

The Queen's Church of England Primary School

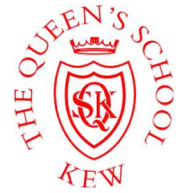
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Governors' Newsletter July 2023

Dear Queen's Families

I hope everyone is enjoying the various events and celebrations of the last weeks of term, and looking forward to a restful summer break. The last day of term is always a special day, and for Year 6 leavers it marks the end of their time at Queen's. Of course, what is unusual this year is that this will be the case for everyone. We say goodbye to the wonderful years of being The Queen's School and usher in the exciting new era of becoming King's.

School leadership: As you know, Ms Stroud-Turp is retiring at the end of term, and as explained in our recent Parentmail, we will welcome Mr Corke as our interim headteacher for the 2023/24 academic year. Mr Corke will work closely with Ms Verge, Ms Demir and the rest of the senior leadership team in planning the year ahead.

We wish Mrs Stroud-Turp all the very best, and thank her for everything she has achieved for Queen's, as Headteacher and in her many other teaching and leadership roles, during her 18 years with the school.

During her time in as our school's leader, Mrs Stroud-Turp has seen us through COVID and two rounds of lockdown learning, the setting of our new Vision Priorities and the embedding of a broad and ambitious new curriculum. Mrs Stroud-Turp has also developed a strong distributed leadership team with Ms Verge, Ms Demir, phase and subject leaders and been at the helm for the hoped for, and expected, outcome of the ungraded Ofsted inspection in March.

Alongside this, Mrs Stroud-Turp has been a role-model of hard work, excellence and dedication to staff and governors alike, championing best value principles in the allocation of our scarce financial resources without compromising on quality in terms of staff support and wellbeing, the excellence of our SEND provision and our aspirational Vision goals across sustainability, learning and teaching and community.

On behalf of the Board, we wish Mrs Stroud-Turp all very best for her future projects and plans.

We also give grateful thanks to departing teachers, Mrs Fryer (Year 4) and Ms Matheson (Year 3) and to our SENDCo, Ms Hurst (covering maternity leave), and also look forward to welcoming back Ms Watkinson as SENDCo. Thank you also to Ms Hersi (Year 1), Ms Hancock (EYFS), Ms Appeah (Year 2 and 5), Mr Oshinowo (Year 3) and Ms Yesilyurt (Year 3) for all the support and encouragement they have provided and we wish them the very best for the next steps in their careers.

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Academic achievements: The results of KS1 & KS2 SATS, Year 1 phonics screening and the Year 4 multiplication test will be shared by the school, once confirmed in the Autumn term. Provisional headlines show our attainment to be high and above national and local attainment:

- EYFS Good Level of Development: 83%
- Phonics screening: 92%
- KS1 - Expected Standard or above in Reading, Writing and Maths: 75%
- KS2 - Expected Standard or above in Reading, Writing and Maths: 78%

Key goals: The Governing Board works closely with the school across a broad range of strategic matters, as well as providing support for operational decisions such as the approach to school opening on recent strike days. Key strategic goals the Board has focused on this year have included:

- Monitoring the progress towards achievement of the first year's goals under our new Vision Priorities of Learning & Teaching, Community and Sustainability;
- Supporting the school in relation to high-quality, inclusive SEND provision;
- Focusing on our financial and environmental sustainability challenges and goals;
- Concluding the embedding of the new curriculum and other preparations for SIAMs and OFSTED inspections;
- Planning the cost-effective, sustainable transition to King's with minimal impact on staff workload, uniform costs and brand image; and
- Undertaking the search for our new permanent Headteacher.

Transition to King's: all is now in place to open the doors to The King's School, Kew in September. We have a new badge, which will appear on our signage, documents and uniform. As outlined in Parentmails, the new King's uniforms will be in place for the new reception intake in September and will be phased in over time as The Queen's uniform runs out, minimising waste. New signage will go up over the summer, and governors have worked closely with the school and PSA in terms of other financial, legal and charitable status changes needed to give effect to the change. An event will be planned for the Summer Term to officially name The King's School.

Finances: The finance of education continues to be a topic high on the national agenda. The financial health of all state schools is under pressure and we are not immune. We rely on government funding decisions for the vast majority of our income which comes to us mainly, but not only, on a per pupil basis. As ever, our school has also benefitted from PSA support and other donations for some specific projects. We also make some income from the lettings of our premises. It is the responsibility of the governors, via the Finance Committee, to ensure that all money coming into the school is spent with maximum thought and value of money with the benefit to the pupils always at the forefront of our minds.

We have recently submitted our new budget to the local authority. We continue to operate at a modest loss as expenditures currently exceed income, and which erodes historic reserves. Governors work closely with the school not only to set the annual budget but also to prepare detailed look-ahead projections of likely changes to both income and expenses to plan as carefully as we can for the coming years. A significant aspect of this is ensuring that we reflect current, and possible, future pay settlements into our planning in order to fully reflect the value we place on recruitment and retention of the highest quality teaching staff.

