



Growing and learning together to be our best, inspired by Jesus' love

Governing Body Annual Report 2022-23

Our school year started sadly with the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September. Working closely together, St Mary's Church and the school arranged a service of remembrance, where we were able to celebrate the Queen's life through photos and prayers.

At the same time, the education sector was affected by a period of unprecedented political instability and saw 5 different Secretaries of State for Education in 2022 alone. One consequence of this has been a halt to the government's drive towards a fully academised sector by 2030. The governing body continues to monitor changes in the Department for Education's strategy on this matter to ensure that St Mary's is well prepared for the future.

We have supported our teachers who faced the tough decision on whether to join the 8 days of industrial action this year. Together with all schools in Richmond, St Mary's did not cover the classes of striking teachers with supply or other staff to avoid undermining those participating in the action and to avoid asking teachers to cover the classes of their friends and colleagues. We recognise the disruption this caused and appreciate the understanding shown by parents irrespective of their own political views. The government has put forward a revised pay offer and with unions recommending their members accept the offer, we hope for an uninterrupted year ahead.

We were delighted at the opening of our new outside learning provision - Willow Wood. Following many months of tireless effort by staff to negotiate planning permission and other considerations, we celebrated the first toasted marshmallow in February. A huge thank you to everyone involved and to parents for their financial contributions which made the project possible. Thank you also to Mr Morgan, our outside learning teacher, who has taught me the difference between the songs of our native bird population.

In last year's annual report, we noted that we were still waiting for our Ofsted inspection and we remain in that position. The Ofsted inspection process received significant media coverage following the very sad death of a head teacher in Reading at the start of the year. This event and the subsequent feedback provided by schools, governing bodies and teachers led the Education Committee to launch an inquiry into Ofsted's work with schools. Ofsted has now published updated guidance on the inspection timetable and St Mary's is anticipating a visit no later than January 2024.

In addition to Ofsted, we are also inspected under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework. The school was due a SIAMS inspection this year, but that too has been postponed until the next academic year. We do not underestimate the pressure that pending inspections can put on all our staff, and the governing body is committed to supporting staff wellbeing and ensuring that workload is manageable.

I would like to thank all the teaching staff, support staff, office staff, ground staff, our leadership team, our Church staff, our volunteers, FoSM chair, vice chair, treasurer and class reps, our parents and of course, our children. Thank you for everything you do each day to make St Mary's a school we can be proud of.

I also thank our departing governors – Oliver Watkins, Malcolm McKinlay, Christina Sturge and Kieran Murphy. Thank you for your guidance, support and contribution to life at the school over your term of service. I would also like to welcome Emily Bainbridge, Sarah Aarons and Amanda Harrison to the governing body this year. A particular thank you to our Clerk to Governors, Alison Watts, without whom we'd be lost. Below is a summary from each of the governing body committees detailing their areas of focus and work that's been achieved this year.

We wish you all an enjoyable summer holiday and we look forward to welcoming you back in September where we will continue our *Service* to each other. Embracing opportunities with *Thankfulness*, challenges with *Endurance*, demonstrating our *Forgiveness*, using our *Wisdom* to guide us and our *Friendships* to uplift us. Conemur!



Caroline Rayfield, Chair of the Governing Body, July 2023

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)	Kat Honour Sarah Aarons	
Foundation Governors (elected by St Mary’s Trustees or PCC)	Emily Bainbridge James Maher Andrew Miyaji	Caroline Rayfield (Chair) Stephen Tetley <i>vacant</i>
Foundation Governor (appointed by London Diocesan Board for Schools - LDBS)	Harry Coleman	
Co-opted Governor (appointed by governing body)	<i>vacant</i>	
Staff Governor (elected by school staff)	Amanda Harrison	
LA Governor (appointed by the Local Authority)	Geoffrey Godin	
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 also a member of one or 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 & Ethos. Below are some brief snapshots of their work this year.

Admissions Committee
<i>Members: Andrew Miyaji (Chair), Kat Honour, Caroline Rayfield, Jeff Hopkin Williams and Clare Cronin.</i>
The Admissions Committee works to support and oversee the Admissions process at St Mary's, meeting regularly throughout the academic year. While it is becoming harder to achieve largely due to the continuing decline in the local birth rate, we are delighted that the school has remained full. We would like to thank Clare Cronin, our Administrative and Admissions Officer, and the Senior Leadership Team in general for their hard work in ensuring

St Mary's remains a school of choice in the area. The new school brochure, expanded programme of school tours and an active communication programme have all contributed to a high demand for places for September 2023. One consequence of this is that we are receiving an increasing number of admissions appeals from families who have not been able to secure a place. St Mary's is a diverse community and we look forward to welcoming a high number of siblings as well as increasing numbers of children from different countries.

Curriculum and Standards Committee

Members: Stephen Tetley (Acting Chair), Sarah Aarons, Andrew Miyaji, Stephen Tetley, Angela Abrahams, 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.

It does this by analysing and probing data produced by the school on pupil performance. This illuminates both areas of progress and issues which require attention in particular year groups. Targeted governor visits are then arranged to seek greater understanding and assurance on how issues are being addressed. Topics for visits this year included phonics in order to assess the success of the new phonics programme, measures to address weaknesses in writing in some year groups and how mathematics is taught across the school. In all visits a common concern is that robust tracking arrangements are in place to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including disadvantaged children, and that the curriculum reflects the school's ethos. In each case, governors were convinced that appropriate measures are in place to foster the development of all children regardless of ability. There is also a clear focus on the development of the whole child rather than a narrow focus on core academic skills.

