



Governors  
Open  
Morning  
Report

April  
2018

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At Downview School we learn and grow together every day

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## INTRODUCTION

Every year, Downview School holds its *Governors' Open Morning* and during our time in the school we visit every single classroom. Just like our individual *Governor Visits*, the *Governors' Open Day* has a focus. As our individual *Governor Visits* focus is on maths we decided that the focus for our open morning would be "writing". Both maths and writing are *Key Issues* on the *School Improvement Plan*.

*Governors* split into two groups to enable us the time to visit every year group and every class within that year group.

We spent the morning visiting the classrooms, talking to staff and the children about their work and looking at some of the children's work they were doing at the time. We also took the opportunity to look at some of their books and admired the high calibre of work we saw. We took some lovely photographs during the course of our visit which will be included in a portfolio that will be in the reception area of the school.

Without exception all the children were fully engaged, enjoying their lessons and were extremely polite.

The *Governors* had a most enjoyable morning and would like to thank all the staff and children for welcoming us into their classrooms.

## Governor Report 1

My first port of call for the day was Year 1. When we arrived the children were looking at the prefix "un" and how it changed the words on the board if the prefix was added it to, for example, happy changed to unhappy. The children soon recognized that by adding this prefix the new word was the opposite of the original word.

The teacher then talked to the children about what they had done the previous day. They had looked at instructions. The children said that if you don't know what to do following instructions would help with such things as building a house.

The children went on to discuss that when you are writing instructions there are three things that you must do to make sure they were instructions. These were:

- Numbers - so that you know what order to do things in.
- Bossy Words - which were doing words, they were words that told you what to do i.e. wrap, get, etc.
- New line for each instruction

The children then split into groups to undertake various tasks. One group were sticking pictures into their books and then writing sentences with a "un" word in it.

The next group I visited I had to don my 'editing glasses' as these glasses helped me to edit instructions so that I could make my flower. The children were looking at a set of instructions and changing words into describing words to make the instructions sound not only more interesting but also clearer to follow. For example, they changed the word 'get' to words such as grab, pinch and collect. They were also using this activity to reinforce the words they had learnt the previous week about a flower. These words were leaf, stem, roots and petals.

Another group were following instructions on how to colour in a picture of some flowers. Some of the instructions asked them to only colour in a certain number of things like petals.

From there I went into Reception where a group of children were playing the Obb and Bob game. It was great fun and they all had a fun time. The object of the game was to distinguish between real and false words. So a word would come up on the screen and they had to feed it to either Bob who ate real words or Obb who ate false words. Obb and Bob made eating noises when they were given the words, however, if they were given a word that was not one they ate then they would make other noises, such as 'burping'. The children thought this great fun.

Another group were cutting out words and putting them into the correct order to make a sentence. The topic was the life cycle of a frog. The teacher would say the sentence into a sound button and then the child would play it back and put the words in front of them into the correct order.

One child insisted on showing us how he had used building blocks to make his name. He was very pleased with himself and rightly so!

On to Year 4 where they were looking at the book *The Hunter* by Paul Geraghty. All the children we spoke to said they were enjoying reading this book. One group of children were looking at an extract from the book that had spelling and punctuation mistakes in it and they were typing the text again on their computers using the correct spelling and punctuation. The children told me that they looked at the text together and discussed what was wrong with it, changed it in purple and then typed it up correctly. I noticed that they had the *CGP* books on their tables too which I remember my children using.

Another group were looking at another extract from the book that the teacher had changed some of the words into the incorrect tense. The children had to re-write the text making sure it was all in the past tense. Again the children had looked at the piece of writing and discussed amongst themselves which words should be changed to make the paragraph into the past tense before they wrote it themselves.

One group of children who were working with a teacher had mapped out the story which was about a girl called Jamina who one day while playing hunters in the hot dry African bush, finds a baby elephant whimpering besides its dead mother. As Jamina bravely helps the little orphaned elephant return to its herd, she goes on a journey of self discovery and realizes that she will never be a real hunter. These groups of children were creating their own character to take on Jamina's role and had chosen their own animal. As homework, the children had to carry out their own research on their chosen animal. The group were building up sentences to describe their feelings and thoughts so that they could incorporate these sentences into their own story.

One group of children were working with a TA looking at unfamiliar words that appeared in sentences from the book. They would look up the meaning of these words in a dictionary and write the sentence again using their own word.

One of the Year 4 teachers explained to us that this was rotation week which the children really enjoyed. Two groups in the rotation had adult input and discussions which would help the children have good vocabulary for their stories.

