



Friday 1st May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

In our letter of 20th March, we promised to write again once the Governing Body had met to confirm our plans for the school's leadership. That meeting has now taken place, and I am writing to set out the steps ahead.

The Governors, working in close partnership with the Trust, and with the continued support of the Diocese of Westminster, have confirmed our full commitment to the Executive Headteacher model. This was a deliberate and strategic decision made nearly two years ago, and its benefits to our school community have been evident ever since.

Why This Model Works

The Executive Headteacher model is well established across the Diocese of Westminster and nationally, both within and beyond the Catholic education sector. It is the model the Diocese actively promotes for schools of our scale and stage of development. This provides strong strategic leadership with a consistent daily presence on the ground and actively develops the broader leadership team within the school.

Hertfordshire County Council's view aligns fully with this. Tania Rawle, the County's Head of School Standards and Accountability, has confirmed that the Executive Headteacher model is one she and her colleagues are actively advocating for schools across Hertfordshire — in the maintained sector, in faith schools, and in academies alike — as an established and well-evidenced approach to better supporting the needs of pupils and families.

For St Cross, the model delivers several clear and enduring advantages. It provides access to a highly experienced strategic leader whilst ensuring consistency from a strong Senior Leadership Team who know our children, our staff, and our families. Mrs James will be on site every day without exception — a senior leader is always present and always available. The model also strengthens succession planning and staff development, supports business continuity in a way that a single-headteacher structure cannot always guarantee, and makes the best use of the school's resources, with investment directed squarely at our pupils.

What This Means for You and Your Child

For children, school life will continue as normal — familiar staff, familiar routines, and a leadership team that is settled, committed, and focused on their progress and happiness. Any non-contact time within the Senior Leadership Team is already accounted for in existing arrangements and will not affect teaching time. For parents and carers, your points of contact remain clear and consistent, with Mrs James on site every day and communication remaining open and regular throughout.

Recruitment and Next Steps

We will be advertising externally for an Executive Headteacher to lead both St Augustine's and St Cross, with the intention of appointing an experienced, serving Headteacher who will take up the post in January 2027. We will update you as soon as we can introduce them to the wider school community.

To ensure strong and uninterrupted leadership throughout the Autumn term, we will be drawing on experienced leadership from within the Trust and the Diocese to provide an interim Executive Headteacher until the substantive appointment begins. Mrs James will be on site every day without exception to ensure consistency and stability throughout the change. We will write to you again as soon as that arrangement is formally confirmed, which we expect will be within the next few weeks.

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Please be assured that the school remains in exceptionally strong hands. The foundations laid by Mrs Walsh — our strong ethos, our dedicated and talented staff, and the warm, supportive community that surrounds our children — are enduring, and will continue to guide us as we move confidently into the next chapter. In the meantime, if you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the Deputy CEO of our Trust, Mrs O'Connor, at b.o'connor@stfrancistrust.net.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Bennett
Acting Chair of Governors
St Cross Catholic Primary School