



11th December 2017

Dear Parents or Carers,

Partnership between Saint Cecilia's and St. Michael's Church of England Schools

In recent months, St. Michael's and Saint Cecilia's have been working closely together to assess how best to address the funding challenges that we both face. These discussions have been very positive and productive, and given our close geographical proximity and shared Christian ethos and values, we believe we are ideally placed to now put our partnership onto a more formal footing. Our reasoning is as follows:

- The sharing of resources is a viable proposition; for example, KS2 pupils at St. Michael's using science labs at Saint Cecilia's or shared staff training initiatives
- This September nearly half of St. Michael's Year 6 pupils transferred to Saint Cecilia's and it seems likely that a similar number will follow this year. To ease the transition between primary and secondary education is a key priority for both schools
- A combination of cuts to Local Authority (LA) and school budgets means that LAs are finding it increasingly difficult to justify their continued support of schools. Our own experience of dealings with Wandsworth LA bears this out. Our hope is that by working more closely we may be able to leverage some economies of scale by jointly negotiating Service Level Agreements and other supplier contracts.
- At a time when funding to schools is more stretched than ever, both schools are working to deliver value for money without any adverse impact on the education of pupils. Our discussions to date indicate that by working together in partnership, we could use economies of scale to make savings and to add real value to both schools
- Whilst Saint Cecilia's has already converted to academy status, for St. Michael's we feel it is a step too far at this point. We hope that by continuing to work in partnership we will gain useful knowledge and experience before making any decision regarding academisation.

To that end the Boards of Governors of both schools have voted unanimously to draw up a shared Memorandum of Understanding that will enable St. Michael's and Saint Cecilia's to explore ways in which we can work together smartly to deliver benefits in terms of cost savings and added value to both pupils and staff. This Memorandum of Understanding will be in place for the start of the next academic year and will be time-based, so allowing either side to withdraw without penalty if circumstances change. Both schools would maintain their independence and be equal partners.

We will be in touch over the next few months with updates, but in the meantime if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Gaby McWhinnie
Chair of Governors, St Michael's

Revd. Greg Prior
Chair of Governors, Saint Cecilia's

Ann-Marie Grant
Headteacher, St Michael's

Niall Gallagher
Headteacher, Saint Cecilia's