



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

*Headteacher: Mrs Helen Armstrong
Diocese of Plymouth*

Dear Parents and Carers,

After a busy Autumn term at St. Mary's I am writing to bring you up to date on our progress. Mr Howard has been updating you weekly on the curriculum and life in school, but this update is based on the leadership and management of our school and what we have been doing to continue to improve our school further. There is much to celebrate and to be proud of.

At the end of this term the performance tables for all primary schools will be published. These results will show how we have halted the decline in progress scores for all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 and that our attainment is either in line or above the National average in all areas. A particular strength last year was the percentage of children who achieved the higher standard in reading, maths, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and greater depth in writing, which were all considerably higher than National. We will continue to challenge our pupils to enable them to achieve the highest standards possible in all subjects whilst also enjoying their time in primary school.

During the summer, Plymouth CAST appointed a Head of School Improvement, Louise Adams. Louise visited our school to understand the context and the leadership of the school. At this meeting we reviewed the 'self-evaluation' and 'school improvement plans and work', this involved presenting evidence to support the impact of our work. We are pleased to say she concluded that we are progressing well.

Following this meeting we were then visited by our School Improvement Officer, Jo Flower. The purpose of her visit was to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership and management. During the day she visited all classes, reviewed the monitoring of teaching and learning file and looked at a selection of pupils' books from each class. She then met with senior leaders, phase leaders and governors. She concluded that we have evaluated the school effectively and that we are moving forward well.

Over the past 12 months we have developed our monitoring and assessment schedule, and the school's self-review programme, which enables us to hold all stakeholders to account. This involves a very detailed plan for pupil progress meetings, book scrutinies, pupil conferencing, lesson observations, snapshots, data analysis and feedback. During the visit from Jo Flower she concluded that 'focused monitoring is planned regularly and that this had impact on learning across the school'.

As a result of the stringent governance review, the governing body of St. Mary's is led by a chair of governors who is very active in school and has implemented a clear vision. Jo concluded that 'governors are showing better support and challenge, and have developed a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses'. The governing body has been streamlined and new governors recruited to fill positions of responsibility. We are pleased to welcome Mr Mike Hayward and Mrs Lucy Culkin to this team.

The governor's areas of responsibility are:

- Personnel – Mrs Ann Harris (Chair of Governors)
- Finance – Mr Mike Hayward
- Teaching and Learning – Mrs Eunice Masters (Vice-Chair of Governors)
- Safeguarding including Child Protection and Pupil Premium – Mrs Mary Norrish
- Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Equality – Mrs Monika Kus-Kwiatkowska
- Health and Safety – Ms Rebecca Granger
- Parents and the Wider Community – Mrs Lucy Culkin


Jo Flower visited all classes and reported a 'very calm and ordered environment, with clear and high expectations for the learning'. It was reported that 'she observed some high expectations of teaching and learning in classes'. She challenged senior leaders on how they were improving teaching and learning across the school and reported that senior leaders are 'clear about steps of support and steps of monitoring'. We are currently waiting for an Ofsted monitoring visit, and will share the results of this when the time comes.

Our success is dependent on the support of all with parental responsibility and so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued efforts in this regard. You have supported the introduction of our new homework system and are regularly helping and supporting your children with their work at home. You are instilling our high expectations by always making sure they are prepared, organised and ready for learning. Thank you for your attendance at the various parent meetings we have held to help support your child in maths, phonics, Early Years, Key Stage 2 SATs, parent consultations and "Open Book" events. Without your strong support we would not be moving things forward as quickly as we are. Parents are continually approaching me to ask how they can help the school be even more of a success. I would ask that you continue to support your children in all areas of school life, but especially in the key areas of attendance, homework, school trips and events such as our recent Nativities; Christmas Sparkle and forthcoming "Carols around the Christmas Tree".

Having had a bit of a shock at the beginning of the year I must share with you that it has brought great joy to my life to be back at St Mary's watching your children grow, flourish and achieve in all areas. Our children are always so keen to learn; they love participating in the exciting hooks that the teachers use at the beginning of new topics such as the mummification of fish or exploring our grounds for the Stick Man! They have all embraced the 'Maths No Problem' scheme and are developing their skills of reasoning. Our children understand that positive learning behaviours result in them achieving highly and that it is important to be fully involved in all activities in school.

Thank you for your continued support, through which we will continue to strive to achieve our vision of "*Inspiring each other to learn, in the light of Christ*", through our values of love, hope, spirituality and respect.

Yours faithfully,



Helen Armstrong
Headteacher