



Queensbridge School

Governing Body Annual Report

February 2020

Introduction

Welcome to the first Annual Report by the school’s Governing Body. Its purpose is to celebrate achievements in the last 12 months, summarise our plans for the next 12 months and ensure that our vision and strategic direction is well communicated and understood by parents who have chosen to educate their children here at Queensbridge.

We are an outstanding school (Ofsted 2013) and became a Foundation School¹ in 2011. This means that while we are still a maintained school, we are ‘independent’ of Birmingham Council as the Governing Body own the land and buildings and employ all the staff.

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¹ Foundation schools are an “exempt charity” and a type of maintained school, meaning that they are funded by central government via the Local Education Authority, and do not charge fees to students. The governing body employs the staff, owns the land and buildings, in trust, and has responsibility for admissions to the school, subject to rules imposed by central government. Pupils follow the National Curriculum.

1. Governing Body

Category	Name	Strategic Lead role	Term of Office Expiry Date
Parent Governors (4)	Ms C Ellis	SEND provision and outcomes	30/11/2020
	Ms H Cross	Parents in Partnership	08/10/2021
	Mr D Masters	Sustainability	17/12/2023
	Vacancy		
LA Governor (1)	Mr P Smith	Vice Chair of Full Governing Body and Strategy Team Safeguarding Link Governor Academic outcomes	10/07/2020
Staff Governor (1)	Mr D Rees	Finance Committee Quality of Education	12/02/2021
Co-opted Governors (6)	Ms J Klaces	Quality of Education Strategy Team	22/05/2022
	Mr D Harman	Chair of Full Governing Body and Strategy Team Finance Committee Strategic Partnerships	18/05/2023
	Mrs J Baines	Academic outcomes Strategy Team	18/05/2023
	Ms T Everett	SEND provision and outcomes Link governor Fox Hollies School	02/02/2021
	Mr L Sharman	Health & Safety Pupil and Staff well-being Strategy Team	13/03/2023
	Ms N Redhead	Inclusion, behaviour and attitudes	1/12/2023
Partnership Governors (2)	Mr A Faux	Links to best practice employment	22/05/2022
	Ms B. Kehrer	Links to local business/Careers Strategy	13/03/2023
Headteacher	Mrs H Reeves	Strategy Team	

The Governing Body is the decision making body for the school, meeting once a term, and has three key functions;

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Some governors are 'Link Governors', who lead on delivery of a school priority. They meet with the lead professional responsible for in-school delivery of that priority 3 times during the year. The first visit focuses on a shared understanding of the priority and how it is to be delivered, the second to discuss progress, and the third to evaluate the results. Each time a visit is made; a report is made to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body delegates some of its functions to the Strategy Team, which meets 6 times a year. This team includes the Chair and Vice-Chair and three governors elected each year, they work more closely and interactively with the Headteacher. Their focus is 'strategic school improvement – what happens next year

and beyond' by knowing the school well through self-evaluation (SEF), challenging the head as a 'critical friend' and engaging in benchmarking and developing strategies and plans for school improvement. It reports through its minutes to the full governing body. A detailed Terms of Reference defines how the Governing Body operates.

2. Key Trends (over last 4 years)

This section summarises two aspects of school life -

- a.) key performance data produced by the Department for Education for all secondary schools in England.
- b.) qualitative information on pupil well-being and enrichment

a. Key Performance data

The pupil characteristics of Queensbridge School have changed over the last few years and while we have grown substantially, we are proud to continue to be an inclusive school.

(i) Characteristics of our school:

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total number of pupils	764	792	830	870
% Male/Female	66/34	64/36	60/40	57/43
Pupil claiming Free school meals (in the last 6 Years)	44%	43%	40%	38%
Minority Ethnic groups	73%	72%	69%	69%
Pupils eligible for SEND support	17%	20%	19%	21%
Pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)		3.4%	3.0%	3.6%

Key points;

- School has increased by 106 pupils over last 4 years, this is a sign of our success but is stretching our physical space which we have addressed to some extent by capital investment
- The proportion of girls has increased year on year resulting in a better balance
- Pupils eligible for free school meals has reduced, but still remains high
- Our SEND and EHCP populations are twice the city average and compared to local schools, reflecting our inclusive approach. It is the view of Governors that we have now reached staff and space capacity. The table below shows that out of 94 secondary schools in Birmingham we had the 5th highest % of pupils with EHCP and 7th highest for SEN support.

