

Junior School

Infant School

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## High Down Schools

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**High Down Schools**

Down Road  
Portishead  
North Somerset  
BS20 6DY

**Executive Headteacher**

Mrs A Cowan

Dear Parents and Carers,

During this term there have been many working party meetings and training sessions that governors at High Down have attended as well as a Local Governing Body meeting.

Firstly, governor training sessions were provided free of charge by the Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP) and were very well attended by the High Down governors.

These included:

- **Safeguarding** – Mandatory training on how to ensure the safety of children in education
- **Scheme of delegation** – To help understand and challenge the responsibilities delegated from the LSP
- **Financial reporting** – Best practice in reading and understanding financial reports and in delivering the role of ‘critical friendship’
- **Championing the disadvantaged** – Holding leaders to account for the progress of pupil premium, looked after and English as a second language children.
- **High level data for governors** – To monitor, challenge and support progress in your school.

Our working parties involve 2-3 governors meeting with the relevant school lead to oversee, hold to account and ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. The working parties then share highlights/outcomes of their work at the Local Governing Body meeting which was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> November.

The following working party meetings have taken place this term:

- Health and Safety
- Finance / Budgets
- Safeguarding
- Pupil Premium
- Admissions

Governors have also been involved during the day to day routines of school life, either by shadowing the infant and junior School Councils, shadowing the senior leaders through learning walks of Maths and English lessons and whilst looking at the learning environments.

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## Summary of recent Governors' Board Meeting

The school governing body met on the evening of 28 November for yet another busy agenda with huge emphasis on financial budgets and pupil performance. The meeting was chaired by Nolan Hibberd.

- Sue Mason, Rob Audain, Sonia Goddard, Penny Atherton and Heather Kirkpatrick were voted to be re-appointed for another term.
- Joe Lee, who has been a parent governor, was voted in as a co-opted governor. This means there is a vacancy for a parent governor which is currently in the process of being filled through a parent election.
- The Headteacher's report gave us the opportunity to hear about the broad and balanced activities, trips and visits that go on across High Down Schools and how High Down prepares children for life in modern Britain. It was noted that this a key part of High Down, through the School Councils, Parliament Week, Harvest Festivals and Remembrance etc.
- We looked at the progress of the 2018/19 Raising Attainment and Progress Plan (RAPP). Governors noted how the progress and updates were clear and able to see the direction of the school.
- We looked at 2017/2018 pupil performance data across the schools and some key points were noted:
  - At the end of Reception (Foundation Stage), for all areas, we are above average against North Somerset schools and particularly pleased with Writing which has been a focus.
  - At the end of year 2 (Key Stage 1), results were above national in all subjects at the 'expected level' and the proportion of children achieving 'greater depth' continues to be well above national.
  - At the end of year 6 (Key Stage 2) the results show we are above national averages, with Maths and Reading significantly above.
- We also looked at autumn performance data and 2018/2019 end of year targets.
- The infant and junior budgets were also discussed and approved.
  - The School Business Manager provided a comprehensive report covering budget status, open expense items, financial risks and site topics.
  - Budgets for 2018/2019 were reviewed and challenged. It was evident that the general squeeze on education funding leads to very tight budgets with little or no margin.
  - Three-year forecasts were reviewed (data requested by LSP) which also highlights the financial strain on the school.

As a governing body, our role is made easier by being continually welcomed into the school and the communication of the school staff to which we are hugely appreciative.

I'd also like to take this opportunity on behalf of the governors to thank the Infant School PSA and Friends of High Down Junior School, as they work tirelessly to raise much needed funds to provide for the children and this was noted at our recent governors meeting.

The views of parents continue to be important, so if you have any questions, concerns or a view point to share then we can be contacted by email [chair.governor@highdownschools.org](mailto:chair.governor@highdownschools.org).

On behalf of High Down Governors, we'd like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Gail Meacock and Nolan Hibberd

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