



HEADTEACHER'S REPORT TO GOVERNORS

April

2009

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June

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Staffing

We say a fond farewell to Mr Mike Hadland, Head of Technology who leaves us this summer to enjoy a well earned early retirement. He has served Holy Cross very well over the years and an example of some of the wonderful work produced by pupils under his guidance is on display in the school foyer.

We are delighted to have appointed Mrs Ann McKeon as his replacement as Head of Technology and welcome Miss Caroline Rawlinson as a new technology teacher.

We also say goodbye and best wishes to Mr Stephen Alker (Maths) and Mr Jakub Peczcowski (Maths support) who are both taking up teaching posts in other schools.

We thank Mr Brian Derbyshire for his excellent service as Exams Chief Invigilator. He has overseen the taking of public exams for a number of years and done much to create an excellent atmosphere for pupils. Miss Marion Eccles takes over this part-time post in September.

Finally our best wishes to Miss Claire Newsham who becomes Mrs Claire Gaughan in July (MFL) and to Alex and Mark Devlin-Tierney (R.E.) on the birth of baby Evangeline.

Governors' Open Evening

Holy Cross was delighted to welcome five governors on Thursday 11th June to visit school for the morning. Governors took part in a lively assembly, tour of school with pupils, visit to eight lessons and lunch with staff and pupils in the Dining Room. Governors will give a fuller report to the meeting of the Full Governing Body on 2nd July.

Parent Governor Elections

Following the four year service of Mrs Tricia Walker and Mrs Liz Fogarty, elections took place for two parent governor places. Seven parents showed initial interest and three parents eventually stood for election. We are pleased to welcome Mrs Angela MacLeod and re-welcome Mrs Liz Fogarty. I would wish to express sincere and grateful thanks to Mrs Tricia Walker who has been excellent in her service of the school.

Spirituality/Catholic Life

Our pupils continue to make serious commitment to their faith in a number of ways. Over 80 Year 10 pupils have chosen to be confirmed, as has a member of staff. Pupils raised well over £1000 for Nugent Care (Good Shepherd) and attended the mass of thanksgiving. Jan Kay Chung (Yr 7) won the Nugent Care Poster Competition and all Year 11 celebrated finishing life at Holy Cross with a wonderful and prayerful service of thanks.

The Chaplaincy team, Junior SVP and pupil meditation groups continue to thrive, as does the Staff Prayer Group which meets each Friday. Voluntary Mass is well attended and provides a wonderful moment of calm each week on Tuesday lunchtimes.

All classes have participated in preparing assemblies and form collective worship and the many services throughout the year have thriving, prayerful and respectful congregations.

We were delighted to take part in the filming of a St Mary's Parish video giving just a glimpse of the many aspects of spiritual life at Holy Cross.

Healthy Schools

On Friday 13th June, we were visited by two representatives of the Lancashire Healthy Schools Partnership for our accreditation visit. Their day began with an informative and thought provoking assembly about hygiene delivered by Mrs Rigby and Mr Power. After a tour of the school, and some time spent in the PE department, the visitors met for (a healthy) lunch with some of our youngsters. These represented the wealth of extra-curricular activity taking place in school including SVP, Fair Trade, The Cohesion Project, Eco Schools, D of E and the School Council. The visitors were blown away by the manner in which our youngsters presented themselves commenting on the standard of uniform, general appearance and their obvious pride in their school. They left with a really great impression of our school and we are just awaiting the written report confirming our healthy schools status. Thanks are due to Mrs Fairclough for all her hard work in achieving the five certificates leading to acquiring the Healthy School Standard.

Attached is an Endorsement Statement on Healthy Schools by Kristina Deakin, a Year 10 pupil.

New Intake Evenings

Welcome Evenings for next year's intake were held on Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th. Mrs White and Mr Walsh addressed the families present, covering areas such as curriculum and setting, expectations, uniform, the School Development Fund and partnerships. During the evenings the form tutors were introduced to their new classes. Both events were well attended. Many thanks to Mr Walsh and the many staff in attendance for their whole-hearted support. We very much look forward to working with our new intake and their families from September.

Thomas Martland Maths Challenge

Now in its 13th year, the competition for Year 6 pupils, in memory of former pupil Thomas Martland, is going from strength to strength. The Martland family continue to support this event and provide all competing schools with a prize. This year's winners, in the closest competition to date, were St. Joseph's, Chorley. Thanks to the Maths department for their organisation of the event and to our primary schools for their continued support.

Buildings and Refurbishment

Remedial work on the school premises including painting and decorating will be ongoing throughout the summer holidays.

After a successful capital bid, money has been granted towards the refurbishment of room 11, currently a Design and Technology classroom. It is planned that this room will mainly be used by the Science and PE departments for practical and theoretical

lessons not able to be delivered elsewhere in the school. As well as the refurbishment, various items of equipment will be purchased to enhance learning.

