



St Thomas More

Catholic Primary School

STM Governing Board Newsletter – Autumn 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 Autumn Newsletter. It's the end of term once again and one where we saw a visit from OFSTED. We are incredibly proud of all staff and students and the warm welcome they extended to the inspectors, we look forward to receiving their report next term. It's also the end of another calendar year and we take the time to reflect and give thanks for our dedicated staff, our wider school community, and most of all our wonderful resilient children.

In the Summer Newsletter we thanked those parents and carers who engaged with and input into our stakeholder survey. We were able to share the consolidated feedback at our information and social evening in September and it was so wonderful to see many of you in attendance. For those that were unable to be there we are sharing the survey feedback here as well so please do read on!

The start of the the new academic year saw us wave goodbye to **Gary Brine** and **Colleen Duggan**, we are very thankful for their service. We were also very pleased to extend warm welcomes to new members; our Parish Priest **Fr Joseph Okoro** and **Ed Murray** who have both been appointed as Foundation Governors. Welcome Fr Joseph and Ed, we are very much looking forward to working with you.

We also want to wish **Mrs Anderton** every happiness in her new role as Head Teacher at St Rose's. We are exceptionally grateful for the dedication and effort Mrs Anderton has put into our school, her legacy will remain, especially within her work on our renewed curriculum offer and her friendly demeanour at school. THANK YOU Mrs Anderton.

As always, we are thankful to our wonderful staff. This term we are sad to be saying a very fond farewell to our much loved colleague **Suzie Furmston**. We thank you for all you have done for our school community.

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

Ms Marian Lally - Assistant Head Teacher
Ms F Boot (Year 3 TA)
Ms L Batista (Year 6 TA and School office)
Ms R Trowbridge (FS TA) -
Ms H Kennedy (Year 6 TA)
Ms S White (School Office Finance Administrator)

WHO WE ARE

David Swarbrick	Chair
Marie Capes	Vice Chair
Jo Cosgrove	Foundation Governor
Fr Joseph Okoro	Foundation Governor
Ed Murray	Foundation Governor
Monica Murray	LA Governor
Laura Connor	Parent Governor
Eoin Power	Staff Governor
Michelle Anderton	Head of School
Kathy Little	Executive Head

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

I am pleased to report that the School's financial outlook is still on plan despite rising costs and economic uncertainty. As always, we thank Mrs Little and Mrs Anderton for continuing to closely monitor the School's finances to not only ensure that the School remains in a surplus budget position for the year, but at the same time, ensuring sufficient learning resources for the children.

With special thanks to the STMSA; like the governing body are all volunteers and have worked tirelessly organising events and activities that raise extra funds for the school which in turn helps to enhance the school environment and improve learning. So, to each and every one of you, **"Thank you"**. The STMSA have raised c. £9,600 in the 21/22 financial year (1 Sept 21 - 31 Aug 22)! STMSA donated c. £7,000 to the school in the 21/22 FY and has given a further c. £7,000 during the current FY to date.

Items funded include:

- Top 50 reading books for every class in the school (Nursery to Y6)
- Classroom resources for every class in the school
- Enhancements to EYFS and Y1 outdoor learning spaces
- Fully funded school trip for every pupil in the school (pantomime/Christmas entertainment)
- Contribution towards a set of new chromebooks
- Sound equipment
- Forest School resources
- Educational subscriptions

