

Dear Parents and Carers at The Howard,

What a great but short half term, the shortest of the year but it has been jam packed and I am grateful to children, staff and families for making it such a super one. I have been blessed to attend Mothering Sunday and Easter services as well as children's productions, plays and dance recitals across the last few weeks, they have been delightful and Ralph and I have loved them. I was disappointed not to be able to attend the Camerata but it's special to know that all the schools were together, singing in such an important event.



The Howards Easter Service is on Friday afternoon so there is no time to get a picture in! Don't forget you can see photos and details about what is happening in your school blogs on the website and [@TSSMAT1](#) on Twitter.

I offer the following in order to update you regarding Trust Growth. We are thrilled to report that the Lichfield Diocese has approved our application for The Mease Federation to join with us so the next step is approval from the Regional Department For Education's Advisory Board before we start the long process of formal due diligence and possible joining procedures. Our 'seconded' opportunities for leadership have come to fruition and after the Easter break we see several changes, this includes Miss Mills moving across to The Mease Federation to become the Executive Headteacher and Mr. Wynn's to become the Executive Headteacher of St Marys and The Howard. Additionally, we are thrilled to have appointed Miss H Jennings as Deputy Headteacher at The Howard and Mrs D Davies at St Marys. Finally, we see Mrs L Derry as Deputy Headteacher at Richard Crosse and have an internal advert running at the moment for a Deputy Headteacher for a year from September 2023 at Anson. Should everything go to plan, we will then have opportunity for permanent Deputy Headteacher appointments across all 4 schools from September 2024 which offers excellent distributive leadership and retention of amazing staff in our Trust as well as great succession plans. We are delighted to offer consistency for children at The Howard by ensuring that class 2 is taught fully by Mrs Fallows who will be increasing her hours. This means that the class will be taught by Mrs Fallows on a Monday and Tuesday followed by Ms. Jennings on a Wednesday to Friday. Finally, we are thrilled that Mrs G Duffy's SENDCO role is going so brilliantly and to commit a SENDCO across the Trust demonstrates our commitment to ensure consistency and excellence in our provision and work with children and families.



<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections>

A range of leaders from middle subject leaders, Deputies and Headteachers, Governors and Directors met with the Lichfield Diocese to receive an update on the new inspection schedule review the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). We feel in a positive position with our practice and provision but also have lots of plans to continue to strengthen what we do.

At one of our Q&A sessions at The Howard a confusion was raised regarding an understanding of the difference between the CEO role now and in the past and the expectations on Headteachers. If you are not worried or bothered about this, then do not worry about the message at the end. If there is some confusion, then please do have a read and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Additionally, we wanted to pen a message for Miss Mills, this is also at the end of this letter and we extend our gratitude, love and best wishes for her future.

Have a wonderful Easter break, I do hope that across the fortnight you manage to have some quality time with your family, engaging in the enjoyment that Easter brings for children and adults alike and some reflection time too. I'm sure many of you will also be working and I do hope that you get to enjoy some of this period.



Kind Regards,

C Gethin

Charlene Gethin (CEO)
and Ralph. - in church for a service.

A message for Miss Mills

Mrs Heather Bowman (our Chair of Directors) and I have penned a few words to say in gratitude to you Miss Mills, and we wish you every success for the future and look forward to continuing to work with you in your new role and such a different post.

It is difficult to put into words what Mrs Mills means to all of us. She was appointed as Headteacher at The Howard at Elford in 2018 at a very difficult time. Pupil numbers were not encouraging, and achievement was not as good as it could be.

The Howard needed the energy and enthusiasm Miss Mills brought to make it into the wonderful school it is today. There was so much to do and Mrs Mills set about the task with a professional zeal that provided the momentum for change. Miss Mills supported and encouraged all staff and appointed new ones. Improving the school meant overhauling the curriculum to bring a host of new opportunities for the children. Working with the Trust and the PTA, the fabric of the school has been much improved and in recent times the outdoor area has been very successful - with the help of the whole community and families to develop the site.

