



Governance Annual Report

2019-20

Dear Parents

It is my pleasure as Chair of Governors to share with you the Governance Annual Report for the academic year September 2019 to August 2020.

Perhaps it would be helpful to start with a reminder of the core functions of the Governing Board (GB):

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the School and its students, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the School and making sure its money is well spent.

With the first of our core functions in mind, the school's new vision and values were launched in September 2018 and these continue to drive all that we do as a GB. The vision of The Tiffin Girls' School is to provide *'an intellectually stimulating and outward-facing school, enabling students to flourish and contribute to society'* and the core values of *'community, love of learning and character'* permeate the entire school, both in and outside of the classroom. The vision and values continue to be underpinned by the school's motto *'sapere aude – dare to be wise'*.

Reflections on the year

Of course 2019-20 has been dominated by the global pandemic and our hearts go out to all those who have been affected by physical or mental illness, bereavement, redundancy, separation from loved ones during the lockdown.....the list goes on.

As a Governing Board we are incredibly proud of how the students and staff engaged with the sudden switch to home learning at what was a tumultuous time for the nation. We particularly recognise and are grateful for the compassionate and confident leadership provided by Mr Keary and the Senior Leadership Team throughout the school closure, visits to the school in the summer term by Year 7-10 and Year 12 students, and more recently the full reopening of the school on 7 September.

We too had to adapt quickly to how we could deliver appropriate governance when the school closed such that all our GB, Committee and Group meetings as well as governor visits have been conducted remotely. It has been a steep learning curve for all.

We are all too aware of the impact of lockdown on the Year 11 and Year 13 students who were due to sit their public examinations in the summer term. We followed intensely the news on A-Level results day and were relieved when the government announced their decision to allow students to be awarded the highest of either their centre assessed grade or moderated grade for both A-Levels and GCSEs. The students are fully deserving of the excellent results: 96.4% of students achieving 9-7 grades at GCSE and 93.3% of students achieving A*-B grades at A-Level.

As a school we are unashamedly academic, but this is only one facet of an outstanding all-round education. The school and its staff continued to provide a wide range of activities, including trips, competitions and events for the students to participate and excel in. The importance of these opportunities on the development of a student's character cannot be overstated; hence we very much promote the need for students to engage in this aspect of school life. The type of opportunities available to the students included: music performances, sports clubs and fixtures, school trips, house competitions, Duke of Edinburgh (Bronze, Silver and Gold), Young Enterprise, school drama productions, cyber security competitions, Maths Challenges (Junior, Intermediate and Senior), to name but a few. Of course the look and feel of these extra-curricular activities changed overnight when the school closed in March. However, within days a new website 'TGS Quaranteen' was launched, providing a variety of resources to support the students throughout home learning.

The school takes its safeguarding and pastoral duties very seriously, and the pastoral curriculum helps the students to develop necessary skills and understanding of the various aspects that are covered during these

sessions. The school continued to have a particular focus on positive mental health, with themed assemblies and activities that promoted awareness and knowledge of ways to support positive wellbeing, as well as parent pastoral talks aimed at providing more insight into specific areas relating to your child's development.

A key tenet of the school is 'Community' and within that encouraging the students to be active citizens and nurturing a culture of giving within them. So it was hugely impressive to see that the students raised just under £15,000 across 19 charities from September 2019 – March 2020, demonstrating great compassion and empathy for others. This sum doesn't include the funds raised on the virtual Sports Day held in July. In direct response to the pandemic, the school donated more than 180 laboratory goggles to Kingston Hospital, made 10 face visors for a local special school and 45 face visors for a local care home, and participated in the 'Sewing4 Kingston' project whereby students, parents and staff have sewn 1119 fabric face coverings, laundry bags, ear protectors and hair scrunchies for donation to local keyworkers.

The governors very much appreciate the role and contribution to the sense of school community made by both the Parent Staff Association and the Tiffin Girls' Music Society, and their financial contributions have enhanced the school environment and had a direct impact on the students' positive learning experience.

We would like to add our thanks to those of Mr Keary for your financial support of the school via the Support Tiffin Girls' School Company (STGSC). Your support, and that of previous parents, enabled the STGSC Directors to make grants in excess of £655,000, without which building the new Rivermead classroom block would not have been possible.

Tara Holt and Alice Nabi left the GB in December 2019, each having served as a governor for six years and we are grateful for their commitment and service to the school over this period of time. Giuliano Giovannetti completed his four-year term of office as parent governor in February and we thank him for his contributions to the GB and for bringing the vital perspective of a parent to our discussions.