By then it was playtime so the children had to traffic light their work and tidy up. The teacher said that she got each group to share a top tip on how to tackle the task they had been given. They had planned to do this after break.

As it was break time for KS2 we took ourselves off to the KS1 Assembly. A KS2 teacher came into the assembly to tell the children all about a writing competition. They could write about anything they liked from elephants to minecraft. They could also present it in any way they wanted be it a poster leaflet or booklet. She went on to explain that the winner from each year group would receive a £10 voucher. The children were extremely excited about this. I hope I am able to hear the outcomes of this competition.

The rest of the assembly was taken up with the re-enactment of *George and the Dragon* by children picked from the room. The theme of the assembly was about being brave when it comes to the things you are frightened of just like St George did when he fought the dragon.

After a quick coffee we went back into reception. The children were reading out words that were on the interactive white board as a warm up. Then up came some words on the board that were all jumbled up and had to be put into the correct order to make a sentence. They had clues to help them such as a word with a capital letter meant it was the beginning of the sentence and the word with a full stop after it meant it was the end of the sentence. The words were dragged into the correct order. Then the teacher said the following sentence into a sound board "Frogspawn is in a jelly egg". Children volunteered to come up to the board to write the words that were in the sentence. They had a big finger to use so that they could remember to use a finger space to separate the words.

The children then went into their groups to do various activities. These were as follows:

- Pineapples - went to another classroom to work with the American student as it was part of her assessment to work with the children on tasks that she had devised but these tasks had to be related to the current topic in reception.
- Mangoes - playing the Obb and Bob game
- Raspberries - were working with a TA
- Bananas - working with the teacher cutting up words and sticking them into their books in the correct order to make a sentence.

My final port of call was back into Year 1 to the class I had not visited first time round. Some of the children were outside with a TA following instructions on how to plant a flower. Some of the children who had already planted their flowers told me that they would be taking them home once they had grown.

As before a group of children were following instructions on colouring parts of flowers. Some children had more detailed instructions than others which they pointed out to me. I did comment on all their colouring as it was so neat and tidy.

I looked at the "washing line" in the classroom which had on it 'what we are learning today'. Hung on pegs were the following:

- To read and edit instructions
- To form the letters b d h k l t
- To show tens and ones in numbers up to 100
- To spell the number words up to 20
- A poem is the best words in the best order
- We are learning poems by the poet Roger Stevens.

A mixed ability group were making up sentences using "un" words. One little boy told me he found it a little tricky so another little girl gave him some help. For inspiration they had words on the main part of a cut out airplane and the un word was on the front part of the plane. One girl had extended her sentence by using the word 'because'. After they had finished writing their sentences they then had a list of the days of the week and had to cover them up and try to spell them themselves and then do a self check.

I was then able to look at some of the children's books. They had delight in showing me their targets and which ones they had achieved. Targets were such things as, to use my spellings, to form my letters correctly, to use a different sentence starter and to use finger spaces. From looking at the books I could see how they had written their own story using the book "I want my hat back" by Jon Klassen. The children had also read Jack and The Beanstalk and had used their own words to describe a character from the book and then used these words to write a description of a character from the book. I also saw how they had created their own crayon and had written about how the crayon feels.

I was very impressed with the standard of writing.

I had a thoroughly enjoyable morning. I only wish I could have stayed longer.

*Sue Hawthorn*

Chair of Governors

## **Governor Report 2**

Year 6 - Two classes - Focus on Story they had all read Wonder by R.H. Palacio.

Year 5 - Two classes - Focus on Battle of Bosworth.

Year 2 - Three classes - Focus on plants.

Year 3 - Two classes - Focus on grammar.

Year 6: The first class we visited were exploring characters through creative writing and drawing. They were listening to the teacher reading a passage from a book they had all read. Wonder by R J Palacio. She stopped every so often to ask how the characters were feeling and as to why they had changed their minds about the costumes they were wearing for Halloween. This reflected their personality and this was discussed. The teacher had looked up the 20 most popular costumes in America for Halloween and they were quite different to our scary ones. Mostly they were characters like Spiderman and Superwoman. The children then had to think about what they would have worn.

We looked at some displays in the classroom an interesting quote was: 'Life is the most important gift you will ever get, don't waste it.' We looked at displays outside in the corridor particularly to note if there was both girls' and boys' work on display and there was.

