

Members' Annual report 2024 – 2025

This is my 15th year of involvement in some capacity with St Mary's, either as a Governor or, in more recent years a member. Throughout that time there have been some recurring themes and challenges, for example the consistent drive to keep up standards and the need to manage our finances prudently and also strategic issues – we are back to guarding our independence as a single academy and the question of nursery provision has returned to our agenda.

Academy Status

I am pleased to see that, whilst the MAT working group is currently on the back-burner, we continue to develop partnerships with other schools, both through the SLIN Network and Suffolk Partnership model. Single Academy status is all very well but we should not allow ourselves to become isolated.

The Nursery Project

Whilst our current financial position is much improved it is obvious that, like all schools, we will continue to face long-term financial challenges and that these will be exacerbated if we are not full. Against this backdrop it is good to see the Nursery coming back on to the agenda. It seems to me that this has the potential to help us right across the board, both in attracting parents and children to the school but also to helping with standards by giving children the best possible start. I look forward to seeing this project progress.

Governing body membership

Whilst the school is clearly in good shape, I was disheartened to read of the Governors' difficulties in finding new governors to ensure we have a full complement on the governing body. I am not sure of the answer to this. I fully recognise that there are ever increasing demands placed on governors and I know how time consuming this can be. I wonder whether there is anything that we can do to limit the burden, or at least to give new governors a more gentle introduction rather than confronting them with substantial numbers of responsibilities from the start.

Conclusion

Finally, a thank you. It is a pleasure to read and see such a positive set of reports and minutes throughout the year. It is easy to forget that our leadership team are still relatively new in their roles and yet it is clear that they have already made a huge difference. Let's keep up these standards and we will quickly see these improvements reflected in the outcomes achieved by our children

Oliver Pryke

November 2025