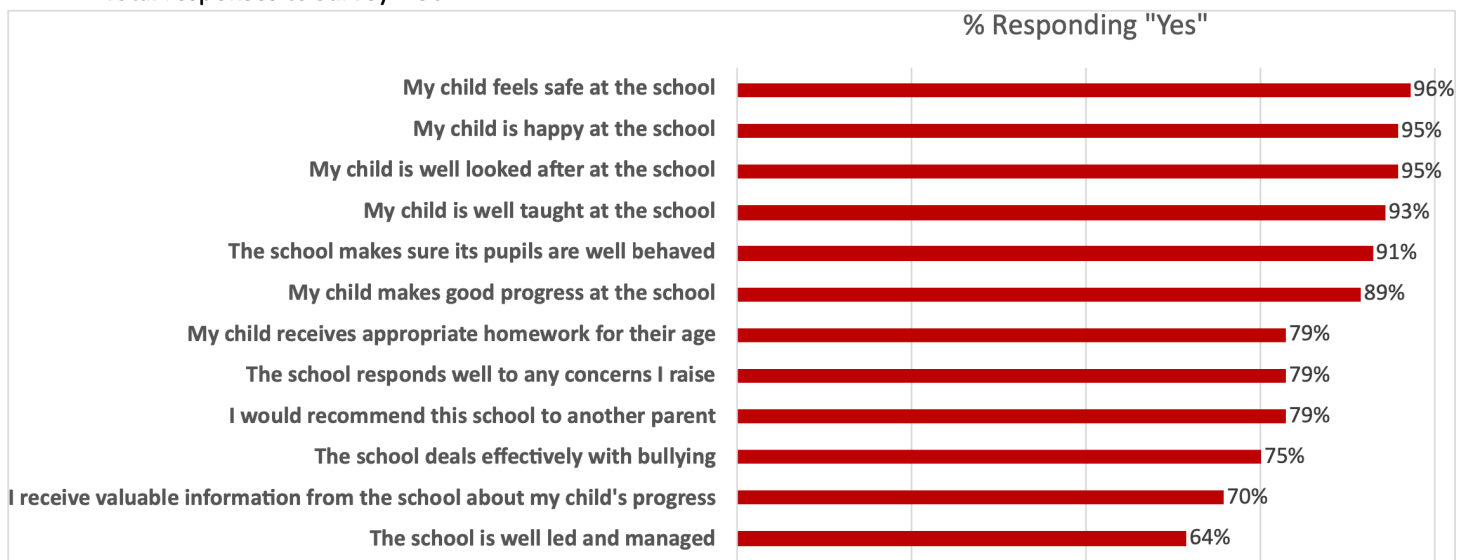
Finally, on behalf of the Governing Body, may I wish you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.



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Parent Survey July 2022

Total responses to survey = 56



The Importance of Being Simply Happy - **Monica Murray**

Every year, around this time, it is a tradition in our house to read the world-famous novella, "A Christmas Carol", written by Charles Dickens and published in Christmas 1843. The story of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge, and his transformation following visits from the three ghosts at Christmas Eve, is an allegory of a rebirth: a man who rejects family and friends, bitter for what life has given or not given him, it ends with him finding happiness and contentment by embracing all of the values of Christmas such as family and love which he neglected during his sad and empty life.

The story demonstrates how it is possible to live in a spontaneous, simple and less structured way. All of this, of course, runs contrary to what we all do in our modern, hectic world. An example of this is the relentless competition driven by parents and foisted on young adults, and children. We all push our kids to get the best score, to win at football or netball, to do everything to the highest level. We invest in building their capabilities almost to the point of opening a second mortgage! We are compelled to seek a quantitative value to score every single dimension of our happiness. We need to have more than to be, to achieve the best more than to try to be the best we can.

But our children are paying a price for this. True, they might love the everyday activities, after school clubs etc that they do; nevertheless, they are immersed - in fact, submerged since an early age, in a world of expectations and rush, in a world of constant confrontation, of emulation, of ascendancy. This can often result in a deep anxiety which can have an impact in their adult life.

If, as Albert Einstein said, "Creativity is the residue of wasted time" it seems that these generations have not much left; this is not only worrying but also sad. Children should be children as long as they can. It is not too late to embrace this concept. In fact, it is never too late.

It takes Scrooge to arrive at almost the end of his life before he understands what really counts: doing the right thing for a little boy who sings a Christmas carol on his doorstep, being with family or friends, forgiving and sometimes forgetting, facing the pain that life sometimes throws our way with resolve and no little humour. Scrooge's wealth and position did not take him very far in terms of happiness and inner peace. Because what is life about? It is about love and friendship, about faith, about being honest with ourselves and in peace with the others, about respect, imagination and hope; of course hard work and doing the best we can are important but not to the extent that we miss the bigger picture.

The road we follow as Catholics and Christians is based on human values like inclusion and kindness in our everyday life rather than ambition or acquisition. It is not essential to be perfect. Instead we should seek inspiration from that little child who is always within us hidden deep inside, the better angel of our nature (yes, I stole that from Abraham Lincoln!).

For, as Dickens says, "no one is useless in this world" and "it is good to be children sometimes and never better than at Christmas".

THE REASON OF THE SEASON... Fr Joseph

It is December!
Wintry, dull and with shorter daylight days.
Yet it brings the most excitement,
than any other month of the year.

Our streets with beautiful look of fanciful lights.
So too is the look of our homes, giving a calming ambience.
The effects, good for brightening up our senses,
Dulled by the wintry, cold and shorter daylight days.

December – the family month, like no other.
Families come together to celebrate.
Gifts are given, gifts are received.
December, children's special month.

All because in December is Christmas,
the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
He comes to help us in life,
and to save us from the darkness of sin.
Jesus Christ is the Reason of the Season...

Wishing all the pupils, staff, the parents and the governors,
peace and joy of a very merry Christmas.



We wish you all a joyous and peaceful Christmas break and look forward to seeing you in January for the start of 2023 and new term.

With thanks from the STM Governing Board