The other Year 6 class was doing very similar work; the children were reading the passage aloud. I was pleased to see the children were volunteering to read and if their voices were not very loud it did not matter as the others were following with their own copies of the book, one between two. We took some photos of the 'washing line displays of grammar names and their meanings and some displays.

Year 5: The children had watched a video about the Battle of Bosworth and had discussed it. They were writing their own version of the event having made notes in their Magpie books to help them with it. Most were working independently; one group was with the teacher and another with a TA putting words on a white board for extra help. There were words on the class white board to help them as well.

Year 2: The Year Two's had begun a topic on plants and had been on a trip around the school grounds to see what was there. They had made it into a scientific experiment, thinking about what they might see, the day before in the classroom and then matching it with what they did see on the day. They were looking at the number of different plants and identifying different species. We saw different stages of the following work as we went to each classroom.

They were in the process of writing a report using words to help them like 'first', 'after that' and 'finally'. One class was sitting on the carpet revisiting in their minds what plants they had seen and another was beginning the writing.



Some were using joined writing, some were still not ready but were still writing neatly. On each teacher's boards there was a sentence to get them started in printed writing so all could understand and then words to help under in joined up writing. One teacher had not been there the day before so the children had to tell her where they went and what they saw. They did some talking to partners on the carpet in the discussion. The children were reminded of using commas for their lists of plants. They were asked to point to the words on display in the classroom that would help them. We took some pictures of the displays which had just begun about plants and others in classrooms and corridors - lovely.

Year 3: The first class was almost in silence when we entered as most were on the carpet reading on their own. Others were completing a grammar exercise. Then they all went quietly to their places and marked the exercise on adjectives themselves. We had a short time with the other Year 3 class and shared writing books with two girls who were very keen to show us their work.

As in visits before we could have spent longer talking to the children and seeing their work. We could see that they were all very much focussed, happy and engaged in what they were doing. In all the year groups we visited the atmosphere was buzzing and the children were enjoying their learning. The children and teachers 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 teachers were all very accommodating. I very much enjoyed my visit. Thank you to Mrs Williams for organizing the morning and to the teachers and children in all the classes I visited.

*Val Morris*  
LA Governor

### **Governor Report 3**

The morning began with a visit to Cedar and Chestnut classes.

#### **Year 6 (9.00 to 9.40)**

In Cedar class, they had just completed a Grammar Test as we arrived. They then started a Literacy lesson where they continued studying a book called 'Wonder' by R.J. Palacio. The teacher read a passage from the book and the children listened well and followed in their own copies. The focus statement 'Can I explore characters through creative writing and drawing?' was displayed in the white board. There then followed a question and answer session where the class explored the reasons why the character August had changed his costume. The teacher explained how American Halloween costumes are more varied than British ones and included examples such as superman and unicorns! The children were then challenged to choose a character from the story and write about a costume that would reflect that child's personality. There were dictionaries on the tables and many grammar and spelling prompts around the class to help them with their writing.

In Chestnut class the children were following the same Literacy activity. This time the children volunteered to read short passages from the book and the teacher stopped to discuss various phrases such as 'giddy with excitement' or to encourage re-reading with reference to punctuation. Here again the children all listened well and followed attentively. Unfortunately, we had to leave before we could see the results of their writing. There was a lovely display of poems on the wall entitled 'Running Wild' and a book of 'Chestnut News' with many interesting articles written by the children.

Some children were receiving interventions and were working in a smaller group, with more discussion, to help them complete the literacy writing task.

#### **Year 5 (9.40 to 10.00)**

Redwood class were in the middle of a Literacy lesson. They were working towards producing a newspaper report about 'The Battle of Bosworth'. The teacher explained that the children had started by writing a report of their Easter Holidays and from this they had developed ideas to understand what a report should contain. That morning they had watched a video of the battle and had used their magpie books to record any key words and ideas as they watched. The class had 'brainstormed' their ideas to make a class sheet they could use to help them write the main part of the report. The children were all working hard in ability groups. The teacher explained that they were able to make full use of all the TA's while the other class were outside at PE, to enable the children to really focus on their writing and produce quality work. We were able to talk to some of the children as they worked. The ones I spoke to knew that a report had to contain facts and not opinions. One boy said, 'you must use the facts and try to make them interesting and better'!

The children were encouraged to use the dictionaries on the tables and the various spelling and grammar prompts on the class displays. At the end of the topic they were going to compare their original Easter Holidays report with the Bosworth report to hopefully see how much they had improved in report writing.

