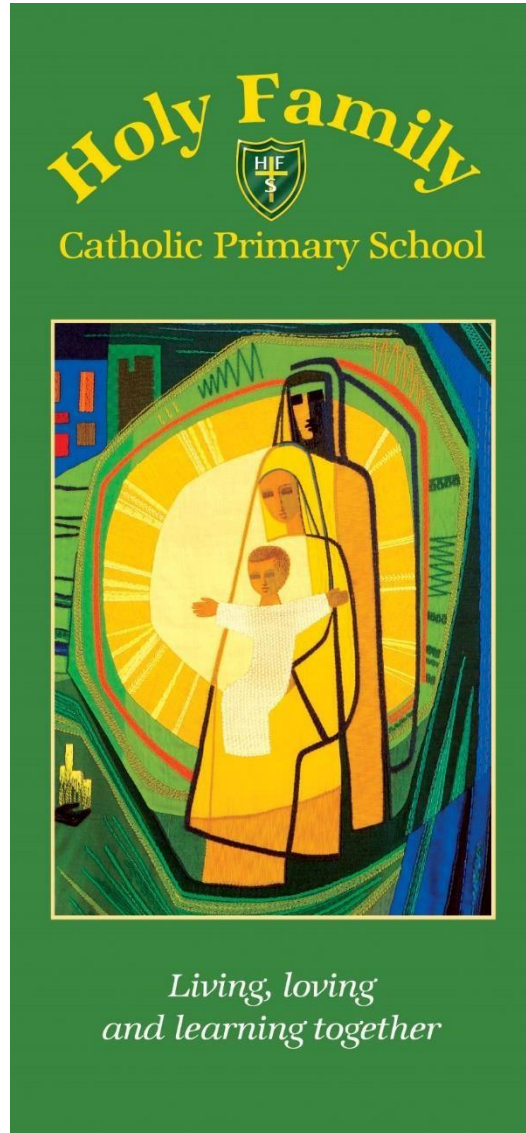


Holy Family Catholic Primary School

The Rosary Trust



**Governor Open Day
5 June 2024**




FOCUS

The focus of this year’s governor open day is mainly for governors to see how Religious Education is used in a cross-curricular way. It is at the heart of everything that is done in and around the school and is the core of the core subjects.

It will enable governors to collect as much evidence as they can about how the school environment translates Catholic teaching into the pupils’ lives – starting from the very day they join the school until the day they leave.

You will see throughout this report a reference to various animals and I expect you have become very familiar with them via your children. But I am listing these below so that you can put their work into context. As soon as they start in Foundation they are introduced to this collection of animals – each having a specific message:

CST Animals to be studied over the academic year

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<p>Sofia the Sloth</p>  <p>Stewardship/ Caring for God’s people</p>	<p>Daisy the Dove</p>  <p>Being peacemakers Promoting peace</p>	<p>Shristi the Sun Bear</p>  <p>Solidarity, showing we care</p>	<p>Patariki the Penguin</p>  <p>Participation, taking part</p>	<p>Chikondi the Giraffe</p>  <p>The common good, thinking of everyone</p>	<p>DJ the Dolphin</p>  <p>Distributive justice, sharing fairly</p>
<p>Poppy the Popokotea</p>  <p>Option for the Poor/Putting people in most need first</p>		<p>Luc the Deer</p>  <p>Human dignity, everyone is special</p>		<p>Sid the Sheep</p>  <p>Subsidiarity, everyone should have a say</p>	

The school is due to have its Catholic School Inspection (CSI) imminently. Just like OFSTED has its framework, we are particularly tasked with providing evidence of:

- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school;
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education;
- How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship.

Today's visit has gone a long way in providing valuable evidence of how these elements can be demonstrated.

A governor's role is to be part of the school day, to increase collective knowledge and understanding of what goes on in a typical school day, and to be part of the leadership role listed above. These governor days are extremely beneficial in building positive relationships between governors, staff and the children themselves.

Governors participating in the day were:

Mrs Anne Wright
Mr Bob Wright
Mr John Glasby
Mrs Korina Murphy-Banham
Mrs Marcella Coleridge
Fr Nixon Gomes
Mrs Tricia Nicholls
Mrs Helen Jones
Mrs Jasmine Everett
Mrs Hannah Clark

FOREWORD BY CHAIR

It's that time of year when the Governors are able to see a snapshot of a Day in the Life of Holy Family School that we wouldn't otherwise have been able to see and no two days are the same. You will see from the focus above that we were particularly looking at Catholic Education and how it inter-weaves with all the other curricular subjects – making it the core of the core subjects.

We found so much in support of this and you will be able to read below each of the governor's individual perceptions. I would like to thank all the staff and pupils for their valuable contributions towards making our day so special and for answering all our questions without hesitation and so freely. The pupils never cease to delight us with their excellent behaviour, impeccable manners and their thoughtful answers to our questions.

A few Governors may have visited the same class and therefore what they have written may seem the same. But it is worth reading each account as that is a Governor's personal perception of what they saw and felt.

I have a remarkable Local Board of Governors who all work so hard for the benefit of the school. They can always be relied on to undertake these visits with due diligence and in their own time. Several of them are also working at a day job but still find the time to ensure their duties as Governors of the HFS are taken seriously. I would especially like to give a big shout out to Ronnie Hannan who works so hard behind the scenes to ensure all the policies and procedures are up to date and relevant and our statutory requirements are fulfilled. Our professional and efficient clerk, Elizabeth Murphy, is also an integral part of the governing body. Together with all the staff at HFS, we are a team who work for the benefit of the children.

ANNE WRIGHT – Co-Opted Governor - Chair

The day started with a whole school Mass led by Year 3 and what is evident is how each and every child understands that Mass is an integral part of school life and is to be respected. They all know that they should be quiet during the service and a prayerful and serene atmosphere can be felt except when the communal singing of the hymns requires them to participate wholeheartedly and with loud voices. The singing brings a joyful element to the Mass and they are also able to participate in the service by making the responses and undertaking the readings on an individual basis. The children who had made their First Holy Communion at Pentecost were able to wear their lovely white dresses and suits and to lead on doing the readings and responsorial psalm. What a joyful start to the day.



Most of the Governors participating in the day were able to attend Mass and then we convened over a cup of coffee to chat as to how to ensure we covered as many of the classes as possible. With so much going on, it is difficult to do this but we believe we made the most of our day.

