



Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day

St. Mark's Governors' Letter to Parents - July 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

In another busy year for the school, a recurring theme for St. Mark's over the last 12 months has been embracing new situations.

This was the first year of the school being led by Ms Braithwaite and Mr Jones. Both have provided strong and ambitious leadership of the school and remain committed to its continual improvement. They have also focused on enhancing the broader curriculum available to our children. The striking artwork around the school and increasing musical talents of our young ones are testament to this.

Our lovely Early Years Foundation Stage centre opened in October 2015 and now provides a thriving environment for two and three years as well our Reception class. Getting the centre up and running was a mammoth task and I'm very proud that governors and the school leadership were able to work together with the LDBS and Islington Council to rise to the challenge. The Centre provides a fantastic learning environment for our children to start their educational journey – a fact recognised in the highly positive inspection outcomes.

Those with children in years two and six will be highly aware that the government introduced revised SATs tests this year. The tests are aligned to the new National Curriculum and requires children to learn their subjects in significantly greater depth and breadth than in years gone by. This was reflected in the test papers, with the KS2 reading paper being notably harder this year.

Our KS2 results are listed below and show that across all subjects, our children scored just below the national average in three of the four subjects.

KS1 SATs Teacher Assessment		
	<i>St. Mark's</i>	<i>National Average</i>
<i>% at expected in Reading</i>	80%	Tbc
<i>% at expected in Maths</i>	73%	Tbc
<i>% at expected in Writing</i>	68%	Tbc

KS2 SATs Results vs National		
	<i>St. Mark's</i>	<i>National Average</i>
<i>% at expected in Reading</i>	62%	66%
<i>% at expected in SPAG</i>	68%	72%
<i>% at expected in Maths</i>	68%	70%
<i>% at expected in Writing</i>	79%	74%

Everyone at St Mark's is now determined to get better results next year and we are very lucky to have the right staff and leadership in place. All our teaching is being constantly checked by independent inspectors. Both Islington Council and the London Diocesan Board for Schools, who oversee our school on behalf of the Church of England, come in every term and have judged more of our teaching to be at an outstanding level than at any other point in our past. Our aim is to go from being an OFSTED 'Good' school to an 'Outstanding' one and the feedback from the constant external monitoring of our teaching shows we are making good progress towards this goal.

Nevertheless we know what needs to be done to for next year and that will mean greater emphasis on reading, writing, spelling and finding new ways to make maths fun and exciting for our kids. Luckily we have a team of talented and enthusiastic teachers to do this.

Being able to support the school and provide experiences for the children that they may otherwise not have are very important to governors. The Astro turf and Arsenal parking are valuable sources of income which have allowed us to do this. For example, we input £50,000 towards the cost of building the new EYFS centre. Governors also made a payment towards the Year 6 Osmington Bay trip and whole school pantomime, amongst other things. Next year, we hope to increase the community use of the Astro turf as a way to broaden the experiences of a wider group of people. If you know of any teams that would be interested in booking a regular slot on the pitch, please ask them to contact John Helm on 07963 003 199.

I started this letter with a mention of new situations and will close by saying that I have decided to step down as Chair of Governors to focus on a new chapter in my life. When I became Chair in 2011, I couldn't have imagined what an extraordinary experience it would be. I have had the good fortune to have worked with many amazing people over the years and the school will forever hold a special place in my heart. Sadly, Chris Daynes will also be leaving the St. Mark's governing body at the end of term. Chris and I started as governors on the same day and I'd like to thank him for being an invaluable source of support and advice over the years. He'll be deeply missed by the governors.

It's my pleasure to say that your new Chair of Governors will be Peter Antolik. Peter has been a St. Mark's governor for a few years during which he has been at the heart of many of the recent improvements to the school. Under his leadership, I have every confidence that St. Mark's will continue to prosper as a nurturing environment where children can reach their potential.

I wish you and your family a lovely, restful summer holiday.

Best wishes



Christine Kinnear

Chair of Governors