

## St. Michael's School: Annual report to St. Michael's Church APCM – March 2026

The world of education continues to be challenging with schools facing increasingly limited funds whilst, at the same time, coping with increasing levels of need amongst the school community. Schools are operating in an environment where the support from external agencies has reduced, even though the responsibilities schools face is likely to increase, as the Government's recent White Paper on education demonstrates.

Inevitably, this puts enormous pressure on those working in schools, in particular the Headteacher, who, in a one form entry school, is responsible for a huge range of roles including safeguarding, health and safety, buildings maintenance, staffing and curriculum development.

St. Michael's is fortunate to be in a good position to face these challenges, as it is led by a very able headteacher and senior leadership team. They are supported by a team of highly skilled and experienced staff, which has largely remained stable over the last year.

The Governing Body is now at full capacity and is pleased to have recently welcomed Tracey Osho-Williams and Maria Rosato. Hilary Fletcher has taken the important role of wellbeing governor and is supporting headteacher Rachel Griffiths regularly as she copes with the many difficulties faced by a school leader.

The school year started on a very positive note with the news that the school had been successful in being awarded the British Council International School Award for a remarkable sixth time. This award, which lasts for 3 years, recognises the excellent work the school does to prepare children for life in the global community and, alongside the No Outsiders programme, ensures that they understand and respect others, no matter what their differences. Rachel was delighted to attend the award ceremony at the Houses of Parliament in January, and the school is continuing to explore new ways to build the international ethos into the curriculum.

Another huge improvement this year is the installation of a new roof following the successful application for funding from the Diocese. Whilst the work was slightly disruptive the replacement roof means the building should be safe for many years into the future. As a Voluntary Aided Church of England school, the governing body is required to fund 10% of the cost of the project amounting to around £20,000. Governors and the PTA are finding it increasingly difficult to raise funds, as families find themselves challenged financially and the make up of the school community changes over time.

After a dip in enrolments of children starting at St Michael's in September 2024, reflecting lower numbers that year across Bishop's Stortford, it has been encouraging to see applications increase in 2025 and 2026. The nursery continues to be a popular choice as the Government's childcare funding has been extended. The school's own 'wraparound care' before and after the school day continues to be well used and is able to generate a small income which helps support the school's budget.

The school is actively involved in local school based 'self help' groups to ensure that academic excellence is shared and there are opportunities for self-evaluation to ensure that growth and positive change are always prioritised.

Please keep the school and its community in your thoughts and prayers as they strive to do their best at this challenging time for the field of education.