Year 1 – Mrs Eardley and Mrs Stanford

Mrs Eardley explained that **SOPHIA THE SLOTH** was making another appearance in the class. She had been introduced to the class at the beginning of Year 1 and Sophia's message was **CARING FOR GOD'S GIFTS**. The children were reminded of what they had learnt when they first joined the class, reinforcing the message.



The children were asked to remember the names of the five Oceans they had learnt about the day before and were all able to identify them easily. They also knew that the important message relating to the Oceans was about pollution and that recycling was key to helping reduce rubbish in the sea. They also knew about avoiding the use of single use plastic items.

Mrs Eardley then shared with the class a story called **Follow the Moon Home** which featured a baby turtle and how light pollution was preventing him from getting to the sea as he was going the wrong way. He needed to follow the moon to get to the sea. The class were introduced to words like *habitat* and *dehydrated*, adding to the growing vocabulary. They were also taught that first a problem had to be identified before a solution could be found. All of Class 1 understood that God made the

moon, the sea and the turtles and this linked nicely to the story being shared.

Year 6 – Mrs Rackliff

The pupils had listened to a song about **Opening the Eyes of my Heart**. They were then asked to identify what this meant to them personally by either writing a prayer, prose or drawing a picture – bearing in mind the heart did not have eyes! Some really wonderful interpretations were presented through their thoughtful and insightful work. They all demonstrated a very mature understanding of what *Opening the Eyes of my Heart* meant.

Lunch and beyond – Mrs Rackliff, Mrs Small, Mrs Scott

During a delicious lunch of baked potato with tuna, cheese and salad, followed by fruit, I was able to chat with some Yr 6 children about life in general! They were happy and were enjoying their various choices of lunch – some had brought their own (as “I am very fussy”) and others were tucking into the chicken nuggets, all freshly prepared and cooked by the kitchen staff. No reconstituted/frozen chicken here!

Rosary Club – Mrs Rockall

A few governors joined Mrs Rockall and an assortment of pupils ranging from Foundation to Year 6 who gave up some of their play time, to say a decade of the rosary. They all joined in and this is obviously one of their highlights of the day. Mrs Rockall held a giant rosary and used stepping stones carefully placed so that as she went from one to another this gave a visual image of the rosary to all there. It could clearly be seen by the eager participation of Foundation pupils, that the introduction at an early stage to saying the rosary is a great part of their religious education. The quiet prayer area outside is ideal for contemplation.

Following lunch, several governors met up with members of staff to talk through the RE books of a random selection of pupils and it was also incredible to see the wide spectrum of subjects covered in the children's own words. It was explained that currently the new Religious Education Directory (RED) had been introduced into Foundation. Years 1 and 2 would follow next year, with years 3, 4, 5 and 6 following on, with full compliance by 2026. However, there was no formal assessment yet for RED and the staff were following their old methods for the time being.

I then took a walk through the corridors which was another delight. A plethora of religious work is on display which links in to other core subjects. Religious art has had a great influence on all the budding artists who have been able to eloquently describe their interpretation of the piece of art e.g. Return of the Prodigal Son, by Rembrandt. One pupil wrote “I think the father and the son are in a vibrant colour because they are in the light of God”. What a lovely comparison. Another display board shows cartoons of how to look after yourself by resting and sleeping or another picture says you should eat a balanced diet. Everywhere the big messages coming out through all the artwork are Pope Francis' words (Laudato Si and Fratelli Tutti). Even on the sports board, the big message **“We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust and care for each other”**. Powerful words that will follow them through to adulthood.



Year 2 – Mrs Cox and Mrs Stanford

A visit to Year 2 introduced me to **SID THE SHEEP** who symbolised **EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A SAY**.

The class had already seen some video clips relating to some youngsters who were making a difference to their local communities. They were completing a quiz, the answers of which related to (1) what was the problem; (2) how it was helping to change things; and (3) how it resolved the problem.

The class then showed me their practice of their hymn “*You made me*” in preparation for their assembly the next day. They lifted the roof with their enthusiasm and I reluctantly left them very happy.

Mrs Hale – Inclusion Manager

On my way through to Years 5 & 6 Spanish class, I checked in with Mrs Hale, the Inclusion Manager. She has been with HFS for nearly a year and she explained that she has a lot of liaison with parents who have concerns over their children. She works hard with staff to support children and monitors their progress over the year.

Years 5&6 – Mrs Lonergan

I don't speak Spanish (having learnt French in school many years ago) and I was enthralled by how competent the class was when Mrs Lonergan went through a recap of the essentials of Spanish, including the 5 different sounds to the English pronunciation. She told them that they were working to level Key Stage 3 and should be proud of their achievement. Mrs Lonergan also told the class that in every lesson they do, including Spanish, there are four important elements: Speaking; writing; listening and reading. I left the class learning the Mission Statement in Spanish. Mrs Lonergan has also been teaching some of the prayers in Spanish too and they had been taught at an early stage how to Bless themselves in that language.

Year 3 – Ava and Kimberley

Going back to base, I couldn't resist a last look at two pupils' pictures from Year 3 who had been learning how to make their artwork of hieroglyphics look older by treating it with tea. They explained enthusiastically what they had been learning and we discussed the pyramids and the inclusion of animals and other symbols in the Egyptian artwork. The bell was going for home and sadly I had run out of time.

TRICIA NICHOLLS – Foundation Governor



The focus of the day was RE and its links to other subject areas. During the day I was able to visit years 2 and 3 and also meet with members of the chaplaincy team. I also had the opportunity to speak with staff and attend a whole school Mass.



Having started the day with a brief meeting with my fellow governors to finalise arrangements for the day we were then able to attend a whole school Mass led by Fr. Nixon. The theme of the Mass was Going Forth and was led by the seven Year 3 children who had recently made their first Holy Communion. The children read confidently and clearly. It was lovely to have the opportunity to see the children wearing their special First Communion clothes. I have been fortunate to be able to attend other

Masses during the school year.

