

10<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **A message from our School Governors**

Happy New Year. We hope you had a wonderful Christmas. As we begin another busy term at St Michael's we wanted to take the time to give you an update on a few things that have been happening in school.

### **Changes to the governing body**

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Scott Room as our new Parent Governor. He replaces Patrick Zebedee who had completed his term as a Parent Governor and now re-joins the board as an Associate Member. We would also like to thank Emma Barnes for her excellent contribution to the governing body. She has completed her term as a Foundation Governor.

### **A lifetime love for reading at St Michael's**

At a recent governor meeting we enjoyed an excellent presentation by Jane Godfrey (Year 2 Teacher) and Ben Jarvis (Year 5 Teacher). They outlined the school's new approach to reading and English in KS1 and KS2.

Since the start of the new academic year the school has adopted 'Sounds Write' in KS1 and the 'Sounds and Syllables' approach to teaching spelling in KS2. Both programmes are based on the latest scientific research and are designed to help children to become fluent and independent readers whilst also fostering a lifelong love of reading with a focus on reading for pleasure.

The enthusiasm and passion that both Jane and Ben put into making this work at St Michael's was clear to see. This was echoed by pupils at a recent governor visit where a group of Year 5 pupils spoke passionately about their enjoyment of their whole class reading book.

### **SIA (School Improvement Advisor) visits**

All Wiltshire schools are assigned a SIA who visits the school to provide tailored support. We were pleased to receive the following feedback from a recent SIA visit.

*"A consistent, research informed approach is evident across the school in the learning environment, in teaching approaches and in relationships and care for the whole child. This enables children to thrive and learn well."*

As a church school we also have a SIA assigned by Salisbury Diocese. Two of our Foundation Governors had the chance to meet our Diocese SIA recently to discuss changes to the SIAMS framework under which we will be inspected in due course. The primary objective of a SIAMS inspection is to evaluate both the effectiveness and distinctiveness of a school as a church school. You can read more about our role as a church school in the recently updated Christian Distinctiveness section on the [school website](#).

## Continuous Provision

Research and our school experience tells us that young children learn best through play and exploration. This is why we have developed [Continuous Provision](#) throughout KS1. We are very proud of this approach so it was excellent to be able to welcome all of the School Improvement Advisors from Wiltshire into school recently to show them how it works in practice. We received some excellent feedback including the following quote from one of the SIAs.

*“There was something magical to see round every corner and every nook and cranny of the learning environment... There are memorable experiences that stay with me forever in my role, usually as a full technicolour mental photos, my visit was certainly one of those...”*

We also run courses for teachers to share our knowledge and it has been amazing to see the next set of courses on Continuous Provision sell out in record time. These courses bring in vital funds which are used to enhance the learning experience for all pupils.

## School performance data

External test results continue to show impressive achievements across the school.

### Key stage 2 SATS

- **Combined reading, writing and maths** at expected standard 77.4% (National 58.7%). This puts us in the top 20% of primary schools
- **Reading** at expected standard 77.4% (National 74.5%) with 32.3% achieving the higher standard
- **Writing** at expected standard 83.9% (National 69.5%) with 22.6% achieving the higher standard
- **Maths** at expected standard 83.9% (National 71.4%) with 45.2% achieving the higher standard. This puts us significantly above national and in the highest 20%
- **SPAG** (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) at expected standard – 87.1% (Wiltshire 71.3%) with 45% achieving the higher standard. This puts us significantly above national and in the highest 20%

### Year 4 Multiplication Times Tables Check

This is an annual check that Year 4s in England and Wales have to sit. It was due to begin in June 2020 but was postponed due to Covid meaning last year was the first year the test has taken place. The test is an online test with 25 questions; children must answer each question within a 6 seconds time limit so the whole test takes less than 5 minutes.

- Our Y4s (*this year's Y5s*) did brilliantly with an average score of 23.5 (Wiltshire 20.2)

87.9% scored between 21 – 25 (Wiltshire 58.1%) and 64% achieved full marks (National 27%).

### Key Stage 1 SATS

- **Reading** at expected standard 90.3% (National 66.9%) with 19.4% achieving the higher standard. This is significantly above national and in the highest 20% of primary schools
- **Writing** at expected standard 87.1% (National 57.6%) with 12.9% achieving the higher standard. This is significantly above national and in the highest 20%
- **Maths** at expected standard 93.5% (National 67.7%) with 16.1% achieving the higher standard. This is significantly above national and in the highest 20%

### **Year 1 Phonics Screening**

This is an annual check taken by pupils in Year 1 to assess progress in reading.

- 92% of our Y1s (this year's Y2s) met the expected standard (National 75.5%)

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** (assessed at the end of the Reception year)

- Good level of development (GLOD) 73.1% (National 65.2%)

This puts us in the 30th percentile when compared to other schools.

### **Our 'whole child' approach**

At St Michael's, academic achievement and personal develop are seen as equally important. It was fabulous to hear parents recognising this in our recent parent survey when asked 'What do you value most about St Michael's?'

*"Sense that children's wellbeing is important, not just learning."*

*"The way the school has an equal focus on social development as well as academic."*

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding continues to be a top priority at St Michael's. Those of you who have been into school will have noticed that we now have a new Sign-in App to keep a record of all school visitors. All staff and governors recently received safeguarding training and all teachers and TAs have had further training on our CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) software which is now used across the school to record all safeguarding, well-being and pastoral issues. As parents you were recently invited to attend an online safety training session run by SWGfL. If you were unable to attend the live session, or you would like to remind yourself of the content, the recording will be available soon.

And finally... we would just like to leave you with this extract from a letter that the school received from a past pupil who has just been given a place at United World College.

*"I believe the hard work you and everyone put in and the way the atmosphere truly allows you to find a 'Lifetime Love for Learning' has played a role in my acceptance."*

Best Wishes,

St Michael's School Governors