

## Foreword from the Chair of Governors

St Mary's governors are part of your community; some are staff, some are parents, and several are neither. They often visit the School and meet staff, pupils and parents, as well as local authority officers, councillors and your MP. Our vision for the school is as a beacon catering for the needs of all children and celebrating their diversity. We see St Mary's as a caring school, the beating heart of the Twickenham community. Like many of you we value the small school familiarity of our three sites and want all 648 pupils to thrive in an inclusive school with shared Christian values and a common identity, underpinned by a strong culture that values compassion as well as excellence.

All St Mary's governors are committed to developing their governance of the school and last October we commissioned an external review of governance, led by an independent consultant from the London Diocesan Board for Schools, in order to identify existing strengths and areas for further improvement. After extensive scrutiny of documentation relating to governance and school leadership, the reviewer attended part of a governors' meeting and had formal meetings with six Governors, including the Headteacher and Chair, five teachers, two members of support staff plus the Clerk to Governors. Her report was extremely complementary about the work of the Governing Body, describing it as "an exemplar of good practice because of the professional input of the clerk and the commitment and skills of many governors". Amongst many other strengths she found that governors are "strategic and proactive. With the new headteacher they have drawn up a vision for the school. The vision shows their ambition and high expectations. They are deeply committed to the school and its pupils and give generously of their time and skills. They have taken a very professional and rigorous approach to exploring possible options for the future of the school."

Such external, independent review forms an essential part of the Governing Body's self-evaluation, and the positive comments within this report will I hope give stakeholders confidence that effective governance is in place at St Mary's. We are acting on recommendations for further development and remain determined to improve the excellence which has been recognised still further. This year our work included consulting on a new Admissions Policy, and with the help of parents and staff we have also supported the school with considerable success in areas of curriculum, standards, finance, ethos, staffing and safety. I hope that this report will give you an insight into what we have been up to for the last twelve months. You can find further information about who the governors are and what they do at [st-marys.richmond.sch.uk/school-governors](http://st-marys.richmond.sch.uk/school-governors).

2017-18 has been a year of change for school staff – it was a particular honour for me to say goodbye to Mrs Shaboe, a class teacher on the Infants site who showed so much kindness and dedication in her care of St Mary's children going back to 1989! – and I would like to echo Mrs Abrahams' thanks to those fabulous teachers who are leaving this summer, including Mr Williams, who has also served on our governing body in his last two years as Deputy Head (and FoSM quizmaster!), and Ann Turner, who has been teaching at St Mary's since 2003. Governors too have felt the winds of change, and it took us several months to find our new clerk, leading me to quickly re-discover just how essential that vital role is. Over the course of the year we welcomed Natalie Robinson as parent governor, and Victoria Busby as foundation governor, and we now bid farewell to two long serving governors Robin Shute and Hugo Clark, both of whom have been on the Board since 2011. I thank Robin for his expertise in finance & staffing, and Hugo for his leadership of school admissions and his tireless support of the school as it expanded from two to three sites (another quizmaster, take note). Happily, Hugo's support for the school continues in his new role as Trustee to St Mary's Church. I would like to thank our Clerk Alison Watts and all governors, and especially Vice Chair Ieke Hilmy, for their fantastic work and commitment to St Mary's.

There's been change nationally too; the first transition year of the national funding formula has arrived, and it remains apparent that our battles to balance the books are set to continue, in part due to inadequate funding for our three sites dating back to 2012. With your help we are continuing to lobby for a better settlement. The magnificent sums raised by FoSM and the St Mary's Fund have enabled the school to maintain excellence in many areas of school life, and I thank parents for their contributions of time and money to the school over the last twelve months. It may have escaped your notice that we have had a new Secretary of State for Education this year; Damian Hinds identified teacher workload in his first speech in March and promised there will be no further changes to the national curriculum or testing for the life of this parliament. Let's hold him to that. Meantime, I applaud our wonderful professionals, so ably led by Mrs Abrahams, for all they do despite the turbulent seas of change in education nowadays. They nurture our children, empower them with

knowledge and understanding, of course, but also encourage them by example to be caring and listening people who work together and support and respect each other as they grow. Thank you teachers and teaching assistants!

I have been a parent at St Mary’s for the past fourteen years, and a governor for half that time, and remain deeply impressed by the care each and every member of staff takes on behalf of our children. In particular I know you will agree with me that the dedication shown on each of our three sites by the caretakers Timur, Mohammed and Mo is wonderful, and I offer them special thanks here on your behalf. They live the St Mary’s motto in their work, which is so important in keeping our children safe and ensuring that the school runs smoothly. That motto, *Conemur*, worn on all those lovely blue jumpers and shirts I have spent hours desperately searching for, washing and then losing again, encapsulates what perhaps all schools strive to achieve, a sense of common purpose and a spirit of shared endeavour. *Conemur*: may we try, and try together.

