



Highfield Primary School

Headteacher: Julie Colley

Assistant Headteachers: Sharon
Woodward and Rachael McVeigh

Sandringham Green
Moortown
Leeds LS17 8DJ



Stephen Lawrence
EDUCATION STANDARD



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Phone: 0113 293 0155

Fax: 0113 293 0576

E-mail:

colleyj01@leedslearning.net

Website: highfield-primary.co.uk

School Governors Newsletter : March 2013

Welcome to the latest governors' newsletter – It's been a busy couple of terms!

1. Welcome from the Chair of Governors, Nancy Lester



Nancy Lester

To all Highfield parents and carers

It is hard to believe we are already approaching the end of the spring term, with so much from the year to celebrate and still more to look forward to.

Walking around the school, there are examples everywhere of the rich and varied curriculum that offers children at Highfield a wealth of exciting and unforgettable experiences. These play a big part in maintaining the high standards and achievements of the school.

I read with pleasure the regular updates on the activities of Highfield school – through its website and newsletters amongst other things - and enjoy catching up on sporting and musical achievements, community projects, competitions, off-site adventures and other wonderful, enriching activities that staff provide.

It's great to hear about the role of the School Council in informing and influencing school activities too – the energy of the School Council members and the engagement and enthusiasm of their class members in the things they do is amazing.

The school continues to benefit from our wonderful Friends of Highfield who continue to lead the way in innovative fund raising ideas (which most recently funded the new stage lighting in the hall). We are very grateful for their hard work and to all of you for supporting them.

Every year the governors work with the staff, children and parents and carers at Highfield to support the delivery of our School Improvement Plan. This identifies specific priority areas for the school, to ensure it continues to improve what it does and deliver excellent teaching and learning in a safe and happy environment. This year we are seeing the impact across all the school's priority areas, including how design technology lessons are being used to improve skills in maths, alongside specific initiatives to accelerate the achievements of children with special educational needs.

Our Autumn newsletter introduced the governors and outlined what it means to be a class governor. This Spring newsletter includes reports on a number of these class visits, each of which were both informative and rewarding – and great fun!

Finally, well done to all of the children. They are working very hard both in school and when out and about representing the school. They are well behaved and polite - a real asset to you! I'd like to thank you, too, for your continued support and wish you all a very happy Easter and look forward to an enjoyable and successful summer term.

2. Our continuing Chair of Resources, Leighton Williams

The resources committee looks after the finances and buildings of the school and, as we all know, budgets are very tight at the moment, therefore every pound spent must be carefully considered in this challenging environment. I think we're doing a good job of catering for the needs of the children within these tight financial constraints, and we aim to get best value out of every order. I do enjoy being involved in helping guide the continuing development of the school and working with our excellent Business Manager Jane Denton.



Leighton Williams

3. Our new Chair of Pupil Support, Mark Rudd

The Pupil Support Committee is responsible for the care, welfare and development of all the children at Highfield.

We place a very high priority on ensuring that all the relevant policies, procedures and structures are in place (and are adhered to) in order to keep our children safe; that children who might need extra support can be identified; that the school environment is a safe, happy, healthy and comfortable one for all the pupils; and that the emotional, physical and social needs of every single pupil are taken into account.

The main topics we cover in meeting these aims are as follows:

- Equal Opportunities and Inclusion
- Child Protection
- Attendance
- Special Educational Needs
- Food
- Behaviour.

If you have any questions about the work of this committee please contact Mark at markrudd@me.com



Mark Rudd

4. Our new Chair of Teaching & Learning, Mags Teale

I'm really delighted and excited about taking on this responsibility and am looking forward to discussions on how Highfield continues to make learning irresistible, whilst ensuring pupils get the best level of teaching.

In recent meetings we have had detailed conversations around how maths is taught in School and the launch of Matheletics, a fabulous web based learning tool.



Mags Teale

Class Visits by Highfield Governing Body

Mark Rudd's Class Visit to 1W

Just before the Christmas break I had the pleasure of spending some time joining in with Mrs Wragg's year one class. Having got to know Mrs Wragg a year earlier when she had the dubious pleasure of teaching one of my own boys, I had a feeling this was going to be an energetic hour... and I wasn't disappointed.



Mark Rudd

I began by talking about my work as a teacher of adults and asked them what they would like to do as a job when they are older. For 5-6 year olds they certainly have ambition, with lots of aspiring doctors, teachers, fire fighters and police officers in the room. I think the future of our public services looks pretty bright!

