



STM Governing Board Newsletter – Summer 2022

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 another academic year and we are grateful that it has been one where we have been living with less global pandemic disruption on school life. It has been a year that has shown the demonstration of extreme resilience amongst our school community and we are grateful to and proud of our dedicated staff, our families, and most of all our amazing children.

We have recently conducted a number of stakeholder surveys and we thank those parents and carers that engaged with them. We look forward to sharing the consolidated feedback with you at a social evening in school on **20th September 2022** (more details on that further down).

We are also very happy to welcome **Colleen Duggan** to the Board this term as a Parent Governor. Welcome Colleen, we are very much looking forward to working with you.

As always, we are thankful to our wonderful staff. 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:

Ms Parker - School Office Finance Administrator

Ms O'Sullivan - Early Years

Ms McParland - Early Years

We are very pleased to welcome new members to the STM community:

Ms Manning - SENDco

Ms Sajid - TA Yr 1

WHO WE ARE

David Swarbrick	Chair
Laura Connor	Vice Chair
Kathy Little	Executive Head
Eoin Power	Staff Governor
Marie Capes	Foundation Governor
Jo Cosgrove	Foundation Governor
Gary Brine	Foundation Governor
Monica Murray	LA Governor
Michelle Anderton	Head of School
Colleen Duggan	Parent 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>



Save the date!!



The Governors, along with the Head and the STMSA would like to invite parents to a social evening on **20th September 2022 at 8:00 pm** in school to discuss fundraising. We are keen to be fully transparent, to answer any questions, provide any further information and in particular listen to any ideas and suggestions you may have for fundraising to improve the fabric of our school to support all our children.

School Finance - Jo Cosgrove

I would like to take this opportunity to update you all regarding the school's finances. In May 2022, we received the final 2021/22 finance reports which confirmed that the school has in fact repaid its deficit brought forward of £40K – in full. This is such fantastic news that the school has achieved this ahead of its strategic objective being March 2023. Special thanks to Mrs Little and Mrs Anderton for managing the school's finances so incredibly well to achieve this ahead of schedule. Importantly, the school also has a comfortable surplus of £23K to carry forward into 2022/23. Also in May 2022, the Governing Board approved the budget for 2022/23 which is a surplus budget of £10K which together with the brought forward surplus means the school has a sensible cushion for those unforeseen costs whilst also ensuring that the children at St Thomas More continue to receive the best possible educational opportunities in the next academic year.

I wish you all a very happy end of term and enjoyable summer break!

A note from Chair of Governors - David Swarbrick

The end of the first academic year without any externally imposed interruptions for 3 years is quite a relief. Obviously Covid has continued to disrupt the efforts of the school, affecting both staff and children but at least we have avoided Government imposed 'lockdowns'. The staff has been very busy and engaged helping the children to catch up with any ground lost during the interruptions experience during the last two years. They have worked very hard in this difficult year and the Governors are very grateful to them for their efforts. In addition to helping the children regain any lost ground the school has made progress in a number of areas, two of which I would like to share with you now.

Firstly, in terms of finances the school had been in deficit for the previous three years but as of 1st April 2022 the school has a small financial surplus. We believe that we can build on this over the next few years. This seems to be particularly important at a time when expenses, particularly energy bills are escalating significantly. One of the factors contributing to this improvement is an increase in the number of children enrolled at the school. We are confident that in this respect we will exceed our strategic objective for the year.

Secondly, the school has this year revised and updated its entire curriculum. With the aid of its Hertfordshire Improvement Partner, a number of 'deep dives' into different areas of the curriculum have been undertaken, to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. On the basis of the information gained from these exercises the curriculum has been improved, updated and is now integrated across the school. This will improve the Quality of Education for children attending our school.

The Governing Board is very grateful to the school leadership and staff for their efforts during the year. Not only in helping the children cope with any of the problems associated with the interruptions experienced over the last few years but also in being able to adapt to changes in the educational environment. We are confident that the school will be able to build on this year's achievements.

I wish everyone involved with St Thomas More, staff, children and parents the blessings of a pleasant, peaceful and relaxing summer. September will come and I am sure it will bring for St Thomas More another year of challenge and change along with further opportunities to maintain improvement.

The Circle of Life - **Monica Murray**

At the end of July, we are going to say goodbye to our Y6 pupils. We wish them luck in their future schools and in their lives. It is a massive change for them, and for their families. A massive step towards growing up and everything that implies, adjusting family life to the physical and emotional changes that will occur.

Are the changes something positive, something we shall look at with excitement, embracing whatever comes next in our lives? The answer is 'yes' yet there is always a tension, a feeling of anxiety too.

Everything changes around us in the cycle of life; it never stops and never will: from the endless procession of seasons to our dearest friends moving house or school or even country, leaving a huge hole in our hearts. The loss of someone you love is the biggest change of all. It's the only change we can do nothing about beyond acceptance and renewal with the help of God and our Faith.

Words like "eternal" and "absolute" seem to possess dignity and weight, while "transitory" and "relatively" have just an emotional connotation, referring to something that doesn't last or which we can't rely upon. Change means uncertainty and uncertainty is scary; this is human and very normal. Nevertheless, the fact that life changes is the only real certainty in life.

We shall build from the present towards the future: material things, things that we often believe essential, are not. What we think is vital, rarely is. What is vital is the ability to breathe, to eat, to drink and to sleep. Everything else is only a routine, a habit, which we can change, and we can adapt to. Nothing terrible will happen. Change is part of us, and we are the biggest instigator of change, each of us, every day of our lives. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "Panta rei", "Everything flows" and the water of this river I see now is not the one I looked at a second ago, and in the same way we are not the ones we were yesterday, and we will be not the same tomorrow. The past will never come back, in good and bad, so why shall we live in it? It would be insane and cause only pain and depression.

"The measure of intelligence is the ability to change" said Albert Einstein, so we shall adapt and be resilient to any kind of changes which life, inevitably, brings to us. Even because, there is no alternative.

Some changes will be the best things which could ever happen to us, some others will be painful and almost unbearable, And still we will embrace them, with all our faith, knowing that God is here not to harm us but to lead us always towards something else. Let it be.

So, after the tears and the broken hearts for an "era" which is ending, after the undeniable goodbyes, lets celebrate our Year 6 leavers, with the amazing gift of culture, faith, and fun which they gained from their time at our school. Let's celebrate the new Nursery children for their new journey and adventure. Let's celebrate all our friends or families moving, changing jobs, teachers or school, parish or country, wishing them well in their new beginnings, a sure guide for exciting paths they will journey on, the first of many, towards a confident, bright future, always with the help of God.

We wish you all a relaxing, recharging and peaceful Summer break and look forward to seeing you in September for the start of the new academic year.

With thanks from the STM Governing Board

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