

St. Francis' Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Maria Wheeler

24th July 2024

Dear Parents, Carers, Pupils, Staff, our Volunteer Helpers and our wider School Community Members

Retirement Farewell and Thanks

As my time at St Francis' comes to an end and I retire, I have been reflecting on so many wonderful memories from my time with you all, from the School Masses, Nativities and Easter Reflections to the Drama and Musical concerts, Sports Days (always sunny!!) and to the trips that enhance the curriculum. We have been blessed with such wonderful opportunities and thoughtful and generous staff who 'make things happen' for our children.

St Francis has always been a happy school full of teaching, learning, commitment, faith and love. I am very proud of our ethos, inclusive and faith-filled school. We have had our challenges, with the 2016 major flood that wrought such damage to the entire school, snow days each year and the Covid Pandemic, but through it all we kept our faith, were resilient and overcame what, at times, seemed like insurmountable problems. We have all grown together over the years and I am confident the school will continue in this spirit as it moves forward.

As it is an almost impossible task to say goodbye and thank you to you all individually, I send my personal thanks in this letter to the Pupils, Parents, Staff, Parish Priests, Bishop Richard and the Diocese, PTA, Governors, the wider Community. A special thank you and goodbye also to the present and past Staff at St Francis', you have been an amazing team and I know that you will continue to be so.

The last week was full of wonderful 'send offs' in the form of the Mass, the whole school singing assembly and Choir Blessing, our Staff Party with retirement cake, Parents presentation and my very own 'Leavers Assembly'. Thank you all too for the numerous and very generous gifts and flowers – I am very excited to be booking to go to Port Lympne for a stay in the Giraffe Lodge (thank you Parents and Carers) and to have Tea at the Ritz (thank you Staff)! I look forward to new opportunities ahead in retirement, especially those with my family, who deserve a special 'thank you' for all the support they have given me over the years.

Finally, thank you so much for your faith in me over the years and for entrusting your children to our school. They are precious gifts and a credit to you all and I will miss them the most every day - your children are guaranteed to make me smile every day, even on the more difficult ones.

It has been a blessing and true delight to be part of the St Francis School community for the last decade. Please keep me in your prayers, as I will keep you in mine.

Sending my very best wishes to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs. Wheeler'.

Mrs Wheeler
Headteacher