



Making learning an adventure

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Governors' Newsletter Summer 2017

Ofsted - Outstanding

Governor Role: Holding the leadership to account for the educational performance of the school and its children.

The last spring term has been a busy and exciting one for all at High Beeches with our much-awaited Ofsted Visit. You would have hopefully seen in our school newsletter and in the local press that our school did fantastically well and achieved an OUTSTANDING rating.



The governors would like to congratulate Ms Lawrence, Mrs Shewbridge and all the staff on this great rating. We would also like to thank Mrs Drake for her hard work as our previous Chair. The Ofsted visit covered all the key areas, as can be seen in the report, and was conducted over two days by four highly experienced inspectors. We were rated as Outstanding in all areas with the exception of EYFS where we are classified as Good. This area already has action plans in place, focused on what the Inspectors highlighted, and will be an emphasis for 2017/18.

Ofsted visits are critically important so that our schools can be assessed and robustly challenged to ensure our children get the quality of education they all deserve – however it is a stressful process so we thank all the High Beeches team as they rose to the challenge! It is also worthy to note that the New Common Assessment Framework for Ofsted Inspections was redesigned late 2015 and as such has become even more rigorous.

To set a context to our recent Outstanding rating : *Before Sept 2015 the % of Outstanding in Herts was 21.8% of our total primary schools; since Sept 2015 141 of those schools have been inspected again and only 7.1% have achieved Outstanding and even less (at 4.4%) have moved from Good to Outstanding. The Inspectors look for evidence of all areas on the Inspection days, however an Outstanding school will also look to provide enrichment to the curriculum and school day for the children. In this regard our focus on learning behaviours, Values programme, increased sports provisions, focus on music and a creative curriculum

and range of extra-curricular activities all help to make our children more rounded and happy, thus more engaged to learn.

As governors we would also like to thank you, the parents and carers, for fully supporting the school in all its endeavours. A key factor in the success of any school, and for children, is high levels of parental /carer support and engagement. We are blessed at High Beeches with a highly responsive and enthusiastic parent body. It was noted that High Beeches had the most responses from Parent View seen by our experienced Inspectorate team – and for that we all thank you for your feedback and support. Please do continue to engage and communicate with us as this is key to all our journeys at High Beeches.



For a more in-depth analysis of the Ofsted visit and what it meant for High Beeches please do come along to the HeadTeacher's Briefing: Our Outstanding Journey on Wednesday 14th June 7pm.

*Herts For Learning Internal Data May 2017

Parent Opinion Survey

Despite great feedback from parents and carers during our Ofsted inspection we want to continue to evolve and improve and as such, value your views and feedback. Currently we have a very active Parent Forum and regular communications routes for issues and suggestions with our weekly Head Teacher's Questions. However, as a school and governing body we like to issue an Annual Opinion Survey for benchmarking and development. The Parent Survey will be sent out before the end of half term – please do have your say and complete it.

Vision and Values next steps



Governor Role: Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school

Part of our governor role is to help set and evolve the strategy for the school. In school, the leadership team with the governors develop and monitor the delivery of the School's Development Plan (SDP) and this contains specific priorities for the next academic year. We would now like to do more work on our Vision and overall Strategy. So this term and into the next academic year, the School and governors will be looking at how we can develop this to include our new Values programme and ensure it fits for our growing school by 2020.

We have all done much work to embed the Values Programme this year and hopefully your children are

coming home talking to you about how they understand and use their Values. There is now an active Values Group of teachers, parents and governors who are looking at how Values can become the heart of all we do and this work will factor into our Vision work. Of course no Vision and Strategy would work without involvement and consultation so we will be after your views and feedback in the coming terms.

With the changing educational (and political!) landscape, one of our roles is to keep apace with new developments in education. So a new priority for us as governors has been to look into the new Multi-Academy Trusts. These are a new structure adopted by groups of schools looking to share costs and deliver combined benefits. There is a lot to understand, so we are doing a longer-term piece of work around assessing the pros and cons of different approaches/options and analysing any impact on High Beeches.

Funding Debate



Governor Role: Overseeing the financial performance of the school to ensure money is well spent.

It is that time of year again where budgets are reviewed. Although as a growing school we are currently funded sufficiently, as we look a few years down the line the financial impact of issues in the economy loom large. Many of you will have received letters from secondary schools and our combined Primary Heads Consortium, stressing the importance of using our voices to support local educational funding. Please do get involved and let your councillors and our new MP know (after June 8th!) that we value our schools and they need appropriate long term funding.

News Update



Library Building

We have had the first green light for our Library project with landowner's approval from HCC, so the next stage is to go to Planning. Our small Library project team are now focusing on funding. FoHBS have this project as a key priority - which is great news –so they will have many fundraising plans up their sleeve for next year. However, as a school we are actively applying for grants so any parents /carers who have connections through work and business that we can apply to, please contact the school. If you would like to join this proactive group, please also get in touch. The more, the merrier!

Governors Cup

Last term we had another successful Governors Cup, this year focused on our Values Programme. Our Infant and Junior overall winners submitted wonderful entries describing important people and their Values and designing their Values Superheroes. The different range of how the Values were demonstrated was wonderful and the governors noted that the standard of entries across the school was even higher than usual - thus it was VERY difficult to judge. The winners' entries are displayed in our special Values area in the Meadow Building. Well done to Sophia and Archie.



Governor Movements

Exiting:

As it is the last term of the year we find ourselves saying goodbye to some of our long-standing and valued governors. Mr David Noble and Mrs Barbara Fairs will be leaving us after a combined service of in excess of 20 years between them!

They have both devoted many years to our school and have provided a valuable consistency and experience on the governing body which we thank them greatly for. We wish them all the luck in future endeavours.

Opportunities:

As our governing body evolves we do look for new recruits so if you are aware of anyone in the broader community who wishes to serve as a Co-opted or Community governor please let us know. We are looking for general business skills, around IT, Health & Safety/technical and legal. An advert is attached.

Also an opportunity has arisen for a **new Parent Governor**, as Mrs Liz Taylor is stepping down at the end of the year due to work commitments. The governing body thank Mrs Liz Taylor for all her hard work over the last two years.

As indicated earlier, we are looking for set skills for any new governor and attached is the formal letter inviting applicants among the parent/carer body to apply to stand for election.

The process is outlined in the formal letter, but if you are interested please get a fellow parent to nominate you and provide an 80 word summary of your background and suitability to be used in the election process. **All nominations need to be in by the last day of term, at midday Thursday 25th May.**

Entering:

We have some good news, as a new governor is joining us. Matt Tang, a qualified accountant, has been brought on board to strengthen our financial acumen on the Governing Body and help us face any funding challenges for the future. We welcome Matt who is a parent at the school and therefore joins us in an Associate Governor for Finance capacity.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the above please do contact me on jhiggins@highbeeches.herts.sch.uk
