 2015/16 academic year, it has been a year of challenges but also a year where we can celebrate the successes of both our pupils and each and every member of our wider school community's resilience to change. We may come from a diverse range of backgrounds and nationalities but the School is united as one family, which has no boundaries.

We wish you all a fabulous break over the Summer holidays – let's hope for a bit more sunshine than rain and we look forward to welcoming you back in September!
 The Governing Body of St Bon's

A Cause for Celebration

As the school year comes to a close, the attainments of our children can give us real cause for celebration. The governors have now seen the results of both the KS2 tests



and the teacher assessments for 2015/16 ... and they make great reading! It is clear that St Bon's has risen to the challenges of a new national curriculum, increased national floor standards and a new national testing system and turned in a great performance. We are truly striving to be the best we can guided by the light of Christ.

It is difficult to leave out some examples at the expense of others especially when all the results are good. However, the performance of our Reception and Year 6 children deserve special mention.

In Reception, the percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD – see below) in 2015/16 increased to 82.5 percent; **a rise of 13.5 percentage points over the previous year.** The moderator from Bristol City Council confirmed the judgements of our two Reception teachers (and actually moved some scores upwards) and praised staff for their use of exemplification materials and for their understanding of the EYFS profile requirements.

Children are said to have achieved a GLD at the end of EYFS if they achieve the expected level in the early learning goals in both the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Our children taking the national end of Key Stage 2 tests also did everyone proud and remember that the tests were harder and it was late in the day before schools were given guidance on how to prepare. Despite this, the results at St Bon's were what we would have hoped for indicating that the children should go forward to secondary education with confidence.

Update from our MECP Committee

This term we revisited the School as part of the AGMEP visits programme undertaken by our school governors. This visit was to examine Leadership and Management. The first part of our meeting was to talk through the effective use of teams at St Bon's and how this has naturally evolved into coaching quads. There is so much great practice at St Bon's; it was a joy to hear how so many staff are becoming involved in leadership and development opportunities. We were informed by Mrs Charles and Mrs Ballantine how staff have formed Coaching Quads themselves, and have examined diverse aspects of Teaching and Learning, all with the intention of improving learning opportunities for our children. The next steps are to introduce coaching champions who will disseminate their research and information back to other staff members throughout the year.

Secondly, we were informed of the use of 'Bluesky', which is a self-evaluation and monitoring online tool to support staff appraisals. This has enabled staff to routinely upload and update their performance management targets, share good practice, request CPD and offer support to other staff members through forums and coaching quad discussion groups. Overall, we were incredibly impressed how our staff have embraced BlueSky and have used it effectively throughout the year.

Thirdly, we were kept abreast with how the School is nurturing a team approach and community through developing a culture of group work. This has included the Staff Choir, music groups and a Staff Netball Team! For me, this demonstrates a feeling of collective 'buy-in' from the staff and shows just how happy our staff are, which is fantastic, because we are very happy with the School and its staff too!

Fourthly we met with Miss Cousins to talk through yet more impressive practice from the St Bon's staff. Miss Cousins explained to us how they have used the 'YETI' approach to develop Growth Mindset in our students. Assemblies have been presented to students about how even when tasks are hard, they shouldn't give up as they are not there 'YET-I'. Students have designed their own YETI's and have begun to develop increased resilience to tasks and activities through remembering the YETI mantra. We discussed, tongue in cheek, how we could get this concept of Growth Mindset trending on Twitter, but I haven't as yet seen #YETI trending!

Finally, we did discuss the big 'O', as in Ofsted. We are now due an inspection, which I am positive will go brilliantly. We are safe in the knowledge that our students are making fantastic progress, they are happy, safe and content and enjoy coming to School. We saw from walking around how attentive and enthused our students are in all of their lessons, and this is testament to the hard work of the staff and fantastic leadership from Mrs Charles and her Senior Leadership Team.

Many thanks and have a great Summer!