### **Year 2 (10.00 to 10.20)**

In Cherry class, the children were in the middle of writing a recount about a plant hunt around the school grounds that they had taken part in the day before. They had worked together to write a paragraph on the whiteboard about how they had prepared for the plant hunt. One child explained to me that they had had to estimate how many different plants they might find. They had estimated 15 but had actually found 24! The children were working in ability groups and had many resources to help them with their writing including 'Professor Know-it-all sentence starters', phonic and word charts, dictionaries and a washing line of ideas. Some children, who needed extra support, were working with a TA who scribed their ideas for them which they then stuck in their books and read back to the TA. We were able to look at a few books and saw how the children are encouraged to edit their writing using one or more criteria depending on their ability. On the wall there was a very informative display of spelling and grammar for the children to refer to.

### **KS2 Assembly (10.40 to 11.00)**

The children were taking part in a Hymn Practice with two of the teachers. They all entered quietly and sensibly and displayed very good behaviour while sitting and standing for various hymns. We were entertained by some very enthusiastic singing and enjoyed joining in with some of the actions. The teachers collected their classes at the end of the practice.

### **Year 2 (11.00 to 11.35)**

We first visited Plum class who were sitting on the carpet using individual white boards to think of different words for 'looked'. They could discuss ideas with their 'talking partner'. The teacher collated their examples on the class white board including witnessed, saw, spied, gazed and searched. The class then recapped what they did when they were 'Plant Hunters' the previous day. The teacher explained to them that they need to have their 'science hat' on to write a science report and how they must use statements and facts in their writing. The children were also reminded of how to use 'time connectives' such as first, next, then and they located these on the classroom wall for reference. The class then worked with the teacher to write about how they prepared for their plant hunt under the heading 'I can write a science report'. The teacher reminded the children to leave a line under the first paragraph. She then demonstrated writing some sentences they could use in their reports and how to use commas when writing a list of plants. The children then went to their groups to begin their writing task.

We next went to Apricot class who were also writing about their plant hunt. They gave us a very warm welcome and told us the names of some of the plants they had found. Here again the children were working in ability groups and had plenty of resources to refer to when doing their writing including a chart with pictures and words showing some of the plants they had found. The children had to copy the first paragraph from the whiteboard and were encouraged to practise their best handwriting using joined-up writing if possible. They then had to write some sentences of their own. The children were all very focussed on their task and were confident to have-a-go at writing their science report.

### **Year 3 (11.35 to 12.10)**

Holly class were just finishing some work in their CGP KS2 English books. Some children were sitting on the carpet reading quietly. We were able to have a look at some of the displays during this time. It was interesting to see a plant display board showing more detailed labelling and facts than we had just witnessed in Year 2. There was also some lovely writing about 'The Iron Man' and a very helpful washing line of grammar reminders! The class came together to mark their CGP work. They had special pens for this and used pink pens to mark a mistake and green pens to tick a correct answer. The children seemed to really enjoy doing this and marked their books well.

Laurel class were studying Islam and were busy making prayer mats. There was a lovely working atmosphere enhanced by some appropriate background music. We took the opportunity to have a look at some of the children's 'Learning Journals'. We saw some interesting writing about 'Seeds and Change' and some current writing about the story 'Pumpkin Soup'. There were charts showing how the teacher and child had marked work together and tables showing evidence of the editing and proof reading of various pieces of writing. It was impressive to see how many tasks had been completed and to observe the improvement during the year. The list of Year 3/4 Writing Expectations was also stuck in the front of the Journal for easy reference.

It was altogether a very informative and enjoyable morning. We were able to see many of the Key Tasks for Writing, Handwriting and Spelling being addressed in the various classrooms.

*Hazel Jones*

Co-Opted Governor

## Governor Report 4

My morning began in Year 1 with Pear Class. The children were listening intently on the carpet about the morning's activity.

The children were looking at the 'un' prefix to words and what happens when you add the 'un' to a particular word. For example 'Un' Happy. The children were asked to explain what happened to the word when 'un' was added and what new meaning it gave to the word.

The tables were set up ready for the children to work at, which included foam aeroplanes with the nose of the plane removed which contained the prefix. For example 'un tie', the aeroplanes were a good visual aide for children to identify the prefix associated with a word.

Some of the tables contained the children's books that gave examples of poems, which each group had written together about different animals.

The follow on task for some children was to follow instructions. This meant the children had to read the instructions on the paper about colouring in a picture of flowers, which included stems and leaves. The instructions were specific about which pieces needed colouring in by which colour and how many items needed colouring in.

