



Highwood Primary School,
Fairwater Drive,
Woodley,
READING,
Berkshire.
RG5 3JE

Tel: 0118 926 5493

Email: admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk
www.highwood.wokingham.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mr M Hickey BA(Ed), PE QTS

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Dear Parent and Carers,

Welcome to the 2019 annual letter from the governors of Highwood Primary School. This letter briefly introduces the current governors and gives a summary of some of the work we have done during 2018/19 academic year and what we plan to do in 2019/20.

Who are we?

We currently have nine governors on our governing board. We are: Wendy Sabaroche (Chair), Beth Rowland (Vice-chair), Matt Hickey (Head Teacher), Dharmesh Modi, Kay Bridges, Lois Beaver, Nick Allaway, Rehan Kamal and Zahida Younis. A full complement would be eleven so we have two vacancies. We are all volunteers; many of us are parents of children at the school or staff.

What do we do?

A school governing board has three primary duties:

1. To set the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school.
2. To hold the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school.
3. To oversee the financial performance and ensure that money is well spent.

We are not involved in the day-to-day management of the school. Operational decision making is performed by the Head Teacher and senior leaders. Instead we are focused purely on the strategic and the longer term.

What have we done in the last year?

The governing board collectively volunteered around 200 hours of their time during the 2018/19 school year. Below is a selection of some of the notable decisions, actions or events we were involved in during the last twelve months:

- Governors contributed to the priorities on the School Improvement Plan. This is a document that contains the main short- and medium-term targets for the school.
- We examined the effectiveness of the assessment across the whole school. This resulted in using an assessment and tracking system called INSIGHT. Governors have spent significant time to understand the school data and effective monitoring of specific groups.

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- We checked how the school is spending pupil premium money to make sure that it is correctly targeted at closing any gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. We check that the spending plans are reasonable and are likely to produce the hoped-for effect on academic and personal outcomes.
- We approved the staff performance management process and the resultant pay progressions.
- We approved staffing changes for the 2019/20 year which included the recruitment of new teachers across the school.
- We performed analysis on historical and projected pupil numbers to better understand how the school should be structured in the years to come.
- We underwent training to gain a deeper understanding of the school's data and how to effectively analyse it in line with the school's objectives.
- We began a strategic discussion about the school premises and potential future improvements. We had our 1st Governors' day in 2018/19 Summer term. This was during transition day as the children went to their new classes and the newly recruited teachers joined for the day. This gave the governors a perspective of how we give the children and teachers the best start for the new academic year.
- We approved the additional Year 2 bulge class midway through 2018/19 at request of Wokingham Council. This was due to the large numbers on our admissions waiting list, the deficit of places across Woodley and our school having the accommodation necessary to meet the need of families in our community.

What do we plan to do this year?

Our plan for 2019/20 academic year is as follows:

- Ensure that the school leadership team continue to work well and embed the changes from the new Ofsted framework.
- The school finances have been well managed for the last few years so we are in the lucky position of having a secure base to move forward from. Our Resources committee will continue to focus on the difficult job of plotting a sustainable financial future whilst maintaining all the things that are good about our school.
- Work with our new School Council to continue making Highwood great.
- Ensure that the curriculum is embedded across the whole school and contributes to the development of phonics, reading, writing and maths. We plan to have specific project groups to look at this in more detail. After the success of our 1st Governors day last year, we intend to plan another one in Spring/Summer term to look at key aspects linked to the School Development Plan.

Interested in becoming a school governor?

We have two vacancies. Being a school governor can be a very interesting and rewarding role, allowing you to contribute to the continuing success of a vital part of the local community. We are always looking to expand the range of skills and experience on our governing board, so if you are interested in becoming a school governor, or would just like to know more, please get in touch.

Contact details

To contact the governing board please feel free to speak to one of us in person, contact the school office, or email us at: governor@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk



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