We welcomed a number of new governors this year, namely Miss Boiling (staff governor), Claire Haynes and Alison Shakespeare (both co-opted by the GB), Hamish Stewart (appointed by the Academy Members) and Matt Toolan (parent governor). The annual GB skills audit is a vital tool in the recruitment process for co-opted and appointed governors as the GB is able to ensure it has the necessary expertise for effective governance.

How has the Governing Board helped the school achieve its vision?

Each year the School Development Plan (SDP) sets out how the School plans to deliver its vision. The SDP is developed by Mr Keary and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), then reviewed and approved by the GB. It includes, amongst other information, key outcomes and the actions required to deliver. Each GB meeting has strategic foci and agenda items are linked to specific outcomes in the SDP. This ensures that the governors remain focused on strategic matters that directly impact the education provided for your child.

During 2019-20:

- We held nine GB meetings, as well as four Finance and Contracts Committees, three Pay and Personnel Committees, two Admissions Group and two Audit Group meetings.
- In response to the pandemic, we also held two extraordinary GB meetings and one Audit Group meeting, all at short notice, in order to review and approve the risk assessments and logistics relating to reopening the school, as well as approve a number of policy addenda specific to COVID-19. This process was supported by two governors undertaking two site visits (June and August) to physically inspect the health and safety arrangements put in place.
- We received reports from the Headteacher and SLT covering a variety of areas related to school development, including student progress, attendance, safeguarding, health and safety, premises and infrastructure, risk management, data protection, outreach activities, fundraising, alumnae network.
- We monitored the 2019-20 financial performance against the budget. Our usual review and approval of the School's budget for 2020-21 and the medium term financial plan to 2022-23 has been postponed to the September 2020 GB meeting in line with the extension provided by the Department for Education.
- Individual governors received training on a variety of topics; including safeguarding, exclusions, Headteacher performance review. Training is evaluated and reported to the GB.
- Several governors also attended webinars by Confederation of School Trusts (CST), National Governance Association and others on COVID-19 related issues such as furlough arrangements, school workforce, virtual governance, phased reopening of schools etc.

- We reviewed and approved 41 policies, of which 19 are statutory. These included behaviour for learning, safeguarding, staff recruitment and appointments, relationship and sex education, first aid, charging, health and safety.
- We conducted our annual governor skills audit and questionnaire. These documents are used to identify any gaps we need to fill in order to improve our effectiveness and to obtain feedback from individual governors.
- As per our Governor Visits Policy, we visited the School during the school day and received presentations from and engaged in dialogue with staff and students covering a range of topics. Each visit is tailored to specific SDP objectives and included premises and infrastructure in October 2019, student welfare and student learning in March 2020, and leadership and management (remote) in June 2020. The lead governor for each visit reported back at the next GB meeting.
- Governors with individual responsibilities for Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Sixth Form Bursary had meetings with the responsible SLT members and reported the results of their visits to the GB.
- We have assigned Governors with the necessary skills and experience to have oversight of (i) Financial Data Analysis, (ii) Student Progress and Attainment Data Analysis and (iii) Data Protection (GDPR).
- Governors have attended a broad range of school events (until the school closure in March 2020), supporting the students and staff.
- We received a detailed report following the parent survey last term and were delighted to see that the overriding response was extremely positive about the school, its leadership and the all- round education provision.

Looking forward to 2020-21

- We will continue to support the Headteacher in the implementation of the school's vision and values – focusing on 'Community', 'Love of Learning' and 'Character'
- We will review and monitor the risk assessment to ensure that the School responds quickly and effectively to the changing COVID-19 situation and Department for Education guidance
- We will continue to focus on encouraging girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or those who are local to sit our admissions test. We will review the impact of introducing a 10% leeway in the admissions tests for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds for entry to the School from September 2020.
- We will support the School's systematic review of the curriculum in light of the Black Lives Matter movement so that the whole School community is enabled to identify and challenge prejudice.
- We will continue to support initiatives to generate new sources of funds for infrastructure improvements, a critical stage in the School's development.
- We will support the School in exploring ways to further develop the alumnae programme.
- We will keep under review our GB training needs.
- We will continue to monitor the fast changing education landscape to ensure the School can take advantage of any opportunities to raise standards in education more broadly.
- We will continue to analyse the revised Ofsted Inspection Framework effective September 2019 and ensure that the GB are fully prepared to answer questions posed by Ofsted, should the School receive an inspection.

There will be a vacancy on the GB for a parent governor this term and I will write to you mid-September with further information about the nomination and election process.

The GB welcomes feedback and suggestions from parents regarding governance and strategic planning. The GB can be contacted via clerk@tiffingirls.org.

A full list of the governors, their responsibilities, the governor role description as well as GB minutes can be found at www.tiffingirls.org/Our-School/School-Governance.aspx

Thank you for your continued support of the School.



Fazl-E Hasnain
Chair of Governors