

# St Mary's Junior School Governor Newsletter

## Issue 8, Spring 2015



**W**elcome 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. It's a slightly longer newsletter this term, as there has been a lot going on!

### Governor Appointment: Dan Smith

The Governing Body has appointed Dan Smith as a Co-Opted Governor, effective January 2015. Dan is originally from Derbyshire and moved to Ware in 2005. He has two children at St Mary's. Dan is a CIMA qualified accountant and works as Head of Corporate Accounts for McDonald's Restaurants. He has long held an interest in supporting the school on a voluntary basis and we are delighted to welcome him to the Governing Body and its Resources committee.



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



**Church School Inspection:** Governors met with the representative from the Diocese during the recent inspection. The school's Christian ethos is very much evident with our collective worship, the beautiful mosaics on the reception wall and the cross-on-the-hill at the back of the school.



**School Policy Reviews:** Governors reviewed and approved several policies this term, to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant.

-  Learning & Teaching
-  Whistleblowing
-  Complaints
-  Safer recruitment
-  Business Continuity Plan
-  SEN & Inclusion
-  Governor Visits
-  Disciplinary



**Finance:** In March, Governors carried out the annual review of the School's Financial Value Systems, which has to be submitted to the Local Authority in April. Governors also reviewed the draft budget for the next 5 years. The school's 2013-14 final budget position is shared via [the school website](#). Governors are happy to answer questions you may have about the school's finances.



## Governor Monitoring Visits: Focus on National Curriculum

What do Governors  
monitor?

One of the key roles for Governors is to monitor the School's Improvement Plan, which sets out the aims and objectives for the school in both terms of pupil progress, achievement and teaching and also around wider issues such as behaviour, safety, leadership and management. Each governor is allocated areas from the Plan and meets with the lead member of staff to review progress.

Why is there a focus on the  
National Curriculum?

Central government introduced a new curriculum at the start of this school year (2014/15). This has marked a wholesale change from previous curriculum, and has set a rise in expectations and standards for pupils across English; Reading and Writing, and Mathematics. This has come at the same time as a change in the way that pupils are assessed with the removal of levels.

What is St Mary's school  
doing about it?

The Staff at St Mary's have spent considerable time and effort implementing the new curriculum and whilst it has proved challenging, it has led to a range of new 'Project' areas being taught. Staff have identified which existing lessons and subjects could be used under the new systems so that previous work was not lost, but have also developed completely new project areas from scratch. Please visit the school website [www.stmarys306.herts.sch.uk](http://www.stmarys306.herts.sch.uk) for more details.

The school's Learning & Teaching and Assessment Policies have been closely linked to this process and provide the framework for all planning work undertaken. Click [here](#) to access them on the school website.

### Has it been challenging?

There have been challenges for the school in implementing the curriculum, which have included finding additional time for staff to complete the volume of work required to plan new lessons and projects; teaching new areas and understanding how much time will be needed for pupils to achieve in each, whilst introducing a new assessment system which has yet to be finalised. However, staff have continued to demonstrate considerable commitment to the process and have worked extremely hard to complete the work required.

### How have pupils contributed?

Pupils' views on the new topics have been taken through the School Council and feedback has been positive, particularly around the new school trips that have been organised.

Governors will continue to monitor the implementation of the new curriculum throughout the school year. Thanks to all members of staff who have worked so hard on implementing the new curriculum, and enabled the transition to go very smoothly. We're sure it hasn't always felt smooth from the teachers' perspective!

### What is a Governing Body for?



The GB is responsible for ensuring the school provides good quality education. Together with the Head, it sets the school's aims and policies, and makes decisions on how to spend the budget.

The Head is responsible for day to day management of the school, but is chosen by the Governors and works closely with them.

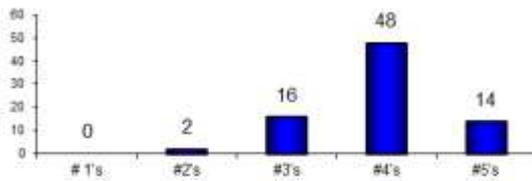
### Parent Feedback:



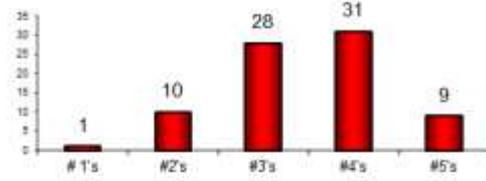
At the recent parents' evenings, Governors asked parents what they thought about school meals. The current catering contract expires next year, and a review is taking place of 2 or 3 companies, in order to select the next provider. As part of a selection process, the survey result will be shared with short-listed companies. Thanks to everyone who completed the survey. Results are on the next page.

