



St Michael's CE Primary School

The Causeway, Steventon, Oxfordshire OX13 6SQ

Telephone and Fax: 01235 831298

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<http://www.stmichaelssteventon.co.uk>

Cultivating Respect, Persevering, and Learning with Courage

Friday 19th April 2024

Dear Families,

Welcome back – and what a first week back it has been! Trips, tennis, skateboarding and SO much more!

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend the meeting about the academisation on Wednesday evening and to those of you who sent in questions. There is a space on our website here:

<https://www.stmichaelssteventon.co.uk/page/?title=Academisation&pid=87> where all of the information will be held. I will also share this on Dojo too. At the bottom this newsletter are the FAQs we have received to date. These will also be on the website.

The consultation period will run until Friday 10th May. The Governors recognise that change is unnerving and that the school as been through so many changes over the last few years that this can create feelings of doubt, trepidation, and anxiety. As such they welcome your questions which can be sent to head.3241@st-michaels-pri.oxon.sch.uk FAO The Governing Body.

HUGE thank yous to both the SSA and the amazing group of parents who came to school on Friday and gave our school a fabulous “spring clean”. The grounds look amazing, and the forest school children loved getting stuck in!

The SSA quiz has raised a huge £1070 and the Easter egg Hunt a further £250. We have put the funds towards some new dictionaries initially and are currently exploring the OPAL project as another investment.

We must also thank Mr. Liddle and Mr. Noys for thinking of us during recent office close downs – we have lots of “new to us” furniture that we have been able to repurpose and spruce up lots of areas of school. Thank you!

Homework

Thank you for your patience with this. Homework is an incredibly challenging thing to get right, and we have tried hard to make sure we have listened to families and that there is balance as well as educational value in the tasks we set.

	Year 1	Year 2	LKS2 (Y3&4)	UKS2 (Y5&6)
Compulsory Set Weekly	Daily reading	Daily reading Times Table Rock Stars	Daily reading Spelling rules Times Table Rock Stars	Daily reading Times Table Rocks Stars CGP Practice books
Optional Set Termly	Topic related menu	Topic related menu	Topic related menu	Topic related menu
Bespoke Ad Hoc	As and when children require some additional support on a particular topic, staff may send some practice home for them to complete. This is to support individuals and will not be compulsory.			

Hopefully this is something that everyone can work into busy family life as well as helping you feel involved with your children’s learning. Please remember that homework never replaces things like family mealtimes, board games, playing outside, exploring nature and time together as a family.

Mostly Books

If you remember, back during World Book Week, we shared that the children would be curating a list of their favourite books to add to a Wish List that would be held by Mostly Books. Our wish list can be found here:

<https://mostly-books.co.uk/product-category/st-michaels-wishlist/>

Sporting News

We have got LOTS of upcoming sporting events. There’s flag football, tennis, multi sports and cricket...all sorts. Please do look out for information for ones specific to your year groups as often there is a short turn around!



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We had LOTS of fun with the skateboarding and scooter workshops on Friday. I was so impressed with the children's courage and perseverance as well as their tenacity! There are some real budding Tony Hawks amongst us. I will be in touch with Alex about after school clubs and other holiday activities as I know there are lots of keen children.

Outside of school two of our Year 6s have been excelling in their chosen sports too. Faith has earned her first pair of pointe ballet shoes and Charlotte Noys has been representing our school at the Pony of The Year show. She went on to win her section being awarded her first ever rug.



Whilst away she also found out she won the southeast bronze league and will shortly receive a medal. Charlotte has also been competing in Dorset for the national school qualifier where she won the class representing St Michaels and has therefore qualified for the BS National Championships in the summer.

Huge congratulations to you both!



Diary Dates

15th April – 10th May – Academy Conversion Consultation Period

22nd April – Year 6 to Yenworthy

6th May – Bank Holiday Monday

20th May – Flag Football Tournament

20th May – Year 5/6 Cricket tournament

24th May – Finish for half term 3:15

3rd June – INSET Day, school closed to pupils

4th June – Term 6 starts

Safeguarding

If you are worried about your own child or another child in the community, please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate people:

Immediate danger

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on **999**.

Immediate concern

If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on **0345 050 7666**.

