

Governors Report for Parents 2020/2021

When we reflect on the last year it has been extraordinary. It is incredible to consider the challenges that our communities and families have faced; it is remarkable to consider the resilience and adaptability of young people and the way that they approached changes to learning, periods of isolation as well as numerous alterations to their assessments. I am incredibly proud of the hopeful and compassionate way pupils and families responded to such change and enormously grateful for the school community and the commitment of the staff and Governors. Each day I feel our special sense of community and there was still an enormous amount to celebrate; our pupils made some incredible achievements inside and outside of school.

It has been a joy to welcome more Year 7 pupils than ever before and the school has never felt fuller. Increasingly St Richard Gwyn is becoming the school of choice and the demand for places is reflective of the excellent attainment and focus on wellbeing that permeates the school. We recognise that our buildings are old and, it is hard when you see the significant external investment in other schools. However, we work incredibly hard to ensure St Richard Gwyn is a community where pupils feel positive and happy to learn in; one in which their education is underpinned with faith and emphasis on character education. This is a school where, even if the buildings are not, the culture of learning and community is fit of the twenty first century.

Standards

The circumstances to last year's attainment were challenging. However, pupils continued to do incredibly well and worked incredibly hard to achieve outstanding outcomes. It was a very difficult time and pupils had to work, extremely hard in lessons and in their own time to make up for lost onsite learning during COVID. We adopted a system used alongside WJEC and Qualifications Wales guidance to ensure pupils had many opportunities to achieve. Over two thirds of pupils achieved at least 5 A-C grades including Mathematics and English whilst over a third achieved at least five 5A/* grades; a fantastic achievement after a difficult 14 months of education. The class of 2021 maintained the excellent progress of the school in terms of examination standards. It was particularly outstanding to witness how maturely and reliably the pupils' went about their work despite the challenges they faced and it was heartening to see the support they gave each other.

Overview of GCSE results:

Key performance indicators 2021: (2020 outcomes in brackets)

Level 2+ (% gaining 5 A*- C grades including Maths and English) - 68.8% (70.7%)

Level 2 (% gaining 5 A* - C grades) - 82.5% (84.67%)

Level 1 (% gaining 5 A* - G grades) - 99.4% (98%)

% gaining 5 A*/ A grades - 34% (34%)

Capped 9 points score (9 best results including 1 maths, 1 English and 1 Science grade) - 425 Points (422)

Literacy average points score - 44.93 (43.2)

Numeracy average points score - 42.08 (41.56)

Science average points score - 42.35 (42.37)

Welsh Baccalaureate points score - 47.06 (47.32)

Wellbeing

We have grown our wellbeing team in response to the pupils needs' and they continue to be at the heart of the caring and loving ethos of the school. We even have the addition of two wellbeing dogs who support the pupils! Our Catholic Profile, with key virtues such as generosity and truthfulness, reflects our belief in the importance of character formation alongside outstanding educational outcomes. We put wellbeing at the forefront of our school, one that is underpinned by unashamedly Gospel values. We have recently been working with the reliance project, where special educational phycologist support is offered. Our Fighting Chance boxing programme continues and we are grateful to have more Wellbeing Officers than ever before supporting pupils with challenges that they seek to overcome. We also support pupils in developing their social interaction and anxiety through the work of the storytelling project.

Teaching and Learning

Last year, pupils had a challenges with lockdown and had to learn in very different circumstances both in and outside of school. There were periods of online learning when pupils and staff had to adapt. As a school we became used to operating differently. The way pupils and staff responded to this was remarkable. In many ways, the school and teaching learning has gone through a huge change; online classrooms, recorded lessons and live lessons became part of our day to day working. The spirit of collaboration this instilled stands us in good stead as we prepare for the new curriculum and greater inter-departmental working.

We continue to be a Lead Partnership school with Cardiff Metropolitan University, training teachers and seeking to promote excellent practice. We had fourteen students this year and the quality has been highly impressive. They have enriched our community through working with departments, conducting research and motivating our students. The vast majority of graduates have found employment in schools. It is most gratifying to acknowledge that as a community St Richard Gwyn has played a significant role in shaping teachers' education. It has been a privilege to see them develop as teachers.

We invested all we could in making the school safe and comfortable in response to Covid; the addition of outside covered areas were essential and we invested heavily in Chromebooks and ICT equipment in order to facilitate online learning. Work has commenced on a new toilet block and this will be installed in the coming weeks. The whole school has been newly painted and we do all we can to make the learning environment as positive as we can for the pupils. It will be wonderful when we are next in line for a new school building!

Outside Achievements

Pupils have continued to make outstanding contributions outside of school; too many to list individually here. We are extremely proud of our groups of regular volunteers for the Feed Charity; providing surplus food for the homeless and refuges. We have many aspiring sports stars across all manner of disciplines and we are proud of each and every one of them. These include Rhys Aclan representing Wales Under 15s in Basketball; and Joshua Humphreys gaining international honours in badminton. Nina Prichard represented Wales at the Dance World Cup whilst George Emerton is an international Scooter rider! There are many more individual and collective achievements in a wonderfully broad range of disciplines and activities. We are extremely proud of the efforts and achievements of these and the many other individuals who are pursuing their passions outside of school.

We are still doing all that we can in response to the pandemic. We are so grateful for the support and solidarity that the parents, staff and pupils have shown this year and we pray and hope that we can look forward to returning to greater normality as the year progresses. Please bear in mind that if you are able to support our minibus appeal in any way we would be very grateful.

The Governing Body

Foundation

Mr Paul McLoughlin (Chair) Dr Martin Price Mr Steve Trigg Mrs Emma McGivern Mrs Lisa Hassan
Mrs Kate Harris Mrs Marcia Gittens

Parent Governors

Mr Steve Farugia Mr Noel Clawson Mrs Emma Turner

Non Teaching Staff

Mrs Kate Clark

Teaching Staff

Mrs Rebecca Swain Ms Amanda Gledhill

Local Authority

Mr Danny Williams Mrs Karen Evans

Headteacher Mr David Blackwell

Clerk

Mrs Claire Price

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