Year 2 - Mrs. Scott

My first visit was to year 2 where the children took part in a Collective Worship session. The children came in quietly and respectfully from their break and sat in a circle whilst reflective music was playing in the background. They had collected their personal prayer stones which they had made earlier in the year and held them in their hands. A pupil was invited to light the candle and to read a prayer to the class. The children were then given time for their own silent prayers and thoughts and after a few minutes were invited to share them with the group, if they wished. Many of the children were eager to share their own prayers and here is a small selection:

- 'Dear Lord, Sorry for the children who have no shelter.'
- 'Dear Lord, Sorry for the people who can't live in peace.'
- 'Dear God, Help the people who are sick and hurt.'
- 'Dear God, Help the people who are in hospital.'
- 'Thank you for people, Amen.'

They ended the session with the Sign of The Cross.

Their next activity was to practise for their class assembly which was to take place the following day. The theme was to share their favourite pieces of learning. They began with a lovely hymn, Father God, which they sang with enthusiasm and knew all the words. We were soon able to move into the hall where they could practise properly for their assembly. Every child participated happily and shared their favourite learning which included creative writing, art and RE. On return to class two children proudly showed me their class wall hanging and explained clearly how they had made it. It was a lovely experience spending time with Year 2 and I was very impressed and moved by how respectful they were during their Collective Worship.

Year 3 - Mrs Marson (PPA)

Mrs Marson was leading the class during a PPA session. The activity was to write a book review of Abel's Moon by Shirley Hughes. The learning objective was to consider the choices that the Abel family had to make; the theme of choice was linked to their work in RE. Mrs Marson reread the story to the class and gave the children opportunities to reflect on the behaviour of the characters, relating their actions to choices they would make in their own lives. Most of the children said that they had enjoyed the story a lot and were able to give reasons. Children who had not enjoyed it were also able to express their opinions fully. The children were given a template to use to write their reviews. I was able to circulate in the room, talking to pupils about the work they were doing. They were very willing to share with me which books they liked to read.

Shortly before lunch time I was able to speak to the two members of the chaplaincy team outside the classroom. They explained how the class prayer bag was used and its contents. One of their responsibilities was to check the contents to ensure everything was there each week. I learnt that the prayer bag contained the following items:

A bear, Rosary beads, a prayer card, 2 candles and the blue book in which their responses were shared.

They explained that they had to be role models in their own behaviour and they chose whose turn it was to take home the bag each week. The aim was for everyone to have the opportunity to take home the prayer bag. Both children enjoyed their role which also included leading class prayers each day. They also showed me the small cross which they wore on their uniform to indicate they were members of the chaplaincy team. They were extremely enthusiastic about their role and it was lovely to be able to learn so much about it from them. They commented that they all enjoyed being able to share the prayer bag with their families.

Lunchtime

I had a very enjoyable time, joining the children in the hall. I had an opportunity to speak to a few pupils from Years 2 and 4. I was impressed that the Year 2 child had remembered my name from my visit to his class earlier in the morning! The children were very polite and friendly and told me what their favourite dinners were. I then spent a few minutes in the playground watching the children playing. It was lovely to see the older play leaders carrying out their roles so well. By sheer chance, on my return from the playground, I came across members of year 6 who were busy making items for a display. They explained that they were members of the chaplaincy team and were creating a display for the month of June, dedicated to The Sacred Heart of Jesus. They showed me the prayer boards which were their responsibility and told me how much they had enjoyed being leaders of the chaplaincy team and that they would miss it next year.



Meeting with Mrs Scott, Mrs Rockall and a small group of prayer partners from years 2 and 4

Mrs Clark and I were able to meet with the above group of people. The children explained how pupils from Year 2 were paired with pupils from Year 4 as prayer partners and had opportunities to come together to celebrate Mass as well as share with each other the work they had completed. The children shared their RE books which contained excellent examples of their work. They had particularly enjoyed writing about religious art and it was explained that all year groups used the same painting as their source and each pupil would respond in their own way. The children showed me a prayer bag and described its contents. It was lovely to see how children had responded when it was their turn to take home the prayer bag. Some had taken photos or drawn pictures and others had even recorded videos.

The children were very knowledgeable about Catholic Social teaching and explained how they tried to carry out the principles of CST in their everyday lives. They talked about their contributions to the Witham food bank and to Cafod. They were able to explain how nine animals were used to reflect the nine key principles of CST. Each class had its own set of animals. Mrs Scott explained how she led a CST assembly each Tuesday and children who had been nominated by fellow classmates for displaying any of the principles of CST had an opportunity to be awarded a sticker, should their name be chosen from one of the 9 jars which represented the key principles. I found the whole session with Mrs Scott, Mrs Rockall and the children very informative as it gave me a greater understanding of how CST is embedded in everyday life in school.

Meeting with Mrs Rackliff, Mrs Small and other Governors

Mrs Small explained how the Foundation class has been following the new RED. It has been working well and next year will be introduced into year 1. Mrs Rackliff explained how all classes do not have to be fully compliant with it until 2026. Currently there are no new resources available for schools to use and the Foundation class has been making use of existing resources. We had an opportunity to see the Foundation's Class Worship book

and Class Prayer book. It is always lovely to have an opportunity to see a range of RE books from different year groups, showing how well the children make progress.

Safeguarding Meeting

At the end of the afternoon, I met with Mrs Kelliher and Mrs Jones, my fellow Safeguarding governor, for our termly meeting. A report for the LGB is produced after each meeting.

In conclusion, I had a very interesting day and it was a privilege to be able to see all the excellent work being done in the school. The children were very friendly and their behaviour was exemplary. By the end of the day, I felt I had learnt a great deal about how RE links with so many other subject areas. I had also gained a greater understanding of how Catholic Social teaching is embedded in the life of the school. Earlier in the term I had visited year 6 and been able to observe an RE lesson, on the theme of the Rosary and May, the month of Mary. I had been impressed by how respectful the children had been whilst saying a decade of the Rosary together as part of their Collective Worship. A detailed visit report was included in Mrs Rackliff's half termly report for governors.

Thank you to all the Holy Family school staff and pupils for being so welcoming and for all your hard work.

KORINA MURPHY-BANHAM – PARENT GOVERNOR

I was delighted to be able to share Mass on the morning of the governor day. The children exhibit such reverence and respect throughout the whole service. It fills my heart to see how enthusiastically they interact with Father throughout the Mass. It's clear to see how much work their teachers do to ensure the children understand the different elements of the Mass and they are able to give the responses without prompting. It's wonderful to hear them sing hymns with such passion, they certainly are beautiful singers. I came away feeling very privileged to be able to share Mass with the family that the school community is. Unfortunately I had to quickly go to work after Mass so I was unable to share the rest of the day with the children.