	Total pupils	SEN support	Statement / EHC plan	% SEN	% EHCP	%EHCP rank	SEN support rank
Queensbridge School	870	181	31	20.8%	3.6%	5	7
City average	81845	9704	948	11.9%	1.2%		

(ii) Key stage 4 attainment

The national key indicator of educational attainment is the Progress 8 score. The greater the Progress 8 score, the greater the progress made by the pupil compared to the average for pupils with similar prior attainment. Progress 8 is a measure used by the Department of Education and is calculated across pupil grades in 8 subjects.

- A score above zero means pupils made more progress, on average, than pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2 in primary school
- A score of zero means pupils in this school on average do as well at key stage 4 as other pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2
- A score below zero means pupils made less progress, on average, than pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2
- The table below shows for the last 3 years our performance has been 'above average' for all schools in England. In 2019 we ranked 22nd out of 86 secondary schools in Birmingham (this includes all state funded schools - grammar, faith, academies, maintained and Foundation schools)

Key Stage 4 results over 3 years

	2017	2018	2019 (Provisional)
Number of pupils	127	130	159
Progress 8 score	0.43	0.32	0.49
Progress 8 Banding	■ Above national average	■ Above national average	■ Above national average
Birmingham average	-0.01	-0.04	na
National average	-0.03	-0.02	Na

High levels of attendance are a key feature of our school, the pastoral team work tirelessly and tenaciously to ensure that pupils are well supported and that pupils maintain high levels of attendance. Our new school nurse Ms Hale is a significant part of this team and is working effectively with pupils and their families to support with first aid and ongoing health issues. Pupils are able to book appointments with the nurse and we are already seeing the benefits of having a health professional on our staff; Ms Hale also drives initiatives and campaigns to support pupils developing healthy lifestyles.

Absence:

Year	Absence	Persistent absence
17/18	4% (National 5.5%)	6.9% (National 13.9%)
18/19	3.6% (national not available)	7.4% (not available)

b. Qualitative information on pupil well-being and enrichment

School ethos emphasises a 'child-centred' approach where well-being is as important as attainment. Gathering pupil's opinion and thoughts about their Queensbridge experience is a regular activity with leaders in school. Pupils' responses to these activities inform leaders that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Governors have also taken an active role in discussing with pupils their wellbeing and the benefit of the many opportunities in school to support pupils' personal development.

As governors we are very proud of the staff team at Queensbridge, they work incredibly hard and truly go the 'extra mile' to provide an enriching range of opportunities for all pupils. Through the wider learning strategy – iweeks, QB+, Tool kit for life (TFL), residentials, curriculum visits, performances, careers work, extra-curricular clubs, and pupils are able to engage in an impressive range of activities. Staff enjoy these additional opportunities and are the heart of a school that builds its successes on the excellent relationships between staff and pupils.

The school's twitter feed regularly captures the incredible amount of activities and celebrates the school's successes. Governors encourage you to follow @QB_sch

Governors are very proud to be the first secondary school in Birmingham to have been awarded the Artsmark Platinum Award

To quote from the award;

"New partnerships have flourished – the collaboration with the Birmingham Hippodrome and Royal Shakespeare Company's Matilda project was an opportunity to develop musical theatre skills, and to disseminate these to other schools as an 'RSC Matilda Champion School'. This partnership with the RSC is developing, as you embark on a longer-term alliance as an Associate School. Another noteworthy project was the 'We Will Rock You' performance, which positively impacted on students' self-esteem and attitudes to learning across the curriculum, as well as increasing parental and local community engagement through unprecedented ticket sales. These and other cross-curricular arts projects (such as the National Youth Inspire Orchestra performance) have inspired and motivated your student Arts Ambassadors to organise their own arts-based fund-raising activities. This charitable work supporting Young Minds is impressive. To further develop Pupil Voice, decision-making powers could be extended to engage larger numbers of pupils within the school. You've made a very positive start to advocating for the Arts beyond your own setting, for example, through the CPD work your arts team and 'Matilda Ambassadors' led with four local junior schools and the support for a school requiring improvement."