The Full Governing Body takes a close interest in curriculum matters and receives presentations including this year on how Religious Education is delivered.

Finance & Staffing Committee

Members: James Maher (Chair), Emily Bainbridge, Geoffrey Godin, Stephen Tetley, Angela Abrahams, Dan Cadman, Simon Minty.

The Finance and Staffing Committee ensures that the school, so far as is possible, can fulfil its stated aims and objectives through the careful and proper control of the funds available. Much of the work of the committee is run by its two sub-committees: the Budget Monitoring Group which provides supportive oversight of how the school's finance is managed throughout the year, and the Staffing Group which reviews the staffing structure of the school and performance management.

We would like to thank Simon Minty, the School Business Manager, for the in-depth reporting that he provides to the Committee, together with the additional detailed commentary and feedback on queries raised by Committee members.

The financial stability of the school is the key focus of the Committee, but it remains the case that like many schools across the country, St Mary's is facing increasing financial pressures. Government funding is not sufficient to meet the educational needs of the school and additional sources of funds are vital to overcome this shortfall and ensure the school is able to provide for our children as set out in our vision.

- Firstly, we are enormously grateful to the generosity of parents. Currently around one in five families contribute through the St Mary's Fund which goes directly to the school to allow it to function on a daily basis. For more information on the St Mary's Fund, please visit [here](#). In addition, parents support the work of FoSM whose fund raising activities (including the Summer and Christmas fairs, and various other social activities) provide additional resources for our children across all three sites and helps make the school what it is today.

- Secondly, we thank our Trustees. They have been an amazing source of financial support and continue to fund specific activities including, this year, a full-time teaching assistant to support vulnerable children, resources for classrooms, a music teacher and our learning support mentor.

- The final element of additional funding is generated through the school's activities, including weekend and evening lettings (on the Middle Site, as the Infant and Junior sites are not owned by the school), school-run clubs and even as a filming location during school holidays. The extra-curricular clubs are great for children and provide some

additional funding for the school. All staff who run such clubs do so on a voluntary basis and we are very thankful for their time and commitment.

Although the school is experiencing some changes in staffing, we are once again fully staffed for September 2023 and thank all teachers and other members of staff for their contributions. We look forward to welcoming all new members of staff in the new academic year and helping the school, despite its financial constraints, continue to balance excellence with compassion

Leadership Appraisal Group

Members: Caroline Rayfield (Chair), Stephen Tetley, vacancy, Mark Newton (LDBS Advisor)

The Leadership Appraisal Group sets the 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 reports annually on its work to non-staff governors.

Safety, Community & Ethos Committee

Members: Harry Coleman (Chair), Geoffrey Goddin, Kat Honour, Caroline Rayfield, Amanda Harrison, Angela Abrahams, Jeff Hopkin Williams, Justyna Konach

The Safety, Community and Ethos Committee oversees all aspects of the community of St Mary's, whilst ensuring the Christian ethos remains at the heart of all we do. Our core duties relate to the oversight of the health and safety of the school environment, the safeguarding of all children and staff, and issues relating to data privacy.

We continue to work with our PFI Officer, Justyna Konach, to monitor the school's tracking of all aspects of health and safety across the three sites and a member of the committee meets regularly with Justyna to understand the measures put in place to address key risks. Safeguarding remains a core priority and the committee receives regular updates from the Senior Leadership Team regarding all safeguarding matters, with a particular focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable children. We have been particularly pleased to note the continuing measures put in place to welcome those pupils joining us from abroad, notably Hong Kong and Ukraine.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, national data on pupil attendance and behaviour has shown a concerning level of decline particularly amongst vulnerable pupils. The committee monitors school data regularly and welcomes the efforts made by senior leaders to ensure our attendance levels are the best they can be. This is of paramount importance given the overwhelming evidence indicating that pupil attainment is closely linked to school attendance and leaders remain committed to doing all they can to reduce the attainment gap.

Compliance with GDPR continues to be a focus and the school's practices are audited by our external Data Protection Officer annually. The committee is satisfied that the school is fully compliant in all essential areas and thanks the school business manager, Simon Minty, for his work on this complex area.

The committee receives regular updates from FoSM (the PTA) on its fundraising activities and we would like to record our sincere thanks to the FOSM team for all their hard work. We could not manage to do all that we do without them.

The committee regularly reviews the school's vision and ethos; a close partnership with the Parish Priest, combined with governor visits to collective worship and various school services give us an overview of Christian worship throughout the school community. To support our work, an Ethos Working Group meets periodically to ensure that our vision and ethos is embedded in all we do, across all committees.

Governors are mindful of the many demands on staff time and the committee has monitored the support provided to ensure the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils. We are glad these issues maintain a high priority at St Mary's and we will continue to monitor staff workload in the year ahead.

During our many visits to the school, we see the children, staff and wider St Mary's community living the school values - supporting one another and striving to be our best, inspired by Jesus's love.

School Priorities for 2022-23

Quality of Education - Behaviour and Attitudes - Personal Development –
Leadership and Management- Early Years - Finance