JOHN GLASBY – Foundation Governor

I spent another wonderful day at Holy Family School during the Governor Visit. We had again determined our principle focus was that of Catholic Social Teaching, and how that was taught in not only RE sessions, but across the wider curriculum. Presently, I have three children attending the school, with one sadly departing in at the end of the current academic year, but another due to start in Foundation.



I observed the start of the school day with pupils entering the premises and interacting with the Head, Mrs Kelliher, who was on the gate that day, and is the case most mornings.

The day started with Mass. A number of the year 3 children had just attended their First Holy Communion the previous Sunday, and school was hosting a 'Going Forth' Mass. Those who had received communion wore their Communion outfits and as such the Mass had a feel of celebration to it. The readings, the hymns, were all around the theme of Communion, and in particular the sacrament. Fr Nixon also talked about happy moments in life, and how good it is to experience happy moments with others as a team. He likened the Holy Communion to other events where there would be happy outcome, such as the moon landing. He even talked about how church candles are made, and that they are the work and product of many bees, working in unison.

After Mass, my first session was to sit in with the Year 4 class and their teacher Mrs Rockall attending collective worship. The children sat in a circle in the hall around a lit candle. Some prayers and readings were undertaken. The theme of this session was 'Good News'. The story of Peter & John was told, in relation to spreading the Good News. The children were also asked to remember the story of St Paul, and how he spoke having endured multiple ordeals. The children recounted that he was attributed to have said that he would have done it all again, to spread the Good News.

After collective worship, which was impeccably observed, the Year 4 children settled into a RE lesson, which began with a story called 'Building Bridges'. This was a simple tale about friendship and friends who make new friends. One of the characters felt sad that a relationship had drifted and the children were asked how they might seek to be part of a new friendship group. Mrs Rockall turned the topic to those who would seek to be negative in a relationship, and how you would act if someone was aggressive towards you. The children arrived at the Gospel answer, which is that Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek. Some time was spent explaining what this meant in practice.



Finally, as part of this session, the children undertook a small art project involving a concertina of people upon which they wrote their personal favourite Gospel values, which has been discussed in relation to the Catholic Social Teaching animals.

I then had lunch with a number of the other Governors and some of the Year 2 class, who delighted in telling me what their favourite lunches were, what they had been up to that morning, and whether I would like to swap any of my food for theirs.

All years that I observed at lunch once again behaved impeccably and every child followed the expected lunchtime protocol. I was impressed at the discipline of even the very youngest children putting their hands up to alert the teaching staff on duty, which included the headteacher, that they were ready for their dessert. All children tidied up after themselves and were very respectful of their environment. During lunch break, I also took the time to walk around the play areas to observe the children at play. It had continued to be a warm and sunny day and pupils were taking advantage of all of the outside area.

After lunch, the other Governors and I spent some time with some of the teachers from each year. The objective of this session was to understand the impact of the new Religious Education Directory and the application of this in the context of both Religious Education lessons and the wider curriculum. We were shown some wonderful examples of work from Foundation all the way to Year 6 and explored how faith was a central tenet throughout the Holy Family learning experience. There was clear evidence of high-quality teacher feedback and pupil growth throughout the various workbooks that I reviewed.

For the final session of the day, I sat in on the year 1 class with Mrs Eardley, who had been building on their 'Around the World day'. This particular day was around 'Caring for our World' (Seas and Oceans) and the final activity was drawing a sea turtle. This, to me, seemed to be a particularly challenging activity for a Year 1 class after a busy day but the engagement and energy levels were very high.

The drawing activity was broken down into several stages, allowing everyone to get up to speed. What followed was every possible permutation of turtle I could have ever imagined and more. The important thing was that everyone tried their best and from speaking with a number of the children, understood how this linked into Caring for our World.

This was my second governor day, which further reminded me of the quality of the education provided, the sense of community being part of the school brings to the children and the part that the Catholic Faith and Jesus play in shaping tomorrow's generation. I look forward to my next visit.

HELEN JONES – Foundation Governor Reflections on an inspiring and spiritual visit to Holy Family School

We started our Governor Day with a meeting to discuss our focus and strategy for the day. We agreed to split each session in two to maximize the agenda for each of us and to cover all the classes.

Whole School

After registration we attended the whole school Mass which was celebrated by Father Nixon and was led by Year 3. The focus for this was "Going Forth" specifically for those Year 3 pupils who had recently made their First Communion. The service was made extra special by those pupils wearing their First Communion outfits and very smart and proud they all looked as they were leading the Readings and Prayers.

It is always a joy to attend a school Mass, to experience how well behaved all the pupils are and how enthusiastically they join in the hymns both vocally and signing.

We all adjourned for playtime and refreshments after which I joined Year 6.

YEAR 6 - Mrs Rackliff / Mrs Collett

Jude was invited to light the candle after which everyone said prayers which they had written themselves.

The class began with the hymn "Open the eyes of my heart Lord". There followed a discussion on what this meant as hearts can't see. Some of the answers given were

- Taking care.
- Making sure you do the right thing.
- Forgiveness.
- Understanding.



- Faith in Jesus being here.
- Feel Him in my heart.
- He shares us all.

They were then asked to reflect on that day's topic which was "Jesus cares for the sick".

They were read a scripture Luke ch18 v35-43 "Jesus heals a blind man" in which the man calls out to Jesus to heal him. This was compared to another reading of the same topic but where Jesus seeks out the man to heal him. Both versions were discussed and they all agreed that the message was the same.

Next was an exercise where they each looked at their partner "through the eyes of Jesus" and said what they saw. Some very heartening statements were made.

It was a joy to see how engaged everyone was and how they all participated in the lesson.

Year 2 - Mrs Cox / Mrs Stanford

When I joined the pupils in Year 2 they were engaged on a lesson based on Laudato Si. "Climate breakdown is an issue of injustice".

The class were doing an exercise on environmental issues and, as demonstrated with Sid the Sheep, everyone should have a say. Therefore, each pupil had a voting card, on one side was "agree" and on the other side "disagree". Mrs Cox read out some statements and asked everyone to judge them and vote.

Climate breakdown is an issue of injustice - most voted Agree.

Mrs Cox explained that was a Christian Aid statement - the poor and the young suffer most.