We also discussed things that they like to do outside school. I told them about my interests and discovered a huge range of hobbies and extra-curricular activities - a wide range of sports was mentioned and several reported a keen interest in wildlife and nature. It was all very positive and a good indicator of the talented, enthusiastic children we have at Highfield.

After a long and interesting discussion about their interests, the children showed me all the work they had been doing over the first four months of their second year at school, excitedly talking me through the fantastic display of art and crafts all around the room.

Before I was allowed to leave I was treated to a rousing rendition of "Teddy Bear Rock n' Roll" by the children, led by the inspirational but shameless Mrs Wragg and Mrs Harrison and complete with a wonderful dance routine. It was great entertainment and really encapsulated the atmosphere in the classroom.

So, thank you to the teachers and the pupils of 1W for providing me with an hour of great entertainment and a real insight into the life of year one children. To be able to experience life in the classroom first hand is a real privilege as a governor.

Claire Hills' time with 2T

With both children at school and some spare time on my hands I decided that perhaps I could try some volunteer work. I e-mailed Mrs Colley and she suggested Friday afternoons in Miss Thackrah's class. A bit of pencil sharpening, washing of paint pots, and clearing up after the children – I could do that no problem. How wrong could I be? To be fair there is a little bit of tidying up, however volunteering at school is about getting involved. Since September the topics class 2T (and I) have covered have included Mexico, New Zealand, time, the 5, 2, and 10 times tables, measuring and maps to name but a few.



Claire Hills

To my horror one of my first discoveries was that after playtime on a Friday afternoon 2T have singing! This has caused much hilarity in the Hills house, as the memory of how I was rather unceremoniously ejected from the school choir age 6 (yes really) haunts me to this day. Miss Thackrah assures me that it is not necessary to sing well, just enthusiastically! Over the past few weeks my blushes have been spared and I have been enjoying listening to class 2T read, which has far less potential for embarrassment!

One of my favourite lessons was at Christmas when Santa tasked 2T with a particularly important job. All of the carrots for his reindeer needed sorting. You see, each reindeer prefers a different shape and size of carrot (who knew?). Class 2T measured and sorted all the carrots ready to feed to the reindeer. The children had to work in groups and so not only were their measuring and sorting abilities tested but also their teamwork and leadership skills. I am reliably informed that Santa was very impressed and none of his reindeer received carrots of the wrong size!

2T is full of amazingly talented young people and I have felt privileged to be able to watch their progress throughout the year. As governor volunteering at school has been a particularly valuable experience. I have been able to witness first-hand the amazing diversity of topics covered by the curriculum at Highfield and the innovative ways the teachers have found to teach them. Most importantly I have been reminded that learning can be fun, it is at Highfield and I look forward to continuing my education!

Maureen Savery - Class 3BC Governor Visit

What a wonderful and memorable experience I will treasure of Tuesday 5th February 2013. Not only had fresh snow fallen heavily overnight but my long anticipated visit to Mrs Buckle's 3BC class (as newly appointed governor) could be in jeopardy once more.

My arrival was greeted in the hall with vigorous and coordinated Haka dancing from all the children and staff who recited lyrical singing from New Zealand. This certainly worked up a sweat! It was followed by an impressive personal tour of the new build and a quick catch-up with staff who had previously taught my two children.

After morning break there was an interactive literacy lesson on time openers. Everyone remained well engaged and politely shared their work. I was now ready to discuss my role and responsibility as school governor at Highfield and answer any probing questions. These came quickly in a flurry and hopefully, 3BC may now have a better understanding of their governing body and the positive impact and decision-making this has on the school community.

I was pleasantly surprised to discover that 3BC had explored many different cultures through dance. This was the perfect opportunity to discuss my family heritage and diverse background. I shared my personal experience about the Caribbean whilst investigating the map and key features and geographical landmarks of Jamaica. It seems that Mrs Buckle and I have a great deal more in common than we originally thought... When I was growing up, African folktales and story telling were a long established cultural tradition, so I really enjoyed reading Anancy and Mr Dry-bone to the whole class.

I am looking forward to seeing you all again in the very near future and would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children including staff members for making my visit so welcoming.

Highfield School Council visit – Margaret Maiden, the newest member of our Governing Body

At the end of January I was invited by the School Council to attend one of their regular meetings. The meeting was chaired by Rose and representatives from all the classes (plus Mrs Colley) were present. The agenda was quite full and included reports on collections for charities the school supports, for example the shoe boxes for Africa and the Bun Day Monday event which raised £163.00 for the Candlelighters Charity.

