



From the Chair – Peter Griffin



Dear Parents

We held our third 'virtual' FGB (Full Governing Body) meeting of the year on Monday December 7th 12th and, as always, we had a very full agenda. We are delighted that Aidan O'Hare has now been confirmed as a new Foundation Governor, as has Tracey Hester. Tracey lives in Princeshore and has worked at the College as a teacher of History for many years. Her experience and her connections with the College have already proved invaluable to the governing body.

It's been 2 months since our last full meeting, but governors have been involved in many aspects of school life; Amy Husband joined forces with Mrs Batson and myself to form a strategic working party and have met three times and discussed several items. Amy, Aidan and Chris Bartup (parent governor and Chair of the PTA) fully understand that they are NOT representatives of parents; their role as Governors is the same as all governors, of every school, focusing on ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, holding senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff whilst also overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

That being said, the governing body feel strongly that we would like to widen the parental input into Our Lady's and to this end we are hope to start on a **Parental Engagement Action Plan**; we are blessed at our school to have a diverse community of parents who are engaged with their children's education. Many of you will have felt particularly engaged this year as you struggled to introduce home schooling to already busy lives! Lots of you already contribute in so many ways to the school's life, either directly with the children or behind the scenes, and something we would like to do in 2021, post Covid, is to make it easier for any parents who would like to start engaging directly with the school, perhaps just for an hour one evening, to share their talents and expertise which could complement those of the school staff. We'll be in touch again once we've worked out how we might be able to come together in this way.

In order to do so we wish to establish a working party, led by Aidan to consider ways in which parents can become more engaged in Our Lady's. Can I invite any parents with thoughts and ideas to email Aidan at ohare.a@ourladyshores.co.uk

We would like to thank all parents who replied to the questionnaire **regarding the possibility of providing a pre-school year at Our Lady's**; the responses were very encouraging and we are establishing another working party to undertake a feasibility study of this proposal with a view to introducing this in September 2021; we held a meeting with Warwickshire Education Service last week and they believe we have the facilities and the staffing to introduce this successfully. Obviously, many of our parents, with younger children, may already be making plans for child care, nursery provision etc and would like to know, as soon as possible, whether Our Lady's will be setting

up a pre-school year for 3-4 years olds. **At this stage can we ask all parents who would be interested to provisionally put this in writing to 'FAO Mrs Batson' (admin@ourladyprincethorpe.co.uk) as soon as possible?** There is no commitment but the sooner we have a firm idea of potential numbers the sooner we can make a decision and move forward on this. Likewise, if any of you are aware of other parents, relations or friends (who currently have a 2-3 year old child either currently in a nursery or at home) who might be interested in a pre-school please ask them to get in touch. It is worth stressing that our current plan would be to combine the pre-school year with Reception and therefore create a Foundation Unit. We know the crucial value of Early Years education and strongly believe that providing this service to these young formative minds would be of great benefit.

Of course, **registration for the Reception class** starting in September 2021 is ongoing and can I remind you and your friends that the **deadline set by Warwickshire is 15th January**. Full details of the Admission process can be found on the school website.

There are many other issues I could mention but I want to keep this newsletter brief. I want to conclude by thanking all of our parents for your support for Our Lady's school and, on your behalf, to thank all our wonderful staff for coping so magnificently during the most difficult year that any of us can remember. I wrote to Mrs Commins when she made the decision to retire from teaching, to thank her for her dedicated service to Our Lady's for the last 12 years. Under normal circumstances we would mark such an important event in an appropriate manner, and this is yet another example of events that would usually take place, that Covid has prevented. Let's hope and pray that 2021 and the promise of mass vaccination, marks a major turning point in this dreadful disease and that we can all return to focusing exclusively on education and the brilliant opportunities this brings to your children, leaving health issues where they belong – in the hands of our wonderful NHS.

May I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas with your family.

Stay safe and God bless

Peter Griffin

Chair on behalf of Our Lady's Governing Body