

Downview School Governing Body

**GOVERNORS OPEN DAY
REPORT**

18th March 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Every year in March, Downview School holds its *Governors' Open Morning*. During our time in the school we visit every single classroom.

Just like our individual governor school visits, the *Governors' Open day* has a focus which is linked to the School Improvement Plan. Our visit this year was on "Talk for Writing".

The following is a breakdown by year group of what they were working on:

Reception -The *Gruffalo* story.

Year 1 -Writing for *Mother's Day*.

Year 2 -The *Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* story.

Year 3 -*Wombat Goes Walkabout* story.

Year 4 -*Escape from Pompeii* story.

Year 5 - The story of *Theseus*.

Year 6 -Newspaper articles.

We spent the morning visiting classrooms, talking to children and looking at their work. We took some photographs during the course of our visit and have produced a portfolio of our morning which is in the reception area of the school.

Without exception, all the children were fully engaged in their lessons.

The *Governors* had a wonderful morning and we would like to thank all the staff and children for welcoming us into their classrooms. It was a great pleasure talking to the children who were all confident talking to us about what they were doing and showing us the stories they had written.

Governor Report (1)

Reception: The group of children we observed had a picture of the Gruffalo and were making sentences to describe him from remembering the descriptions from the story. They were talking together and with a teacher to make their sentences. We were shown by a child, a model of the Gruffalo and the large display board.

Year 1: The children were doing poems for Mother's day which they were going to write out with special pens to take home for their Mums. They began with 'My Mummy makes me smile when.....'. There had been a lot of talk before and that was being built on when we were there as they were thinking of different ideas. The two teachers were doing the same thing in slightly different ways. It was nice to see the children telling each other their ideas and then telling the teachers what their friend had said so they were not only talking but listening as well. Some of the ideas were 'when she tickles me, when she makes cakes, when she plays with me.' The children who needed extra help had some idea words on cards and were rearranging them to make the sentences with help from an adult.

Year 2: The class had read and talked about the story of The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse and they were in the process of studying the Town mouse in more detail. They had a drawing of him on their page and were making up sentences about him. They were being encouraged to extend their sentences using descriptive words about how he looked and his personality, one had written 'he even had a shiny nose' another 'his shoes were shaped like carrots'.

Year 3: After reading the story of The Wombat Goes Walkabout they were writing their own version of the story so they were sticking to the story line with the wombat, crocodile and the Tasmanian devil but making changes. One class was finding a girlfriend for the Wombat and the other class had hunters in their story. They had pictures to help them to get it all in the right order. Lots of talking and discussion had obviously gone into the versions we saw which were still not complete.

Year 4: The children were very impressive to start off with as I think they surprised themselves and Mrs Ward by coming in from play and sitting down in absolute silence! They then proceeded to do a performance for us of their shortened version of the story of Escape from Pompeii with actions. It was brilliant; they were all involved and enjoying performing. We then looked, with a small group, at a video on a tablet of the class acting the story in the hall and then listened to them telling us about their own stories and had a brief look at some of them. They had written their own story based on the class story with their own characters and ending. They were not allowed to use the word 'said' so they told me some of the words they used instead, 'shouted', 'joked', 'coughed' and 'murmured'. There had obviously been lots of discussion and they would have shared a lot more with us if we had been able to spend more time with them. The other class gave us a version of the story by groups standing at the front of the class and telling each part of the story with actions and the rest of the class sitting down followed the actions. The year group had really worked hard using an inspiring story to inspire them.

Year 5: We looked at two of the children's books where they had been reading different versions of the story of Theseus and doing their own writing from them. There was evidence that they must have done a lot of talking and discussion before the writing we saw, as they had developed their descriptions from what they had read and talked about. Their stories had different endings as had some of the versions they had read. There was lots of descriptive writing; '..the Minator hooked his claws into Theseus'; '.....knashing Theseus as violently as he could';Theseus trembled with fear.....: ...the Minator wildly charged at him

Year 6: The children were looking at newspaper articles that they had brought in from home. The idea was to eventually make a Downview Times but they needed to know how the journalists work to make their articles, the what, where, why, when, who. One class were highlighting these things in their article and there was lots of discussion going on. They were going to be given a sheet with a picture already on it and make their own article from that. The pictures were all taken around the school and some could be quite controversial so should make good articles. There will have to be a lot more talk before any writing.

The other class were looking at their article they had brought in and particularly looking at the use of headings, photos, paragraphs. Quotes and captions all to help them later with their own article writing.

I very much enjoyed my visit, as usual there was not enough time to talk to as many children as I would have liked. In all the year groups we visited the atmosphere was buzzing. The children all appeared happy, concentrating on and enjoying their learning. They were all happy for us to go into their classrooms and talk to them. All the children we spoke to were all very polite and well behaved and the staff were all very accommodating.

Thank you to all.

Mrs Val Morris

Governor Report (2)

My day started off in Year 1 where they were talking about writing their poems for Mothering Sunday. All the poems started with "My Mummy makes me smile when" Some children had already written theirs and read them out to the rest of the class - they were lovely and quite funny. Both Pear and Apple class were talking about what they could put into their poem and how they could make it even better. The activity was led by the teachers, whole class discussions took place and then the children talked in pairs. After they had been talking in pairs, one teacher, instead of asking a child what made them smile, asked them what their partner had said. This proved that the children were actually listening to each other.

From there I visited the Year 6 classes where they were looking at newspaper articles they had brought in and annotating them. In prior lessons they had looked at photos from newspaper articles and then tried to guess what the article was about. There had been class discussions and group discussions about various newspaper articles and the children told me that they found this extremely useful in helping them write their own articles.