I was impressed with how comfortable the pupils were with the whole process of being able to voice their ideas and opinions in the meeting. Class representatives used the Orange Book system to raise issues and put forward suggestions and the School Council discussed them, often providing responses and decisions.



Margaret Maiden with the School Council

Getting the most from Highfield's Website

If you are looking for information, the website is a great place to start and it is regularly updated. Every term the governor's newsletter will include a brief guide to some of the things you might not realise are available online, with quick links to get you started.



Jacqui Green

- **Guide to the national curriculum levels:** You will have been issued with a booklet containing the guide to the national curriculum levels at the October parents evening. If you have misplaced your copy please look on the website as the booklet can be found in the **Curriculum Section** <http://www.highfield-primary.co.uk/curriculum-plans>
- **Class sharing assemblies:** If you want to know when your child's class sharing assembly will be, a full list can now be found in the **noticeboard** section under the subheading **sharing assemblies** <http://www.highfield-primary.co.uk/events>
- **Curriculum guides:** As your child enters each new academic year you will be issued with a guide to the year ahead. This will include an overview of the curriculum areas to be covered. This information can also be found on the website in the **curriculum** section. As the school has moved to 2 form entry the curriculum models have changed and the website has recently been updated. <http://www.highfield-primary.co.uk/curriculum-plans>
- **Term dates:** If you are thinking of booking a holiday, all term dates (including those for the 2013-2014 academic year) can be found in the section **noticeboard** under the subheading **calendar**. Training days for 2012-2013 & 2013-2014 can also be found here. <http://www.highfield-primary.co.uk/school-calendar1>
- **Policies:** Highfield policies are regularly reviewed and updated by the board of governors and can be found by clicking the clearly-marked link on the home page
- **The Highfielder:** Congratulations to budding year 6 journalists Thomas, Abigail, Teagan and Mia who have launched "The Highfielder". The new half termly children's newsletter can be found in the **Pupils' area** section of the website. <http://www.highfield-primary.co.uk/the-highfielder>

An Introduction to the STEPS programme:

The governors are real advocates of the STEPS programme at Highfield. STEPS stands for **Steps To Excellence for Personal Success**.

It is a 13 unit programme developed by Lou Tice, founder of the Pacific Institute in Seattle in 1971. Since then it has developed an



Tony Walberg

international reputation for its practical programmes in the field of self-help psychology.

The units are delivered in a fun and friendly way, giving participants plenty of time to fully understand the concepts of understanding how our brain works, changing our self talk, lifting self-esteem, setting goals, following them through, visualisations and affirmations. It looks at the beliefs we have that stop us from moving forward and helps to lift confidence.

This programme was fully taken on board by Leeds Education, championed by Chris Edwards the then chief executive, in 2005. Many leaders, movers and shakers of our society have been on a STEPS programme. I trained in 2006, first doing a 6 day course in Investors in Excellence and then a 4 day training course to facilitate STEPS. The STEPS programme is not a parenting programme but it does give wonderfully helpful tips on encouraging young people to fill their true potential. It covers all 5 Every Child Matters outcomes, Being Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy & Achieve, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Wellbeing.

Here are just a few quotes from STEPS participants;

"Steps has help me believe in myself and have more confidence, It was motivating and helped me overcome mental as well as physical challenges" (Went on to become a teaching assistant)

"I feel confident and stronger and more able to make decisions for myself"

"Potentially life changing. I am feeling so much more positive than when I started the course. I will use these tools to drive my life forward in all aspects"

"I learned to be my own boss of my mind and my life. My life has already changed with STEPS and I feel that there are lots of changes waiting for me and my family in the future"

"I learned how to picture things in a positive way to make life better, I will be able to do this in the future"

(after feeling very isolated, having moved to England, went on to get a very good job on a par with the one she had when she lived in her home country)

"It seeps into you and makes many thoughts and actions more positive. A better attitude about everything"

(went on to be part of the friends)

"I found that it became an oasis in my very intense week, a space and time to think about me and my life. It has sparked me intellectually as well and I am looking for further study. It helped reinforce that there are things I am good at, which has helped my confidence"

Most participants form very good friendships during the 13 week period and some have gone on to be close friends to this day. We have had a running group formed, some becoming members of the friends and others helping in school.

For further information on the STEPS programme please contact the school office.