The destruction of their earth is a crime - most voted Agree.

Mrs Cox explained that this statement was from a barrister named Poly Higgins.

Going on strike for climate change is a good use of my time - most voted Agree

Mrs Cox told them that this was said by Greta Thunberg.

After watching some video clips showing how youngsters around the world were making a difference to their communities – "The change makers of Lima in Peru" - the class were put into teams. They were given a quiz to complete by finding various posters depicting the youngsters and showing what they were doing to make change.

After prayers the class went to have their lunch and break.

Lunch Break And In The Playground

We joined the children for lunch and then went outside to see some of the many games being played.

Some of us joined Mrs Rockall and various pupils ranging from Foundation to Y6 who gave up some playtime to say a decade of the Rosary. It was heartening to see how the younger pupils were keen to "help" carry the rather large rosary beads held by Mrs Rockall. It seemed to me that they wanted the connection to it while praying.

After lunch we met with members of staff to inspect the RE books of a random selection of pupils. It was amazing to see how they had developed through the year and through the years. The work showed that the pupils obviously enjoyed all the religious topics and putting together their class assemblies and Masses.

Year 5 - Mrs Lonergan

I next had a chance, prior to a scheduled meeting, for a short visit to Year 5 who were recapping on the essentials of their Spanish lessons. They had already learned how to bless themselves and to say some of their prayers in Spanish. I was very impressed by their enthusiasm.

Although I only had a snapshot of the lesson it was obvious that the pupils enjoyed learning the language and that they were making good progress.

At the end of the day I went away feeling inspired by everything I had experienced with the staff and pupils and also felt that the Catholic ethos can be felt through all aspects of the school day.

I very much look forward to our next Governor Day.

JASMINE EVERETT – Foundation Governor

As a new Governor, I had heard a lot about Governor's Day, from my fellow Governors, and from reading their past reports from the past years' visits. This made me excited to experience the day for myself.



We started the day with a catch up in the Staff room discussing how we would like the day to go, and what classes we would like to visit in the afternoon, making sure we could fit in all this wonderful School has to offer covering all year groups.

Year 3 Whole School Mass

Firstly we got to celebrate a beautifully prepared, whole school Mass, led by the pupils in Year 3, some of which had just made their First Holy Communion at the weekend. It was the first time the children had received the Holy Eucharist in school, it was lovely to see them all in their dresses and suits, all looking very smart, pretty and proud.

Sharing this with their class friends and the whole school created a delightful atmosphere during Mass. I was taken aback by the children's enthusiastic singing of the hymns and how wonderful it was to see them using signs to go along with the hymns, which were appropriate to the theme. I can reflect fondly on my time attending Holy Family as a pupil myself and taking part in such occasions.

The First Holy Communion children did amazingly well at reading their prayers. Our priest, Father Nixon spoke to the children about the Mass candles. He started to ask the children questions about flowers and bees. He then explained how they work together as a team to produce the Bees Wax which is used for the Mass Candles, which symbolises the presence of Jesus the light of the world, The Body of Christ, and the sacrifice he made for us.

It was a very enjoyable Mass and I felt very honoured to be able to attend.

Year 5 – Mrs Sanders & Mrs O'Shea

My first class visit, was to Year 5. Approaching the classroom, I witnessed a graceful and elegant display of a statue of The Mother Mary, with the Words "Mother Mary Pray for us." It was surrounded by the Rosary. It was a beautiful sight to see before entering the classroom and serves as a reassuring reminder for the children, to think of Mother Mary and pray for help and guidance when needed.

The children were given 5 minutes extra play, due to running a bit late from Mass, this gave me an opportunity to have a look at the classroom displays.

I could see a glorious corner, dedicated to the class saint. I was informed by the children, that each class has their own saint that they celebrate.

There were some intriguing displays, to help the children with their emotions it was labelled as "Self-Regulation Zones", using different colours to represent how they were feeling:

- Blue- Sad / Sick / Tired / Bored.
- Green- Happy/ Calm/ Ready to learn.
- Yellow-Frustrated/ Worried/ Excited/ Silly.
- Red- Mad /Angry /Terrified /Out of Control.

There was also a "Feed Your Worries " box in the classroom. A box which enables the class to write down any worries they may have. Both this and the safe regulation zones are supportive ways to help with the student's mental health and wellbeing.

The children settled back into their seats and started the mornings lesson, which was focusing on Reconciliation, with the theme of Freedom and Responsibility.

Mrs Sanders had asked the children what they thought a conscience was?

The children were very alert and raising their hands eager to answer. The answers that the Children came out with were:

- A voice in their head.
- An Imaginary friend.
- Someone talking in their head, telling them when they are doing wrong.
- A feeling of what is right and wrong.

They then read a story, about two children who made the decision to skip school and go and buy their mother ear rings with their saved pocket money. The children did not tell anyone where they were going. The class were asked whether it was the right decision to make, to go out without telling anyone and consider how their parents would feel.

The majority of the class said Yes, they would be worried or angry and it was wrong. They should have told someone where they were going and they spoke about how the children's parents would feel, showing they all understood the difference between right and wrong, and taking others feelings into consideration. I truly believe after the children shared some of their own experiences of where they have been in similar situations, as the children in the story, they will be thinking more about their responsibility to make the right decisions to follow rules in order to develop trust which can lead to freedom.

I had a lovely time with the very chatty, enthusiastic and well mannered Year 5.

Year 1 - Mrs Eardley and Mrs Stanford

I spent the 2nd half of the morning with the very creative Year 1. When I arrived, the class had already started talking about Sea Turtles. Mrs Eardley had an amazing connection with Year One, holding their attention, whilst talking about what factors are affecting the life of the Sea Turtles. This included the impact us humans have on the Sea Turtles. The children were told about plastics being thrown into the ocean and the Sea Turtles mistaking the plastic for food. Which leads to them getting trapped in the plastic. Mrs Eardley then set out a task for Year One, to create a poster. They discussed what a header was, and what it should look like. Mrs Eardley expressed with passion, that a header should stop you in your tracks, make you take notice, may be, even be slightly bossy.

Some of the classes' ideas were:

- Big writing in capitals
"DON'T THROW YOUR RUBBISH IN THE SEA!"
- Big Bold "SAVE THE TURTLES!"

One child raised their hand and said, "Put an exclamation mark at the end." This was delightful to hear her understanding of the use of an exclamation mark, and the importance of the situation.

