



GOVERNORS' UPDATE

Spring 2022

Dear Holy Trinity community

As we reach the mid-point of the academic year, I wanted to write and share some of the highs and lows so far of this school year at Holy Trinity.

Beyond Covid

On the Covid front, the autumn term began with such excitement and promise as school felt normal once again – bubbles and staggered start and end times were a thing of the past, whole-school collective worship and singing were back and parents were again welcomed on site. Though we managed to have our Christmas performances and adapt some festive events, by the end of term Omicron was in our midst. Since January, we have battled with keeping classes adequately staffed and our children safe but we have kept going and haven't had to close any classes. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our staff who have been so flexible, over and beyond what is expected, to ensure our pupils continued learning and enjoying school. A big thank you also to our parents and carers for bearing with us cheerfully during these testing weeks. The warm atmosphere at this week's parent consultations was testament to how pleased we all are being able to discuss our children's progress face to face.

Financial management

Managing the school budget continues to be a challenge for governors but thanks to some careful planning and cost-savings we have ensured that our finances remain in the black and that our pupils' education is not impacted by the reduction in central funding. As ever, we are grateful to the families that support our Kingfisher Fund, the voluntary donation scheme. While the fund does not go towards staff salaries, it helps to pay for some of the extras on the curriculum like author visits, as well as the basics, like pencils and paper. If you are interested in either making a one-off donation or a regular monthly payment to school, the bank details are below. All contributions are confidential, but we ask you to state your child or children's surname as a reference should we need to contact you.

Account name: Kingfisher Fund

Account number: 63531925

Sort Code: 60-22-03

Pupil numbers

Numbers in our reception class in September were the lowest in many years and we still have over 20 unfilled places. Unfortunately, this has a large impact on our budget as funding is based on the actual

number of pupils on roll. This is a borough- wide problem owing mostly to a lower than predicted birth rate and many families having moved away, either due to the pandemic or Brexit. It is compounded by several local schools having expanded their intake for 4 year-olds in recent years. It is not a reflection on Holy Trinity which continues to be well regarded both among parents and our wider community. You may have seen that a recent report in *The Times* placed us third among Richmond primary schools.

Applications for entry next September suggest this is an ongoing problem so please spread the word among your friends about what a lovely nurturing school this is! You may also have seen that we are advertising for a part-time marketing officer to raise our profile locally, so we hope this will help to increase demand for places too.

Some good news is that we have filled many of our places further up the school and have been delighted to welcome many new families to HT. Our recent census showed that we have 36 different first languages among our children, highlighting what a wonderfully diverse community we are and we are looking forward to our international day next half term to celebrate this fact.

Inspectors calling

School leaders are always alive to the possibility of an Ofsted inspection. As our last inspection was in July 2015, we will be due for a full 2-day inspection when the time comes – which we don't believe is imminent as there are many schools whose previous Ofsted inspection predates ours. Regardless, we constantly aspire to demonstrate the best possible quality of learning, leadership and management, behaviour and attitudes and personal development – the four pillars of an Ofsted inspection. Since the last inspection, the framework has been completely overhauled and the criteria and expectations have changed significantly. Since this change, in September 2019, and the start of lockdown in 2020, only 1.6% of schools inspected nationally received a judgement of outstanding. Between now and last September, when inspections resumed, in Richmond borough eight schools have been inspected – six received a judgement of good and two were outstanding. We work with the local authority to ensure we are keeping up to the mark. Our latest self-evaluation, based on the Ofsted criteria, judges us to be good, or better, in all areas and we are always striving for improvement.

On the staffing front, we welcomed three Early Career Teachers to HT in the autumn – Miss O'Brien in year 1, Mr Al-Warith in year 4 and Mr Honnery in year 5 – and they have quickly become part of the community. We said goodbye, at Christmas, to Mr Aylward (though he will be returning to run our Forest School days) and now to Mrs Powell, who is moving to Leeds. We wish them both well in the future.

On behalf of all the governors at Holy Trinity, we wish all our staff and families a restful half term break.

Michèle Marcus
Chair of Governors