It is planned to erect a canopy in the outer quad area, which will give the children added protection in adverse weather conditions.

Money has been provided to cover the costs of replacing the school boilers. This will take place over the period 29 June – 21 August.

CPD - Emergency Planning Day

The CPD held on Wednesday 10 June was in the form of a critical incident discussion, and was attended by all available members of staff. The guest speaker was Mr Mark Taylor, who is the Business Continuity Manager from the LCC Emergency Planning Team. Mark gave a brief lecture on emergency planning and followed this with a scenario based exercise, covering the evacuation of the school for a prolonged period. The staff were split into groups, and spent time evaluating the various problems that were given to them, before presenting their solutions. This was a very informative session and achieved the aim of making staff more aware of problems that may arise in any type of emergency.

Attendance

At the end of June we are not achieving the Governors target of 94%, I expect us to reach 93.5% by the end of this school year. We have had this year 8 pupils with very low attendance, 2 of whom have been almost non attendees. We have been targeting attendance since early May by appointing internally Mr Steve Smith and Mrs Marie Loughlin to have the responsibility to scrutinise pupils' attendance data, interview pupils and liaise with parents by letter, phone call and interviews, which may include home visits. We are confident that our attendance figures will improve and indeed several pupils have had a marked improvement since early May.

We recently had a presentation by Truancy Call, which is a system that can link in with SIMs and is designed to improve attendance. The feedback is that the system does work. A decision will be made by the end of the term whether to rent the system for a trial period.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The expedition season is well under way with very successful Bronze and Silver expeditions to the Ribble Valley and Northern Lakes.

Planning for the 4th Gold Expedition is in the final stage now the team have regrouped after their GCSE examinations. Fundraising has gone extremely well with some new events on the calendar including Strictly Come Dancing, Clarins Pamper Night and Run Row and Ride to Gozo. The team are close to achieving their target of £10,000 raised. A great achievement has been the award of a grant of £4000 from the Harris Charity, to purchase diving equipment which will remove the recurrent cost of hiring equipment in the UK and in Gozo.

In the last year we have had some great volunteers, old and new, without whom the expeditions wouldn't be able to run. Many of the volunteers have undergone Basic Expedition Leadership training and we are all currently undergoing assessment under the new assessor's accreditation scheme.

And finally, on 1st July, 13 past pupils and their parents will attend a garden party in the grounds of Holyrood house in Edinburgh where they will receive their Gold Awards from HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. We are all incredibly proud of them and they have certainly set a great benchmark which increasing numbers of our youngsters are aspiring to match.

Punctuality

A new system will be in place by September to improve pupils' punctuality.

Pupil Voice and School Forum

We had our first meeting on 1st May, with 3 pupils from each year group in year 7 to 10. It was very useful, the pupils were given refreshments and topics covered included, school uniform, the role of Prefects, designated areas for year groups in and around the school. A second meeting has been arranged for 3rd July. One of the strengths of our school is our pupils, many pupils from all year groups have been used to showing visitors and parents around school. We have also used pupils when interviewing for staff vacancies. They have taken interviewees on a tour of the school and will feedback to the Headteacher any thoughts that they might have about the candidates. On the recent Governors' day, pupils played a big part in the proceedings, as they did in the Healthy Schools assessment.

Musical Futures

This term we have subscribed, through Lancashire Music Service to the nationwide initiative called 'Musical Futures'. It has received considerable funding from the government. If funding allows it would be excellent to continue in September.

What is it? We pay for one hour's tuition from a Lancashire Music Service teacher and we receive on loan to school, 6 bass guitars, 6 guitars, 6 drums machines, 6 microphones, 12 amps, 6 keyboards, 6 keyboard stands and 6 microphone stands and all the connecting leads etc! This is enough for a class of 32 to be in 'bands' of 5/6. They all perform on their chosen instrument. The focus is on pupil motivated learning. It has been incredibly successful with all year 9 classes. We are going to have a 'performance week' when all bands will perform. Hopefully one 'band', who have never previously played, may perform in front of the whole school. An incredible achievement.

DJing and MCing

This type of musical performance is now acceptable as part of the new music GCSE.

DJing

Pupils use decks with an LP on each deck. They merge the beat from one to the other, keeping the tempo the same by listening and slowing one LP down with their hands. It is quite difficult to do successfully. I've tried!

MCing

Historically this has involved a great deal of bad language. The two leaders from Lancashire Music Service will only accept 'clean' words and promote words aimed

against bullying and street crime, knives etc. One of the leaders, Montana, is quite famous in the area and was a past pupil here, with a reputation. He has however turned himself round and is a positive role model to many of our youngsters who could be easily led by negative influences. This 6 week course attracted many low ability pupils, where they were encouraged to write words for MCing. It was a very positive experience and possibly involved some pupils who have not been and may not again be involved in extra curricular school activities.

