

Matthew Quinn (Staff Governor / Head Teacher)



Teaching is my second career. Upon leaving school I worked, substantially in London, for approaching six years, as a Quantity Surveyor. A desire to re-train led me to Nottingham where I qualified as a teacher. Oaklands is my fourth school; two previous appointments have been in large Catholic comprehensive schools in Hertfordshire and the third a joint Catholic and Church of England school in Torquay. I am married with three school age children. Over the years I have worked with a variety of governing bodies and know the benefit they can bring to a school.

What do I do?

As Head Teacher I have a position on the school Local Governing body. I value the professional relationship that I have with other governor colleagues and this comes in the form of challenge and support in the mode of critical friend and responsible governor. It is vital that the Governing body, and I as Head, share the same vision for the school and this in turn is communicated and shared with staff and pupils. At Oaklands there is a sense that all members of the school community are moving in the same direction. This is something from which I draw great strength.

What is the best thing about being a Governor and Head at Oaklands?

This is a question that is often asked of me by students. The answer is bound up in the mission of the Catholic school. As Head I am able to create an environment that recognises the sanctity of the individual, that each student has special and different gifts, identify those gifts and develop them so that they can be shared, and personal achievement can be maximised, where difference is not just tolerated but celebrated. I know that I am succeeding to help youngsters develop their unique God given gifts and feel lovable, loved, capable and valued members of the community. This is relevant for all students but particularly for students who most need to experience God's love.

At a practical level I like to engage with youngsters in the classroom. Most Head Teachers now have almost no experience of teaching which makes it difficult to give governors an accurate view of teaching and learning. I believe that time in the classroom is invaluable, so I spend time each day visiting classrooms to look at teaching and learning. You have to know what the teachers are going through, and weigh that up against the needs of the pupils.

Being Head and a Governor is an all-consuming job, you are never off duty. During the day, while I'm at school, I have to manage the planned and respond to the unpredictable. Some of my best 'Head space' is gained early in the morning, or working at the computer for a few hours once the children are tucked up in bed in the evening.