I congratulate all the pupils and staff for doing so well this year and wish everybody a joyful and peaceful summer holiday.

Ben Driver  
Chair of Governors  
July 2018

### Who are the school governors?

Headteacher	Angela Abrahams	
Parish Priest, St Mary the Virgin, Twickenham	The Revd Jeff Hopkin Williams	
Parent Governors (elected by school parents)	Ben Driver – Chair of Governors Natalie Robinson	
Foundation Governors (elected by St Mary’s Trustees or PCC)	Hugo Clark Katherine Cox Ieke Hilmy – Vice Chair	Eloise Leeson Robin Shute Victoria Busby
Foundation Governor (appointed by London Diocesan Board for Schools - LDBS)	Alex Hazard	
Co-opted Governor (appointed by governing body)	Christina Sturge	
Staff Governor (elected by school staff)	Ruth Knight	
LA Governor (appointed by the Local Authority)	Anneliese Jacklin	
Associate Members (non-governor)	Rhys Williams, The Revd Dr Piotr Ashwin Siejkowski	

### What do the governors do?

*Governance determines who has the power, who makes the decisions, how other players make their voice heard and how account is rendered*  
- Institute on Governance, Canada

The St Mary’s Governing Body has four core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- Communicating with stakeholders: pupils, staff, parents & the wider community.

The governing body is often hard at work behind the scenes at St Mary’s. The majority of governors’ business is administered through its committees, often alongside school staff, which meet at least once each term, covering Admissions, Curriculum and Standards, Ethos, Finance and Staffing, Leadership Appraisal and Safety and Community. Below are some brief snapshots of their work.

<b>Full Governing Body</b>
<i>Members: All governors and associate members</i>
The school governors attend four evening meetings each year as a full team and the agenda is always packed with important items for discussion, policies for approval and other business. You can read the minutes of the last meeting of the full governing body on the school <a href="#">website</a> . One of the main roles of the GB is to set and champion a clear vision for the school’s future, and we updated this recently (you can also find it on the website). This year the

governors have continued to work closely with Headteacher Angela Abrahams and her team to secure long term financial stability for St Mary's as a three site, part PFI-managed primary school, and the signs of recovery from a difficult period in 2016-17 are certainly there, helped hugely by continued good management of limited resources and fantastic fundraising efforts by parents, staff and children at the school.

### **Admissions Committee**

*Members: Hugo Clark (Chair), Jeff Hopkin Williams, Alex Hazard, Victoria Busby*

Every year throws up new and interesting challenges for the Admissions Committee and 2017/18 has been no exception. We started the year with a fundamental review of the school's admissions policy and a proposal to amend the oversubscription criteria to cater for the admission of children of permanent members of staff. This is an arrangement that is becoming increasingly common in the borough as schools have to work ever harder to recruit and retain the best teachers (and, as other local schools have adopted the policy, St Mary's has found itself at a potential disadvantage). A fundamental change of this nature triggered the need for a full consultation of the proposed admissions policy with comments sought from parents, the local authority, local schools and the LDBS. No adverse comments were received and, with the confidence that the school's admissions policy has been subjected to thorough scrutiny, the full governing body accepted the proposed changes and the new policy will take effect for the September 2020 round of admissions.

Following recent changes in policy and guidance the admissions committee has become increasingly involved with the question of the admission of summer born children. This is a hugely complex and emotive area and one that demands equal proportions of consistency of approach, rigour and compassion. There is still work to do to perfect the way in which applications of this nature are addressed and the school has volunteered to work closely with the local authority over the coming year to develop greater clarity for schools and parents on this very important topic.

As I step down from the role of Chair of Admissions after 7 years I would like to take the opportunity to express my huge debt of gratitude to the team at the school and my fellow committee members for the huge amount of work they do every year and for all the support they have given me. This is a never-ending job that runs the course of the school year and often requires quick responses against short deadlines, collectively the admissions team at St Mary's has always responded to that challenge with the grace and good humour that so typifies the school - thank you all!

### **Curriculum and Standards Committee**

*Members: Ieke Hilmy (Chair), Christina Sturge, Ben Driver, Angela Abrahams, Natalie Robinson, Victoria Busby, Ruth Knight, Eloise Leeson (vice-Chair), Rhys Williams.*

The Curriculum and Standards committee monitors and evaluates pupil achievement and the quality of teaching, ensuring the school provides a high-quality learning experience and delivers a broad and balance curriculum in keeping with the school's aims, all pupil needs and legal requirements.

