

Dear Parents and Carers,

I can hardly believe another academic year is nearly over. School life has been busier than ever, with a huge amount of hard work from both children and staff, punctuated by some wonderful musical, theatrical and sporting performances, and stimulating visits.

Priority Schools Building Programme

As you can imagine this project has been both challenging and time consuming for the school leadership and governors. Those with experience of building projects, large or small, tell me it is always a rollercoaster and this project has certainly been no exception. We have faced obstacles and challenges and met them with determination and as much patience as we have been able to muster, always focussed on providing the best possible learning environment for the children in our community for many years to come.

Fundraising efforts driven by the wonderful PSA have been remarkable and this has allowed us to commit to enhancements that will transform the 'fit for purpose' building provided through the scheme in to a much-improved learning environment with more than the basics. An enormous thank you to the PSA volunteers, class reps and everyone who has contributed to this effort already. The Create a Brighter Future fundraising drive will continue in to the next academic year as we turn our attention from the building itself to the play areas and 3G sports pitch.

The Queen's School Vision Priorities

The school has completed its latest two year vision cycle, and I am delighted to be able to report on some key achievements. We have now set new priorities for the next two year cycle, based on questionnaire responses from parents, staff and governors, and feedback from the children and other stakeholders.

Learning, teaching and the new curriculum

The school has continued to focus on the quality of teaching and learning. For more than a year all teaching has been rated as 'good or better', with more than half being 'outstanding'. This is a huge achievement and testament to the efforts of all the teaching staff. Key to achieving this has been a focus on clarity of expectation, effective systems and frameworks to support learning and teaching, a commitment to sharing best practice and prioritising continued professional development. The most important ingredient though is the hard work of the staff team and their unwavering commitment to the development and success of all the children at The Queen's School.

Last summer I reported on the school's efforts to ensure that all children make 'good progress'. This means looking carefully at varied groups of children (girls, boys, summer born, winter born, those with special educational needs, the most able children...) to ensure that each child is receiving appropriate challenges and support and none slip through the net unnoticed. Not long after writing to you I received letters from the Local Authority congratulating the school on the excellent progress our children had made (based on end of Key Stage 1 to end of Key Stage 2 results). The school has only recently received this year's SATs results and is starting to look at them in detail, but early indications are that children at The Queen's school have, once again, made excellent progress. Congratulations to the children and staff on these achievements. Detailed results will be published early in the next academic year.

The new curriculum, which came into effect in September, has been rolled out and staff are now looking at how this can be developed to further enhance the children's learning and ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Skills progression has been a key focus and this will continue to be a priority.

Sport

The school's target of increasing participation in competitive sport by 25% was achieved in the first year of the two year vision cycle. Since then sport at Queen's has gone from strength to strength and this has resulted in some very impressive performances in borough competitions – and some new silverware to add to the trophy cabinet. More recently the focus has been on how to assess and track children's attainment in PE against a defined set of skills so that each child is challenged at an appropriate level. A new system for this will be implemented at the start of the next academic year. Overall the school's efforts in PE and sports will be maintained in line with the school policy, which sets a clear direction and principles.

Valuing Staff

I have previously reported on the introduction of a new pay and performance management framework, with targets closely aligned to our Vision Priorities. I also told you about a new structure for teaching assistants (TAs) which ensures that their skills and experience are recognised as they work more closely with teachers to support and challenge the children. This year there has been a focus on restructuring the administration team so the vital support they provide can be delivered more efficiently. The new structure will become effective in September and you will hear about appointments in due course when they are finalised. We are very grateful to all our staff for their hard work and commitment to ensuring that the best interests of the children are at the centre of all we do.

Statutory Responsibilities

This year all governing bodies were required to re-constitute in line with government guidance. The outcome of this was that one current Staff Governor and one current Parent Governor were replaced by two co-opted governors. There was no resulting change in personnel. I also wrote to you earlier in the year about a proposed change to the admissions criteria that will go out for consultation next academic year. The Governing Body welcomes your input on this as part of the consultation process and will consider all feedback carefully before making any decisions.

We also continue to work hard keeping abreast of best practice and to make sure all statutory responsibilities are met. You can find our policies on the school website, along with all the other information we are required to share – and lots more of course.

New Vision Priorities

In the spring we consulted parents, staff, children and governors to help us determine our priorities for the next two years. Reviewing the feedback, governors were delighted to note that it reflected the efforts made over the last two years and the progress described above. Staff governors and parent representatives met on the Inset Day in April to agree a way forward based on the feedback received. New priorities are:

Learning and Teaching: This continues to be a priority but in the next two years focus will shift to effective assessment and subject leadership, as well as a review of foreign language teaching.

Child Centred Learning: As part of the work on implementing the new curriculum, the school developed a set of 'learning certainties' (for example resilience, determination, risk taking...) to ensure that children are positive, motivated and successful in their learning. Over the next two years the school will ensure that children, staff and governors and parents are familiar with these 'learning certainties' and routinely use them to underpin learning.

New Build: The building project will bring challenges and opportunities. We are committed to making the most of this wonderful opportunity by carefully planning how the new building and grounds will be used to optimise learning and will ensure that the internal and external learning environment reflects the values and ethos of the school. In the interim period, careful and creative planning to maximise access to outdoor learning, play and PE during the building works will be prioritised.

Transition Planning and Secondary Transfer: The school will be proactive in ensuring that children are prepared for and positive about the next stage in their education. Transitions between Key Stages, from Early Years (EYFS) through to Key Stage 3 (Secondary School), will be considered and action plans created to ensure children are well prepared academically, emotionally and spiritually for the next stage in their education. We will also take action to influence external parties with respect to secondary school catchment, admissions and provision.

We are excited about starting work on this new set of priorities and I will keep you updated on progress.

Welcomes and Goodbyes

Year 6 mark the end of their time at The Queen's School with the Year 6 Performance and a special Leavers' Service at St. Anne's. No doubt the children will treasure memories of these special events – and the performance of The Lion King this week really was very special indeed. It is always sad to say goodbye to these children who have contributed so much and embodied the school's values of love, compassion and respect in their time at The Queen's School. We know though that they are well prepared for the next step of their journey and will shine in so many ways as they take their special talents to their new schools. May God guide and protect them as they set out on this exciting journey.

Next year we are delighted to welcome Miss Wood and Miss Dunk, who will teach in Reception and Year 3. Mrs Lisney started her maternity leave last week and her family will be in our thoughts and prayers as they look forward to the arrival of their new baby and in the busy weeks that follow. This year we also say goodbye to Mrs McEaney, Miss Daley, Miss Doherty and Mrs Mollet.

Sincere thanks to all our leavers, both children and staff, for all you have contributed. You will always remain members of our Queen's family.

On behalf of all the Governors, I wish you and your family a very relaxing and happy holiday. May God bless you and keep you safe.

With very best wishes,

Bonney Venning
Chair of Governors