



# 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**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Dear Families,

I hope you all had a lovely Bank Holiday weekend despite the variable weather... My newsletters have moved to the beginning of the week which feels a much better place to share them – hopefully they don't get caught up in the end of the week chaos if your houses are anything like mine!

Just a reminder that the academy conversation consultation window closes on Friday. Please do take the opportunity to ask any questions or raise anything you would like to before 5pm. Hopefully all the information you need is on the website but if there is anything specific you would like to know or you would like to read more about, please do ask.

Year 6 had a fantastic time at Yenworthy Lodge and have grown in every sense during their time away. They conquered fears, pushed their own personal boundaries, and bonded brilliantly. Huge thank you to the staff, Mrs Hyland, Miss Fytche and Mrs Ross for taking them as well as the Office team for their help with coordinating all the paperwork!

## **SATs**

Our Year 6 children will be sitting their SATS next week. At St Michael's we recognise that the SATs test only assess a very small part of a child's education and for some children their sporting prowess, artistic flair or historical curiosity is not recognised. So a message to our Year 6 children - Please remember, these results do not define you. They do not show all of what makes you special and unique. The tests do not assess what makes you, you. They do not know that some of you are incredible sportspeople, athletes, artists, and musicians. They do not show that you are a wonderful friend, a caring, kind, and respectful member of the St Michael's family. These results do not show the courage you showed at Yenworthy or the perseverance you showed.

## **Parent Survey**

Over the next few weeks, I will be sending out the parent survey. It will take a slightly different format this year to help us make more specific improvements – especially around communication. Your views are important to us, and we would really appreciate it if as many parents as possible could complete the survey.

## **OPAL**

I had a really exciting meeting with Helen from OPAL last week. OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) are an initiative that we will be implementing in school over the next academic year or so to widen, support and enhance high quality play for all children at St Michael's.

We believe that investing in open ended, creative play for all children across the school is not just about "better" playtimes but also about equipping children with the personal, social, and emotional skills to effectively negotiate, problem solve and collaborate. OPAL also provides great opportunities for cross phase play, open ended experiences as well as providing a whole range of sensory experiences.

OPAL will form a significant part of our strategic development plan for the coming year and we look forward to sharing our journey with you.

## **Diary Dates**

10<sup>th</sup> May – Academisation Consultation Ends

20<sup>th</sup> May – Flag Football Tournament

20<sup>th</sup> May – Year 5/6 Cricket tournament

24<sup>th</sup> May – Finish for half term 3:15

3<sup>rd</sup> June – INSET Day, school closed to pupils

4<sup>th</sup> June – Term 6 starts



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## 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

## 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.



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## 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?

- St 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.

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