3. Strategy and Ethos

a. Ethos

A school's ethos is key, as it defines the set of beliefs, values and principles that provide the foundation for all decisions and policies. The governing body have agreed;

'Our aim is to build a thriving and cohesive learning community, characterised by excellent relationships between staff and pupils. We expect all children to be safe, to grow in confidence and resilience and to achieve both academic success and personal fulfilment, while being caring and respectful.'

b. Strategic Goals

The governing body has also agreed a set of strategic goals to guide the direction of the school;

1. Ensuring our school places an emphasis on the wellbeing of the pupils, is a child-centred place and provides a curriculum that stretches and develops their whole personality as well as their educational achievement.
2. Ensuring high expectations of good pupil behaviour and respect for all.
3. Providing a supportive environment for our staff and ensuring that their wellbeing is paramount, while striving to improve educational attainment.
4. Collaborating and cooperating with other schools to help and support each other and provide an excellent education for children.
5. Engaging with parents to ensure we listen to their concerns and ideas for improvement.
6. A public service philosophy that education is a right and a service that should be available to all at no cost.
7. Ensuring equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils is the key driver in all strategic decision-making processes

The ethos and strategic goals are further defined by the **Queensbridge '5 Rs'** -

Responsibility – We provide a moral compassionate education that prepares pupils for exams, but more importantly for life in a way that makes pupils take responsibility for their decisions and their learning.

Relationships – We work hard to build strong relationships with each other, our richly diverse community, our locality and the wider world.

Relevance – We are committed to being self-reflective to ensure that our pupils are presented with learning that is meaningful now and into their adult life.

Rigour – We foster strength of character, creativity and critical thinking through well-structured, learning opportunities that enable both academic and personal growth. Potential is not allowed to rest.

Risk – Queensbridge pupils and teachers are innovators and risk takers, prepared to be provocative, bold and courageous in order to explore and make sense of our world.

4. Review of 2018-19

a. Progress on strategic priorities

Each year the governing body reviews its priorities for the following year to ensure we focus on what is important at a strategic level and what requires action to deliver. Over the last year the priorities were;

Governing Body Priorities	Progress
<p>1. SEND & LAC Provision</p> <p><i>Trish Everett Charmaine Ellis Phil Smith</i></p>	<p>SEND: SEND Governors have attended open days for prospective pupils and their parents to describe support available. We have focussed on how school supports SEND pupils in their attainment and this included shadowing TA staff to explore how their supporting role is key to progress. Our remit also includes investigating any concerns by parents about support for their children.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Trish Everett, Charmaine Ellis SEND Governors</i></p> <p>LAC: School has a pastoral care system focussed on supporting all pupils, but giving particular care and support to the most vulnerable including looked after children (LAC) and children with statutory involvement by Children’s social services. A coordinated approach is taken to meeting pastoral care needs of pupils and overall responsibility rests with Ian Horgan Deputy Headteacher as Designated Safeguarding lead.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Phil Smith Safeguarding Lead Governor</i></p>
<p>2. Pupil and staff wellbeing</p> <p><i>Laurence Sharman</i></p>	<p>As a Governing Body, we are fully committed to the health and wellbeing of the staff team and the pupils in the school, both from a mental and physical point of view. We have a well-established forum providing objective and positive feedback on a confidential basis (where needed) between staff and governors. This happens on a termly basis and there is a governor’s sub-group who are continually monitoring behaviour within the School and how it changes the school environment. Laurence Sharman has spent time talking over a number of issues with a selection of pupils and how those issues affect their school day. He also works closely with Margaret McCarthy member of the senior leadership team leading on staff wellbeing issues and monitors the feedback from the Staff Survey on a regular basis. There are a number of external agencies who have provided, and will continue to provide, seminars for the whole staff team. Relating to specific issues arising out of a desire to provide strong support and encouragement for the team.</p>
<p>3. Development of cycling provision on playing field</p> <p><i>Darrell Harman Rob Anderson</i></p>	<p>Governors are committed to making the best use of the playing field that we jointly lease, with Bishop Challoner school, from the Council. This the green space up to the corner of Moor Green Lane and Queensbridge Road. Rob Anderson led on this priority for much of the year until he resigned in the Summer Term due to his work commitments. We are grateful for the work he did on this. We met with British Cycling, Parkride, City Council and Midland Mencap to discuss an inclusive facility and we intend to develop a business plan and apply for funding in 2020</p>

