



## St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs. P.M. Best B.Ed M.A. NPQH

### Governors' Update

19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we journey through advent together it is wonderful to see all the lovely seasonal events. The Christmas fayre last week was immensely successful and so many people came to join in the fun. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this event, and especially to the PTA committee who work so hard for our school. Congratulations also to the lucky winner of the wheelbarrow full of alcohol, I am sure that you will have a very merry Christmas, a happy new year and probably a very merry summer as well!

I find it is always really interesting to look back over a year and get a sense of what we have achieved. Much of the good work of the governors is not so visible to parents. It is wonderful though to have a very visible activity, the redevelopment of the Teaching Hall. This week I managed to take a look inside and I could see that work is progressing very well, with the building on track to be completed after the Easter holiday. As with all building work, there is a need to move out of the hall and make space for the materials and machines. Once this has been completed, we will have an immensely useful new building. We are delighted that this work could go ahead and have been planning it for over 5 years. One of the original ideas was that the hall could be extended and moved up a floor from its existing location as an "attic conversion". This proved to be unfeasible, and so we settled on the current plans for the hall so that we could create a larger multi-purpose space. Most of the construction cost has been provided by the Xavier Trust and we are deeply grateful to James Kibble the CEO and his team for finding the funds to support this work.

In the early 2025 we will continue on our quest for funding for the internal work in the new hall. Thank you to everyone who is contributing to the governor trust fund, this money will be invested in the hall project very soon. Some photos of the work are on the next page.



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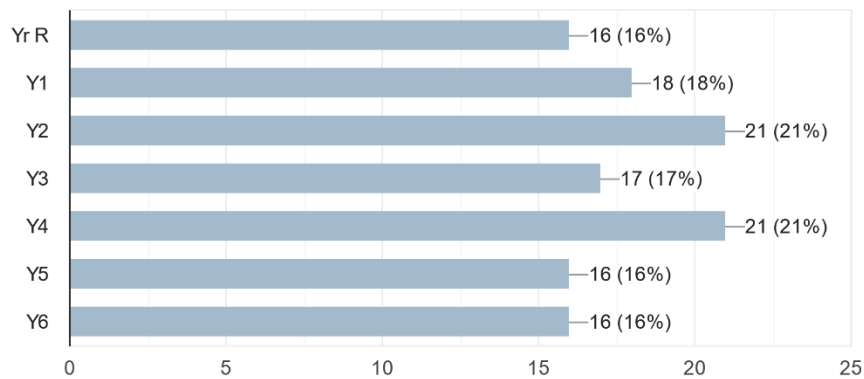


### Parent Survey

Thank you so much to all the parents who took time to complete our annual survey, which has just closed. We have had 100 responses from parents with children in year groups across the school. We will publish the full results early next year once the governors have had time to review the graphs and all the responses.

Which school year is your child in?

100 responses



I am always so happy to hear the stories from parents who are former pupils from Saint Polycarp's. The swimming pool (that was removed many years ago) always comes up in conversation. Saint Polycarp's was not the only school to have one, The Bourne School also had (and may still have) a pool. It is amazing how installing a swimming pool some decades ago seemed like a very good idea – you could teach children to swim, they could



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have fun in it in the summer etc. Now when we look at this we would more see the very obvious and huge health and safety concerns around protecting a pool from 420 children, quite a number of whom can't swim very well. There would also be a need to heat it, and by the time you add in the maintenance costs it is far better value to make use of the indoor pool in the leisure centre rather than have one of our own. Our priorities do change.

While changes in some areas of life take time we also noticed how quickly things can change in November when our parish priest Fr Niven announced that he would be taking early retirement. I think most of us had forgotten that there was a time at Saint Joan's church before him. Fr Niven didn't want a big party or farewell celebration, so we marked the end of Fr Niven's last school mass with a few moments of farewell messages. We have been so lucky to have Fr Niven come into the school for all these years and we recently welcomed Fr Simon for his first visit to Saint Polycarp's. We look forward to celebrating the final school mass of the year this week with Fr Simon.

I am so often reminded about how lucky I am to live in such a safe part of the world. Last year I stood at the border with the Ukraine looking at the hills and trees stretching away into the distance. It was a very peaceful place, but I knew that not far away from me there were bombs falling onto innocent people. Further still was the front line of a war in Europe, a war that has affected the lives of so many people. We continue to pray for peace in the Ukraine, the Middle East and throughout the world.

As this term draws to a close, I hope that you will have time to rest with your family from these busy days. I hope that your Christmas will be filled with great joy. I wish you and your family peace, happiness and success in 2025.

With every good wish,

*Martin Parr*

Martin Parr  
Chair of Governors



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