

## **Chair of Governors Annual Report - September 2025**

What an interesting and busy 12 months it has been at Higham Primary School.

As with all years there have been highlights and there have been challenges.

The major highlight of the year has to be the fantastic team effort, led by the PTA in raising monies for new computers in the IT suite for all of our pupils to use over the coming years. Computers and IT in general have advanced so quickly over the recent years that the computers we had were soon going to be obsolete so prompt, urgent action was needed.

As I am sure you are aware, Central Government funding is always strictly controlled and certainly does not allow a surplus to completely renew a computer system even if it is essential for each pupil's learning.

The PTA stepped up to the plate and made the new computers a priority that they would assist in funding. The PTA led by Miss Panayi, Mrs Swain and Mrs Coxall plus a tenacious band of supporting parents explored various avenues and events that would allow us to achieve the necessary funds as soon as possible.

This is my opportunity to thank the PTA, any parents who generously donated towards the cause, the children for their fundraising, any village contributions and the Higham Parish Council.

The PTA support is also not just for large projects and is never taken for granted by the School and Governing Body. The assistance from the PTA is so vital. Without their efforts some of the extra activities just would not happen. A strong PTA is essential now more than ever and so if anyone is interested in joining the PTA please let the School Office know.

Another PTA led success was the Annual Colour Run, in sweltering temperatures every class, some staff and some parents ran around the course, having powder paint thrown at them before cooling off with water sprays. It was great to see so many smiling happy faces from all participants and again vital funds were raised. The next major fundraising event is the Christmas Fair on 22nd November 2025, I am sure the PTA will welcome any offers of help with the preparation, the setting up on the day, running stalls and clearing up afterwards. These events don't just happen, planning and commitment has already started, so if you can offer any support again please contact the School Office.

Over the last 12 months Higham Primary School has been busy. We had a week's PGL trip, school sports day, various inter school activities and tournaments across a wide variety of sports, the infants Christmas production, various external workshops, science days, outdoor learning, various off site trips to Broadstairs, Legoland, the cinema at Rochester and the Sky TV Studios and many more events in addition to the normal daily classroom learning.

The SATs tests took place in Term 5 with an increased percentage of our Year 6 children reaching the Key Stage 2 Expected Level in Reading, Writing and SPaG (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling) compared to the previous year. Increases were also seen in the

Greater Depth results for Reading and Writing compared to Spring 2024. Key Stage 1 and Early Years assessments also took place.

The Senior Leadership Team always review the whole set of results and then make any changes needed with the aim to increase the learning and results in forthcoming years. The Senior Leadership Team have incorporated these changes along with already consistent strong practices within the School Plan for the next 12 months. The Governing Body will discuss progress on all of the areas of the School Plan at the committee and Full Governing Body meetings throughout the academic year.

The Primary Education sector covering Key Stages 1 and 2 set in place the foundations that our pupils will carry forward to secondary education, possibly university education and ultimately employment, which is why it is essential to have the best learning environment possible.

Another of the other areas that the Governing Body will monitor is the financial strength of the school in line with the proposed budget. It is fair to say that the school budget is the biggest challenge each year with increasing costs for food, supplies, staff costs, energy and curriculum extras (trips, coach costs, visiting workshops etc). A school encounters exactly the same pressures that apply to a family budget. As mentioned earlier, the monies received from Central Government funding for a school of our size will always need careful management with difficult decisions made each year. The Governing Body has a duty to ensure the school gets the best value for centrally received funding. The Finance Officer and Finance Governor meet regularly to review and monitor.

The last 12 months are now in the past and are history, the next 12 months will no doubt bring more highlights as well as challenges. If we can harness the Team spirit that was shown last year with the Computer Funding project, we will have another successful year. The story of the 2025/26 school year has not been written yet. I have no doubt that with the school motto of "Grow, Learn, Believe, Achieve" central to everything we do, we will hit the heights again this year.

Before I say a few collective thank yous, I wanted to highlight how the school motto applied to a particular staff member in 2024/25. As you are aware Mrs Grattan was off through terms 4 and 5. Mrs Levy had to step in to lead the school. As the weeks went by Mrs Levy grew into the role of leading the school, learned new skills that an Acting Headteacher needs, believed in herself and achieved so much. The Governing Body appreciated her dedication to the challenges of leading the school.

Mrs Grattan returned full time to school in term 6 and Mrs Levy will once again split her time between being our Deputy Headteacher and a class teacher.

There are so many people to thank for their efforts over the past 12 months and so I will collectively thank the following:

The Senior Leadership team for continuing to lead the school through a challenging period and working as a team to make Higham the best learning environment possible.

The Designated Safeguarding Team who continue to monitor that every child and adult at Higham Primary School is safe - this is **the most** important aspect of a school's activities.

The Class Teachers who deliver an interesting curriculum appropriate to each child as they progress through the seven years at Higham Primary School. No two years are the same with a different cohort to teach and different initiatives to focus on but ultimately the same result of building that strong foundation in education for every pupil.

The Class Teachers are supported by Teaching Assistants who work daily in class sometimes with individual children, sometimes in small group learning and sometimes in whole class learning. They are a necessary support to every class regardless of year group and have a great flexibility to deal with the daily requirements.

The Senco, Mrs Dunn, who works tirelessly with pupils where some extra support is needed.

Our kitchen and lunch time supervisor staff not only deliver a high quality, healthy menu to all pupils that want a school meal every day, but also ensure the lunch time is organised so that 210 pupils within an hour, receive and eat their lunch along with the children's break in the playground before the afternoon's learning starts.

Mr Walton and his Premises staff who ensure our school is safe, clean and tidy for all pupils day in day out.

The Office staff who cover a multitude of tasks across finance, attendance, first aid, communication, front of house, organisation etc without whom the efficiency of the school would be impacted. This has included switching to Bromcom, a new newsletter and a new School website in the last 18 months (assisted by Mr Walton's IT skills).

Terms 5 and 6 saw a few departures from Higham Primary School with Mrs Cousins retiring, Miss Wright, Miss Chan and Mrs Graham moving to new schools and Mrs Smith Assistant Senco, I would like to thank all of those staff for their dedication to Higham Primary School over, in some cases, many years and wish them well for the future.

The PTA, as I mentioned earlier, are essential to the financial well being of the school. Their support is so important in providing the extras that make the school experience as good as it can be and is never taken for granted.

The Parents and Carers who support the school in any way with their time and efforts, attend events, contribute to Parent Representative discussions, engage positively with changes made by the school and encourage their children to bring their best to school everyday.

A special mention to last year's School House Captains and Vice Captains and those who have volunteered this school year to undertake those roles. They are Ambassadors for the school and help on various occasions by setting a fantastic example to others.

Finally, the Governors who support me through the year in monitoring how effective the school is operating. We have a mix of Staff Governors, Parent Governors, Co opted Governors and I am a Local Authority Governor to ensure that each stakeholder group is

represented in discussions. They all volunteer their time across 11 meetings through the academic year as well as visits to the school to meet with staff in line with the school plan.

I am always proud to be the Chair of Governors for Higham Primary School and every year I see the positive impact that this school has on the children of the village and the wider community.

Brian Maynard  
Chair of Governors  
September 2025