

# Higham Primary School Governors News

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome any new parents, carers, staff and of course children who have joined Higham School since the last Governors News, as well as providing an update to existing parents, carers, staff and children.

This Governors News will have a new audience who may not be aware of exactly what Governors do and I make no apology in reiterating some parts of previous year's Governor News, as I feel it is important for all parents to be aware of the school organisation.

In October 2011 we produced the first Governors News in response to feedback that we received from a survey sent out to parents. One point highlighted in that survey was that some parents were unaware of the Governors role and how to contact them. The Newsletter is designed to provide some clarity to **all** parents and carers about the Governors of Higham Primary School.

## **Chair of Governors**

My name is Brian Maynard and at the recent AGM of the Governing Body in September I was re-elected as Chair of Governors for the current academic year. I am proud to undertake this role for a 4<sup>th</sup> school year.

I can be contacted via the School Office, please mark any sealed envelope for my attention and leave with Mrs Michael.

I have been a member of the Governing Body for 9 years, firstly as a Parent Governor and now as a Local Authority Governor. I was previously the Vice Chair of Governors and Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

Father James Southward is the Vice Chair of Governors.

## **Purpose of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body have numerous responsibilities in relation to all aspects of the running the school. These include reviewing the quality and standard of teaching, the adherence to the new National Curriculum, the safety of all children, the budget of the school, facilities and premises issues, admission policy, target setting and communication with stakeholders and parents.

Mrs Coombs, your Head Teacher, provides regular updates at Committee Meetings and Full Governing Body Meetings and confirms the School's progress against its School Plan.

The Governing Body oversee their duties by way of 2 Committees (who each meet 3 times a year), 3 Full Governing Body Meetings each year, a Budget Meeting once a year and Governors Day in March each year, where the Governors spend a day in school attending classes, school council, lunch time in the hall and playground time.

Over the past 12 months there have been some changes to the Governing Body. Ms Amy Grix was elected in February 2015 as a new Parent Governor.

Ms Kerri Howard has been co opted to the Governing Body in September 2015 to fill the co opted Governor vacancy, so that there remain 4 Governors who are parents of children at

Higham School following John Latter's child leaving for secondary school in July. John remains on the Governing Body as a co opted Governor and is Chair of the Resources Committee.

A key feature of a Governing Body is to have a mix of parents, non parents, teaching staff and Local Authority represented on the Governing Body to ensure that a 360 degree view can be undertaken in all areas of school life.

The 2 Committees are:

**Resources Committee**

Mr J Latter (Committee Chair)  
Mr N Cook (Committee Vice Chair)  
Mr S Walton  
Mr L Pearton

**Curriculum & Standards Committee**

Mr S Mackie (Committee Chair)  
Ms A Grix (Committee Vice Chair)  
Mrs C Grattan  
Father James Southward  
Mr F Garrett

Ms K Howard was co opted to the Governing Body at the recent AGM and will be attending both committees before deciding upon which committee she will join.

The Head Teacher, Clerk (Mrs Shirley Pearton) and myself attend all meetings.

In addition since the last Governors News, Stewart Mackie has become the SEND Governor responsible for over seeing children who have special education needs or disabilities. Les Pearton has become the Child Protection Governor and Health & Safety Governor responsible for over seeing that your children are safe while at Higham School.

Both Stewart and Les provide update reports at the Committee and Full Governing Body Meetings as these are key areas in any school.

The Governing Body structure changed in 2014 following National Government guidance where the emphasis is placed on Governors having suitable skills to compliment the requirements for a modern school through people skills, experience, employment skills and financial skills.

Aside from the Head Teacher, Higham School's Governing Body Constitution is a Local Authority Governor, a Staff Governor, 2 Parent Governors, 7 Co-Opted Governors and a Clerk.

The Governors give up their time voluntarily and I really appreciate the commitment that they all show in ensuring the children at Higham School receive the schooling that they deserve and that the parents expect. Governors also attended the recent Parent Consultations in case there were any parents who have a matter that they wish to discuss with a Governor directly.

**School Policies**

One of the duties of the Governing Board is to initiate and review the policies that govern every aspect of the school's operation.

These include National Guidelines and Legislation, Local Authority Guidelines as well as Local standards tailored to Higham Primary School. These need to be reviewed on a regular basis due to amendments in Government Guidelines or also due to general changes (one such example is our policies now cover such items as Facebook and other social media sites).

These are prepared by the Head Teacher and approved after review by the relevant Committee for ratification by the Full Governing Body.

These policies are available on the school website or can be provided upon request if you have no internet access.

## **Complaints**

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

If you are not satisfied following this discussion then you should raise the matter with Mrs Coombs, who as Head Teacher will look into the matters raised and understand the issues. This can be with a face to face meeting (by appointment), letter, phone call or email.

If following the discussion with Mrs Coombs you are still not satisfied by the actions taken then you can contact me by letter to the School Office, If I receive a complaint I have to investigate the matters raised by speaking with Mrs Coombs and to ask her to provide me with the reasons for her course of action. My role is to ensure that the School has acted in accordance with its stated policies and provide an independent investigation into the particular matter.

I hope that this Governors Newsletter has helped provide you with some useful information about the Governing Body of Higham Primary School. We will be providing a "mid term report" in March 2016 from the Governors with details of progress made over the intervening months. The Governors also submit a report to the Parish Council for their annual publication as we are proud to celebrate our successes with the wider Higham Community.

## **The Future**

Higham School has been assessed as "A Good School" at the Ofsted Inspection in October 2013. The School did not just "scrape" into the good category. Out of the 4 general measures of the Ofsted inspection 3 were good and one was outstanding.

The Ofsted Report is now history and the Governors have been working with Mrs Coombs and the staff to ensure that complacency does not set in as we expect to be visited by Ofsted within the next 2 years.

The Governing Body will receive regular updates to ensure that continuing progress is taking place across all year groups. This includes the National Curriculum changes that are now fully embedded after their launch in September 2014 and coming to terms with the "Assessing Without Levels" guidelines set in place by National Government at the same time.

It cannot be underestimated the work and commitment that your children's dedicated staff have undertaken over the last 14 months to ensure that the school has continued its progress in times of major change. I can assure you that not all schools in Kent have been so successful in this transformation.

I will provide a mid year report in March 2016 regarding the progress that the school has made in the intervening period.

Brian Maynard  
Chair of Governors

November 2015

