

Higham Primary School Governors News

I hope that you have all had a pleasant and relaxing Easter Break despite the best efforts of Storm Katie on Easter Monday.

4 of the 6 terms are now behind us this Academic Year and I know that the children have been very busy in their classes learning each and every day guided by our excellent teaching staff.

The evidence of this is there for all to see in the classrooms and corridors and makes the school a colourful place of learning for the children and for guests visiting the school.

A few weeks ago the Governors of Higham School were the “guests” who spent a day in school. The morning was spent in classes observing the children’s learning, followed by lunch spent with the children, the afternoon was spent undertaking various statutory tasks and presentations, followed by the Full Governing Body meeting afterwards.

The afternoon’s presentations and tasks ensure that the Governors are acting compliantly in their duties and understand the challenges that have arisen with the new National Curriculum and the new assessing guidelines that the school must follow regarding pupils progress monitoring. I am confident that the teaching staff at Higham take an active interest in every pupil’s progress to ensure that they reach their maximum potential while at Higham.

Whilst the afternoon is an important part of Governors Day I know that every single Governor prefers the time spent in the classes.

Every year group had Governors in their class at some point. As it was Book Week there was a focus on books and in particular a book about flying frogs. The teachers across most classes had used the book as the central theme to their classroom activities. I saw large frogs being made out of card and tissue papers, lily pads made, story telling ideas and script planning. No doubt many of these creative efforts will soon be displayed on the walls in classrooms and corridors.

In line with the Book Week theme, the Year 1 class I witnessed the children writing stories about their own book characters that they were going to perform later on in the week. There were traditional characters of Red Riding Hood, Cinderella and Goldie Locks as well as some more modern characters of Wolverine and Captain America. It amazed me how these 5 and 6 year olds were using creative descriptive words to make their script.

I also spent some time in the Year 5 class. They were taking part in a special workshop about the Ancient Greeks including tile carvings, examination of Greek artefacts and character work in Greek costumes. The workshop was an external group who go around to schools, teaching the children and making their learning fun and memorable.

Other Governors were able to witness a group of children undertaking a film making project with green screens, similar to the methods used in TV and film making, with very professional results. Maybe Higham will produce a Steven Spielberg of the future.

At Higham the teaching staff investigate ways to bring the curriculum to life and in my view this is the reason that the children's development and learning has progressed as evidenced by the various external checks (eg Ofsted, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results). The National Curriculum is the same for all schools but the enthusiasm and variety shown by Higham's teaching staff is what makes the difference in progress and results for your children.

After the morning the Governors all had school dinners with the children. It amazes me that 210 children can pass through the dinner hall, be fed and cleared away in just over an hour. The mid day meal supervisors do an excellent job in coordinating what appears organised chaos in such an efficient way.

Lunch with the children is always such a special time for me as the children are so confident in talking about what they do at school, what they think of the school dinners and general conversations.

At the Full Governing Body meeting afterwards every Governor recounted their individual favourite parts of the day and these will be displayed on the Governors Board in the playground.

Aside from Governors Day, the Governors of Higham School have, as always, been working on ways of enhancing your children's education experience at Higham in conjunction with the Leadership Team under Mrs Coombs guidance.

We thank you for the feedback provided in the autumn questionnaire and will continue to look at ways of communicating with parents in an effective manner. Please look at the Governors Board in the playground or the Governors page on the school website.

In this Governors News I would also like to say how impressive the PTA Christmas Fayre was. I know that many of you were involved in the preparation and the staffing of stalls for this event. I also know that many people visited and I have received some extremely good feedback from members of the local community. Parents, Governors, teachers, villagers, past pupils, current pupils and pupils of the future all turned up and supported the event.

The PTA over a number of years have provided vital support to the school and raised monies which has been used to fund equipment, activities and experiences (like the work shop mentioned earlier) that enhance the children's learning. The PTA , like Governors, give up their time voluntarily and I would like to thank you for your continuing efforts.

Parking outside the School

I will be writing to all parents shortly regarding the continuing problems with parking outside school on the zig zag lines at morning drop off and afternoon collection times.

I need you all to take some individual responsibility in this regard as the safety of all children, staff and parents at Higham Primary School is the paramount concern of the Governors.

Option C Thames River Crossing

The Governors of Higham Primary School have written to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Local County Council expressing their fears if the Option C plan is selected.

The Governors have highlighted the negative impact that this plan will have on increased levels of traffic in Higham and its environs, the potential impact on the natural environment and the potential impact on air quality linked with breathing conditions such as asthma.

Whilst accepting that there will be some benefits to this project for Kent, the Governors views are restricted to the impact on the current and future children attending Higham Primary School.

For those leaving Higham in July 2016

I hope that you have all enjoyed your last 7 years at Higham Primary School. 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.

Brian Maynard
Chair of Governors
April 2016