



STM Governing Board Newsletter – Summer 2021

Our Mission Statement: Learning to love, live and celebrate as we grow in the knowledge and love of Christ
Our Vision: To provide an outstanding education, with Christ at the centre, underpinned by a Catholic, spiritual ethos

Welcome to the Summer Newsletter. It's the end of the academic year and what an absolutely extraordinary year it has been. It feels surreal reflecting back on this time last year, when the global pandemic had already impacted everyone's lives in such a huge way, to where we are now. The Governing Board are very proud of our school community, parents, staff and most of all the children, who have endured a most challenging stop/start year. We are very much looking forward to the new academic year and the revitalising freshness it will bring with it, to continue to build and strengthen our wonderful school community.

We also wish to say a great big **THANK YOU and GOOD LUCK** to our Parish Priest and Foundation Governor, **Fr David Burke**, who leaves not only the Board this term, but also our Parish. Fr David has been a solid and supportive member of the Board over the past four years and we will miss him greatly. Thank you Fr David. We wish you every grace in your exciting new adventures!

As always, we are thankful to our teaching faculty. This term we are sad to be saying a very fond farewell to much loved colleagues, we thank you for all you have done for our school community:

Mrs McAtamney - Yr 2
Mrs McDonagh - Yr 4
Mr Simpson - Y5
Ms Harris - Yr1

We are very pleased to welcome new and returning members of staff:

Miss Carey – Yr 4
Miss Addison – Yr 3
Mrs Jevon – Yr 1 Teacher Trainee
Mrs Mathews - Nursery (FS1)
Mrs Archer – Reception (FS2)
Mrs Ali - TA
Mrs Turnbull - TA

WHO WE ARE

David Swarbrick	Chair
Laura Connor	Vice Chair
Kathy Little	Head Teacher
Eoin Power	Staff Governor
Fr David Burke	Foundation Governor
Leanne Butler	Foundation Governor
Jo Cosgrove	Foundation Governor
Gary Brine	Foundation Governor
Monica Murray	LA Governor
Michelle Anderton	Associate Governor
Peter Fitzgerald	Associate Governor

All governors serve STM in a voluntary capacity

Parent View gives you the chance to tell Ofsted what you think about STM. The survey can be completed at any time; you don't have to wait until the school is being inspected. Ofsted will use the information you provide when making decisions about which schools to inspect and when. See the STM website for the link or click on the link here:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>

School Finance - Jo Cosgrove

My first year as Chair of the Resources Committee has been interesting. I have seen first hand how well the School's financial outlook improved during the year, despite the challenges that the pandemic presented with reductions in letting and wrap around care income. It is with huge thanks to Mrs Little and Mrs Anderton for continuing to shape the School's finances and after laying the groundwork over the past year, the School has recently submitted a budget for 2021-22 which is not only a surplus for the end of the year, but eliminates the brought forward deficit. The £14K surplus budget means the School is well placed to meet its strategic objective of eliminating its financial deficit by March 2023, as well as stabilising its finances going forward. At the heart of all the Resources Committee decisions we make is our children – how to ensure their learning environment remains rich, supportive and safe and we can rest assured this still holds true. Have a great summer!

Faith and Positivity - **Monica Murray**:

"Be strong and be courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6

I've had the privilege of being a First Holy Communion Catechist for last year. It has been my pleasure to teach our young people about faith and to prepare them for the holy mystery of this "meeting point" with our Lord. Our most recent session was about the resurrection of Jesus. When we lose someone we love dearly, it is heart breaking. Life at these times can seem almost too much to bear without them. Personally, I've gone through many losses in my life, and some were, and are, absolutely unbearable, beyond comprehension. Without my faith, I'm honestly not sure who I would be today.

Faith is strength, it is hope; it is a choice to stand up to our overwhelming fears. Let's face it, life can be scary, especially for young people and especially now when the world we used to know has been turned upside down; plans and hopes spiralling out of our control. But, we always have that choice, to trust God and to trust ourselves. Because for every crisis, for every loss, for every single uncontrollable event that comes our way, our Lord is waiting for us and this is what we must trust, like holding on to a solid rock.

The importance of developing self-confidence and positive thinking in children (and adults), is well understood. Thanks to great authors like Carol Dweck and Matthew Syed we can understand better how to empower pupils with determination and resilience, which will be essential for their success in life and, more importantly, for their own happiness and well-being. But as Christians, we have something even more. Our trust in God and in the power of Jesus' "resurrection" brings us the hope and the certainty He is with us; that He can help us change, grow and achieve our dreams. These can be big dreams like scoring for your country or sometimes small like mastering algebra (perhaps not so small). Neither of these can be achieved without sacrifice, hard work but also faith. Just like we read with "my" Catechist pupils about Jesus, when Mary of Magdala and many of his friends on the road to Emmaus didn't recognise him after he rose from the dead, because he was different, so we can change and be better (and better!) while always being ourselves, and keeping sincerity in our hearts.

Our thanks also goes to the **STMSA** in recognition of the essential fundraising they have undertaken this year in challenging circumstances where usual routes to fundraising have not been accessible. Not only have they worked hard to ensure there is a stream of income for the school they, have also provided in-school fun events for the children to enjoy within their Bubbles. For all of this we thank you.

A note from our Chair of Governors **David Swarbrick**

We have finally reached the end of the academic year and it has been an extremely difficult year for all of us. I do, however, on behalf of the Governing Board want to thank Mrs Little, Mrs Anderton and all the staff at St Thomas More for continuing to provide the 'best education possible' in spite of the very trying circumstances.

A Prayer Summer 2021 - **Fr David**

Heavenly Father, we pray that you will continue to bless us and our families during the wonderful months of summer. May we all help make our homes a place of relaxation, joy, love, peace and safety. May we be generous and considerate, not thinking only about ourselves, but helping others enjoy the blessings of summertime. Lord God, Creator of all things, guide our steps and strengthen our hearts, during these summer months. Grant us refreshment of mind and body.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

As for the Governing Board our focus during the year (in addition to the responsibilities imposed by the Covid situation) has been on our strategic plan. We completed it during the year and have already made significant progress in achieving many of our 10 strategic objectives (a progress update is now available on the school website). We also undertook a survey of parents/carers of children attending the school and are currently in the process of 'digesting' the correspondence from this survey. We will provide further details of our planned response to the survey at the beginning of the next academic year.

I wish you and all the children of St Thomas More a happy and relaxing summer holiday.

We wish you all a wonderful Summer break and look forward to seeing you in September for a happy and healthy start to the 2021-22 academic year!

With thanks from the STM Governing Board

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