



From the Chair – Peter Griffin



Dear Parents

We held our second 'virtual' FGB (Full Governing Body) meeting of the year on Monday October 12th and, as always, we had a very full agenda. We began by welcoming Aidan O'Hare who joined us as a potential new Foundation Governor. Aidan is the father of Tamsin, Year 5 and Peter, Year 2 and we're delighted that another parent will, hopefully, be joining our governing body, subject to confirmation by the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham. We are always on the lookout for potential new Foundation Governors and it is always preferable that they have some prior or present connection to Our Lady's. It was interesting to learn from Aidan that his mother attended Our Lady's as a pupil back in the 1960s.

It's been 5 weeks since our last meeting, but governors are doing their best to monitor teaching and learning on line; as always we are so grateful for the fantastic work being done by our teachers and support staff under the leadership of Mrs Batson. Pupil attendance has been around 98% which is truly remarkable and I do hope that you, as parents, are impressed and pleased at the progress being made as your children try to catch up on the learning they may have missed from March – July; it's been clear that for the most part your best efforts to support them at home, together with 'embedded' teaching and support from staff, has really helped to minimise the impact that Covid has had on their development. The latest news on the new 3 tier scheme for dealing with Covid is worrying and we earnestly hope that Warwickshire remains at the lowest level and that school closures remain an unused last resort option. I know that Mrs Batson has kept you up to date with all the latest developments.

Despite Covid, governors' business has to continue as normally as possible and we approved several statutory policies that required updating as well as receiving an update on OFSTED preparation. As mentioned in my previous two newsletters marketing and school finances have been high on the agenda. We are delighted with the early success of our marketing campaign contacting local nurseries and displaying posters of Our Lady's. This has already generated a significant number of enquiries with many prospective parents meeting Mrs Batson and Miss Youds after school to do a short socially distanced visit. It has been very interesting to hear that many had never heard of Our Lady's before seeing the poster. I want to put on record our personal thanks to Pete Waters who helped print the posters (and flyers). This has been a very generous gesture and he is now working on producing a banner which we hope to display on the junction of the A423/Leamington Road.

Even more encouraging is that enquiries have already been followed by firm applications and we're hopeful that well before the January 2021 deadline we will have met, or even exceeded our PAN (Pupil Admission Number) for Reception class next year. As always, no matter what publicity we put out and no matter what changes we make to our website, by far the most important 'tool' in our

marketing strategy are our parents and your children and I want to put on record the governors' appreciation of your 'word of mouth' recommendations and the conversations you have had with family and friends. Please continue to do so.

It is clear that our Care Club, managed so enthusiastically by Mary with the support of Anna, provides a vital service to many working parents and I again want to express our appreciation and thanks for the service they provide and the love and care they have for your children. We know that the flexibility of the arrangements offered by our Care Club are so important for many parents.

Our very helpful business manager, Vicky Palmer, has just produced a map showing the locations of all of Our Lady's families and it is clear and no great surprise that we have a huge catchment area; it was the same when my own children attended Our Lady's in the '80s and '90s. Many staff from the College together with parents who had older children attending the College chose Our Lady's for their younger children and we need to look at how we can make more current parents aware of our existence and the historic links between the College and Our Lady's.

Vicky also confirmed details of the bus service provided by Warwickshire County Council serving our school and transporting pupils from Wolston, Bourton, Frankton, Birdingbury and Marton to Our Lady's and Knightlow. I understand that only one family makes use of this service and I wonder is this due to lack of knowledge amongst parents? We will add this information to our website as transport can be another factor influencing parental choice of school.

Finally, we hope to distribute online a parental questionnaire before half-term, particularly to ascertain your views on the possibility of providing a pre-school year at Our Lady's and we look forward to hearing your views.

Once again I want to conclude by again thanking all parents for your support and understanding during the last seven months and can assure you that, as Governors, we will continue to strive to do our best to support our wonderful school community.

Stay safe and God bless

Peter Griffin

Chair on behalf of Our Lady's Governing Body