

Chair of Governors Report - September 2024

I want to start this year's annual report by thinking back 12 months. At that time the discussion was about an Ofsted Inspection being due and whilst the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team were confident that a Good result would follow, there is always an air of the unknown.

12 months later and I am pleased to report that the Ofsted Inspectors did arrive for two days in January and they judged Higham Primary School as a Good School. They judged that right across all the areas inspected we were considered Good, namely : The Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management and Early Years Provision.

I usually include in my annual report the views of the Governing Body and our thoughts on the strengths of the school. However, this year I will quote verbatim from the Ofsted Report as external verification of the School is so much more powerful.

“Pupils at Higham Primary School say it is a good place to be”.

“Parents recognise the positive impact of the school on their children’s self-belief and confidence”.

“The school has high expectations for all pupils’ achievement . Pupils recognise this and approach their learning with a great sense of positivity and enthusiasm”.

“Pupils work hard to demonstrate the positive behaviour and values the staff expect”.

“The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum”.

“Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early and well supported within the school”.

“Leaders are supported by Governors, who know the school well. Together they are determined to ensure that the education pupils receive at Higham Primary School has a highly positive impact”.

I have highlighted seven points from the Ofsted Inspection report but I could have highlighted 20. I urge all parents and carers to view the Ofsted Inspection report and to feel pride in our school.

The seven comments above show what a great team Higham Primary School is - the team includes Teaching staff, Teaching Assistants, Kitchen staff, Midday Meals supervisors, Office staff, Premises staff, the Senior Leadership Team, Governors and Parents.

However the very clear, strong, positive theme coming through the Ofsted Inspection Report was the pupils’ achievements, attitudes, motivation, behaviour, respect and in particular their enjoyment of school.

These attributes have also shown themselves in the results received from the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results achieved by last years Year 2 and Year 6, with steady improvement seen over the past year across all areas.

The Ofsted Inspection Report is also an indicator of any areas that can be developed to bring even better results in the coming years. The Senior Leadership Team have incorporated these areas along with already strong practices and have set in place the School Plan for the next 12 months. The Governing Body will discuss progress on all of the areas of the School Plan at the committee and Full Governing Body meetings in this academic year.

One of the other areas that the Governing Body will monitor is the financial position of the School in line with the proposed budget. It is fair to say that the School budget is one of the biggest challenges each year with increasing costs for food, supplies, staff costs, energy and curriculum extras (trips, coach costs, visiting workshops etc), in exactly the same way that the "Cost of Living" pressures apply to the household family budgets. Sadly, the monies received from central funding for a school of our size will always need careful management with difficult decisions made every year. The Governing Body have a duty to ensure the school gets the best value for funds centrally received. The Finance Officer and Finance Governor meet regularly to review and monitor.

For this reason the support from parents is much appreciated and never taken for granted. The assistance from the PTA is so vital. Without their efforts and support some of the extra activities just would not happen. A strong PTA is essential and so if anyone is interested in joining the PTA please let the School Office know.

The last academic year has also seen the transfer across to a new IT system called Bromcom. When such a transition happens there can always be teething troubles, however the parents and carers have taken this in their stride and helped transition across smoothly along with the guidance of the School Office and Mr Walton's IT expertise, who have been there to work through the teething issues. Thank you to all for making this happen, the benefits to the school in terms of efficiency and administration are immense.

Aside from the Ofsted visit, Higham Primary School had such a busy year over the last 12 months. Two PGL visits, the PTA Colour Run, School Sports day , various inter school activities/tournaments across a wide variety of sports, the infants Christmas production, various external workshops visited the school, various off site trips, Choir performances, outdoor learning and many more events in addition to the normal daily classroom learning.

The last 12 months are now in the past and are history, the next 12 months will no doubt bring more great learning experiences, special moments as well as challenges. If we can again harness the Team spirit that was shown last year who knows what this school can achieve. The 2024/25 School year achievements have not been written yet, but I have no doubt that with the school motto of "Grow, Learn, Believe, Achieve" running through everything we do we will hit the heights again this year.

There are too many people for me to individually thank for their efforts over the past 12 months and so I will collectively thank the following:

The Senior Leadership team for leading the school forward to make Higham Primary School the best education environment it can be.

The Designated Safeguarding Team who continue to monitor that every child and adult at Higham Primary School is safe - this is **the most** important aspect of all schools activities.

The Class Teachers who deliver an interesting curriculum appropriate to each child as they progress through the seven years at Higham Primary School.

The Class Teachers are supported by Teaching Assistants who work daily in class sometimes with individual children and sometimes in small groups to aid the pupils' learning.

The Senco and her assistants, who work tirelessly with pupils where some extra support is needed.

Kitchen and lunch time staff who not only deliver a high quality, healthy menu to all pupils that want a school meal every day but also ensure that the manoeuvring of 210 pupils in an hour to receive and eat their lunch is smooth. I would urge all pupils to try school meals if they do not currently do so - they might be surprised.

Premises staff ensure our school is clean and tidy and safe for all pupils day in day out.

Office staff who cover a multitude of tasks across finance, communication, front of house, organisation etc without whom the efficiency of the school would be impacted.

The PTA, as I mentioned earlier, are essential to the financial well being of the school and their support is so important in providing the extras that make the school experience as good as it can be.

The Parents and Carers who support the school, attend events, read the newsletters and communications, contribute to Parent Representative discussions and encourage their children to bring their best to school.

Finally, the Governors who assist me through the year in monitoring how effective the school is. They all volunteer their time across 11 meetings through the year as well as visits to the school to meet with staff in line with the school plan.

I am proud to be the Chair of Governors for Higham Primary School and every year I see the impact that this school has on the children of the village and the wider community. Long may that continue.....

Brian Maynard
Chair of Governors
September 2024

