

Governing Body Annual Report 2018-19

It has been a year of consolidation and further progress for St Mary's in general and for its Governing Body.

Building on developments of the previous couple of years, we have:

- **Refreshed the St Mary's Vision and Values** (see <https://st-marys.richmond.sch.uk/ethos/>);
- Built on the recommendations of the external review of governance of the school reported to you in our last annual report, and **looked at the structure of the governing body itself and its priorities**;
- Continued our work with Headteacher, Mrs Abrahams, and the Senior Leadership team, especially the School's Business Manager, Simon Minty, on seeking to **balance the books and secure long-term financial stability for the school**; and
- continued to **develop links with the wider community**, through initiatives such as the ongoing discussions with the Department for Education and the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames on the shared use of facilities on the middle site with Capella House.

Our vision of a culture that balances excellence with compassion continues to guide everything the school does.

Our drive towards consistently high teaching standards and developing the curriculum through topic/theme led learning continues and contributed towards a truly excellent set of validated results for the last academic year, with the unvalidated results for this academic year showing that those standards are being maintained. Alongside the strive for excellence and playing just as an important part in school life are our caring school initiatives, such as our partnership with the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families outreach services, the continuation of the work of the school's learning mentor, and the introduction of the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking and Strategies) project. Our aim is that all pupils at St Mary's thrive in an inclusive school with shared Christian values and ethos.

We have welcomed four new governors during the course of this academic year: three foundation governors, Ila De Mello Kamath, Caroline Rayfield and Andrew Gunn; and a parent governor, Malcolm McKinlay. They join other longer serving members of the Governing Body. I would like to thank all the governors over the past year who, as volunteers, have given their time and commitment to the school generously and unfailingly, not only attending full governing body and committee meetings, but also visiting the school regularly, attending school events, and liaising with local authority officers, councillors and your MP. They are part of your St Mary's community, striving towards ensuring St Mary's continues to provide a rounded education, not only for the current children in its care, but also for future generations of St Mary's children. This report gives you some further detail on their work during the course of this year.

As a school we continue to benefit from a strong team of teachers, teaching assistants and support staff, led by Mrs Abrahams and her leadership team. They live and breathe the School's vision and values. Many thanks to them and to all the children for their incredible hard work, enthusiasm and passion for learning this year.

A school like St Mary's functions at its best when all in its community - staff, children, parents, governors, external support bodies - work together and support one another towards a common aim of providing the children in our care with the finest education and nurturing them to reach their full individual potential. Our motto is **Conemur**: may we try together. We are incredibly fortunate at St Mary's that we consistently receive that support and are immensely grateful for that.

And last, but by no means least, I would like to thank Alison Watts, the clerk to the Governing Body, for her tremendous professionalism, tenacity and good humour in the face of a seeming endless "To Do" list; the Governing Body could not function without her.

On a personal note, I step down as Chair and as a governor at the end of my term in September of this year. It has been a privilege to serve St Mary's in this way. Although I will no longer be a parent of a current St Mary's child, nor a governor, I will always be a friend of St Mary's, cheering the whole school community on from the sidelines.

Alex Hazard, Chair of Governors, July 2019

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)	Natalie Robinson Malcolm McKinlay	
Foundation Governors (elected by St Mary's Trustees or PCC)	Andrew Gunn Katherine Cox Caroline Rayfield	Eloise Leeson Ila De Mello Kamath Victoria Busby (Vice Chair)
Foundation Governor (appointed by London Diocesan Board for Schools - LDBS)	Alex Hazard (Chair)	
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)	Dan Cadman	

You can read a bit more about each Governor here: [Who We Are – St Mary's C of E School](#)

What do the governors do?

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 also plays a key role in acting as an appeal body in relation to any formal complaints about the School.

The Governing Body is hard at work behind the scenes at St Mary's. The school governors attend four evening meetings each year as a full team, each meeting with a busy agenda. You can read the minutes of the last meeting of the full governing body on the school website.

Each Governor is usually a member of two of the Governing Body's committees through which the majority of governors' business is administered. Each committee meets at least once each term. These committees work alongside relevant school staff and cover Admissions, Curriculum and Standards, Finance and Staffing, Leadership Appraisal and Safety, Community and Ethos. Below are some brief snapshots of their work this year.

Admissions Committee

Members: Alex Hazard (Chair), Jeff Hopkin Williams, Victoria Busby, Caroline Rayfield (Vice Chair) and Clare Cronin

It has been a year of relative quiet for the Admissions Committee. After last year's fundamental review, no substantive changes were proposed to the school's admissions policy, only clarifying changes.

The Admissions Committee has worked with the local authority, and welcomed clarifying guidance from it, on the question of the admission of summer born children. As a result, this issue has not demanded as much of the Admissions Committee's time during the admission round for September 2019.

We look forward to welcoming our new intake of Reception children in September; initial indications are that we will fill all 90 places available. Our particular thanks go to Clare Cronin for her dedication and hard work as admissions officer, ensuring the admissions process runs smoothly (a process that runs throughout the school year; as soon as one admissions round is completed, another gets underway, with in-year admissions happening all year).

Curriculum and Standards Committee

Curriculum and Standards Committee Members: Christina Sturge (Chair), Natalie Robinson (Vice Chair), Caroline Rayfield, Ila De Mello Kamath, Eloise Leeson, Angela Abrahams, Ruth Knight, Dan Cadman

The Curriculum and Standards committee monitors and evaluates pupil achievement and the quality of teaching, ensuring the school continues to provide a high-quality learning experience and delivers a broad and balanced curriculum aligned to the school's aims, all pupil needs and legal requirements.

