

Saint Mary's Chair's End of Year Report 2025-26

Firstly, what an action-packed year this has been. I would like to congratulate Miss Butterfield, in her first full year as Headteacher at Saint Mary's, and all the staff for what has been achieved through the hard work of everyone working together for the benefit of the children.

Miss Butterfield started her full year tenure with the problem of the new telephone system which I would like to thank the parents for their patience and understanding at the time of something completely out of the control of the school.

A school Facebook page was set up as a new way of communicating to parents throughout the year and I hope that you appreciate the hard work the school puts in to keep up with the fast-moving uses of modern technology. Although this comes with its issues the school has spent a lot of time ensuring the children stay safe with talks from the local PCSO on Internet Safety as well as regular reminders about safety on line and an Internet Safety Day and for the older children Crucial Crew (Internet Safety).

Father Francis started the year with a Welcome Mass in September and shortly afterwards celebrated a Harvest Mass at which the children brought food items for the local food bank. The children have been very active in supporting many charities and organisations locally as well as nationally this year, including The Royal British Legion, East Cheshire Hospice (Jingle Bell jog), visits to the Laurels nursing home, Big Clothes Movement and CAFOD. The GIFT team and Mini Vinnies have played active roles this year especially sharing Catholic Social Teaching with Reception, and taking part in the Masses. An enrolment Mass for First Communion children was celebrated in November followed by visits by all classes to Masses in church during Advent and Lent. Lent included Stations of the Cross and First Forgiveness for the First Communion children. The First Communion Mass was celebrated in May followed by the May Procession and Crowning of Our Lady. The 200th Anniversary of St Mary's Chapel in early July was celebrated by the children in church and a leavers' Mass will be held in church this last week for our Year 6 children whom I wish every success in their next stage of their education and lives. They certainly have contributed to the life and success of Saint Mary's during their time with us.

Miss Butterfield has ensured that parents have had many opportunities to visit the school throughout the year through Stay and Play sessions, Parents' evening, Parents' Book looks, weekly assemblies, picnic lunches, nativity plays, carol service and sports day. As the new headteacher, Miss Butterfield, changed the format of the weekly newsletter to ensure parents were aware of what the children are being taught termly, as well as weekly events. I love reading about Rock Stars and the half termly Celebration Circle. She has ensured that our attendance record has stayed above the national average with weekly reminders about taking children out of school during term time and the impact this has on their progress and learning. I have looked forward to seeing which class had the best attendance. Another great item I have enjoyed reading about is the Talking Point which encourages parents to ask their children what they have done during the week. Such topics as Reading, Catholic Social Teaching, visit by HSBC, Spanish, Democracy, talks about differences, respect and tolerance, individual liberty just to mention a few. I hope you have taken the opportunity to ask your child/children and that you read the weekly newsletter, it contains so much information. It is interesting to know what the children have been taught and learnt and I would like to thank everyone for the number of topics covered during the year, far too many to mention here. The website has also recently been updated and I hope you will take the opportunity to look at it.

Thank you to those parents who took part in the two Parent Questionnaires this year. It is really important that we learn from your views and that you know that we are listening and taking action. The children have had similar opportunities to let us know how they view the school through Pupil Voice. I hope they think we are listening.

What a year it has been for sporting opportunities not only with All Hallows Catholic College, but also Congleton High and Eaton Bank. The children have certainly been active in football, netball, cricket, cross country, tag rugby, athletics, ability, basketball, Town Sports including a dance festival for Y4. All this has contributed to the school being awarded the Gold Sports Award. My thanks to the staff who have given up their time to support the children in all these activities.

The children have been given chances to take part in many projects/initiatives such as The Rotary Photography Competition, Young Writers Competition, Young Climate Warrior talk to Y3/4, talks on Water Safety during the various seasons, RSPB Big Bird Watch and the Eco team followed this up with a Birds of Prey Competition. Young Voices concert, Book Week, Y5 Choral concert, National Skipping Day, Bikeability, Field work in Congleton Park (Y1), National Bee Day (Y5), Congleton in Bloom, Y5 experience day at AHCC, British Values Day, Walk to School Week, EYFS Animal Day, Wellbeing week, Numeracy Day, Visit by the Police to EYFS, Outdoor Classroom Day. There is bound to be something I have missed out. I can't believe how much has taken place. Well done everyone.

I must mention the various residential and opportunities the children have had over the year – Tattenhall (Y4), Alton Castle (Y5), Min-y-don (Y6), Peak Wildlife Park (Y1/2), Laudato Si (Y4 and Gift Team), Jodrell Bank (Y5), DEWA Chester Roman Day (Y3). The staff give up a lot of their own time to take the children on the residential trips but we know the benefits the children get from these trips.

As we approach the end of the academic year, I would like to thank all the staff in the massive improvements made over the year, the school feels so different now, not only in the school environment, indoors as well as outdoors (new school roof, covered area in Early Years) but the support being received from parents especially in helping out with reading with the children regularly, supporting the Christmas and Summer Fairs and the various events run by the PTA, school discos and Mother/Father Day gifts. The funds raised have been used in buying Chrome Books, School Trips etc.

Finally, the school has been awarded with the Primary Languages Award, Gold Sports Award and the 10th Green Flag. We should all be very proud of these achievements. My thanks to the office staff who work tirelessly to ensure everything runs smoothly, the Teaching Assistants for their commitment to the school, and all the teaching staff who have worked incredibly hard this year in ensuring great improvements in Early Years, the Y1 Phonics Screening results, Y4 Multiplication Test and Y6 SATS. All this is very encouraging knowing that the school will more than likely be visited by Ofsted in the Autumn term and we can expect a Catholic Schools Inspection as well. My thanks especially go to the governors who have tirelessly worked in collaboration with the school to ensure the school has improved as well as the support received from our Trust colleagues.

Have a great summer break, and I look forward to another exciting year from September.

Kind regards

Val Bridge (Chair of Governors)