## School Meal Parent Survey Results from Parent Consultation E venings

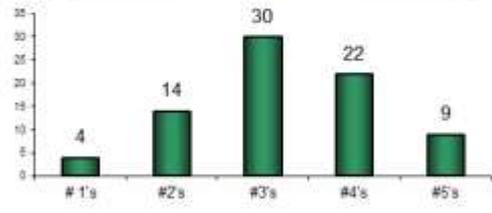
**1. The lunch options available to my child are healthy and balanced.**



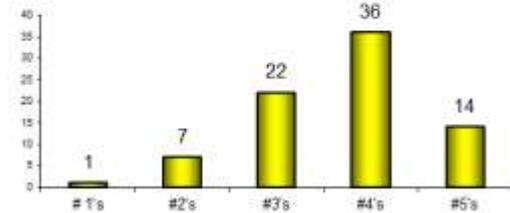
**2. The healthy options on the menu sound exciting and appealing.**



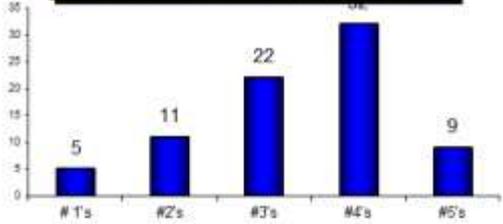
**3. My child often comments on how good school meals are.**



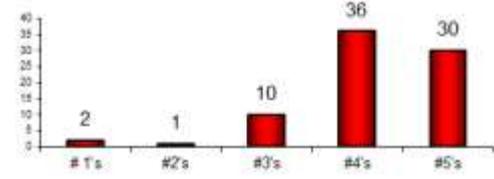
**4. School dinners are good value for money**



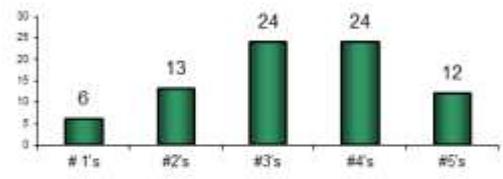
**5. I believe the current school dinners are adequate and do not need to change.**



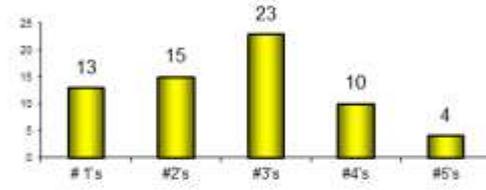
**6. I would like a menu that makes healthy foods sound exciting and tasty.**



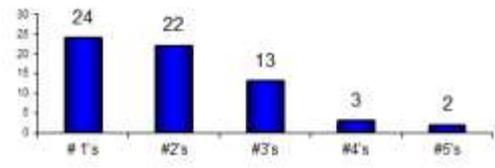
**7. I would be happy to pay more for my child's school dinners if the quality and variety improved.**



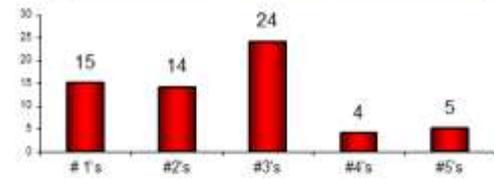
**8. My child has a packed lunch because I want to decide what my child eats.**



**9. My child has a packed lunch because I do not believe the quality of school dinners is good enough.**



**10. If the quality and variety of school dinners was better I would consider them for my child.**



Survey Scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

**Governor Stall at Parent Consultation Evenings:** There was an opportunity to meet some of the Governors, who were available to answer your questions about the work of the GB. Here are the questions that were asked on the night:

Is there going to be a school meal survey for the children to complete?

Two children will be part of the selection panel, along with staff and governors, when the catering companies pitch on 18 June.

Why does the school 'police' what snacks parents put into packed lunches, then hand out sugary cakes and iced biscuits with school meals?

The school encourages healthy snacks at break-times. At lunchtime, School Food Standards permit desserts, as part of a balanced meal.

How do dining staff handle issues in the hall and concerns that children raise?

The midday supervisory staff on duty may make notes in their notebook and pass the note to the child's class teacher.

Are there any Associate Governors positions available?

There are currently no Associate Member vacancies, however, there are two full Governor opportunities. Please contact Nicci Smith via [admin@stmarys306.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys306.herts.sch.uk) if you would like to know more.

Who is the Special Educational Needs Governor?

Margaret Meldrum



The Governing Body sends Jill Parker best wishes for a speedy recovery.