



11th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Over the past two years, St Mary's has experienced challenging leadership changes that have had a significant impact on many areas of school life. Over the past couple of months, the Local Authority have worked closely with the school governors to ensure the most effective leadership is put in place to drive school improvement and ensure lasting stability for St Mary's. The leadership team at Coniston Primary School were identified and have agreed to support the school for the remainder of this academic year. Coniston has an outstanding reputation for school-to-school support and has had a lasting impact on multiple schools both locally and nationally over the past seven years. Coniston has extremely high standards and this has enabled them to develop exceptional pastoral and academic practices.

The rationale of the school-to-school model is very clear: to strengthen inclusion, enhance teaching and learning, and ensure that every child can thrive socially, emotionally and academically. Through developing strong systems, fostering high expectations, and working closely with staff and families, we aim to create an environment where all pupils feel valued, supported, and inspired to achieve their very best.

Our Leadership Structure

The school will be led by an experienced team working across both schools.

Alan Walters, Executive Headteacher

Alan is deeply passionate about ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, has the opportunity to succeed and achieve their full potential. With over 15 years of senior leadership experience, he has previously supported a number of headteachers and schools in their improvement journeys.

Alan has a particular interest in the role that sport can play in raising aspirations, building resilience, and helping young people develop confidence and character. Outside of school, he is a keen rugby enthusiast and enjoys following Bristol Bears and Scotland Rugby.

Sam Glover, Head of School

Sam's passion lies in teaching and learning and curriculum development. Throughout his career, he has supported schools both locally and nationally to refine teaching approaches, improve classroom practice, and develop ambitious curricula that meet the needs of all learners.

As a father of two primary-aged children, Sam understands the importance of creating nurturing, engaging, and inclusive school environments where children feel safe, happy, and able to succeed. Outside of school, he enjoys spending time with his family and following Swindon Town Football Club.

Elisa Vindel, Inclusion Lead

Elisa is an experienced leader with a strong commitment to inclusion. She firmly believes that every child should feel a genuine sense of belonging and be supported to learn alongside their peers wherever possible.

Throughout her career, Elisa has supported a number of schools in developing inclusive practices and systems that ensure children with a wide range of needs can access high-quality education alongside their peers. Her expertise will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen the support available for all pupils and staff.



Building on Existing Strengths

Alongside the newly appointed leadership team, we are delighted to be working with the school's existing leaders, who bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and commitment to the school community. Andrew Wood will continue in his role as Assistant Headteacher, Jane Cowell will continue as Pastoral Lead, and Emma Wilkinson will continue as SENDCo. Their understanding of the school, its pupils, and its families will be invaluable as we move forward together. We are committed to building upon the strengths already present within the school and working collaboratively to achieve the very best outcomes for all children.

Looking Ahead

Although we are only at the beginning of this journey, we have already been made to feel incredibly welcome by the children. Their enthusiasm, kindness, and pride in their school have been evident from our very first visits.

Our focus over the coming months will be on:

- Strengthening inclusive practice across the school
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- Raising aspirations and expectations for every pupil
- Developing systems that provide consistency and support for children, staff, and families
- Ensuring every child feels valued, safe, and able to succeed

We are excited about the opportunities ahead and are confident that, by working together with pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors, and the wider community, we can build upon the school's many strengths and secure excellent outcomes for all children.

We appreciate that periods of change can bring questions and a sense of unease, however, it is important that parents and carers understand that changes are needed and everything we do will be in the very best interests of the children. We are committed to working in partnership with families and keeping you informed as our plans develop and we look forward to meeting many of you over the coming weeks and months.

Thank you for your continued support. We are excited to begin this journey together and look forward to helping every child achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Walters
Executive Headteacher

Sam Glover
Head of School

Elisa Vindel
Inclusion lead