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### **Our Vision Statement** **'Learning for Life'**

'Learning for life' with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' is at the heart of St Mary's. At our school children are seen as unique and will feel loved, safe and empowered to flourish so they reach their full potential both academically and personally.

## **Welcome to the Governor Newsletter**

### **Termly Review - Autumn 2023**

We hope that you and your families are all well and enjoying the advent celebrations, it is hard to believe that we are already approaching the end of 2023.

This is our first chance to say that we hope all our new St Mary's pupils and families have settled in well, and we are so impressed with how much everyone at the school has achieved already in the first school term. We are very fortunate to have such a committed team of staff and senior leaders, all seeking the best for our children at St Mary's. A warm welcome to our new teaching and support staff who joined this September. Following our last full governing board meeting, we all wanted to use this opportunity to say a huge **THANK YOU** to our incredibly generous school community. With increasing pressures on school budgets nationally, it is through the incredible fundraising efforts of St Mary's PTA and Friends, along with your overwhelming support and volunteering for them, and the immensely generous gifts of individuals, that St Mary's pupils can have access to resources to help every child flourish. It truly takes a village, thank you!

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### **About the school governors**

For those unfamiliar with the work of the governing body, we have three core functions:

- To establish the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school;
- To hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and for the performance management of staff; and
- To oversee the financial performance of the school and ensure that resources are used effectively.

Our aim is to provide an environment at St Mary's where every child is seen as unique, feels loved, safe and empowered to achieve their full potential academically and personally. We are ambitious for all our pupils and constantly ensure that this vision along with the school's core values of kindness, courage and trust are embedded in everything we do.

## **What we have been talking about this term**

### **Safeguarding**

Keeping our pupils safe and thriving is a priority for St Mary's governors. Our safeguarding governor Michele has visited to ensure the school continues to follow policies and best practice. These visits can include talking to staff and children, in small groups, about how they feel at the school and what they have learned from their PSHE lessons. For example, online safety is an increasing issue nationally and we asked children what they would do if they saw something online that upset them, we were pleased to hear that they would tell a trusted adult! All governors are given anonymised data reports on areas of safeguarding such as behaviour and online safety to look at the broader picture in the school too.

Our school community was shaken this year by the death of Sara. We have prioritised resources for supporting staff and children through this difficult time and look forward to commemorating Sara in the school in due course. Thank you all for your sensitivity and support.

### **Teaching and Learning**

We are ambitious for all our pupils at St Mary's and this term we have been particularly impressed by the quality of the curriculum and teaching at the school, and of the SEN provision in place.

Through our meetings and monitoring visits we have seen lessons in action, met teachers and leaders, looked at progress in books and reviewed against the attainment data. This term the school invited an external 'deep dive' review of our history curriculum. The consultant was impressed with the inspiring curriculum that school leaders have developed.

An ongoing priority for the school in our development plan is to ensure that pupils with SEN make the best possible progress. Our SEN link governor, Charlotte, visited the school this term to observe the fantastic work being done meet the children's needs.

### **Getting Inspection Ready**

We are anticipating an Ofsted inspection at some point in the near future. At our last Ofsted inspection in 2019 we were deemed a 'Good' School. Since then, there have been many positive changes. We also recognise that there are areas that we can still build on. We have a detailed and robust school development plan and are actively working to this to ensure we continue to grow and be even better.

As a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School, we are also inspected by SIAMs which focuses on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision on pupils and adults. We are due for a SIAMS inspection in 2024 and are looking forward to demonstrating to inspectors the impact of areas such as the wellbeing 'WAS Award', nurture clubs and links with the Church; from Laser Run to Carols in the community.

### **School budget**

As you may be already aware from the media, the level of funding in schools is not matching the rising costs that we are facing. We are therefore setting a small deficit budget for next year. There are a growing number of schools across the country in a similar position. We feel confident that with careful management, we can reduce this throughout the year. This does mean that the money we raise from lettings and clubs, and support from the PTA, will be more crucial than ever. The Finance and Assets Committee, will be focussing on ensuring that all possible financial efficiencies are being made, our

outgoing costs are being regularly reviewed, that any possible grants are being applied for and that our school pupil numbers remain high. Small ways to help are checking if your child is entitled to Free School Meals and Pupil Premium.

### Attendance

Attendance nationally continues to be affected by the impact of the pandemic. Attendance is monitored in the governing board meetings. Whilst St Mary's attendance is above national averages at 95%, there remains a focus on ensuring that every child has their full entitlement to education. Governors were this year updated on the careful tracking in place to identify and support families where absence reaches or is nearing a persistent level.

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### Pupil Vacancies

Occasionally, in-year school places become available, due to families moving away. If you know of any families who might be interested in a place at our school, please ask them to contact the school office for more details and to arrange a tour. We would love to show them how wonderful school life is at St Mary's.

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### Other things you can do to help

Support your child's progress with learning at home, read with your child daily, talk to them about what they have learned, and make the most of the school funded resources, Numbots, TTRS and Purple Mash.

By offering your time to the PTA, as a Parent Rep and/or when we ask for Parent/Carer volunteer working groups.

Help us offer enrichment opportunities such as swimming and school trips by making contributions via scopay, or speak to the Home School Link Worker or school office if you are having difficulty financially as there is support available.

Check if your child is entitled to Free School Meals and Pupil Premium.

If you have a birthday party or other event coming up you can rent our school hall. We offer fantastic rates for one off and regular hires. Please get in touch with the school office for more info!

If you or a family member has a trade or a small business that can help with repairs/maintenance and you are willing to offer your services, please get in touch with the school office.

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Latest information on our school governing body, including contact can be found [here](#)

Please direct any enquires to [clerk@stmarys-byfleet.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@stmarys-byfleet.surrey.sch.uk)

<b>Name of Governor</b>	<b>Governor Position</b>	<b>Role and Responsibilities</b>
<b>Jo Ajani</b>	Foundation Governor	Christian Distinctiveness
<b>Charlotte Amison</b>	Parent Governor	SEND / Children in Care / LAC
<b>Jacque Chambers</b>	Staff Governor	Ex-Officio, Finance and Assets
<b>James Felgate</b>	Parent Governor	Vice Chair of Governors Curriculum/Equalities and Diversity/Online Safety/Pupil Outcomes
<b>Melissa Hackney</b>	Parent Governor	Finance and Assets Health and Safety
<b>Geoff Hurst</b>	Co-opted Governor	Chair of Governors Finance and Assets
<b>Julia Lamaison</b>	Co-opted Governor	Chair of Finance and Assets
<b>John McCabe</b>	Foundation Governor	Finance and Assets Christian Distinctiveness / wellbeing
<b>Michelle Oliver</b>	LA Governor	Child Protection / Safeguarding
<b>Helen Simmons</b>	Staff Governor	Staff Representative