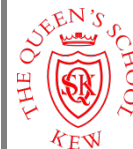


The Queen's Church of England Primary School

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Telephone: 020 8940 3580 email: info@queens.richmond.sch.uk

Co-Headteachers: Ms V Demetriou & Ms J Stroud-Turp



Governors' Newsletter July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope everyone has enjoyed the various events and celebrations of the last few weeks of term. When starting to write this last week, I had been going to note that this brings to an end the first uninterrupted school year since 2019. Since last week though we have experienced the UK's first ever Red weather warning and record temperatures. I hope you and your families have stayed safe during the hot weather.

Thank you to everyone for working with the school to support our decision to close early on Monday and Tuesday of this week. I know the early closures caused difficulties for some of you, but hope the last couple of (cooler) days of term are a happy start to the Summer break.

School leadership: As you know, Ms Demetriou is leaving The Queen's School at the end of term to pursue a new career. We wish her all the very best, and thank her for everything she has achieved for Queen's, as Co-Head and in her many other roles during her 15 years with the school. Mrs Stroud-Turp will continue as Headteacher from September, leading a strong team. We are delighted to welcome Ms Verge to her new permanent post as Deputy Head, and congratulate Ms Demir on her appointment as Assistant Head. Ms Demir replaces Miss Wilson, to whom we wish the very best for the future.

Academic achievements: All statutory external assessments have taken place this year, for the first time since 2018/2019. 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:

- Phonics screening - 93% of pupils met the expected standard
- KS1 - Expected Standard or above in Reading, Writing and Maths: 59%
- KS2 - Expected Standard or above in Reading, Writing and Maths: 87%

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 school's response to the heatwave. Key strategic goals the Board set itself this year included:

- Setting the new Vision Priorities and beginning work to achieve them;
- Supporting the school in implementing the new curriculum and, in parallel, supporting the catch-up learning required post-Covid;
- Having close regard to the inclusion, mental health and wellbeing issues faced by both children and staff as school life began to return to normal, with an emphasis on both spiritual and pastoral elements of this;
- Focusing on our financial and environmental sustainability challenges and goals; and

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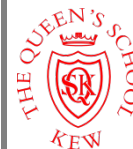


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- Providing the strategic oversight required to ensure Queen's is in the best position possible, under strong leadership, to excel with the return of external assessments such as SATs, and inspections under the increasingly rigorous OFSTED and SIAMs frameworks.

More details on the steps taken to achieve these goals are set out below.

Finances: The Finance Committee continues to ensure that the finances of the school are well maintained, and that we meet all statutory reporting requirements. We always strive to get the best value for money and that we benchmark ourselves regularly against other similar local schools. The financial environment for schools remains difficult. Whilst we currently retain healthy reserves, a drop in pupil numbers (since most funding is on a 'per pupil' basis), coupled with the rising costs that we are all experiencing, does make a balanced budget challenging. Reassuringly, from the benchmarking work we undertake, we know that this is an issue in other local schools as well.

A new School Vision for 2022-2025: During this academic year, through a series of stakeholder consultation sessions with staff, parents/carers, children and our local churches, the Board and school leadership identified our new Vision Priorities, which are:

- Learning and Teaching:
 - Academic
 - Spiritual
 - Personal
- Community:
 - Inclusion, Diversity and Equality
 - Local and Global
- Sustainability:
 - Environmental
 - Financial

Full details of our Mission Statement and Vision Priorities are available on the school website. Our Vision Priorities underpin the decisions made by both school and governors. They are also central to the allocation of resources, and school and staff objectives. Responsibility for working with the school to achieve each of these Vision Priorities over the next 3 years is allocated to specific Committees of the Governing Board and underpins the work that we do.

