



Governance Annual Report

2018-19

Dear Parents

It is my pleasure as Chair of Governors to share with you the Governance Annual Report for the academic year September 2018 to August 2019.

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 and, further to consultation with Members of the Academy Trust, Governors, all staff and student representatives, we were delighted to launch the new vision and values in September 2018. 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'*.

Later in the academic year we approved both the five-year strategic plan to 2022-23 and the school development plan for 2019-20 that determines how the school's vision and values will be delivered.

Reflections on the year

Examination results in 2019 were once again outstanding with 94.7% of students achieving 9-7 grades at GCSE and 91.1% of students achieving A*-B grades at A Level. The School was the top state school in the country on the 9-7 measure at GCSE and the second placed girls state school in the country on the A*-B measure at A Level. More importantly, this has enabled the vast majority of students to reach their destination of choice.

All of this has been achieved against a backdrop of education funding reductions, huge change within the curriculum provision and an increase in the number of students sitting exams at the school. The students and staff richly deserve credit for the results achieved, as do you as parents for the support you provided the students during the year.

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.

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 daughters' 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 over £21,000 across 20 charities this year, demonstrating great compassion and empathy for others.

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 approve grants in excess of £550,000, without which building the new Rivermead classroom block would not be possible. We are looking forward to seeing this new build completed by the end of the Autumn Term.

In January 2019, we said a fond farewell to Ron Percival after many years of service both as Chair of Governors and latterly as Chair of the Academy Trust. His public service and contribution over 13 years to the school's development was significant. Of particular note was his leadership of the GB during the time the school converted to an Academy Trust in 2011.

Caroline Calascione left the GB in June 2019 after 13 years as a governor and we are grateful for her commitment and service to the school over this period of time. We are also thrilled that she will be remaining within the school community following her appointment as a Member of the Academy Trust from September.

Mrs Barakzai completed her four-year term of office as staff governor in August and we thank her for her contributions to the GB and for bringing the vital perspective of a staff member to our discussions. We look forward to welcoming Miss Boiling to the GB from September.

In addition to the annual GB self-evaluation report, we arranged for an independent review of governance to be conducted in November 2018. We engaged the services of a Senior Partner (Head of Education) in a leading law firm in the education sector. The review included one to one meetings with a number of Governors (including Mr Keary) and Members, as well as our Clerk to the GB. In addition, the reviewer accessed wide-ranging documents, including meeting minutes, reports, policies and terms of reference. I am delighted to report that the reviewer concluded that *"the current effectiveness of governance at The Tiffin Girls' School is highly developed and of an excellent standard"*.

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 daughters.

During 2018-19:

- We held nine GB meetings, as well as three Finance and Contracts Committees, three Pay and Personnel Committees, one Admissions Group and two Audit Group meetings.
- 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 2018-19 financial performance against the budget, and both reviewed and approved the School's budget for 2019-20 and the medium term financial plan to 2021-22.
- Individual governors received training on a variety of topics; including safeguarding, health and safety, safer recruitment. Training is evaluated and reported to the GB.
- We reviewed and approved 48 policies, of which 24 are statutory. These included behaviour for learning, anti-bullying, safeguarding, staff recruitment and appointments, relationship and sex education, first aid, charging, health and safety, homework.

- 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 staff and students covering a range of topics. Each visit is tailored to specific SDP objectives and included premises and infrastructure in October 2018, student welfare and student learning in March 2019, and leadership and management in June 2019. The lead governor for each visit reported back at the next GB meeting.
- Governors with individual responsibilities for Careers, Health and Safety, Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities, 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 over the course of the year, 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 2019-20

- 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 continue to focus on encouraging girls from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or those who are local to sit our admissions test. We look forward to reviewing 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 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 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.

We are currently recruiting for a governor with senior experience in education and will be advertising later this term for governors with HR and finance management experience respectively. There will be a vacancy on the GB for a parent governor in the spring term and I will write to you in January 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 and I look forward to meeting you at the various events throughout the year. In particular, I look forward to welcoming new Year 7 parents at Wednesday's Parent Focus Evening.

Fazl-E Hasnain
Chair of Governors