



# Governors Newsletter



## St Thomas More Catholic Primary School



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### Welcome!

Welcome back to another school year or for some of you, your first term with us here at St Thomas More School. In this newsletter we hope to update you on the activity of the Governors in addition to informing you of important news and events. We are proud of the children of St Thomas More and are continually impressed not only the educational achievements of our children but by their wonderful behaviour and caring nature.

### New Position.....Join Our Team!

Contact us to find out more about joining the team:

[chairstm@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:chairstm@dbmac.org.uk)

The academy committee, also known as school governors, are made up of 8 foundation governors (who are members of the parish) 2 Staff governors (elected) and 2 parent governors (elected). We have recently restructured the committee and are delighted to announce that there is an **opening for 1 parent governor. We also have 3 Foundation Governor openings.** If you are a member of the St Thomas More Parish you can request an application from the email listed below.

We have an enthusiastic committee with a range of experience with the majority of members having joined in the last two years. Why become a parent school governor?<sup>1</sup>



1. **Make a difference:** you have an opportunity to have an impact on education and positively influence children's lives.
2. **Get to know the school and community.**
3. **Develop and gain new skills.**

More information is available online, in the school office and via email: [chairstm@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:chairstm@dbmac.org.uk). Please note that the school supports governors by providing free accredited training for the position.

If you are interested in the position please contact us via email or submit an application directly to the school office. If you are also a member of the parish you can apply to become a foundation governor there is also a position available. Further information available via email.



On the first day of school the governors aimed to brighten up the playground with welcome back balloons!

## Governors Impact

Over the past year Governors have been involved in many activities below is a summary of what we have done across the year:

### Learning Walks



One of the important activities that governors undertake is a Learning Walk. This involves attending the school and spending time in the classrooms. Already this year the learning walks have begun. Here is a summary of some that were done last year. Over the last year Sally-Anne Reckless looked at our children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the classroom and with the SEN Coordinator. Emma Rhodes attended the Foundation Year and looked at the learning environment, the teaching of children and children's views on their school. Stephen Finn and Sophie Upellini spent a considerable amount of time looking at health and safety across the school and on the back of this organized the multiple school clean-up sessions.



Nickie Rogan and Sue Pollard jumped on the school bus and spent a night at Hill End with the Year 3 and students. She reported to us about the fantastic fun the children had exploring nature, gobbling food, sipping hot chocolate. Emma Rhodes also helped with meal preparation. Thank you to all the teachers and assistants who help make the overnight trips so safe and successful.

### The Governor's Cup of Catholicity

Last school years Leavers Assembly saw the introduction of the school's first award for Catholicity. What does it mean to have faith and how can we show our faith to others? Think of the word **LOVE.....**

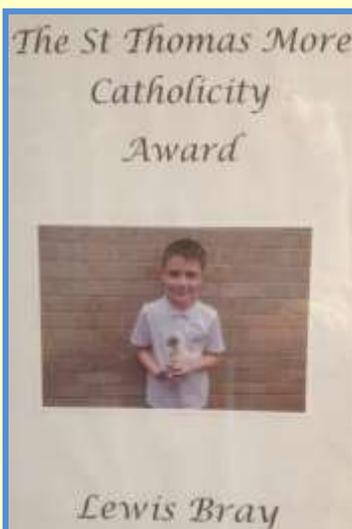
**L stands for LISTEN** Listening to others helps us to see where we can make a difference: help, learn and share.

**O stands for OPENNESS** Being open to learning, faith and understanding not only the catholic religion but other religions is important.

**V stands for VOICE** Our voice must be heard, sometimes that can be a challenge in today's world.

**E stands for giving EFFORT** Sometimes choosing to enrich our faith takes effort and sometimes that can be hard.

This cup was inspired by Ciaran Ward a year six student who embodied these principles. He is now in High School and we hope to welcome him back in 2017 to help present next year's award. The cup was awarded to Lewis Bray who is now in year six and continues to show the principles of L O V E.



## Finances and Funding

After a tough year last year the school has managed to get the finances to a stronger position. But in order to provide a rich educational environment for our children further investments need to be made to help our teachers deliver outstanding education and allow our children to play and learn in a safe, exciting environment.

