

September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

On behalf of the school and the school's governors, I wish a very warm welcome to all our St Mary's families to the start of the academic year - both those who are joining us for the first time, and those who have been with us for many years. We hope you have enjoyed your summer, and we are delighted to have you and your children with us at the start of this new academic year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome, Mrs Butler, our Interim Headteacher, to the school community. Mrs Butler has been working hard behind the scenes this summer, preparing for the start of term and an exciting and busy year ahead. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated, warm and experienced Headteacher working with us, someone who is committed to academic excellence and access for all; to promoting the joy of learning through hands on experience and teaching that values 'having a go' and learning from mistakes; and to creating a kind, caring Church school where all children feel nurtured. In other words, Mrs Butler starts at SMAS completely committed to our school vision that 'with our heads we learn, with our hands we create, and with our hearts we love and care for one another'. I know you will join me in welcoming Mrs Butler to St Mary and All Saints, and that you will be as impressed with her leadership as I am. She is excited to meet and get to know you all.

The year ahead will be an exciting one for both your children, and for the school. We will be looking to appointing a permanent Headteacher and we also expect Ofsted to visit us this term. As governors, we see both of these as opportunities; we relish the chance to demonstrate the school's multitude of strengths, and we are excited to find a dynamic and brilliant leader to take the school forwards.

The Headteacher role is currently being advertised and interviews will take place at the end of September. St Mary and All Saints has much to offer and should be an attractive appointment for an experienced or aspiring Head. We are confident that we will appoint a talented, nurturing and inspiring Headteacher to lead the school. However, as I said when I wrote to you last term, we will only appoint when we feel we have found such a leader.

In terms of Ofsted, the school has worked extremely hard to address all issues raised in the last report and has thoughtfully implemented changes over the past two years. These include embedding a new curriculum in collaboration with Subject Leads and all staff; the careful introduction of a new Phonics scheme; selecting and training a new Board of Governors, as well as the appointment of a dedicated, non-teaching SENDCO to support our SEND children and continued investment in our amazing programme of enrichment days, trips and events to support the wider curriculum. We are in a strong position, with excellent results, wonderful relationships between staff and children, and a nurturing culture that ensures all children are supported to access the curriculum.

Much of the progress made in the past two years is down to the commitment, careful planning and hard work of our outgoing Head and Deputy. Our thanks and gratitude go to both Mrs Barnett and Mrs Philpott for all they have given to the school and children over the many years they have worked at St Mary and All Saints. We wish them well and look forwards to keeping in touch. They will always be a part of the SMAS community, having played such a significant part in its development.

Finally, as we begin this new school year, remember that each of your children are valued members of our community and we are here to support them, be it in mastering challenging

areas of learning, making new friends, or trying something new. Your involvement and support will contribute to your child's happiness and success this year; we greatly value your input. Whether it is through attending parent-teacher meetings, participation in school events, or supporting learning at home, your role is invaluable, and we look forwards to strong, open and supportive relationships between staff, governors and parents.

I hope to see many of you on the school gate on Monday mornings over the first few weeks of term and will be in contact to update you on the appointment process as things progress. We look forwards to welcoming your children into school on Thursday morning!

Yours faithfully,

Caroline Davis-King

Chair of Governors SMAS