b. 2018-19 Summary of the year

This year has seen the biggest impact of the increase in school numbers with capacity, especially at lunchtimes, providing a challenge. This has resulted in a change to the school day and further capital investment to improve facilities. At our September meeting, Governors asked Senior Leaders to review the impact of these for changes in time for our meeting in January 2020. The review provided governors a balanced summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the change in the school. Governors concluded that the changes should remain in place because; it was a return to the usual lunch break, while some pupils preferred a somewhat longer break, they welcomed school times, vulnerable children found the shorter break more comfortable and it avoided the need for split lessons.

Governor's commitment to a rich curriculum that focuses on developing well-rounded pupils is maintained despite the government education policies on curriculum forcing schools to focus on a 'grammar school' approach. This narrow approach means many schools have dropped arts subjects and reduced PE to a minimum as 'they don't count toward results' and they also fail to develop disadvantaged pupils. Over the last two years, the curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been reviewed and rewritten, with focus on appropriate assessment. Our curriculum at KS3 guarantees a broad and balanced range of subject's studies for three years. We are committed to this as it reflects our ethos. Queensbridge is proud to say that it is a Reading School; teachers take every opportunity to develop the reading confidence of pupils and encourage the benefits of wider reading and reading for pleasure. Across the large majority of subjects, this summer there was a 10% increase in the proportion of grade 5s achieved.

The school site has been further developed to provide Year 11 with their own Coffee Shop and more social spaces for wet weather. The entrance to school and reception area has also been remodelled and updated. However, the most important of all refurbishments was the new pupil toilets – pupils are delighted with this new facility, it was money well spent.

Throughout the year, we have focused on staff and pupil well-being, meeting with pupils and staff to ask how we can help improve this key aspect. One key outcome was setting up a governors working group on behaviour, which included meeting with parents. This resulted in a revised behaviour policy implemented in September 2019 to drive our vision to be a recognition based community.

The focus on personal and academic development is crucial if we are to educate pupils for the complex world in which we are living. Building relationships between staff and pupils is paramount and as governors, we are impressed by the vast number of 'out of lessons' opportunities, enrichment and residential events that are on offer throughout the year. Over the duration of five years at Queensbridge we are exceptionally proud of the wealth of experiences that pupils encounter that contribute to their personal development and well-being. All of this is only achieved by having staff that are willing to go the extra mile, give up their own time and invest in the lives of our pupils. School's twitter feed captures very effectively all of these opportunities.

***'The best thing about the school is the teachers. I think they are fantastic, they help the children to maximise their potential and always hear when you need help.'** Year 7 parent*

***"We're delighted with how well our daughter has settled and it's wonderful to see the creative approach to the curriculum."** Year 7 Parent*

'Impressed by; range of exciting opportunities to pupils in all Yr groups, iweek – excellent feedback from children – stimulating, relevant, enjoyable themes (Yr 7, 9 11), willingness of departments to

re-think curriculum to address live issues and consider the learning from pupil's point of view'

Year 11 Parent

'Absolutely wonderful my child has had an amazing week. Thank you for giving her such an inspiring start to year 7. She has already developed such a love for drama. Thank you for all you hard work.' iWeek feedback

