

The Saints Academies

We are a “Federation” of four very small rural academies and are part of Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT).

Our History

We have been on a journey in order to protect and maintain the future of these vital village schools. Our journey into Executive leadership and governance began in 2015 when, All Saints and St Peter’s formally federated and shared an Executive Head Teacher with St Augustine’s, who then formally joined the Federation, known as “The Saints Federation”. This model ensured that we could strengthen the viability of our small schools. The budgets for all schools are stretched and this is particularly so in very small schools.

In April 2018, The Saints Federation joined SUAT, who saw the strength in our model and agreed that we would keep the same structure of an Executive Head Teacher and one Local Academy Council for the three schools. We were now known as The Saints Academies.

The benefits of Executive Leadership are many. Everyone is aware that financially, small schools are extremely vulnerable, this model ensures that the budgets are used as effectively as possible, by sharing costs of leadership. Purchasing of supplies, equipment, transport and staffing where necessary, can also be shared between the academies.

The staff in our academies benefit from peer support across our federation, this can be via shared planning, moderation, and sharing of knowledge and excellence. The children benefit as the academies are more sustainable.

In February 2023, The Saints Executive Head and Deputy Head Teacher were asked to support another SUAT small village academy, who would be without a head teacher from the summer term. This agreement was put in place for 1 term and 1 full academic year to enable everyone involved to trial this model of executive leadership, before either officially committing to it or trying to appoint a substantive head teacher.

During this trial period, Horton St Michael CE First School experienced the benefits of executive leadership, whilst still keeping their individual Local Academy Council. We are extremely pleased to have them join the Saints Academies, under the Saints Local Academy Council from September 2024 with the merging of the two councils.

Senior Leadership Team

Within each Academy, a Senior Teacher has been appointed as the main point of contact for day to day issues or concerns.

At St Augustine’s this is Natalie Gilmour
At All Saints this is Emma Manby
At St Peter’s this is Donna Rogers
At Horton St Michael’s this is Lacey Royall

The Executive Head and Executive Deputy Head aim to split their time equally between the four schools. They are contactable during the school day and if required, can and will attend on short notice. Their itinerary is shared with the leadership team and the office managers each week.

The Local Academy Council

The role of the Local Academy Council (LAC) is to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Hold senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation
- Oversee the financial performance and ensure that its money is well spent.

We hold 6 full LAC meetings a year, one per half term. These are held in the academies after school and will rotate between the schools to hopefully ensure that one school isn't having to travel more than others. These are attended by the full committee and last for 2 hours. We also hold additional subcommittee meetings as required, these would be to deal with a specific subject, e.g. pay committee, or Head teacher performance management. These sub committees are only for a selected number of LAC members.

The LAC is comprised of representatives from each school and its community. Whilst the members maybe elected or nominated from each individual school, it is important to remember that we govern over 4 schools. It is therefore important that we all share the responsibility and support each school equally, rather than "favour" the one we come from. We do not deal with the day to day operational running of the schools.

There are Foundation Members, who are nominated by the local Parochial Church Councils, as Church schools these members help to encourage and support the Christian Distinctiveness of each school.

We have a parent member from each school, this position is elected by the school community. With this role it is important to remember that it's a "representative parent and not a parent's representative".

The staff from the academies are represented by a staff member, who is elected by the staff at all four academies.

We have Co-opted members, these are occasionally previous parent members or other people who have particular skills that the LAC deem to be needed or useful.

The Executive Head teacher is a full member of the LAC. Other staff members, senior teachers and office managers are often associate members, while they do not hold voting rights, their input is vital.

The Saints Structure from September 2024