This year a governors' data monitoring group has been set up within the committee. This group has met with Deputy Headteacher Rhys Williams, to discuss the latest school data in detail and ask questions. The group is pleased to note that the school makes excellent use of the data to target specific areas of focus, to progress the education. Of all pupils, whatever their ability levels.

The committee would like to thank Mr Williams for all the work he has done for this committee as Deputy Head and wish him well in his retirement.

### **Ethos Committee**

*Members: Jeff Hopkin Williams (Chair), Hugo Clark, Katherine Cox, Ieke Hilmy, Robin Shute, Piotr Ashwin Siejkowski, Kieran Murphy*

St Mary's Ethos Committee is committed to encouraging the nurture and development of each child entrusted to the school, into becoming more fully the person God has created them to be. To this end it oversees the work of the RE Co-ordinator and the School Chaplain. It receives a report from them each term and gives them both an opportunity to chat through what they are seeking to do. The Ethos Committee then tries to ensure that they have the support and resources they need to be effective in their roles.

The Ethos Committee also monitors the expression of the Christian ethos at the school through written accounts of certain key school services held in the church and also on RE lessons and Collective Worship held in the school.

### **Finance & Staffing Committee**

*Members: Anneliese Jacklin (Chair), Christina Sturge (vice-Chair), Robin Shute, Angela Abrahams, Eloise Leeson, Natalie Robinson, Victoria Busby, Rhys Williams, Simon Minty.*

The finance and Staffing Committee consists of governors, the Head Teacher (HT) and School Business Manager (SBM), and its role is to ensure that the School is enabled, so far as is possible, to fulfil its stated Aims and Objectives and School Development Plan, through careful and proper control of the funds available.

This is the second year of the amalgamation of two separate committees; Finance, and Pay & Staffing. The processes and ways of working for this larger committee have now been fully embedded, working closely with the SBM and Senior Leadership Team on the budget challenges which are on-going, as they are with most other schools currently. 2018-19 is the first of two implementation years for the National Funding Formula, and St Mary's is keeping a close eye on decisions concerning its funding, especially in relation to its three sites, two of which are PFI controlled.

The school is now able to accept online payments for contributions, supported by the St Mary's Fund sub-committee, and we continue to work on achieving charity status for this account. We have continued our normal work with the SBM on financial management, supported by the Budget Monitoring Group sub-committee.

The Staffing aspect of our committee has continued; we updated many policies this year to support the successful running of the school, working with the HT and DHT to support their staffing strategy, and continue our performance management work with the HT and her team supporting the long-term needs of our amazing school.

### **Leadership Appraisal Group**

*Members: Alex Hazard (Chair), Ben Driver, Christina Sturge, Mark Newton (LDBS Advisor)*

The Leadership Appraisal Group sets Headteacher's objectives and appraises performance annually. The Group also receives a report from the Headteacher on the objectives and appraisal of the other members of staff on the Leadership Pay Range. The Leadership Appraisal Group presents an annual report on its work to non-staff governors. This year the LAG governors joined the appointment panel for our new Deputy Headteacher arriving in September.

### **Safety & Community Committee**

*Members: Katherine Cox (Chair), Alex Hazard (vice-Chair), Angela Abrahams, Hugo Clark, Anneliese Jacklin, Ruth Knight, Justyna Konach, Emily Price.*

The S&C committee oversees all aspects of St Mary's as a community and within the wider community. We look at all health and safety and risk assessment matters pertaining to the school and all safeguarding and safety practices pertaining to the children and staff. In addition to the regular matters covered by this committee, this year we have particularly focused on the following:

- GDPR compliance has been a very live issue and we thank the School Business Manager Simon Minty for his dedication and commitment to this complex new area
- Health and safety: we have carried out regular health and safety 'walks' and the Flamingo tracker allows us to keep a rigorous check on all aspects of health and safety across the three sites. We were very sad mid-year to have to say goodbye to Johanna but are very grateful that Justyna has stepped into her shoes with such commitment and skill
- Staff safety: we have instigated a new staff safety policy to ensure all staff are safe and free from harassment at work

- FoSM: We have welcomed Emily Price as our FoSM representative and are delighted that FoSM has a regular slot in meetings to update us on their extraordinary work
- Safeguarding: This committee receives regular updates from Ruth Knight regarding numbers of children who are subject of child protection or child in need proceedings and we again are very grateful for all that the SENCOs and other staff do to safeguard all children at St Mary's

## School Development Plan 2017-18

1. Standards (a) EYFS(b) KS1/ Phonics(c) KS2 (d) Whole School
2. Finance
3. Curriculum
4. Assessment
5. Caring School



Photograph by Claire Novakovic

*Growing and learning together, inspired by Jesus' love.*