

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School



**Normandy
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1JL**

Headteacher: Mr A Bird

Telephone: 01403 265999

Fax: 01403 252071

e-mail: office@st-marys-horsham.w-sussex.sch.uk

Report to PCC August 2020

Well – perhaps the most bizarre PCC report from St. Mary's School you'll ever get. Obviously the enforced partial closure of all schools took up such a huge chunk of this last academic year. However, prior to this we were continuing with our focus on school improvement, maintaining so much the wonderful broad, balanced curriculum and community spirit that St. Mary's is known for while working on the areas SIAMS, Ofsted and of course the school staff had identified for work as well.

During the partial closures we actually remained open to Key Worker and Vulnerable Children throughout (including the Easter Holidays and half-term). Numbers of children were initially very small as most parents wanted to shield their families if at all possible but grew rapidly. So that the school was accommodating 105 of its 208 children in the latter parts of the summer term. The parents and children at home received a weekly newsletter and work to complete, with communications enabled via the online learning platform 'Tapestry' – this allowed pupils to upload their work or photos of what they'd been doing and for staff to set online work as well as to comment on this too. The larger numbers of pupils attending were in-part enabled by the generosity of Lisa and St. Mary's Church in allowing the school to use The Barn for lesson as well as allowing us to store copious quantities of furniture, toys and equipment (which the government said schools were not to have last term) in the church and the vicarage garage.

Staff continued to work on our overhaul of the curriculum with guidance from Mr Ellis, so that we are ready to start our new provision in September and hopefully have it tweaked with any issues ironed out prior to the now delayed start date of September 2021. This will also allow time for staff training in delivering our new PE scheme as well considering the new RE syllabus which includes more reference to other world religions as expected by SIAMs. The School Development Plan will be reviewed again at the start of term.

Building works also commenced during covid – with the EYFS outdoor area being completely overhauled. This has been needed for a long, long time and will enable far better outdoor learning provision as a result. It is due to be completed the week commencing 21st Sept.

Staff changes have taken place ahead of September: Mrs V Cole has moved to the West Country and has been replaced in Y4 by Mrs Fulkes (joining us from Barnes Green Primary) while Mr Tombling has been replaced by Mrs Harrison (from Liverpool College) both are experienced teachers who we hope will step into the breach with aplomb. Mrs New also retired from her multiple roles of a huge amount of dedicated service to the school – working with individual children, speech and language as well as running our Explorers club, organising the Flower Festival and Prayer Spaces – she will be sorely missed too.

We have also finally appointed a new premises manager who will commence his role at the end of September. Come October half-term we will say our farewells to Mrs Brett who will be replaced in Year 3 by a Mrs Hickmott another teacher of great experience who interviewed (online) exceedingly well – following great interest in this role (I haven't had so many applications for one position at St. Mary's in my time in post).

Pupil numbers

Two families have opted to leave for public school leaving spaces in Years 4 and 5. And we have one space in Year 1. However, I am aware that this latter space is being pursued via admissions with a view to a September start. We have two families who have had to put their emigrations on hold, but do have waiting lists for their spaces should they head off soon.

Clubs

We are awaiting a decision on whether clubs will be started up again in the autumn term – having been stopped due to covid.

Sports

This year we received our School Games Silver Award, finished eighth overall in the Sussex School Games, were District Swimming Champions and enjoyed success in the local football, rugby and hockey tournaments to boot. Huge thanks to Mrs Peel, Mr Palmart and Mr McGregor for their work on this front – sadly we have lost Mr McGregor from his TA role as he commences his teacher training next month.

Worship

We hope to welcome different members of the clergy to lead our Worship once each week and are watching government guidance regarding the half-termly Communion Service. Open the Book are still unable to attend at present. Bizarrely our assemblies remain as 'online' affairs as we are having to follow the 'bubble model' – which means the children cannot gather altogether in the hall'.

Prayer Spaces for Schools

Mrs New who has worked so hard in organising the event in the past has been completing a handover to Mrs Bathgate, who will be taking the lead with this event (assuming it's allowed) this coming term. We are incredibly grateful to Mrs New for her work over the years (and relieved that she still be joining us this year due to her curtailed travel plans)!

Raspberry Pi

This year's team made it seven finals in a row for St. Mary's – returning as Champions again. Huge thanks to Mr Feitz and his team of parents who mentored the team to their success this year.

Church Support

As a Church-Aided School, the School does rely on and receive a great deal of support from members of the Parish churches and the Parish clergy team. The financial support in the form of a Deanery Grant is much appreciated too and I would like to record our thanks for these things. I am also very aware that the vast majority of parents who turn up for our half-termly working parties are members of the St. Mary's congregation along with significant numbers of our governors too: who have worked so hard in helping and challenging me to move the school forward. For these folks I am so very grateful.

Thank you also to:

Our teaching and support staff who continue to work very hard to give the children high quality learning opportunities.

Our Home School Association who continue to put on fund raising and social events and offer other support to the school – throughout Covid too. In fact, they have been most creative with their plans for fundraising – which included a mammoth sponsored run from Mr Tomlinson as well as their 50K Your way event that so many families engaged with.

The school very much values the role the Parish and its churches play in the life of the school and I have really appreciated the sense of community that supports the school so much (even in these most challenging of times)!

Best wishes

Alex Bird
Headteacher