

Dear Parents and Carers,

Another term has passed and life at school seems busier than ever. Recently the governors have had the privilege of spending time in lessons, watching the learning and teaching. It really has been an education and an inspiration to see the level of care, challenge, support and encouragement given to each child, every single day. Many of you will also have spent time in school, joining in our Christmas celebrations and I hope you have enjoyed these very special occasions as much as I have. The enthusiasm, joy and talent of the children are always wonderful to see. Many thanks to the staff who provide our children with these wonderful opportunities to grow in confidence as they enjoy and learn from the Christmas celebrations.

Priority Schools Building Programme

The building programme is now moving forward at quite a pace. Hopefully you will have seen the plans at the consultation evening, on the website or in the newsletter. If not, please do take a look at the website, which has been updated with the latest information and designs. It really will be fantastic to have a modern building that provides an environment conducive to learning.

We expect the planning application to be submitted in the next week and building work to start around Easter time – with the move into the new building planned for Easter 2016. We hope the project, including demolition of the existing building and essential re-landscaping, to be completed in time for the new academic year in September 2016. In the mean time, Miss Bentham and I will continue to work closely with the Education Funding Agency and the contractor, and will start to look at the transition period in more detail. There is no doubt that we will face challenges in the next 18 months but please be assured that we are doing our very best to minimise disruption. We are in no doubt that it will be worth it in the long run.

Create a Brighter Future Campaign

Through the Priority Schools Building Programme we will be provided with a modern building that is fit for purpose. The Education Funding Agency has been clear about their aim to build new schools as cost effectively as possible, so the maximum number of children across the country can benefit from the initiative. This means there are lots of items on the school's wish list that are not funded within the scope of the project.

The 'Create a Brighter Future' (CBF) campaign is a joint initiative, led by a steering group, with staff, governors and the PSA all represented. The aim of the group is to raise funds for items on the 'wish list' so the children can benefit from the best possible learning environment. You will appreciate that it is often more cost effective to build in additional features than to add them later, so the CBF is focussed on generating the funding necessary to make these enhancements possible.

Since it was confirmed that The Queen's School would be rebuilt, governors have managed the school's finances accordingly. We have spent money on items such as smart boards, which will benefit the children currently at Queen's and can be transferred into the new building. We have minimised spend on non-essential maintenance, setting this money aside to enhance the new building. The money we have saved will help fund some of the items on our wish list, for example upgrading the music store to make it a room suitable for teaching and enhancing the classroom doors in Reception and Year 1 classrooms to improve access to the outside environment.

The PSA have also been extremely busy this term, organising events to raise money for enhancing the external environment so we can gain maximum benefit from the space gained as a result of

moving to a two-storey building and its new location at the rear of the site. We hope to raise enough money to provide a synthetic sports pitch that can be used all year round for PE lessons, as well as formal and informal matches.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to the fundraising effort so far, either by giving your time, support or money. We recognise that not everyone is in a position to give and those who can will choose to contribute in different ways. The schedule of CBF events is a busy one and we encourage you to get involved but also recognise that you have busy lives and will not be able to support everything. The aim is to provide a range of opportunities to be involved, so you can pick the ones that are most relevant or interesting for you and your children. A special thank you to the PSA committee and their band of super-volunteers who have embraced the challenge and are doing a brilliant job of organising the various campaign events and activities.

SATS, League Tables and Pupil Progress

Once again last year's leavers achieved very impressive results in their SATs and these can be seen in detail at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/> There are several measures by which schools are ranked and you can see a full breakdown of this data, with notes on how to interpret it on this website. The 'average point score' for our school was particularly strong and we are ranked in the top 50 of all primary schools in the country. Congratulations to the children who worked so hard to achieve these results.

These excellent SATs results mark a staging post in the children's learning journey. Throughout this journey the children are extremely fortunate in being supported and inspired by a staff team who support the children in their learning with such skill and dedication, from the day they arrive in Reception until the time they leave us at the end of Year 6. The school is also very fortunate to benefit from the valuable input of parents and carers, who provide such a vital support to individual children and so often to the wider school community. This partnership between home and school contributes enormously to me being in the happy position of sharing outstanding outcomes with you year after year. Thank you very much to all those who contribute to this success.

No doubt 2016 will be a challenging but very exciting year for The Queen's School. In the mean time I hope you find time in between all the rushing around to enjoy this special time of year. On behalf of the Governors I wish you and your families a very joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Bonney Venning
Chair of Governors