Walking around the classroom, observing these children was fascinating!. Their imagination and eagerness to get their point across through their poster was just thrilling. This was teaching them to love, respect and to protect all of God's Animals. It taught them to protect God's Planet which we are so blessed to have, for them and future generations to come.

I also had an opportunity to walk round the class room to look at some of the displays in the class. The children had been obviously very busy creating beautiful pictures, including bright coloured church windows, their own interpretations of the Stained Glass windows you see at The Holy Family and All Saints Catholic Church. Prior to lunch, I got to share the lunchtime prayer with Year One. I was so impressed by their behaviour and how they knew without being asked, how to say thank you for the food they were about to receive.

After a delicious lunch we got a chance to go out into the playground and talk to the children. The children were very welcoming and asked me to come and see a part of their Forest School, where they go and relax during break time. It was lovely to see the Fire Pit circles. I was informed by the children, about the marshmallows they get to toast. They find it good for their mental health and general well-being, being outside in the fresh air.

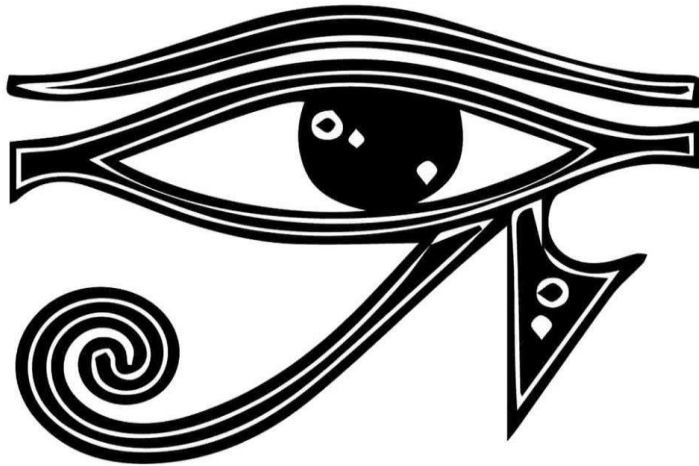
During lunch time, we got to share a very special Rosary with other teachers, children and Governors, it was extra special for me as my youngest son came to join me. It was a lovely experience to share with him and all the other children.

Following on from lunch we had an opportunity to look at Foundation and Year 6's, Saints and Class Worship books. Inside these books, were wonderful prayers, photos and art work, clearly showing understanding of

religious teachings they have been learning in school. It was a joy to see the progress made from the beginning of the year, to now seeing the improvement, perception and quality of work being done.

Year 3 - Mrs Sanders

I made my way to Year 3, they were learning about Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. Mrs Saunders explained to the class that the ancient Egyptians communicated with pictures, showing the class different pictures they could use in their own work. The Class had already stained the paper ready to draw their own hieroglyphics. It was interesting to learn from the children the names of the Egyptian gods, and why they only had pictures of the side of faces. I was amazed by the knowledge the children held about the ancient Egyptians. One student said one of the most common hieroglyphics was the "Eye of Ra".



The Children were very knowledgeable and very well behaved. They were all very engrossed in what they were learning and showing excitement in making their own hieroglyphics, which I look forward to seeing when I next visit the school.

Reception - Miss Walkden / Mrs Bradley

My next stop, led me to the Reception class. All of the children were welcoming. They were enjoying a range of activities from Lego, cars, drawing and sand play. There was a table set up for the children, to make special bracelets for someone special in their life. It was lovely to get involved with the children on the floor playing Duplo, just not as easy for me to get up. The whole class looked like they were really enjoying whatever activity they were involved in.

Year 4 - Mrs Collett / Mrs Marson

I went round to Year 4 where I found them learning how to edit photos using different techniques like flip and rotate, which they were able to do, to a picture of a Swan and a Macaw.

The children had a shortcut sheet ready for them to follow. I spoke to a student, who said they really enjoyed learning about photo editing. She said she already knew how to do some things, but it was helping her learn more. A very happy enthusiastic class. I loved watching some of the children help other children who were struggling a little. A beautiful display of kindness and patience from the staff helping the children achieve this creative skill.

Year 6

My final visit took me outside, onto the school field to watch Year 6 preparing for the sports day relay race. The Year 6 children were really passionate about winning the race. It was refreshing to see how competitive, yet supportive of each other they were. I look forward to sharing their last sports afternoon with them.

I had a wonderful day at Holy Family School; it really made me appreciate the work and dedication that the teachers and all the staff put into the school, to make it such a wonderful environment for all the children. It certainly has made me, as a parent of 3 Children that attend the school, appreciate the love and care and patience the staff show to the children.

I am extremely grateful to have been welcomed by all the Governors, Teachers and Father Nixon since becoming a Foundation Governor. I look forward to my next visit.



HANNAH CLARK – Foundation Governor

I joined Year 3 at 11.30, in their English session before lunch. I wasn't able to make Mass in the morning but Year 3 were eager to tell me about it. They explained it was the 'Going Forth' Mass for the children who had made their First Holy Communion - they got to wear their special Communion outfits and do the readings and the rest of the class were singing. It was lovely to hear them speaking about their classmates, they were excited to lead the Mass and share in the celebration, especially getting biscuits after Mass! Even a small treat like that showed the significance of the Mass, they understood it was something special. One girl in the class explained to me that her friend (who had made her first Communion) wore a traditional Polish outfit. She was so proud of her friend, and showed a real interest in a different culture.



In the afternoon, I visited Year 2 who were practicing a hymn for the assembly they were leading the next day. They were very enthusiastic and all knew the words, I'm sure it was very successful! I could see how each year group looked forward to participating in the worship and had plenty of opportunity to do this.

In Year 3, it was wonderful to see how all children were encouraged to participate during reading in the English session and share different opinions when writing their book review. They all seemed engaged and were eager to share their experiences of times when they had made a den at home. The teacher was able to relate this back to Catholic Social Teaching, even though the book was not religious, talking about playing with their siblings, being kind and helping each other.

In the class there was a prayer corner, which included a large wooden cross with all the children's names on. One of the children explained to me that they had this since reception and took it with them in each new class as they progressed through the school. At the end of the lesson, the children all said grace before lunch and turned towards the prayer corner for this. The teacher didn't ask them to do this, or tell them it was time for a prayer, they are obviously used to this as part of the daily routine and were able to lead the prayer time themselves as a result. It was particularly touching to hear them recite the school motto, including the sign language. The whole session had a very inclusive feel, which the children responded well to.



