



Welcome to the latest newsletter from St Mary's Governing Body. We aim to keep you up-to-date, via regular newsletters, on the work that the Governors do to support our children and staff.

Governor Appointment: Benjamin Lee

Please welcome Ben, who joins us as a Co-Opted Governor. Ben works in management for a software company in central London and moved from Watford to Ware in 2013. He graduated with honours from UEA Norwich in 2008 with a BA in English Literature and worked in hospitality before joining his current employer in 2011. He is a keen gym-goer and really passionate about helping others and the community.



Spring Term Activities: These are some examples of the work that St Mary's Governors have been involved in:



Policy Reviews:

Each term, the Committees review a number of school policies, to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant. Statutory and curriculum policies are available on the [website](#). Other policies can be viewed by request at the school office. This term the following policies were reviewed:

-  Off-site visits
-  Harassment & Bullying
-  Anti-bullying
-  Governor Allowance
-  Charging and Remissions
-  Behaviour
-  Racist Incident



Finance: In March, Governors carried out the annual review of the School's Financial Value Standards, which has to be submitted to the Local Authority in April. Governors also reviewed the draft budget, which includes provision to replace the classroom Smart Boards, and renovate the swimming pool.

The school's 2014-15 final budget position is shared via the school [website](#). Governors are happy to answer questions you may have about the school's finances.



INSET Days:

When the children are off school on an INSET Day, the teachers become the students! Like all professionals, teachers have to continuously develop and during INSET days they come into school to receive training. The training is always linked with the School Improvement Plan.

For example, on the INSET Day on 18 April, an external trainer is training our teachers on new spelling tools. Another trainer is coming into school on 1 September to help staff consider 'Mastery' of the national curriculum objectives to enable children to work at greater depth within the expected standard.



Governor training:

Governors also continuously develop and update their skills and knowledge and regularly attend training programmes provided by the Local Authority.

Recent courses attended by some of our Governors: **Governor Induction** and **Safeguarding**.

Three training sessions are booked for next term: **School Finance**, **New Ofsted Framework** and **Vision, Mission & Strategic Planning**.



Swimming Pool:

Governors approved the transfer of management of the swimming pool from Kingshill to St Mary's this term.

The pool is a significant asset for the children of both schools and enables all children to build towards successfully achieving the end of Key Stage 2 swimming requirements. The pool will remain as dual use for both schools.



Feedback Tool:

Governors reviewed a new tool;

'School Effectiveness+: Self-Evaluation Portal'

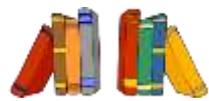
that the school plans to implement next term, to obtain feedback from parents, children, governors and staff. The tool help us evaluate our school against 'The 25 Characteristics of High-Performing Schools' and will link us with other schools to help share best practice.

The survey results will then help write the School Improvement Plan to determine our priorities for development. Parents can continue to also provide feedback via [Ofsted parentview](#).



Play Equipment:

Our thanks go to Friends of St Mary's who, through their fundraising activities, were able to donate a significant amount towards the cost of the new playground equipment. The children were asked to choose between several designs, and their favourite one was installed several weeks ago. It has proved to be very popular. New fencing has also been erected between the equipment and the playing field, to help keep muddy shoes and boots away!



School Library Procedures:

At the Autumn parent consultation evenings, you asked Governors about school library procedures.

At St. Mary's, we have two well-resourced libraries that are open each day, for the children to use.

The Reference Library is open each lunchtime for the children to browse and choose books or to complete homework, and is timetabled as follows:

- Monday: Year 5
- Tuesday and Friday: Year 6
- Wednesday: Year 3
- Thursday: Year 4

The Reading Library is also open each lunchtime and break time. During lunchtime, Miss Powell and the school librarians are available to assist other children with book choices as well as scanning and returning books. Children are not timetabled for this library so that they can return and choose books when they wish, with Mrs Powell also available in the 'Reading library' during the children's reading times; 11:35am to 12:00pm from Monday through to Thursday.

The Reading Library has recently been reorganised into AR ZPD levels to allow children easier access to books at their level. When choosing books, children need to know their Accelerated Reader ZPD number, e.g., 2.5–3.5, so that they are choosing books with the appropriate challenge for them.

Children can currently take out 3 books at a time and borrow them for up to 14 days, choosing books from either library. Children scan and return books themselves. Children should return a book before choosing another one.

Governors wish to thank all staff for their hard work over the Spring term and wish all staff, parents, carers and children an enjoyable Spring break.