

Dear Parents and Carers,

As I am writing this end of term letter, we have just lit the third candle on the Advent wreath, representing "Joy", and inevitably our minds start to turn from the work of our day to day school business, to the festive period itself. The prospect of Christmas cheers us and lifts our spirits away from the cold, dark seasonal weather and all talk of Covid 19. But while we may be ready to move on from the pandemic, it seems that it is not yet finished with us and these last few weeks of term have presented staff at the school with more challenges to keep the infection at bay and all our pupils safe.

I am sure you will join me in thanking the head Teacher and all the staff for their hard work this term, particularly the extra work they have had to undertake in recent weeks. Their total commitment to the children not only in the day to day life of school, but in providing additional support for individuals and families, shows their dedication to St. Francis's School.

The local governing body also would like to welcome two new teachers to the school: Miss Emelia Hall and Miss Rose Lucas. We hope that their time with us will be a very happy one.

I would also like take this opportunity to thank you as Parents and Carers for the support you continue to give to the school. Together, as parents and carers, staff, pupils and governors, we work to bring to a reality our collective vision – that is that every person in our school community is able to fulfil their full potential. This would not be possible without the support and engagement of you as parents and carers.

Finally there have been some changes, this term, to the local governing body. The role of a Governor is a voluntary one and we are a small band of individuals who work in partnership, with the Catholic Multi Academy Trust and the Head Teacher, to ensure that our school is the best it can be. Our role is to be "critical friends; to listen, challenge and support. I would like to say thank you to all the Local Governors for the commitment and support that they have given this year. In particular, I would like to say a huge thank you to Mrs. Thew, who retired from the local governing body this term after many, many years working as the Year 6 teacher at St. Francis and then over 5 years as a Foundation Governor, giving freely of her time to support the learning of our children.

But this term we have also been pleased to welcome Sister Valerie, who has taken over from Sister Thomas More, who retired as a governor last term. Welcome Sister.

This term, again, governors have had to try to complete their monitoring work, while still restricting time spent in school. We have been able to look at school data, meet and question the Head Teacher and have discussions with staff leading specific subjects through the magic of Zoom, but what we have missed is the opportunity to hear the pupil's voice; to seek their views about their learning, the curriculum and their progress. This is something we very much hope to resume next term, the pandemic allowing, for we can never forget that our main duty is to help secure the safety of our children.

As Christmas approaches, it can be easy for us to get distracted by all the shopping, the decorating of the tree and the wrapping. It is so easy, isn't it, to forget the true reason for the Christmas season - the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

So, may you and your families have the gladness of Christmas, which is hope, the spirit of Christmas which is peace and the heart of Christmas which is love. And, on behalf of the Governing Body may I wish you and all your family a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year"

Best wishes

*Helen Webb*

Chair of Governors

