

## **Higham Primary School Governors News**

I hope that you have all had a pleasant break with your families over the Festive Season and I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year as a new decade begins.

The last decade has seen many changes and events. Ten years ago we were preparing for the London Olympics in 2012 and the launch of the Apple I Phone 4 and the word Brexit had not entered our vocabulary.

In October 2011 the first Governors News was sent out in response to feedback received on a parental questionnaire that they were unsure what Governors did including their roles and responsibilities and how that could be contacted. Since then the Governors News has been a consistent way to communicate to parents and carers.

### **Purpose of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body oversees the strategic operation of the school and has numerous responsibilities in relation to the day to day running of Higham Primary School. This includes regularly reviewing the quality and standard of teaching in line with the National Curriculum requirements, the financial stability of the school via the budget to ensure that the school has the necessary resources to support the learning experience, facilities and premises decisions, communication with all stakeholders and parents but most importantly the safety of all children and staff.

Mrs Grattan provides the Governors with regular updates at Committee Meetings and Full Governing Body Meetings and Governors visit the school on a regular basis to review the progress made by the School against its planned objectives.

The Governing Body are split into two Committees that each meet 3 times a year, they report back to the Full Governing Body Meetings 3 times a year. There is an AGM every September to review the previous year's progress and set in place the plan for the academic year and there is Budget Meeting every May to ensure that the school is financially prepared for the following 12 months.

Every March, the Governors spend a day in school to visit classes, watch lessons being taught, watch the children at play and have lunch with the children. This gives the Governors the first hand views and insights of the children, who after all are the most important judges of school life.

A key feature of any Governing Body is to ensure that we have the necessary skills to undertake our roles as Governors and that there is a mix of parents, staff, non-parents, community and Local Authority representation. This ensures that the operation of the school is looked at from all angles.

Governors give up their time voluntarily and are all committed to ensuring that the children attending Higham Primary School receive the best possible learning experience to set them up for secondary school education. A child's learning is built on the foundations set in place from the Reception Year and consistently built on through the 7 years at Primary School.

### **The Higham Primary School Governing Body**

Chair of Governors – Mr B Maynard (Local Authority Governor)

Vice Chair of Governors – Mr S Mackie (Co opted Governor)

Clerk to Governors – Mrs S Pearton  
Child Protection Governor & Health and Safety Governor – Mr L Pearton  
Special Education Needs & Disabilities Governor – Mr S Mackie

Curriculum & Standards Committee  
Committee Chair – Ms A Grix (Co opted Governor)  
Committee Vice Chair – Father J Southward (Co opted Governor)  
Mrs N Molloy (Co opted Governor)  
Mrs C Driscoll (Staff Governor)  
Mrs J Brown (Parent Governor)  
Mrs V Levy (Deputy Head & Associate Governor)  
Mrs C Donnell (Associate Governor)

Resources Committee  
Committee Chair – Mr S Mackie (Co opted Governor)  
Committee Vice Chair – Mr G Cousins (Co opted Governor)  
Mr S Walton (Co opted Governor)  
Mr L Pearton (Co opted Governor)  
Mrs V Levy (Deputy Head & Associate Governor)

The Chair of Governors, Clerk and Head Teacher attend both Committees and all Full Governing Body Meetings.

In October 2019 we welcomed Mr K Fairbank as a new Parent Governor. He has attended both committee meetings in Term 2 and will decide which committee he wishes to serve for the rest of the year. Parent Governors are an extremely important part of a Governing Body as they will be able to share experiences that they hear from their children and other parents on a day to day basis.

On the school website there is a section about the Governors with short personal statements about each Governor which shows their experience and reasons why they decided to be a School Governor.

### **School Policies**

One of the duties of the Governing Body is to set in place the rules and regulations that are to be followed concerning the school's operations.

These policies are agreed in line with National guidelines and legislation, the Kent Local Authority guidelines but are also tailored to our own local requirements. These provide the framework for the day to day running of the school and are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are all current and up to date. The Governors will refer to these policies at times and they cover many aspects including Admission Policy, Attendance Policy, individual Subject Policies, Finance Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy , to name but a few.

These policies are available on the School's website or upon request from the School Office.

You will recall that in the Autumn of 2018 we undertook a consultation with pupils, staff and parents to review the Behaviour Policy as the Governing Body had received correspondence concerning aspects that were not working as well as they should have been. Following this consultation a new policy was prepared and ratified by the Full Governing Body and is now part of the day to day running of the school, which 12 months down the line has been well received by all parties as it is

clear and consistent regarding the standards of behaviour expected at Higham Primary School and the consequences of poor behaviour.

### **Complaints**

If you have any issues or complaints about your child's education experiences at Higham Primary School you should initially raise the matter with your child's class teacher.

If you are not satisfied, following this discussion with the class teacher, you should raise the matter with Mrs Grattan who as Head Teacher will look into the matter. This can be by a face to face meeting, phone call, email or letter.

If after speaking with Mrs Grattan you are still not satisfied by the response or actions taken then you can contact me by letter to the School Office. Upon receiving a complaint I will investigate the matters raised with Mrs Grattan to ask for her rationale behind the decision taken. My role is to ensure that the school has acted in accordance with its policies and provide an independent response to the specific matter raised. I will always reply in writing to the parent within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.

### **The new decade at Higham**

As most of you are aware Mrs Grattan was appointed as the full time substantive Head Teacher at Higham Primary School on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019. Mrs Levy was appointed as the full time Deputy Head Teacher shortly after. In the intervening months they have been reviewing the plan for the school, building upon the already solid foundations that saw the school judged as "Good" at the last Ofsted review in June 2018.

The Governors have reviewed the plan and believe that it will continue to provide the best possible learning experience for all of the children at Higham School regardless of age, gender and ethnicity. Governors will receive regular updates at Committee Meetings and conduct school observation visits to ensure that the agreed plan is being carried out.

There will always be challenges when running a village school ranging from budgets with the regular erosion of monies available for resources and services, challenges of directional changes from Central Government (eg the National Curriculum or GDPR), infrastructure in the village regarding traffic, Brexit concerns for a school in Kent, the social media explosion and behaviour.

However when you look at these factors it's not just Higham Primary School that has these challenges but society in general as it enters a new decade.

As Chair of Governors I promise that the Governing Body will continue to do our best in the face of these challenges and will oversee the best possible learning experience for the children at our school in a safe environment for all.

I hope that this will provide you with some helpful information about the Governing Body at Higham Primary School and I look forward to meeting with some of you at school events.

Brian Maynard  
Chair of Governors

January 2020

