

## **Higham Primary School Governors News**

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

I make no apology for reiterating some parts of previous Governors News as I feel it is important that all parents and carers are aware of the school organisation and in particular what exactly Governors contribute.

In October 2011 we produced the first Governors News following feedback that was received from a parental questionnaire commenting that they did not know what Governors did, their roles and responsibilities and also how they could be contacted.

### **Chair of Governors**

My name is Brian Maynard and at the recent AGM in September of the Governing Body I was re-elected as the Chair of Governors for the academic year 2016/17. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year that I have undertaken this role and I am so proud to have been re-elected.

I have been a member of the Governing Body for 10 years, originally as a Parent Governor and for the last 4 years as a Local Authority Governor. I was previously the Vice Chair of Governors and Chair of the Curriculum & Standards Committee.

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

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 of Higham School. This includes reviewing the quality and standard of teaching, the following of the National Curriculum, the budget of the school, the admissions policy, facilities and premises matters, target setting, communication with stakeholders and parents and most importantly the safety of all staff and children.

Mrs Coombs, your Head Teacher, provides the Governors with regular updates at Committee Meetings and Full Governing Body Meetings and confirms the progress made by the School against its planned objectives.

The Governing Body carry out their duties by way of 2 Committees (who each meet 3 times a year), 3 Full Governing Body Meetings each year, an AGM and a Budget Meeting once a year and Governors Day in March every year, when the Governors spend the day in school observing classes, school council meetings and even have lunch in the dinner hall with the children.

A key feature of the Governing Body is to have a mix of parents, staff, non parents and Local Authority representation to ensure that the school operations can be looked at from a variety of aspects.

### **Higham School's Two Committees are:**

#### **Resources Committee**

Mr J Latter (Committee Chair)  
Mr F Garratt (Committee Vice Chair)  
Mr S Walton  
Mr L Pearton  
Ms K Howard

#### **Curriculum & Standards Committee**

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

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

Mr Stewart Mackie is the SEND Governor responsible for overseeing the teaching relating to children who have special educational needs and disabilities. He works in tandem with Mrs Grattan (Senco) to ensure that this very important area is monitored and reported to the Governing Body throughout the year.

Mr Les Pearton is the Child Protection Governor and Health & Safety Governor responsible for overseeing the safety of your children whilst at Higham School.

Mr Nigel Cook resigned as a Governor at the AGM in September as he no longer has a child attending Higham School and work commitments. He has been a Governor for 5 years and I would like to thank him for his contribution to the School over that time.

The Governors give up their time voluntarily. I appreciate their commitment that they all show in ensuring the children who attend Higham School receive the best possible learning experience and the schooling that both the parents expect and the children deserve. Governors also attend Parent Consultations and will happily speak with any parents who wish to speak to a Governor directly.

### **School Policies**

Like most walks of life there are rules and regulations that have to be followed.

One of the Governing Body's duties is to set in place and review the school's policies to govern every aspect of Higham School's operations.

These policies are written in line with National guidelines and legislation, Local Authority (Kent) guidelines as well as local standards adapted to Higham School. These policies are reviewed on a regular basis due to amendments in National Government guidelines or general social changes. For example 10 years ago social media channels did not exist unlike today and so our policies now include reference to items being placed on social media relating to the children to safeguard all children.

The policies are prepared by the Head Teacher and discussed at Committee Meetings. Once approved they are ratified by the Full Governing Body and then become the school's rules and regulations for Staff, Governors, parents and pupils to adhere to.

These policies are available on the school website or can be provided upon request, if required.

## **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 to fully understand the issues. This can be face to face (by appointment), letter, telephone 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 delivered to the School Office. If I do receive a complaint, I have to investigate the matters raised by speaking to Mrs Coombs and to ask her for the rationale behind her decision and actions. My role is to ensure that the School has acted in accordance with its stated policies and provide an independent investigation into the particular circumstances of the issue raised.

I will then always respond in writing to the parent.

## **The Future**

Higham School was assessed as "A Good School" at the last Ofsted Inspection in October 2013. Out of the 4 general measures of the Ofsted Inspection, three were classed as "Good" and one, Behaviour in School, was "Outstanding".

That Ofsted Report is now 3 years old and a key focus of the Governing Body is not to let complacency set in and aim for an even better judgement when Ofsted next visit.

Governors receive regular updates to ensure that continuing progress is taking place across **all** year groups.

Summer 2016 brought the first set of Key Stage 2 results following the National Curriculum changes in 2014 with the "Assessing Without Levels" guidance standards. This was a real "acid test" to see if the structures put in place by the Senior Management Team of the School were working

The results have already been shared with parents within a Newsletter in July however, in case you had missed them:

### **Every single measure was above the National average**

**Reading 87% (National 66%)**

**Writing 90% (National 74%)**

**Grammar, punctuation and spelling 83% (National 74%)**

**Maths 77% (National 70%)**

**Combined Reading, Writing & Maths 73% (National 53%)**

These results were from more challenging SATs tests where the expected standards were much tougher to reach.

They are a credit to the School and are the result of a team effort encompassing the Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team, Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Midday Meal Supervisors, Office staff, Premises staff, Kitchen staff, the PTA, Parents and Governors – but most importantly the pupils. It is vitally important that this team ethic continues.

I can assure you that not all schools in Kent have been as successful as Higham School in the way that it has embraced the National Curriculum changes.

I will end this Governors News with a comparison I drew in my AGM Report.

In 1996 Team GB won 1 Gold Medal (15 medals in total) at the Atlanta Olympics. In 2016 Team GB won 27 Gold Medals (67 medals in total) at the Rio Olympics.

The improvements were down to hard work, a settled team structure, great leadership, great facilities, challenging existing practices, tiny marginal gains, not accepting satisfactory but aiming for outstanding and of course trust.

Higham School has exactly those ethics but achieved its recent fantastic results in 7 years and not 20 years like Team GB.

I hope that this Governors Newsletter has helped to provide you with some useful information about the Governing Body at Higham School. We will provide you with a review in March 2017, following Governors Day, regarding progress made from September to March. There will also be a report in the Parish Council annual newsletter publication, where I will be highlighting and celebrating our successes to the wider Higham Community.

Brian Maynard  
Chair of Governors

November 2016