'My child is so happy to come to school every day. She is enthusiastic about all her subjects and has a good rapport with her teachers. The praise and recognition for her efforts really impresses me – as do all the wider learning which is offered.' iWeek feedback

c. Governors review of the year

Jo Klaces, Co-opted governor. *Previously Queensbridge Creative Agent/English A-level teacher / Director of the National Literacy Association now retired. As always, Queensbridge has delivered a fantastically busy and successful year. I have been into school on several occasions for pupil events, concerts and performances. I particularly enjoyed judging the public speaking event where students spoke eloquently and persuasively on diverse topics of their own choice, such as racism, gender equality and the environment. On the latter topic, I also came in to see the work students had done in the summer Iweek on the topic of climate change and the environment. I am the link governor for Quality of Education with a particular focus on literacy and have been talking with Jayne Ashton about supporting those who struggle to reach their appropriate reading age and how best to support them. As always, Queensbridge is a hotbed of ideas and practical, positive action. I have also been into school for disciplinary hearings and appeals. I will be at the Parents' Evening on 27th February and I look forward to meeting parents there.*

Danny Rees, Staff Governor. *I have been on the governing body as Staff Governor for two years and have been impressed with the commitment to staff and pupil wellbeing that governors express at every opportunity. It is reassuring to see governors take so seriously the issues of pupil and staff emotional and physical wellbeing. This is reflected in 'daily life' at Queensbridge and makes it a rewarding and supportive place to work. This is coupled with governors' high expectations of staff and pupils, which ensures that Queensbridge continues to grow and develop.*

5. Looking ahead to 2019-20

a. Finances

Our finances are in a healthy position due to an increase in pupil numbers and the accumulation of gradual savings over the last 10 years in preparation for the impact of funding reductions resulting from the Government's austerity programme and need to invest in a long-term capital improvement plan for school buildings.

However, our next 3 years budget projections indicate that our financial reserve will be much depleted. This is because government funding is not increasing with inflation and due to further capital investment required for long-term sustainability of our buildings. We need to plan well ahead to ensure this doesn't adversely impact on the rich curriculum we offer. A review of costs and income will be completed early in 2020, which will involve consultation with staff. As part of this, we need to focus on increasing efficiency and economy on property running costs and support services. One way is to work in partnership with schools to reduce costs (eg sharing procurement).

b. Governing Body priorities for 2019-20

In April 2019, a review of priorities by the full governing body led to the following being agreed;

1. Pupil behaviour and well-being is good
2. School is a 'great space' for pupils and staff;
 - a.) wet weather protection
 - b.) encourages engagement and activity
 - c.) Internal space design supports good behaviour
3. All pupils read at their chronological reading age
4. Governing Body and staff engage with/reflect our pupil's community
5. Effective formal school partnership via South Network that;
 - a.) mitigates financial risk
 - b.) supports improved teaching and learning
 - c.) supports behaviour management (and access to REACH)

Link Governors, together with Senior Leaders will develop implementation plans and report on progress to the Governing Body and to parents in the 2019-20 Annual Report.

c. Strategic Partnerships

This is a complex and challenging issue, as our exploration of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) option demonstrated in 2017. The MAT option was rejected by the Governing Body due to the loss of autonomy for our school and the risks associated with a 'self-appointing and unaccountable' trust board. However, the fact remains that 80% of secondary schools in Birmingham are Academies and the recent re-election of a Conservative Government means this policy direction is likely to intensify. This, together with the challenges of reducing government real term funding, means we will have to re-visit options for strategic partnerships in some form. Whatever this may mean, you may be assured that we will consult fully with all stakeholders well in advance of any proposed changes.

6. Conclusion

I hope that you have found this, our first, Annual Report interesting and informative and that it provides a better idea of what the Governing Body do. We are extremely fortunate to have such a high level of commitment and talent amongst our governors. As volunteers, attending meetings after work requires dedication to the success of the school. I know we all feel rewarded by being part of a successful school of thriving pupils - which is due to hard work of all our staff and in particular to the dynamic leadership provided by our Headteacher Helen Reeves.

Please email me using the email address governors@queensbridge.bham.sch.uk if you have any comments on how the format and content can be improved.

Darrell Harman, Chair of Governors

January 2020