

Chair of Governor's End of Year report 2024-25

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents for their support this academic year and my special thanks to the children, staff and governors for all their hard work in bringing about considerable changes since our disappointing Ofsted Inspection in May 2024. It's been a busy year for link governors and subject leaders who have shared work over the year, and this is going from strength to strength with recent leadership changes. We hope you understand the hard work they have carried out on your children's behalf to give them the best possible outcomes.

In September, Mrs Gum, became the school's first Executive Headteacher after several attempts to recruit a substantive headteacher. Mrs Gum brought the nursery within the school which has been a great success; the children settled well, A new canopy area has been created to allow the children to spend more time outside to share and spend time with the reception class children and staff.

Each class now has its own reading areas and parents have been given the opportunity to 'stay and read' with their children. Library visits took place earlier this year as well as a poetry assembly, World Book Day and book fair. A themed reading morning has been planned for the last week of term.

Fr Francis celebrated a few masses in school during the year starting off in October with a Harvest Mass and in March Ash Wednesday when ashes were distributed to all children and those attending to start off the Lenten period finishing off with the Stations of the Cross at the end of the term. The children also walked up to church for masses during Advent and Lent. In January, all the children passed through the special door to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope. As part of the Jubilee celebrations the children from Christ the King's GIFT team joined us for a Celebration of the Word and shared the picture of Our Lady during the Visitation that is travelling around all the schools in the diocese to celebrate the Jubilee and the picture will go over to St Gabriel's next on its onward journey,

The children have supported several charities this year, Congleton Storehouse, East Cheshire Hospice, World Down Syndrome Day, Lenten fundraiser and CAFOD to name but a few, The Mini Vinnies and GIFT team visited Clayton Manor Nursing Home in October and the GIFT team returned in December to sing songs and play games.

There were lots of sporting opportunities for the children during the year both locally and at All Hallows Catholic College – swimming lessons for Years 4 and 5, netball, cross country, girls' football, football, tag rugby, athletics, cricket, netball. Year 5/6 came 1st in the Congleton Schools netball tournament, and 2nd in the main tournament. The Y5/6 netball team also came 1st in the All Hallows tournament. We came 2nd in the All Hallows athletics track events and good placings in the football and athletics events. These fantastic achievements have culminated in the school receiving the Gold Sports Award. Well done to everyone involved especially the children.

Parents have had the chance to get involved with drop-in sessions, parents' evenings, merit assemblies, the Christmas Fair, Christmas plays, carol service, book fair, parent lunches, whole school stay and pray, May Procession, and schools' sports day. It is hoped there will be a good turn out for the summer fair on the 11th July which the PTA have been involved in planning.

The children have been able to enjoy in the following events - help opening the new Aldi store along with the Olympian Sarah Jones; discos, road safety talk, WW2 themed dance day for Armistice Day, ambulance visit, Christmas Jumper Day, bird watching, Young Voices at the new Coop Arena, termly Forest School days, Rock Steady concert, Crucial Crew visit, circus skills enrichment day, Rotary Club 'Party in the Park (Choir), also day trips to the Imperial War Museum; Ford Green Hall, Formby Beach and Chester. The older children have been on residential trips to Robinwood, Alton Castle and Min-y-don.

Governors met with parents in March at which the parent questionnaire results were shared. The school has taken on board several of the issues raised and we hope we are going a long way to resolving many of the other issues. Governors have also been involved in monitoring and have accompanied the children to mass, the library and school trips over the year.

Mrs Gum returned to her substantive Headteacher role after Easter and we were fortunate to have the Primary Director of the trust, Jane Millward, step in until we were able to appoint a substantive headteacher in May. Miss Amy Butterfield has been appointed and is presently working 3 days a week until she takes up her full-time role in September. It has taken 4 years to appoint a substantive headteacher and we are looking forward to a new and exciting era for Saint Mary's community, my thanks go to Mrs Gum and Jane Millward.

Finally, I would like to say a great big thank you to our parents for your continued support throughout the year and I look forward to a very exciting year ahead along with our brilliant teaching and support staff.

Kind regards

Val Bridge
Chair of Governors