At lunchtime, I sat with some children and other Governors to eat and then went out into the playground. The children were so welcoming and friendly, there were always children coming out of their way to speak with me. The school has a real community feel, which is shown in the confidence and security the children feel while there.



During lunch, I had a brief conversation with the prayer council who were re-decorating a display in the hall for the month of June.

They informed me this was the month of the Sacred Heart, which I admit I didn't know before! They explained they were using green as it was the colour of ordinary time, which was a lovely connection between the colours used as Mass in the church, and the school. The group had the assistance of Mrs Rockall to decide how to decorate, but had been left to do this independently. The Year 6s were happily sitting cutting and creating vines for the display during their lunchtime and even had friends who were not on the prayer council to help. It was clear they were proud of their work and the school environment, and



eager to share and display their learning about their faith for the rest of the school.

I went out into the playground just in time for Rosary club. It is normally only in May but there was an extra session for us to share how it works. I was impressed at the Foundation students who joined, as well as a mix of other years. A foundation pupil explained how there were 10 stones, 1 for each Hail Mary, and we should turn round the circle as each one is said. I found it particularly heartwarming to see how the children were encouraged by Mrs Rockall to join in and express their faith even during their recreation time, and the number of them that chose to do this in their free time. The prayer garden is a very special area for the children to have access to. I noticed how some of the girls from Foundation were carefully replacing Mary's crown when it fell off. It's these activities that foster and grow faith from the youngest age in the school.

After lunch, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Year 2 and Year 4 prayer partners. Each year is partnered up with another to come together to share, develop and recap their RE learning. I had an opportunity to see the individual and class books. Each class learns about a Saint each term and you could clearly see the progress between the autumn term and now. One child showed me how he had created a colour key to easily find the information about the Saint. They were confident in expressing themselves and sharing their knowledge in their books and when speaking to me. It also demonstrated how the class links scripture to Catholic Social Teaching. The children in Year 4 could tell me about Saint Paul and what he did for the common good – which links to the CAFOD CST animals. I also got to see how the children can express their RE learning through art, making it accessible for those children who are less comfortable with their writing skill.

I could tell the children had a particular connection to the CAFOD animals, they had some soft toy versions they had brought along to show us. They explained to me how each animal has a jar, each class takes it in turns having a jar and they can nominate their friends who display those qualities. It gives the children the opportunity to revisit these key qualities they learn about in their Catholic teaching. There is a book kept of all the nominations which the children enjoyed sharing, and allows the opportunity to evaluate how the children's understanding is deepening language during the year. They demonstrated how they apply the CST to their lives by recognising these qualities in each other. In particular, the children chose to tell me about Chikondi the giraffe, who promotes the common good, and they had lots of examples of how they can include everybody. They also told me about Poppy the Popokotea who is for the poor, so at Christmas they collected loose change to buy a CAFOD gift. They were so proud and could still remember they bought bees. One child in particular showed real compassion as he told me how he wished they had enough for a house for a poor person. He was so compassionate in how he spoke and thought of others.

It has been a real pleasure to spend time with the children and be part of their community.

BOB WRIGHT – Governor & Trustee Of The Rosary Trust

Attendance at the Year 3 led Mass was a very spiritual start to the day. Children who had made their First Holy Communion were dressed in their white dresses and suits, just as they had worn on that memorable day at The Holy Family & All Saints Church on Pentecost Sunday. It was uplifting to join them in this celebration at the continuance of their Catholic journey.



Early Years – Mrs Willsher and Miss Walkden

Mrs Willsher was using a video of the story of St Peter. This was teaching the class to be good friends using the analogy of when Jesus asked his disciples to be fishermen of friends. A friend is always there for you – just like Jesus. When the children were asked for an example of a good friend and whether they have seen Jesus, one little boy said “Yes, we saw Jesus in the assembly not long ago” (I think he meant Fr Nixon and Mrs Willsher had to explain the difference). Mrs Willsher also told the class how Jesus keeps everyone safe and asked them who else kept them safe. Their answers varied from Santa, to family and friends. They also spoke about how the friends Jesus met at the Sea of Galilee were the ones he had shared his Last Supper with. Discussion was then around how can you tell who is a good friend. Suggestions from the children were those who were kind, respectful, honest, a listener, helpful and a sharer. They then compared the attributes of someone who wasn't kind and these included things that hurt people. The session was concluded by singing in a loud voice “Jesus is my Best Friend” I had no doubt they had fully taken on board the message being presented.

I was next asked some of their own questions by the Foundation children as follows:

“Why is the church so big?”

“What does Fr Nixon do in the church?”

“How wide is the church?”

“How old is the church?”

I answered to the best of my ability and hope that Fr Nixon appreciates what I told them about him!

The class then split up into three groups – some made friendship bracelets with the name of their best friend on; some coloured in rocks with their own names on for the prayer garden; and some built items with Lego.

Year 5 - Mrs Sanders

The class were learning and writing about freedom and responsibility. They were given a scenario of a brother and sister that went off on their own after school and nobody knew where they were. The police were called to find them but all they had gone off to do was to spend some money on their mother for her birthday. However, they hadn't informed anyone where they were going and of course this caused problems, when all they were doing was a kind act.

One of the first lessons that came out of this scenario was that freedom is not just doing what you like but you have to be responsible for your actions. You basically have to have rules and laws and also just because you have a right to do something, doesn't mean it is right to do it. With responsibility you have to be thoughtful. You have to think of other people's reactions. The pupils were given 9 questions to answer about the experience and aftermath of the two children's actions. After they had finished the questions, the class was asked to check and edit their own work. Pupils went through their answers with the whole class. The morale of the tale is that there is no right or wrong answers but it is being responsible and thoughtful for your own actions that is important.

Lunch and beyond – Mrs Rackliff, Mrs Small, Mrs Scott

I enjoyed eating chicken nuggets with the children from a cross range of classes, who had joined me to ask me questions. One pupil thanked me for taking her to sports day when I acted as chauffeur for a number of them at the Cross Country competition. It's simple pleasures like this that makes the whole role of governor very pleasurable.

