

Co-Chairs' Newsletter December 2016

As we (Laura Coughtrie and David Durie) come to the end of our first term as Co-Chairs of Governors, we look back to a term of high achievements in the school as well as looking forward to developments in the New Year. We have received great support from the outgoing chair, Bonney Venning and from the Head Teacher, Miss Bentham.

Governors

We welcome a number of new governors in recent months and will be saying farewell to Bernadette Bird as parent Governor in January, with thanks for all she has done. This means that we will need a new parent Governor next term and preparations are under way for an election.

The New Building

Starting the term in the new building was very exciting for children and staff alike. Although there are still some 'snagging' to be sorted out, there is no doubt that the building serves the school well and is liked by the children. As the term has gone on, more playground space has become available and even more will come into use in the Spring when the new grass has grown.

The big outstanding issue is the planning application for the Astroturf pitch. Although we have agreement for a pitch in front of the school it has become apparent that a slightly larger pitch would serve the school better and be more attractive to outside users. This has gone out to consultation by the local authority and we hope for a decision fairly shortly after Christmas. There is some concern from local residents especially about parking and we are looking at ways of minimising the impact. Incidentally, it is very important that parents who use cars to ferry children to and from the school fully respect the parking restrictions in Cumberland Road and do not endanger children or upset residents by stopping or parking in restricted areas.

Achievements

Academically, the school continues to do very well, thanks to the hard work of both the staff and children. You may have seen the various league tables that have been published recently in: The Times; The Sunday Times; The Standard and The Telegraph, all of which have been calculated and presented in different ways. We are delighted to note, that The Queen's School continues to feature towards the top end of most of these tables.

We still do not know when the school will face the next OFSTED inspection which could come upon us any day, but, for all we know, may not for ages. Whenever it does, we are as ready as we can be. One aspect of inspection was successfully met earlier this term when we were inspected by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education under what is called the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The school was judged to be outstanding overall and in each of the four aspects of church school life. This is a marvellous and well-deserved tribute which reflects well on the whole ethos of the school.

Sporting achievement has also been recognised with Queen's gaining the Gold Sportsmark Award. Given the difficulties in continuing to provide good sporting opportunities against the constraints imposed by the recent building work this is a particularly creditable achievement. We are one of only ten schools in Richmond to achieve this status.

The School Vision

Sport has previously been part of the Vision for the school and we think that this achievement reflects in part the success of the school Vision process. The present Vision has been in place since 2011 and has proved its worth in focussing the school on particular areas where we want to see special progress. These Vision Priorities guide the work of the school, supplemented by performance management, action plans, resources and training etc focussed on helping to achieve our targets. The Governors have decided that, with the move into the new building, the time has come to take a fresh look at the Vision and will be doing this, starting in January, with the participation of both staff and parents and with an input from the children. The aim will be to have the new Vision priorities in place in time for the next academic year.

Christ's School - Admission criteria changes

You will probably have seen in last's week's school newsletter that Christ's School is currently consulting on their admissions policy. We are planning to respond to the consultation, which ends on Friday 22 January 2017, and have been in contact with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) and Head of Admissions at Council's Achieving for Children (AfC) to explore our options and to help inform us of the way we should respond. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Christmas!

It would not be Christmas at the Queen's School without a whole series of wonderful performances from the children at all levels to mark the coming of our Lord – from the infants in Reception with their re-telling of the Christmas story, to Key Stage 1 with its version - "Whoops-a-Daisy Angel" and the lovely Key Stage 2 Carol Service, "Oh Holy Night", in St Anne's on Monday. We have been treated to displays of talent, energy, resourcefulness and musicality which reflect so movingly on the aspirations of the School bringing home to children and parents alike the true meaning of Christmas. Well done to all!

And Happy Christmas and a successful New Year to you all

Laura Coughtrie

David Durie

20 December 2016