News from the Board's Committees

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Admissions Committee – The Admissions Committee sets (and regularly reviews) the school's admissions policy, and oversees the admissions process. Applications for Reception places have been rising year on year, with 145 applications received for the 60 Reception spaces in 2023/24. Better still, Queen's was the first preference school for 67 of those applications, and of the 60 offers we made, all were accepted. Numbers of children on the full school roll have also been stronger this year, standing at 395 in February compared with 372 at the same time last year. There are some places available in the higher year groups – parents, please do spread the word - but, overall, these numbers all point to Queen's enduring popularity in a competitive environment and are a significant achievement for the school, especially given the sharp decline in Richmond's birth-rate over the past decade and the impact of Brexit and COVID.

We wish our 55 year 6 pupils all the very best as they head off to no less than 26 different secondary schools. Nearly three quarters (73%) are staying in the state sector and just over a quarter (27%) are moving to the independent sector. We wish them all every success in the future.

Curriculum and Standards Committee –The Curriculum & Standards (C&S) Committee supports the school to provide the highest quality of education and ensuring that our curriculum is cohesive and has a strong progression of knowledge and skills, across all subjects, providing opportunities to enrich learning and enhance cultural capital for all pupils. A key role of the C&S Committee is to ensure that every child is supported to progress, and achieve their personal best outcomes. Our SEND, PPG and Equality & Diversity governors contribute to this with their focus on specific pupil groups.

This year has seen a significant development of the curriculum, particularly the foundation subjects such as geography, history and computing. All subjects have been reviewed and updated for each year group, to give greater depth, structure and cohesion across the curriculum, so our children are able to learn more, remember more and apply more. A new curriculum for Art & Design/Technology and computing has also been introduced. The teaching staff, with support for our Education Advisors, have carried out deep dives for all subjects to support and develop subject leaders' knowledge. There has been a focus on subject specific vocabulary and the teaching of key component knowledge.

Governors have been fortunate to carry out structured class visits in each term this year, seeing for example the teaching of phonics, and how assessment for learning principles support knowledge retention. We have found this extremely rewarding, giving context and helping governors to understand how our teachers continually assess the pace of learning for all pupils to structure the lessons and progress through the curriculum. We have had the opportunity to speak to pupils and experience the joy of enthusiastic and happy children.

The C&S Committee has also worked closely with SLT and subject leads to ensure that we were ready for the OFSTED inspection, which we expected to occur this year. As you will recall, the inspection report affirmed the many positive aspects and high standards of teaching and learning at Queen's.

Pastoral + Kairos Committees– It has been a very busy year for the Pastoral Committee across three main areas; Mental Health & Wellbeing, Safeguarding, and Equalities & Inclusion. Queen's Mental Health lead, Ms Matheson, has worked consistently to develop and promote our school's best practice, including parent workshops, staff and governor training, and pupil focussed development and referrals. The new Behaviour Policy has been embedded across the year with much success and Queen's has been able to share this

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success by inviting leaders from other schools to observe our programs in practice and also achieving the Attachment Aware Schools Award (Bronze)

A specific Safeguarding Governor framework was created to ensure consistent and rigorous oversight of the policies and practices of the school and their partners. The designated safeguarding governors conduct topic-specific visits and safeguarding audits with the leadership team and use the findings to continuously review our offering and make changes if needed.

Work continues to be done on decolonising the curriculum, and developing a cultural and religious calendar that recognises and celebrates the diverse backgrounds that make up our community. Pupils have been encouraged to be 'courageous advocates'; and supporting a chosen cause was demonstrated beautifully by the Eco monitors leading the Royal Refill station, and participation in St Luke's inaugural EcoFair.

The Kairos Committee has been working closely with the school and with Fr Giles and Rev Melanie to strengthen school-church relations, including the planning of services for next year to develop children's understanding of being in church, reviewing the RE Policy and introducing a 'new to school' service.

Pay & Personnel Committee – Delivery of the Vision Priorities is underpinned by the commitment of all staff to the school, whether through teaching or enabling. In relation to the priorities, the Pay & Personnel Committee has an active monitoring role to ensure that continuing professional development supports Quality First Teaching, with associated learning plans and appraisal mechanisms.

In a broader vein, the Governing Board want the school to be a place where all staff can develop their individual skills, so that the school forms a valuable part of each career; whether that is a long career here or a shorter stage before moving elsewhere. This is helped by the willingness of staff to adopt and develop new approaches to teaching, and to further their own professional development. The encouragement of Early Career teachers is also a keen interest of the committee.

