

Highwood Governor Newsletter

Summer Term 2015

Chair of Governor's email: chair@highwood.herts.sch.uk



Welcome!

We are pleased to present the first of our newsletters which we aim to publish each term.

The Governors are aware that many members of the school community have very little understanding of our role. By publishing these newsletters, we hope to bridge that gap, share some of the activities that we get involved in and improve communication between governors and the school community.

We hope you find this newsletter informative and wish you all an enjoyable and relaxing summer break.

Governor Activity

An important aspect of the governor remit is to visit the school in order to monitor and evaluate the school's progress towards achieving agreed improvement targets. Governors also need to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and assure themselves that assessment processes are rigorous.

This year, the 9 non-staff governors have carried out an astounding 74 monitoring and evaluation visits in addition to attending 32 meetings!

In addition, governors participated in the highly successful Governor Day which provided them with an excellent opportunity to see many different aspects of school life from site security through to school lunches and gardening club.

Given that our governors are volunteers with busy lives, this demonstrates their huge commitment to their role in the school.

HMI Pilot Inspection

In March this year, Highwood were visited by the HMI as part of the Ofsted pilot for short inspections. Although we didn't receive a formal report, the feedback we received from the inspectors was extremely positive and they were absolutely thrilled with what they saw.

This feedback is testament to the strong leadership team and hard work of all members of staff from teaching teams to support staff.

Well done and congratulations to you all. You never fail to impress governors with your professionalism, dedication and teamwork.

School Stakeholder Engagement

Parent/carer and staff engagement has been a joint focus of the senior leaders and governing body this year as we are keen to encourage a positive culture where all members of the school community feel welcomed, valued and heard.

Governors have paid particular attention to feedback we received through parent questionnaires, school report feedback, staff and pupil exit interviews and termly staff reviews.

Having identified the need, governors were pivotal in the decision to appoint a Parent Partner for the school.

It is envisaged that engagement will remain a key focus for governors and senior leaders during 2015/16.

Pupil Outcomes

This year's results are very pleasing and show that Highwood pupils develop well and make good progress.

Some of the highlights from this year's results, include:

- Excellent results following a focus on boys literacy in Early Years.
- Although children at Highwood perform well every year, we achieved our highest pass rate for a number of years in KS1 phonics.
- The number of pupils achieving level 5 has improved significantly across all subjects and once released, we expect our results to be considerably higher than the national average.

Pupil Highlights

We are extremely lucky at Highwood to have a team of staff that go that extra mile to ensure they provide exciting extracurricular activities for our children.

You only have to scan through the monthly Round Up to see some of the wonderful enrichment experiences this term, including the highly successful safety week, performance assemblies, open evening, the French Café, an Anglo Saxon workshop, a Magna Carta assembly, Yoga workshops, the Challenge Cup and the whole school Summer picnic to name but a few!

Governors recognise all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes to make these experiences memorable for the children and thank all staff involved, the Friends of Highwood and parents/carers for your ongoing support.

Unacceptable Conduct of School Visitors

At Highwood we are fortunate to have a supportive and friendly community where the vast majority of visitors to our school are respectful and keen to work with us.

Sadly, however, there are rare occasions when behaviour towards staff members is unacceptable and they have been made to feel unsafe. As such, governors are currently working on a policy to address such unwanted behaviour.

We genuinely welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school but I'm sure you will appreciate that we must take action to ensure it remains a safe place to learn and work.

Goodbye and Farewell

This Summer we say goodbye and thank you to Wayne Warren who has been a loyal and active governor at Highwood for 17 years. Wayne will be sadly missed but we wish him well with his endeavours in the art world.

We also bid farewell to Alison Day who was a governor in addition to her role as Deputy Headteacher. Alison is well liked and respected by everyone that has had the opportunity to work with her. We wish her all the very best.

Financial Update

The governing body's resources committee is accountable for ensuring that the school's budget is allocated to meet the school improvement objectives and to ensure the best outcomes for pupils, in the most efficient and effective way.

So far this year, we have:

- increased our staff budget to ensure that the impact of staff movement on pupils is minimised;
- reviewed our lettings policy to ensure we are competitive and receiving appropriate income (balanced with the needs of the community and the services our lets provide); and
- secured a new 17-seater mini bus, for a minimal contribution, through a local charity as the lease on our current minibus has expired.

Academy Conversion

We remain excited by the prospect of academy conversion and we look forward to converting during the early part of 2016.

New Pupil Assessment Scheme

We were pleased that so many parents attended the information meeting to discuss the new Hertfordshire assessment scheme.

Thanks to the foresight and planning of our senior leaders, we have already been assessing pupils in years 1, 3, 4 and 5 on the new criteria and believe we are now well placed to manage these changes across the whole school from September.

Finally, Thank You Parents/Carers

Whether you volunteer in school, read with your child, encourage them build on their knowledge through home learning, attend school events, help your child learn their lines for their sharing assembly or simply encourage your child to get an early night so that they are fresh for school; we appreciate the efforts that you make every day and recognise that we could not be so effective without your support.

Thank you!