

Members Annual Report 2022 – 2023

1. Leadership Changes

The past year has been a year of significant change for the Academy. At the end of the Spring term Mrs Stabler stepped down as principal after nearly 5 years with us and was replaced by Mrs Rutter, who has been supported by Mrs Rourke on a part-time basis as our interim executive principal.

Just after Mrs Stabler's departure our school business manager, Mr Johnston also resigned from his position. Mr Johnston has been replaced by Mr Griggs, who has formerly served the Academy as one of our Governors.

This period of change also saw the resignation of our deputy principal, Miss Cooper, and the consequent restructuring of the SLT by the joint appointment to Assistant Principal of Miss Brown and Miss Lowe.

I take this opportunity to thank Mrs Stabler, Mr Johnston and Miss Cooper for their service to the Academy, to welcome Lorna to us and to congratulate Mrs Rutter, Miss Brown, Miss Lowe and Mr Griggs on their appointments.

This is obviously a very significant change at the top of the Academy but we are very fortunate to have the calibre of staff that has allowed us to promote from within so that we have a leadership team with a deep understanding of the Academy and the challenges it has faced, and who are well known and supported by the whole school community.

There have also been significant changes both to the Membership and the Governing Body. In particular we record our thanks for their work to Mr Crawshaw and Dr Alderton, both of whom have stood down as members this year, and to Mrs Middleton and Rt Reverend Stevens, who have resigned from the Governing Body.

2. Academy Status

This will be dealt with in more detail elsewhere in the AGM, but at the time of writing the Academy has applied to become a founding member of a multi-academy trust alongside Elveden Church of England Primary Academy. We are waiting for the determination of that application but, regardless of its outcome, the fact that we have sought to move away from our stand-alone status is a significant milestone for us. It indicates a future strategic direction and in the unfortunate event that the application is unsuccessful there will be ongoing work to understand why that is so and how St Mary's might pursue the objective of becoming part of a MAT in the future.



3. Reflection on the year

2022/2023 began as a challenging year for the Academy. In the Autumn term there were problems with staff absence which made the end of term difficult to manage and children's absence was also high. There were also difficulties with the behaviour of some children and morale in the school was low.

On 8 and 9 March we had an ungraded (Section 8) Ofsted inspection which highlighted a number of issues to be addressed if the School is to retain its status as a good school at the next, graded inspection. All of those involved in the Ofsted inspection welcomed the manner in which the inspection was carried out and the constructive observations that were made.

Since the changes to the school's leadership team at the end of the Spring term there has been a tangible improvement in morale across the school and this is reflected in the head teacher's reports to Governors during the summer term which are not repeated here but which clearly show the different atmosphere and the turnaround that is taking place after a difficult period.

We are pleased to see the smiles returning to the School and look forward to the work of the new leadership team coming through to improve outcomes for all children and staff within the school.

Oliver Pryke

Chair of Members

4th December 2023