News from the Board's Committees and Working Groups

Admissions Committee – Despite a declining birth rate in Richmond – down by nearly a third over the past 10 years – Queen's remains an extremely popular choice with parents in the locality. On National Offer Day in April we had two applications for every place in our Reception class starting in September. There are

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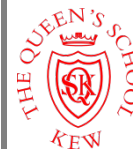


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some vacancies in the higher year groups and we do encourage parents to spread the word about the high quality education offered by The Queen's School. Following agreement from the National Schools Adjudicator, we were able adjust our admissions arrangements so that parents are still able to meet faith-based oversubscription criteria despite the challenges of church attendance during the pandemic.

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 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 update to the curriculum, and subjects re-planned with updated knowledge and skills organisers for each year group, to ensure our children are learning the appropriate skills, at the right time, and can link their learning from one subject to the next. The aim has been to give greater depth, structure and clarity across the curriculum, so our children are able to learn more, remember more and apply more. Governors have been fortunate to visit school in each term this year. We have found this an extremely rewarding and helpful experience, giving context and helping to understand the intent and implementation of the curriculum plans, and to observe their impact. We have had the opportunity to speak to pupils, see some good examples of the Learning and Teaching Vision Priority, and experience the joy of enthusiastic and happy children.

Finance Committee – The Finance Committee has overseen the slow return to a post-Covid balance of income and expenses this year. Through the regular review of the school's actual financial position against budget throughout the year, the Finance Committee addresses trends, such as rising energy costs and inflation, which we then factor into our budget setting for the next year.

The work of the Finance Committee is centred on our Vision Priority for Financial Sustainability, namely to ensure the school's long-term financial stability and sustainability, and to ensure that the resources are available – both now and in the future – to deliver our Mission and all of our Vision Priorities.

We have recently submitted our new budget to the local authority for the year ahead. We also explore options for increasing the school's income, keep all financial policies under review, and maintain the funds generated by our annual Governors' Appeal. This fund finances the school's required contribution to any capital works (which includes large-scale maintenance projects).

Pastoral + Kairos Committees– The Pastoral Committee has had a clear focus this year, in alignment with the school's Vision Priorities, on ensuring our students' mental health and well-being is front and centre, especially as we navigate a post-pandemic education environment. With a revision of the policies, and

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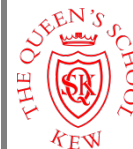


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appointment of the mental health lead on staff, we will continue to support the SLT in this crucial area. We continue to support the school in encouraging children to build positive relationships valuing diversity, equality and inclusion, and remain focussed on the safety and emotional support of the students.

As we move towards an expected SIAMS inspection next academic year, the Kairos Committee has established 3 core priorities that link to our Vision and have made some great progress against each element:

- Learning & Teaching - Spiritual - Implementation of our RE Action Plan, which has included ensuring that pupils have a broad familiarity with the Bible and its core content, pupil-lead theological discussions, creation of a Prayer Table with a Prayer/Reflection Notebook in each classroom and Collective Worship.
- Community - Local & Global - the Kairos Committee has supported the school in strengthening our ties with our Local Churches, fostering an understanding of other faiths (visits to local Synagogue, Sikh Temple for example) and supporting the development of overseas school links to Queen's. This will also be a key focus for next year, further strengthening the ties between school and church.
- Sustainability - Environmental - the Kairos Committee works closely with the Premises Committee to actively ensure the school building and grounds reflect Queen's Christian character and distinctiveness. For example, this had recently included working to implement Fr. Nigel's prayer for the outdoor area.

Pay & Personnel Committee— The Governing Board wants The Queen's School to be a place to develop skills and build a career. This has been a challenging year for all staff. While the immediate pressures of remote learning have gone, there remain on-going impacts of Covid – such as the in-class engagement of children who have spent a significant part of their lives out of school, or Covid-related staff absences requiring generous flexibility from staff in covering for each other.

With this backdrop, all staff have made a sustained effort to re-energise the curriculum and to develop and deliver the Vision Priorities, while teaching, caring and enabling. The role of the Pay & Personnel Committee in this is to provide support and appropriate monitoring. For example, by seeking to ensure that staff well-being is at the forefront of concerns, and that across the career cycle appropriate structures are in place, whether a new senior leadership structure with clear accountabilities or by support for early career teachers.