With a group of other governors after lunch, we were shown a sample of children's RE work throughout the whole school. It is hard not to be impressed by the depth of knowledge and how the understanding of RE is progressed through the year as can be measured through glancing through one book. You can also see that the standard of handwriting improves as the year progresses. Every child has a book and also every class has a combined book for the whole year group. When talking to the children it is easy to see how they understand their religious instruction and can demonstrate this through, inter alia, their artwork and creative writing.

The introduction of the Prayer Bag has been a roaring success. Each pupil can take home the Prayer Bag for a number of days and the object is to pray and discuss the contents of the bag with their own families. When the bag is returned to school, the pupil shares their experience of what they did with the bag with the rest of their class. This may include a prayer about all the items in the bag.

Year 2 – Mrs Cox / Mrs Stanford

I briefly went into Year 2 who were practising and learning a hymn for their next day assembly. Not only were they singing but they were signing the words. The hymn was called "Father, God". They were also having a discussion on who was going to take the Prayer Bag home.

PPE with Mr Fyfe on the playing field

I joined Mr Fyfe on the playground where the class was practising changing the baton over for a relay race. We didn't want to interrupt the flow, as concentration is needed for this task and the children only have a short time to learn and practice this manoeuvre.

And with that, it was time for me to reluctantly leave after a brilliant day.

MARCELLA COLERIDGE – Foundation Governor

I really look forward to attending the Governor day, it is one of my favourite activities of the year. Unfortunately, this year I couldn't attend the morning due to work commitments but I arrived in school just in time to catch the end of Year 4's lesson before lunch.



I arrived in the classroom to a hive of activity and smiles and was warmly welcomed. I spoke to some of the children who were busy finishing off their activity and they were more than happy to show me what they were doing. The children explained to me that they were making origami chains of people and then adding Catholic value words that mean something to them to each person. I spoke to the children about how they have chosen the words to put on their people. The children were very keen to share their stories, telling me



of times they had fallen out with their friends and how the teachers helped them use their Catholic values to repair friendships. I was also told by a child that they were feeling sad one day and that their friends cheered them up and that they are going to have that situation in their mind when they choose their words because it made him feel happy. It was lovely to see how proud the children were of their work and they would go



and show the teacher and the rest of the class their finished product.

It was then time for lunch and I sat with the children in the hall. It always surprises me how smooth the lunchtime system works in school. The children are amazing and know exactly what they need to do and where to go. They are all patient when they are waiting in line and sit nicely when they are eating their lunch.

I was made to feel very welcome by the children and had lots of lovely conversations. I was even given suggestions of days I should visit next so I can try particular items on the menu. After we had finished eating I wandered outside and enjoyed some fresh air with the children. A lot of children were playing on the field with the more younger children using the playground being lead by some older children playing games.

Whilst I was walking around I heard a bell ringing and some children running over to the stations of the cross area in the playground. I went over and was told it was Rosary Club, which is usually run in May but they have put on an extra session for us today. I really appreciated the time out for my own reflection during a busy day and I was impressed with the children joining in with the prayers and being very respectful of others around them.

After lunch I met with Mrs Small and Mrs Rackliff who showed Governors some of the childrens RE workbooks. I really enjoyed looking through these and seeing how the children express themselves in different ways. I particularly liked how inclusive the books were. It was clear that some children enjoyed writing and expressing themselves that way but others preferred to do this by drawing and the message is just as strong in each example. I especially liked to see the progress in some of the books over the year, one child in particular stood out to me, at the beginning of the book they were very reserved and didn't write much but as the book went on you could see the child grow in confidence and understanding and the last few pieces of work were so expressive.

It was nice to hear that the teachers don't just look at the written work of the child (as it is not an English lesson) but at the child as a whole and it was nice to see the children relate to particular stories in their own lives and are able to reflect on that and the children ask themselves "What would Jesus do?" in certain situations to help guide them to a resolution. I am very pleased I was able to sit in on that session, it was very enlightening.

During the end of the day I wandered around the school and just enjoyed looking at all the beautiful wall displays and dipping in and out of some classrooms. I visited Foundation who were making some beautiful friendship bracelets and of course I had to sit on the floor and play with some construction toys before I left, a few children helped me build a fire truck and they were very proud of me for trying my best.



I then sat in Year 3 who were learning about Egyptian Scrolls and discussing the pictures and symbols used. I enjoyed how interactive this was and that the children were able to share their own knowledge as the lesson progressed. Finally, I went outside to see the Year 6 children practicing for Sports Day. The children were really good at encouraging each other and whether they came first or last in their race they were all celebrated.

Although my visit was shorter than I would have liked, I really enjoyed my day and I always feel so welcome when I come to visit. We often talk about how the school day goes but to be able to see it is person really brings it to life and helps with my understanding of different areas. I am already looking forward to our next visit.

FR NIXON GOMES

The Governors day began with the celebration of Mass during which the liturgy was organised by the Year 3 particularly those cohorts who have recently celebrated their First Holy Communion. Parishioners and Parents are invited to attend the weekly school Masses and it was good to see so many there today.



Later, I visited the Year 3 to evaluate RE activities.

The prayer corner in the classroom was very prominent placing prayer at the centre of all activities. The students explained how they enjoyed taking the responsibility of taking the prayer bag home and organising their activity.



Each student shares about their God given talent and how it was used in a group.

Speaking on 'Laudato si' the cohorts shared their involvement and concerns shared about caring for creation.

I thoroughly enjoyed my day on knowing how the students enjoyed RE and hearing of their experiences. It was also good building up a great rapport between the parish and the school.

CONCLUSION BY THE CHAIR

Our remit had been to see for ourselves how the whole school environment supported the Catholic Ethos and the school's Catholicity. There is no doubt in any of our minds that the calm, peaceful learning environment is created by ensuring Living, Loving, Learning with Jesus is at the centre of everything the children do. Everywhere you see that Pope Francis' messages in relation to *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* are intertwined in all the other subjects of the curriculum but it is obvious that Religious Education is the core of the core.

I would like to thank all the staff at HFS for allowing the governors the freedom to roam in and out of their work space without any hesitation. No-where was out of bounds! They all work so hard as a team to ensure your children are kept safe and feel secure in a learning environment whilst providing a support network to their own colleagues. I would also like to thank all my fellow governors who support me so well and work so hard behind the scenes to support the staff. It is our commitment to continue to do this.