Chris Jackson - Chair of MECP

*"Faith is a flame
that grows
stronger the
more it is shared
and passed on"*
Pope Francis



Collaboration with other schools: New Educational Framework

As you may all be aware, the educational framework in this country is undergoing considerable change; there has been significant coverage in the press of the present administration's wish to have all schools converting into academies. Although recent announcements stated that schools will not be forced to become academies, we believe that there is unlikely to be an alternative going forward. Central to the government's plans to make savings and balance budgets is the elimination of the role of Local (education) Authorities. Their monitoring and scrutiny role will be taken up by Regional Education Commissioners, a role which is already well established. Funding will be provided directly from central government but imperatives of efficiency will drive schools towards what in effect are Academy Trusts.

At the same time, you will know that we are about to complete the first full year of operation under both the new National Curriculum and new Assessment Criteria. The latter have been under construction and continuous modification throughout the year and, in my view, the guidance offered has been late and lacked sufficient clarity.

All schools are being encouraged to collaborate more strongly with each other than hitherto. Our School is part of the North Bristol Hub of Catholic Schools which is building on the existing collaboration between the headteachers. This grouping also aims for the very best academic outcomes, foster creativity and, in addition, to sustain and enrich the Catholic provision.

The School has also continued collaborating with the former Bristol N3 cluster; this has repackaged itself as the NW24 partnership comprising 24 schools of the geographical area of north-west Bristol. The aims of course are unchanged, where the schools seek to obtain the best academic outcomes for the children through sharing best practice and moderation.

Many schools are experiencing budgetary pressures as, I may venture to say, the educational settlement has not been particularly generous. Furthermore, in the short term, as more maintained schools convert to academies, the costs of support services borne by the remaining schools escalate thereby adding additional pressure on budgets and encouraging the exodus. As an aside, I have been informed recently that at least two neighbouring LAs will cease to have their statutory duties from next year.

At the moment, we have no specific plans to become members of a Multi-Academy Trust but this is a very likely outcome given what I wrote in the first paragraph. We are working with the Diocese and neighbouring Catholic schools to prepare ourselves for the coming changes to retain the very best of our current provision and make the most of any opportunities that may arise.

Eddie Romero – Chair of Governors



*“And we know that all
things work together
for good to them that
love God, to them who
are the called according
to His purpose”*

Romans 8:28

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Working with parents to maximise learning outcomes for their children

It is a given that our mission at St Bon's is to secure the best learning outcome for all our children. To have the best chance of achieving this, the governors recognise that there needs to be a variety of effective School-Parent partnerships. Therefore, we are always delighted when we hear of initiatives that reinforce and build on the partnership processes already in place.

Very recently, it was my pleasure to attend the very first meeting for parents whose children may have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). This meeting was facilitated by the St Bon's SEND Coordinator, Liz Kurzik, and followed the successful launch of a similar forum* for the parents of children for whom English is an additional language.

Around fifteen parents attended the meeting and were able to hear about the positive experiences of two parents and to obtain advice and information on the Government's 2014 SEND Code of Practice from Miss Kurzik. As a governor, I was especially delighted to hear one of the parent speakers say that "*St Bon's is always open to new ideas and initiatives and that her child loved coming to school*".

Those attending the meeting clearly found it a very positive experience and future meetings will follow once Miss Kurzik has received feedback on what will work best for parents. I would strongly encourage all interested parents to attend and, at the very least, get the opportunity to share ideas and concerns in a friendly setting over a cup of coffee and a biscuit (though the Wagon Wheels did seem a lot smaller than I remember!). For more details please speak to Miss Kurzik in the first instance.

**the EAL Group, which is led by Tiba Preisner, has been going since February 2015 and now has thirty parents on its mailing list. The aim is to provide support and encouragement for parents and the group meets every Thursday during term time to discuss topical issues. The meetings generally start with a chat over a cuppa and then go on to cover a theme or topic selected by the group. There are plans to put up a web page on the St Bon's website and to invite teachers along to the meetings. Because of the support it provides the group is very popular but new members are always very welcome.*

Kevin Molloy – SEND Governor



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 year. You are all amazing and we are incredibly proud to be part of this School.
- 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.