Miss Mills has actively invited and encouraged parents to share in the life of the school. That partnership has been very important, and I know she is valued by parents who can see the difference she has made. The school now has one of the most successful PTAs in the trust. We always feel that the whole community of Elford has been behind her, recognising a quality Headteacher.

On personal levels Mrs Bowman and I have always admired Mrs Mills for the boundless energy and the ideas she has brought to Headship, her work ethic and passion. We admire the way she has built an excellent team of teachers and support staff who all understand and subscribe to her vision within the vision and values of TSSMAT. We admire the way she has been faithful to our Academy Trust and has made a major contribution to its life and direction of growth.

The Howard's loss is The Mease's immense gain but although Miss Mills takes on new and challenging responsibilities she is still a major part of TSSMAT, continuing to work with our senior leadership team – thank goodness!

Miss Mills, thank you for all you have done at and for The Howard and we really look forward to seeing you thrive as Executive Headteacher in your new schools, All the best!

A message in response to the Q&A regarding Headteachers and CEOs roles

This message is an opportunity for Directors to outline a response to an observation which was raised at The Howard's 'question and answer' session. As Directors we need to realign perception as to the roles and responsibilities of our senior team.

We believe the potential confusion amongst some parents comes from the fact that Mr P. Lovern (previous CEO) was firstly the Headteacher and then Executive Headteacher of the schools and, until recent times our Headteachers were 'Heads of School' and so had reduced responsibilities and he was still very much the figurehead of each school

meeting parents on the gates, solving school level issues, undertaking 'Headteacher' duties and for example, leading sports days, events and being very much the front man. This is exactly as it should have been at the time.

Directors wish to outline that my role is hugely different and the expectations on me as CEO for the Trust but not a direct leader for each school which makes how I engage with families very different to what they have been used to. It is important therefore to identify as a Trust our rationale regarding the roles and responsibility of the CEO and Executive Headteacher/Headteachers to manage this misconception.

We believe in empowering our Headteachers to be the figureheads of their schools, to lead with their vision, within the vision and values of TSSMAT, and to be fully responsible for the standards, opportunities and outcomes of their schools. As you can see by the simple summary, this is then all led and managed by the Local Governing Committees, Trust Board of Directors and CEO ably supported by the central team of the Trust to hold Headteachers to account and support them in their roles.

As a Trust CEO I am responsible for leading the senior leadership team of our Trust, enabling our Trust and all its schools to be sustainably successful over time. I am tasked with providing high level strategic leadership and management across all aspects of the Trust's activities ensuring that all our schools provide high quality education for all our children through the effective and efficient use of resources and people. As a system leader, I represent TSSMAT with a wide range of stakeholders and partners to fulfil our civic responsibilities. I'm also the Accounting Officer for the Trust, responsible for ensuring the Trust meets its statutory and legal requirements. There are six interlinked areas of responsibility for myself and our Trust Board: strategic leadership, Trust values, culture and strategy, quality of education, finance, sustainability and compliance, people strategy, governance and accountability and system leadership and civic responsibility.

I am hugely supported by our excellent Headteachers who carry out their roles fabulously being the leaders and figureheads of their schools. Additionally, our central team of finance manager (Mrs Shanie Cole) and Business Operations Manager (Jacqui Bowman) are fantastic in enabling us to run the Trust effectively.

My passion is for all to feel part of our Trust family and I endeavour to be present in our schools as regularly as I can. I'm blessed to be able to be part of our schools' lives. Often CEOs rarely visit their schools as readily as our Directors/Trustees and I which is a strength of our family of schools.

We hope this clears up the change in how the CEO at TSSMAT and indeed other Academy trusts works and the regular CEO letters and knowledge that you have your own Local Governing Committee who are an excellent conduit between the School and The Trust Board should offer further reassurances. We have previously sent a Trust structure out to help families understand the layers and responsibilities and please do contact me if you wish to receive further information.