During the year some aspects of the school environment have been particularly challenging for staff:

- There has been staff action against the government's approach to pay and conditions. The governors fully understand the drivers for this action and acknowledge the difficult decisions which staff have faced individually, as well as the work involved in making sure that parents were kept informed of the situation and ensuring the safeguarding all children.
- The welcome conclusion to the Ofsted inspection was a testament to the work of all staff on the past year, but the stress of the process, beforehand and during the inspection cannot be underestimated.
- We have a higher than national average of SEND children, each of whom receive tailored provision, and which staff work together to deliver. Additionally, childrens' behavior is still impacted by the disruption of the Covid-19 lockdowns, which is recognised and supported by staff through using the zones of regulation and emotion coaching and working closely with families.

Through the year the P&P committee has sought to promote a useful mental health and well-being support structure for staff, backed by the ongoing development of appropriate policies.

Premises, Health & Safety Committee – Work towards our Environmental Sustainability Vision Priority has *Encouraging every child to reach their full potential, nurtured and supported in a Christian community that lives and learns by the values of Love, Compassion and Respect*

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continued this year, with work progressing well on developing an environmental sustainability plan for the school (to cover the external grounds, the internal environment and the building's energy consumption). It is hoped that work will shortly begin on turning the 'wildlife area' into an accessible area for environmentally-based outdoor learning opportunities.

During the current year, the Premises Committee has also worked closely with Mr Rooney and external stakeholders such as the local authority, Southwark Diocese and building contractors to resolve defects, and to ensure the best allocation of different funds to contribute to school improvements - this has included improvements to the physical environment such as the purchase of ceiling fans for our classrooms most prone to overheating, and the use of capital funding to purchase new Chromebooks throughout the school to support the new computing curriculum

The Premises Committee also undertakes a detailed review of all health and safety related policies each year, explores ways of increasing income, and continues to pursue options for extending the Community Use Agreement for the leasing of our facilities.

Board leadership: I am stepping down as Chair of Governors with effect from 1 September, and will be leaving the Board after 7 years. It has been both an honour and a joy to work with the whole school community over that time. I am delighted to confirm that our two highly skilled, committed and experienced Vice Chairs, Janine Farrance and Larissa Sutton, have been elected by the Board as Co-Chairs of Governors. Janine is a Diocesan Governor and Larissa a Parent Governor. Both have experience across the full range of the Board's work, lead our Headteacher recruitment panel and have been instrumental in achieving the successful transition to The King's School from September. I wish them, and the whole Board, the very best and every success as they work with our new interim Headteacher and senior leadership team during the next academic year to take King's from strength to strength.

Other governor news: Janine and Larissa will look to appoint a new Vice Chair early in the Autumn term, and committee structures/chairs will also be confirmed. A number of our governors have come to the end of their terms and are stepping down at the end of term.

Mark Ollard steps down after almost 7 years, and has been chair of our Finance Committee for the majority of that time. Working with Mr Rooney and Mrs Stroud-Turp, he has ensured that our finances are in as strong a position as they can possibly be given the constraints imposed by government funding, and also that our financial priorities map our Vision goals. Mark has also been an invaluable member of our Pay & Personnel committee, and a number of our working groups. Mark's role as our Local Authority governor will be taken on by **Kennan Michel**, one of our current co-opted governors.

Our other Diocesan Governor, **Barnaby Rodgers**, has been with the Board for 5 years and during that time has been Chair of our Kairos Committee, member of the Premises and Finance committees, Treasurer to the Board and a key lead on seeking to extend our community use agreement for the benefit of local children and the school's finances. Barnaby was also instrumental in setting up the popular, successful, and now regular 'Secondary Pathways' events to support parents' understanding of the breadth of the secondary options which a Queen's/King's education provides.

Harry Charrington steps down as the St Luke's Foundation Governor after 5 years on the Board. He has played an invaluable role, with the wealth of his architectural experience, in continuing the negotiation about

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building defects and improvements required to our physical environmental. As well as being Chair of Premises, Harry has worked closely with the school team in progressing the environmental sustainability aspects of our Vision goals and to explore various initiatives which the school and board can take forward in terms of energy use, overheating and future-proofing strategies. **Rev Melanie Harrington** will take over the role of St Luke's governor.

Our staff governor, **Mrs Kodia**, is also coming to the end of her term and the election of a new staff governor will take place at the beginning of the Autumn term. Mrs Kodia has been an indispensable link between staff and governors and during 2020/21 Mrs Kodia led the working group setting our 2022/25 Vision Priorities. She has also been a member of the Curriculum & Standards and Admissions committees and PPG lead.

New governors will also join the Board in next year, including **Deirdre Carswell**, the current Treasurer of the PSA, as a co-opted governor. We also wish our St Anne's Foundation Governor, **Auriol Hale**, all the very best as she begins a period of maternity leave as well.

On behalf of all the governors, I would like to wish you and your family a safe, relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday, and wish you all the best for the future.

With best wishes,

Inga Hall, Chair of Governors

19 July 2023

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