If you are a parent or carer

If you feel you are harming your child or are close to doing so please contact us on one of the following numbers:

- Office hours (8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4pm, Friday): Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: **0345 050 7666**
- Outside office hours: Emergency Duty Team: **0800 833 408**

If you have any concerns or require any support, please do speak to us. We have access to lots of different types of support ranging from the Community Larder and parenting support right through to Social Care.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if we can support with anything.

Kind Regards

Hayley Leyshon
Headteacher



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FAQ – Academisation

Why has this decision come about and why now?

- In June 2022 the Department for Education released more detail on its plan to deliver a fully trust based system by 2030. OCC briefed schools on this plan and encouraged governing bodies actively to review their position with regards to academisation.
- The support from Oxfordshire County Council has reduced significantly over the last few years and is not expected to improve. It is this need to secure appropriate levels of external support for our school that triggered the governors to revisit our thoughts on academisation that were last formally assessed before COVID. This current phase has been underway for over 12months.
- Enabled the Governing Body to benefit from the luxury of selecting the right academy trust for the school rather than being forced to choose one should the political landscape change rapidly.

This is a village C of E primary school, why link it to two secondary schools and one primary school in Abingdon?

- Steventon is uniquely placed between Wantage, Didcot and Abingdon, with children attending Secondary settings in all three of these towns.
- The most effective Multi Academy Trusts contain at least one Secondary School.
- As a school, we are already part of the Abingdon Partnership of schools. As an Academy we would be able to retain this membership
- Abingdon Learning Trust will change their constitution to reflect the inclusion of us as a C of E school.

Why this specific academy?

- Good educational outcomes
- Local
- Small
- Vision and ethos match ours
- Level of autonomy for us as a school

What is the benefit to the children, teachers, and school in general?

- School
 - o Access to funding to support specific school improvement priorities
 - o Access to grants and funding that are not open to Maintained schools e.g. for the MUGA
 - o Potential to improve Additional Provision offer and widen it to more children
 - o Streamlined processes
 - o Access to better procurement rates e.g. I.T., utilities etc.
 - o Better support for Safeguarding, Estates, Health and Safety etc.
 - o Removal of additional workload around things such as estate management to allow more time for school improvement
- Teachers
 - o Better opportunities for collaboration – share ideas, moderate work etc.
 - o Opportunities to access more tailored support for individual teachers
 - o Opportunities to procure higher quality continued professional development
 - o Opportunities to work with secondary subject specialists to improve teaching of wider curriculum content
- Children
 - o All of the above lead to improved outcomes and opportunities for children

Will the curriculum be the same? And if not then who decides this? Will you lose the creative aspect / the individuality of St Michael's?



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Michael's retain, set and own the curriculum.

Will there be new leadership?

- No – the current leadership team remain in post
- The school will just be accountable to a different body

Why now, before Ofsted is due - is this one of the reasons for it?

- No this is not driving the decision.
- Our Ofsted window will not change. We are due to be inspected before September 2025 and that will remain the same.

Will you still have governors who have roots and interests in the school or will it become a panel from the Trust which makes all of the decisions - without knowing our village school at all?

- Yes – Our Governors will remain the same and will have the interest of the children in our school at the front and center.
- Their remit will change slightly but the impact of this will enable them to spend more time focusing on the experiences of the children at St Michael's instead of being tied up in other issues.
- Rev Phil Sutton will sit on the Members Board to represent St Michael's
- Local Governors will still be representative as they are now

Are academies still accountable for their performance and are performance targets set for staff and children?

- Yes – Academy Trusts are ultimately accountable for the achievement of staff and pupils in their schools
- Individual performance targets for staff and children are set by the individual school
- Academy trusts are accountable to OFSTED and the Regional Director

Will the behaviour / exclusion policy change to be in line with the academy?

- No, operational policies will be held by the school

Why the ALT academy and not the RET or the Vale Academy Trust?

- Values of the other trusts are not as well aligned
- We are already part of Abingdon Partnership
- The autonomy the school retains with ALT is high
- RET and Vale have both grown quickly and would not be in a position to onboard another school.
- Vale are expanding into Farringdon – which is less efficient for collaboration across schools

There are not as many schools and only one primary in this trust - have you sought advice from Rush Common about the transition and how it went for them?

- Rush Common have been an academy for 12 years.
- Ms. Leyshon has met with the Head at Rush Common on several occasions to Share their experiences.
- As the second primary to join the trust we will be in a position to help to influence the development of the primary element of the MAT.