Premises, Health & Safety Committee – Our Environmental Sustainability Vision Priority is to care for the world that God has created by developing a sustainable school environment, and preparing children – as future guardians of the world's resources – to care passionately about contributing to a sustainable future. This goal spans the work of a number of our Committees. In the coming year we will be helping the school develop an environmental sustainability plan, which will cover the external grounds, the internal environment and the building's energy consumption, and will also be looking to develop the 'wildlife area' for environmentally-based outdoor learning opportunities.

During the current year, the Premises Committee has also continued to work with the local authority,

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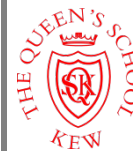


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Southwark Diocese and building contractors to resolve defects, including completing repairs of staircases and agreeing the replacement of damaged timber cladding. We also continue to work with Southwark Diocese to undertake assessment of methods to combat overheating in south-facing rooms, including shading, fans and so forth – with a view to remedial work and future-proofing the building's temperature profile.

The Premises Committee also undertakes a detailed review of all health and safety related policies each year, explores ways of increasing income, such as through a new Community Use Agreement for the leasing of our facilities, and has overseen the resumption of highly successful school trips.

Secondary Pathways Working Group- Pupil numbers have declined at a number of local schools, including Queen's, in recent years, largely due to Brexit and Covid-related departures from the local area. At Queen's, some departures before the end of Year 6 have however been to local independent schools, and the Board and school leadership recognise the importance of providing support and guidance to our families navigating the transition to secondary school at the end of Year 6. As part of this initiative, the Board recently funded an evening led by Camilla Smiley, Founder of Crocus Education, aimed at demystifying the secondary school process, informing families of the choices and pathways available to them, and outlining the support families and students receive from The Queen's School throughout their education journey. Feedback from the evening was overwhelmingly positive, and described as a valuable addition to the calendar.

Governors will continue to work with school leaders next year, with Curriculum Showcase events planned for the Autumn term, where leaders across the school will share the holistic view of the curriculum from Reception through to Year 6. Subject leads and the SLT will present insights and share the immense amount of work that has gone into giving our students the best opportunity to learn and grow at Queen's. The school and Governing Board are also working together to create a schedule of Parent workshops throughout the academic year; tailored to the needs of specific year groups. These workshops will cover a range of topics from Phonics and Maths, to Public speaking & Presentation skills. The workshops will provide practical skills and guidance on how families can best support their children in these areas.

Board leadership: Inga Hall will remain in the role of Chair for the coming year, and both Janine Farrance and Mark Ivory will continue to share the vice chairing role. All current committee chairs also remain in post.

Welcomes and Goodbyes: We say an extremely warm welcome to Fr Giles Fraser who has joined the Governing Board in his *ex officio* capacity as the new vicar of St Anne's. This position has remained vacant since we said goodbye to Fr Nigel last summer, and we are grateful for the experience, insight and guidance that Fr Giles will bring to the Board. He will be joining our Pastoral & Kairos Committee and Admissions Committee, and we look forward to working with him and further strengthening our connections with St Anne's.

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Dr Emma Roberts, one of our St Anne's Foundation Governors, has stepped down recently, although has agreed to remain an Associate Member to advise the Board as required.

We also say thank you to our long-standing Clerk to Governors, Michelle Jones, who is stepping down as clerk at the end of term (but remaining with the front office team, and as PA to the Headteacher). Michelle was originally clerk to governors between September 2013 and October 2015 and then she returned to the role in September 2019. Since then, she has clerked us through the pandemic, and other milestone events including recruitment of the Coheads and setting the new Vision, as well as seamlessly carrying out her 'day job' roles at school, which include leading on admissions.

As you will have seen from our flyers around school, we are looking to recruit a new clerk, and if you know of anyone who may be interested in the role, please let the office know.

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

With best wishes,

Inga Hall, Chair of Governors
19 July 2022



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