

Higham Primary School Governors News

I hope that you had a pleasant and relaxing Easter break and were able to spend time with your families.

The last 12 months at Higham Primary School have certainly been a busy time for the Governors.

You will have all seen my recent letter to parents in which I was delighted to be able to announce that Mrs Grattan had been confirmed as the new full time substantive Head Teacher of Higham Primary School following her leadership through the first four terms of this Academic Year.

The Governors feel that they have found the best possible candidate to lead the school and throughout the last six months we have seen Mrs Grattan and her team make positive changes to enhance all aspects of school life. We wish her every success with her new full time role and we know that we have someone leading the school who really understands the school's ethos and has a passion for Higham Primary School.

Whilst the Governing Body were aware of the progress made since September from committee reports and visits to the school we were able to get a real flavour of the atmosphere around school on Governors Day in March. This is something that has taken place for 12 years where Governors come in to the school for the whole day and spend time in class rooms watching the lessons, spend time in the playground watching the children at play, have lunch with the children, talk to staff and also undertake some training where we hear about new local or national education changes.

For the Governors this day provides us with an overall first hand view of the school and to see the impact of our decisions regarding the overall strategy for the school.

I wanted to tell you about a few things that I gained from the day in school.

Firstly, I noticed that a group of children were not in the normal school uniform for the day, this was because the Year 2 class were taking part in a Castles Workshop for the day, where an outside agency came into school with some activities designed to teach the children about history, not in the classroom but in an innovative way of learning in the hall. This involved the children dressing up in a fancy dress costume appropriate to Castles.

At lunchtime I was able to sit with these Kings and Queens, Princes and Princesses, Knights, Soldiers, Jesters and peasants. What struck me was the enthusiasm and happiness shown by the children and the fact that they were looking forward to the afternoon when they would be having a mock banquet and drama entertainment for the King.

As I was lining up to get my lunch I was told by a "Medieval Princess" that her picture was in the kitchen serving area because they had a food allergy and then went on to explain to me, in some detail, why that was important and how the school did not allow children to have any nuts in their lunch as a lot of children can have a nut allergy which could be very dangerous. I am sure that as a 6 or 7 year old I did not know about nut allergies. It did make me appreciate the awareness of pupils to matters like food allergies and also how this message has been embedded across the school.

After lunch I spent the next half an hour wandering around the playgrounds and I saw play leaders bedecked in high visibility waistcoats encouraging pupils to take part in organised games. I saw the infants with so much energy, rushing around the infant play area. I can see why we get the odd bumped head and scraped knee and as Governors we are going to look at options to see if we can make that area less crowded.

My third recollection of the day was when Mrs Grattan took some Governors around the school to see the wall displays including children's pictures, written work and general displays. We also saw the Tree of Positivity and heard about why some children had been included on the branches of that tree.

At the end of the day the Governors had a Full Governing Body meeting where we shared our observations from the day. Without fail, everyone was positive of their experience and the recurring message was about polite children, confident children willing to talk about their school, good behaviour, stimulating and interesting lessons and a general happy feeling around the school. All the Governors really enjoyed the day in school and we cannot wait for next March when we will have that opportunity again.

Behaviour Policy

You will recall that in September and October the staff, children and parents were asked about their views on behaviour at school. Following this feedback the Senior Leadership Team and a couple of Governors met to formulate the new Behaviour Policy. This has been ratified by the Full Governing Body and is now in place. This gives the framework of what is expected. The Governing Body has received feedback from parents that they are very happy with the new policy and in particular the consistent adherence and implementation across the school. Thank you for your assistance and input in this process.

Governor Changes

It is fair to say that Higham School is lucky to have a dedicated group of Governors who give up their time voluntarily for the benefit of the school. Following the recent Parent Governor Election, Justine Brown was elected for a four year term of office. She has already attended committee meetings and spent the day in school on Governors Day.

Amy Grix, who was previously a Parent Governor has remained on the Governing Body as a Co-opted Governor due to her valuable contribution to the Governing Body and in particular her role as Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee along with her participation on the Head Teacher Appointment Committee.

The Governing Body currently has a full complement, however from time to time Governors decide to resign for varying reasons and as Chair of Governors part of my role is to ensure that there is a succession plan in place to ensure the Governing Body remains strong and has the skills to carry out its duties.

If you have ever wanted to become a School Governor or know someone in the locality who would like to be a School Governor, please leave your contact details at the school office along with the skills that you could bring to the Governing Body. Then if a vacancy becomes available I will be in touch.

Parking outside the School

For those of you who drive your children to school in the morning or collect in the afternoon can I please ask you to respect the parking restrictions and zig zag lines outside the school. Whilst parking on the zig zag lines has improved over the last couple of years there are still some who flout the restrictions with parking or stopping on the zig zag lines. This is illegal and could result in a fine if observed by the police

I have always said that the safety of staff, parents, pupils and siblings of Higham School is the Governing Body's primary concern and so I will repeat my request of years gone by.

I need you all to take some individual responsibility for your parking outside the school and also for the speed at which you drive as you pass the school. A moment of excess speed, a loss of concentration, a child running across the road could have devastating consequences. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

PTA

Once again I am indebted to the PTA who voluntarily give up their time to raise monies for the school. I think that every week there is a news item about the pressures placed on school budgets due to Central Government budget cuts. If you look around Higham School there are some fantastic facilities and equipment for the children, the buildings are in a good safe condition and if works are needed these are attended to. Part of the Governing Body's duties is the financial stability of the school. This task is made so much easier by the PTA donations from their fund raising events.

Thank you to those of you who have helped at school fayres, helped at the discos, sold raffle tickets and generally supported the school. I hope to see some of you at the summer fayre.

For those children leaving Higham in July 2019

I hope that you have all enjoyed your last 7 years at Higham School and can leave with a lot of happy memories. Can you remember the day you walked through the gates as a 4 year old starting in the Reception Class for the first time? Think about everything you have learnt over those 7 years and the friends that you have made.

I would like to wish all of the children moving on to secondary education in September all the best for the future. I hope that you will continue to achieve your full potential in education and maximise your opportunities in life. I hope that you will always remember your school days at Higham with happiness and I hope to see you back at events like the School Fayres in the future.

Brian Maynard
Chair of Governors
April 2019