Ski Trip

During Enrichment Week we are taking 64 pupils and 8 staff to Chatel in the French Alps on a skiing holiday. Chatel is part of the Portes du Soleil, which has 640km of skiing linking 8 French and 6 Swiss villages. It is just south of Geneva.

We are staying in a fantastic French hotel, in a tiny village called Chapelle d'Abondance, 5 mins from Chatel. The party leader has already visited the hotel and knows the whole area for skiing very well. It will be necessary for pupils to speak French in the hotel as much as possible.

Children will have 4 hours of supervised tuition every day, for 6 days. The cost is £700 for coach, hotel, meals, ski, boot hire, lift pass and 3 evening of entertainment.

Life Channel

We had two plasma televisions installed over the Easter Break to display the Life Channel. One set is in the school reception to welcome visitors and provide relevant day-to-day information and the other set is in the sports reception to help publicity for the community element of school. The Channel is also available to view through the pull down screen in the dining hall. The channel delivers high quality health, social and educational programmes to the pupils. We have used the expertise of Michael Cowley (our ICT Technician) to implement an interruption to the programme loop to show pupils' work, relevant information and rewards and celebrations of the school. The Life Channel has lots of potential for school to showcase its successes and work with local businesses.

Accreditation Endorsement Statement

At Holy Cross, there are many opportunities to improve in learning and in character. During enrichment week, the school teaches a PSHE programme which is taught in various ways that allows pupils to gain knowledge through interesting and fun lessons. Discussions, models and worksheets are just some of the ways in which the lessons are given. I find these lessons quite enjoyable because they are delivered in a way that allows us as pupils to ask questions without feeling embarrassed which broadens our education.

In Year 8, we were thoroughly taught the effects that drugs have on people. We also learnt about the consequences of breaking the law if you take drugs, which was reinforced upon us by a policewoman who visited us in a lesson. Her experiences and understanding of drugs was effective in teaching the class and deterring them away from the use of drugs. Assemblies are also presented which are very informative and gives us huge awareness of the problems surrounding drug abuse.

Holy Cross offers a wide range of opportunities to participate in schemes with school partnerships and within the community. Duke of Edinburgh is a popular award scheme that focuses on the independence of people and organisation skills. Last year, I took part in the bronze award which involved volunteer work, physical activity, learning a new skill and the most challenging of all, which was the expedition. The variation of the scheme allows participants to choose areas that they will excel in. For example, we had pupils helping out with Mayfield School to people working in the community with various sports teams. I find the award really encouraging as we become more involved with new people and have new experiences. I found that the award has really boosted my confidence, which is why this year, I have enrolled with the silver award along with many others in my year.

The Step Into Sport Scheme is another programme which I have become involved with which focuses on the development of young leaders. The programme puts you on a placement of your chosen sport and provides leadership courses, one of which I recently enrolled in during the summer half term. I find that this scheme is very enjoyable because the people who I work with are enthusiastic and possess motivational personalities.

Furthermore, the Catholic ethos of the school is influential for all years. Assemblies, services and prayers are all major influences on the pupils to give us guidance in life. Prayers are said before exams to give everyone the right sense of mind, and the Chapel provides a serene place for the weekly mass which all contributes to the ethos of our school. The Catholic influence provides the morals and values of our school which builds a positive atmosphere around everyone. "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" is taken from John's gospel, that is a fundamental belief on which the school builds on. The wide range of opportunities offered to the students fulfil the statement as with staff support, we progress through the education in all aspects and become mature young adults with future aims in life.

Holy Cross is outstanding in the facilities we offer in physical education. The Astroturf is a massive addition to the PE department and is used thoroughly by the school. Holy Cross is a base for sports events held on the all-weather pitch such as hockey, rugby, football and netball festivals ranging from primary schools to the end of secondary schools. The multi-purpose room has state of the art gym equipment which is a major help in the growth of pupils' physical literacy and is a building point for future success. The physical education department offers a wide variation in lessons, from skill-based learning to games activities building on the overall health of students. I find that the lessons are fun and adapted to suit all abilities. The enthusiasm from staff helps as motivation for everyone to become active during lessons as well as extra curricular activities. After school, a range of sports are on offer to all years which can develop into brilliant teams. Last year, the year seven girls became national champions in rugby league with the help and coaching of staff. This year it appears that they will become champions for the second time running. The PE department has also recently offered the chance to take GCSE dance which is brand new to our school but proved to be very popular. I have also recently sat a GCSE PE which I was offered to enrol in, along with 13 other pupils a year early. We began the 2 year course in Year 9 and on completing the exams, have been given the opportunity to take part in an orienteering course. For my last year in Holy Cross, we

are going to develop in leadership and coaching as we enrol in further programmes to add to our records of achievement.

As a student at Holt Cross, I believe it is one of the healthiest places to be because of the opportunities offered to us, and the support and achievements we gain throughout high school with the help and guidance of teachers and each other which is built on our Catholic values.

Kristina Deakin
Year 10 pupil