### How is the school funded?

**INCOME:** All schools receive a set amount of money per child from the government to run the school. Extra funding is provided to help certain groups of children and smaller amounts in the form of specific grants (i.e. sports). The school can generate some income from other areas such as nursery places.

**EXPENDITURE:** As part of an academy we give a percentage of the per pupil amount above, to the running of our school through the academy. The remaining funding is then divided across our expenditure areas. The main costs are staffing, maintenance (incl heating), supplies, insurance, ICT, and cleaning. The bottom line is that all schools (and in particular voluntary aided schools like ours) face a battle each year to balance our costs with income especially with buildings and grounds needing constant care and upkeep. Over the next few months we plan to make some big improvements to the playground including new adventure style play equipment and to completely redo the outside area in the Foundation stage.

**How can you help?** We rely on fundraising to improve learning tools, school grounds and buildings as our income unfortunately isn't enough to fund all the children's needs. If you have any fundraising ideas, want to help with events or hold a brand new event of your own please contact The Friends of St Thomas More on [friendsstm@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:friendsstm@dbmac.org.uk). The **Foundation Team** have organised a **working party** to renovate the outdoor space for the children. During this meeting they have devised a list of small jobs and large fundraising activities. Please contact them if you want to get involved: [stthomasmore@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:stthomasmore@dbmac.org.uk).

Thanks very much to all of our committed parents, families and carers – it's only with your support that we can make our school a better place for our children to be and learn.

### Improvements made.....

At the end of last term Stephen Finn and Sophie Upellini with many parents came together on 3 different days to clear out, clean up and update the classrooms. Old picnic benches, tyres, and tables were removed. Curtains in the classrooms were taken down and windows were cleaned. The new PE shed is only there because of hard working dads who erected the building on a foundation kindly provided by Zygygy Koceila and the infrastructure part funded by The Friends. The School Hall has new colourful benches and tables replacing the old tables and chairs, which have been a hit! This was funded by the Governor's Fund and Friends.



*Our Adventure Playground is currently not fit for purpose and we hope to improve this and the rest of the outdoor areas this school year.*



New dining hall tables and benches  
The new PE Shed



## School Caretaker

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Mick is currently our school handyman and works at our school and St Gregory the Great in Cowley. **We are hoping to recruit a full time caretaker** who can be in school to open and close it as well as keep on top of the security, lighting, heating, maintenance and health and safety around the school. If you know someone locally who may be interested please let us know. The job description is currently being constructed and will be advertised in the next couple of weeks.

## Who and what are the Governors/Academy Committee?

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The Academy Committee (also known as school governors) support the Head Teacher and professional staff in determining the school's ethos and aiding development such that its pupils learn effectively and achieve their full potential. It offers leadership, support, constructive advice, a second opinion on proposals and help where needed. It also challenges, asks questions, seeks information, and tries to arrive at the best solution. More information about us can be found on the school website. You can email us:

[Chairstm@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:Chairstm@dbmac.org.uk)

Academy Committee is accountable to the Board of Directors of the Dominic Barberi Multiacademy. More information on the structure and leadership within the DBMAC can be found on <http://www.dominicbarberimac.org.uk/index.shtml>

### **Nickie Rogan – Acting Chair**

#### **Foundation Governor**

Parishioner who runs her own business

### **Sally-Anne Reckless – Vice-Chair**

#### **Foundation Governor**

Has 2 children in school and works as a doctor

### **Stephen Finn – Parent Governor**

Has 2 children in school and works in IT

### **Sue Pollard – Staff Governor**

Teaching Assistant

### **Jennifer LaVertue – Staff Governor**

Year 1 teacher and KS1 Coordinator

### **Breda Bowles – Executive Principal**

Our Executive Principal covering our school and St Josephs in Carterton

### **Emma Rhodes – Foundation Governor**

Has 2 children in school and works in the Charity sector

### **Chris Robins – Observer**

Retired government employee

### **Sophie Uppellini – Observer**

A parent who now works in the school office.

### **Judy East – Clerk to the Governors**

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Thank you to Marianne Balaz and Tracey Wyse for all the time and effort they gave the school. They both stepped down from their roles last year.

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It is with great sadness that we report that Judy Pearson who was our school clerk up until 2 years ago has lost her battle with cancer. She will be missed by all especially her dedicated and loving family.