The data monitoring group evaluated the SATs results in detail, together with the new Deputy Head teacher, Dan Cadman, and was pleased with the results, which reflect the significant efforts of the teachers and children and all those who contribute to St. Mary's. We are confident that the 2018/2019 set of results will also be positive. The data monitoring group also ensures that the school utilises the data carefully to ensure that the resources are directed where most required to aid the progress and achievement of all pupils, including pupil premium children.

We have spent considerable time discussing the Special Educational Needs and Disability agenda and ensuring that the policies and procedures demonstrate best practice in this field.

The committee would like to thank the senior leadership team and all the staff at St Mary's for the work they undertake on an ongoing basis to provide the best possible learning experience for all pupils.

Finance & Staffing Committee

Members: Eloise Leeson (Chair), Andrew Gunn (Vice Chair), Anneliese Jacklin, Malcom Mckinlay, Natalie Robinson, Angela Abrahams, Dan Cadman, Simon Minty.

The Finance and Staffing Committee consists of governors, the Headteacher and school business manager, 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 Improvement Plan, through careful and proper control of the funds available.

As in the past, during this transitional period before the national funding formula is fully implemented, we have continued to maintain a very tight budget during the year, which has been managed by the school business manager, Simon Minty, impeccably. Owing to the carry forwards that have been present for the last few years, we have been in a position to increase slightly staffing numbers, as well as keep the school fully resourced. On top of this, thanks to the outstanding fundraising done by Friends of St Mary's (FOSM) and the generosity of parents contributing to the St Mary's Fund, we have been able to carry out much needed building works including the installation of air-conditioning on the middle site as well as a full refurbishment and expansion of the junior site kitchen. These streams of revenue are much needed and very gratefully received; however, they are not guaranteed. As our expenditure is expected to exceed our certain income for the foreseeable future, caution must remain when setting future budgets so as to not rely on unguaranteed income.

Staffing levels have been well managed by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, especially where gaps needed to be filled due to unforeseen staff illness. With turnover higher in the previous year (which was comparable to schools within the Borough), the Senior Leadership Team has ensured stability and continuity of the teaching and support staff, notwithstanding our continuous financial restraint. Providing high quality teaching remains the top priority for the school and is achieved by retaining a full complement of able and dedicated teachers, which the school has managed to do throughout this year.

Leadership Appraisal Group

Members: Alex Hazard (Chair), Ben Driver (recently succeeded by Andrew Gunn), Christina Sturge, Mark Newton (LDBS Advisor)

The Leadership Appraisal Group sets Headteacher's objectives and appraises performance annually. The Group also receives information 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.

Safety, Community & Ethos Committee

Members: Katherine Cox (Chair), Victoria Busby (Vice Chair), Jeff Hopkin Williams, Anneliese Jacklin, Ila De Mello Kamath, Malcolm McKinlay, Angela Abrahams, Ruth Knight, Justyna Konach, Emily Price, Kieran Murphy

During this year the Safety and Community Committee was merged with the Ethos Committee and the summer term meeting was held as an integrated group. In this report the two committees will be addressed as one.

The Safety, Community and Ethos Committee oversees all aspects of the community of St Mary's, with a Christian ethos at its heart. We monitor all health and safety and risk assessment matters pertaining to the school and all safeguarding and safety practices pertaining to the children and staff. We take a strategic overview of all aspects of the school, ensuring that a Christian ethos flows through all aspects of the school community.

In addition to the regular matters covered by this committee, this year we have particularly focused on the following:

- **Data privacy compliance:** compliance with GDPR continues to be a live issue and we thank the school business manager, Simon Minty, for his sustained dedication and commitment to this complex area. A comprehensive audit of GDPR compliance has been carried out and we are satisfied that the school is fully compliant in all essential areas and working towards compliance in those aspects of data protection which are desirable.
- **Health and safety:** we have carried out regular health and safety 'walks' and the Flamingo tracker has until recently allowed us to keep a rigorous check on all aspects of health and safety across the three sites. Flamingo is unfortunately no longer in operation and Justyna Konach has done an excellent job in maintaining the high standards that the Flamingo tracker set for us.
- **Staff safety:** we have implemented the new staff safety policy to ensure all staff members are safe and free from harassment at work. We continue to take a keen interest in the ways staff wellbeing and safety are ensured and maintained.
- **FoSM:** Emily Price has continued as our FoSM representative and we 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 and Angela Abrahams regarding numbers of children who are subjects of child protection or child-in-need proceedings and we again are very grateful for all that the staff do to safeguard all children at St Mary's.

This combined group continues the work of the Ethos Committee in its commitment 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. We oversee the work of the RE Co-ordinator and the School Chaplain. We receive termly reports from the RE Co-ordinator and take a keen interest in the implementation of the Diocesan resources in the teaching of RE throughout the school. We also receive termly reports from the School Chaplain. These and regular visits to class and collective worship and to the various school services give us an overview of Christian worship throughout the school community.

School Priorities for 2018-19

1. **Standards:** to inspire a love of learning through a creative, challenging and exciting curriculum.
2. **Finance:** to continue to balance the budget and look at further ways of becoming financially sustainable.
3. **Caring School:** to continue to embed "St Mary's – the CARING school" initiatives.
4. **Leadership and Management:** to develop leadership and management.