We were then shown by the class teacher sheets of paper headed up "Downview Times" with a photo on each. The children had been outside and had had their photos taken depicting real issues; these were then going to be given to groups of children who then had to come up with a headline and write the newspaper article.

My next stop was year 2 where recently they had read *The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse*. They had spent time talking about the respective personalities of the two characters and why they were like that. For this age group that is quite a difficult thing to do. Initially, the children used repetitive sentences, then they took out the repetitive words to make a sentence and then finally they added something to make the sentence more interesting.

I spoke to some children about what they were doing and they said they had really loved the story and were enjoying writing about the characters.

My next port of call was Year 5. They were working on the story of Theseus. The children started by using freeze frame and discussing this and the story. They then put photos in their books and wrote notes around the picture. They then read different versions of the Minotaur which is one aspect of the story of Theseus. After this the children wrote their own version of the story

incorporating what they had liked about the different aspects of the story.

We read two children's versions of this, they were quite different from each other as they were slightly different versions but both had us captured by the way they described what was happening in the story.

From there I went to Year 4 who had been looking at the book *Escape from Pompeii*. Oak class did a whole class performance for us of their abridged version of the story with actions. Beech class did the same thing but they were standing up in groups. We were surprised to be treated to such performances and we thought that they were great.

The children were given pictures of the story and the children had to say which part of the story the picture belonged to. After these discussions they were then given the task of writing their own version of the story. The group of children we spoke to were telling us how they wrote the story as it actually happened with a volcano erupting in the story and there being only two survivors but to make it more personalised to them they changed the names of the characters. They explained that the word "said" was in jail and therefore could not be used in their version of the story. All the children were eager for us to look at their version of the story and talk about it. They explained that they still had more work to do on this story.

Whilst we were looking at their books we were given an I Pad to watch as they had just recorded their PE lesson in which they had done a dance depicting the eruption of a volcano as in the story.

We also spoke to the children about their impending trip to Hook Court. They were all very excited and could not wait to go. They even told us which DVD they would be watching.

Unfortunately my visit to Reception was rather a fleeting one. The children had been reading the story of *The Gruffalo*. In one class they had an amazing model that someone had made of the *Gruffalo* and in the book corner there was a huge *Grufalo*. The children each had a picture of the *Gruffalo* in their books and they were writing what he looked like and then reading their work to the teacher. They were all extremely engrossed in their work they hardly knew we were there.

My final stop was in Year 3, where they had been reading the story of *Wombat Goes Walkabout*. The idea was to change the story slightly but keep the same

characters. Interestingly although both classes were doing the same work their stories were completely different. Whilst I was in the classrooms the children had been given a storyboard and they were writing their version of what was happening on this and drawing pictures to go with what they were writing about.

I had a most enjoyable morning that seemed to go by in a flash. All the children were thoroughly engaged in their work and any chat we overheard was in connection with their work.

Sue Hawthorn

Governor Report (2)

Our morning started with a visit to Year 1.

The children were talking about the poems they were writing for Mothering Sunday. The first line was "My Mummy makes me smile when" Some of the children had finished and their teacher asked them to read their poems to the class, the poems were all charming, and funny, and certainly made me smile.

Both classes were involved in the same activity, in slightly different ways. The children were encouraged to express their ideas and share them with the class. One of the teachers got the children to ask their neighbour what 'makes me smile'. This was a good way of encouraging the children to talk, and listen, to each other.

The classroom assistants helped the children who needed extra help with words printed on cards, that they then rearranged into sentences for their poems.

The children obviously enjoyed the session and I am sure their mothers would love the poems.

We then went on to visit Year 6.

The children had been asked to bring in newspaper articles.

One class were looking at how journalists gather information, (the what, where, why, when, who), and then put the relevant information (use of headings, photos, punctuation, quotes) into a piece for the paper. There was a lot of discussion going on, the children had got a lot out of their articles and were keen to get involved with 'Downview Times'

The other year 6 class had been given a sheet with a picture already on it and had been asked to write their own article from that. The pictures were taken from all around the school, some could be seen as quite controversial, I am sure they will provide the basis for interesting articles.

Next was Year 2:

The story of The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse had been read by the children. The children had been given a drawing of the Town Mouse and were making up sentences about him using descriptive words, how he looked, his personality, colours, and shapes. Every 'Town Mouse' was different, the children had obviously been engaged by this activity and it was fascinating talking to them about their pictures.

We went onto visit year 5

The children had been reading different versions of the story of 'Theseus and the Minator'

We were able to look at two of the children's versions of the story, they had obviously read, talked about and discussed the stories they had read. The stories they had written had different endings as had some of the versions they had read.

After a short coffee break we went to visit year 4

The children came in from play in complete silence! Very impressive.

The children then gave us a performance of their, shortened, version of the story of 'Escape from Pompeii' with actions. The children were terrific, they obviously enjoyed it nearly as much as we did.

Unfortunately, due to a previous appointment, I had to leave at this point so I was not able to visit Reception or Year 3.

I had an amazing morning, I enjoyed meeting the staff and the children who were well behaved, polite and enjoying their learning. We were welcomed into their classrooms, they were happy to talk to us about their projects and show us their work.

Thank you to all the children and staff for a brilliant morning.

Eileen Lord



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18th March 2014

All Members of Staff,

Downview School

Dear All,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Governors to thank you all for the wonderful morning we had yesterday. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Without exception everywhere we went we were made to feel extremely welcome and we wish we could have stayed longer in every class we visited. We saw lots of fantastic work and the children were a real treat to talk to. The whole atmosphere around the school was happy and hard working and the children were obviously fully engaged in their activities.

Please pass on our thanks to all the children for making us feel so welcome in their classroom and for chatting to us about their work.

Kind regards

Sue Hawthorn

Chair of Governors