Whilst using the interactive white board the teacher was asking the children about 'Bossy Words' in relation to writing a set of instructions. 'What are instructions?', 'What do we use them for?'

The children then followed the instructions given by the teacher, with the emphasis being put upon the 'Bossy Word' and could the children identify what it was, for example 'Stand up', 'Jump on the spot'. The children also learnt rules about writing a set of instructions, for example each instruction needing a new line on the piece of paper.

The next class I visited was Year 1 Peach class. The children of Peach class were following similar tasks as Pear class in their groups. The children were very welcoming and were inquisitive that they had not seen me before! I spent some time with the children who were working with the aeroplanes and identifying which prefixes were associated to which word. Once the children had identified which prefix went with which word, they then need to construct a sentence to include the word. The children appeared to all enjoy this task, especially as they were working independently.

I then spent some time with the children who were following the instructions and colouring in the flowers. There was a hive of activity around these children with lots of discussion. Some children were identifying the colour while others were deciding what they should be coloured.

Another group were working with their teacher using their 'editing glasses'. I found this to be a great initiative for the children to look through the 'editing glasses' to help focus their minds on what improvements could be made to their work as they followed the instructions about creating a flower. As a link to the UPS Writing Group, I was able to see clear links to the school improvement plan and the initiatives being used to help raise attainment.

***'EDITing / drafting and crafting techniques strategies developed Children to be confident of terminology of punctuation / grammar / lesson observation'***

Next stop was Strawberry Class in Reception. The children were all busy working on their activities.

The teacher introduced me to an interactive online game called Obb and Bob. This game helps children to identify real and alien words. Using the interactive white board and pen, then children in small groups take it in turns to read the word on the board. If they think the word is real, they must move the word for Bob to eat. If they think the word is alien then they must move the word for Obb to eat. The game uses a timer and the children must 'eat' as many words as they can in the given time. This game proved popular with children who were all keen to take part.

A little boy was very enthusiastic that he showed me that he had made his name out of the wooden dominoes. For such a young children I was very impressed with how resourceful he was and how the word clearly spelt. This was lovely to see and that he wanted to share his work with me. I later learned that only a few months ago this boy would not have spoken to any guests in class, as he was quite reserved. It is a credit to the teaching team on his progress in communication and his ability to engage with visitors to his class.

I then moved on to where a group of children were working on the lifecycle of a frog. Using the words First, Then, Next and Finally.

The children needed to order the pictures of the frog at its different stages of growth, matching them to the words. One little boy knew very clearly the order and was working independently at sticking the pictures into his book.

The literacy group of children were ordering a sentence; A Banana is yellow. The words were jumbled on the page. The children were required to cut out the words and picture and put them in order, working independently. It was lovely to see the children working together on this task.

Next, onto Oak Class in Year 4.

The class were busily all working on different rotations associated with the book, The Hunter by Paul Geraghty. The task for the first group I spoke to were looking at an extract passage of text from The Hunter, which was using the wrong tense.

The group had to identify the incorrect tense by underlining the words. They then needed to re-write the sentence using the correct tense. There was a varied response to the task, with some children finding it relatively easy and others were finding it a challenge.

The second group I observed were creating a character for their own story and making up sentences independently. The teacher wrote the brainstormed ideas on the white board. The children were encouraged to use a thesaurus to change words to make the story more interesting.

The third group were working with the teaching assistant looking at the question 'I can begin to understand unfamiliar words from The Hunter.' The group were recognising unfamiliar words, writing them down and took it turns to use the dictionary to look up the meaning; they then read the definition aloud to the group. I spoke to one boy who said he found this a useful exercise and helped him with comprehension.

The teacher shared that there had been a decision to change the text to The Hunter. I could again relate this to the school improvement plan within the UPS Writing group

***'Lesson Observations and Book scrutiny KB 5+6 FM 2+3 NE 4 SD t1 will show teachers use of QUALITY TEXTS with children's annotation of grammar/ punctuation highlighted and discussed.'***

I popped next door to see Beech class, who again were using the text The Hunter. Another group were creating their own characters, but this time using a homemade dice with a different question on each side to prompt ideas. For example, 'Who else is in their family? Who are their friends?'

The teacher explained that the children received two adult interventions per week in this rotation. She also shared that at the end of each rotation the children were to identify a hint or tip to share with the next group about doing the task that they had just completed. The children are required to self evaluate their own work with the traffic light system.

A quick hop across the playground and it was time for KS1 assembly. All children were well behaved and arrived at the assembly in a quiet manner. A teacher welcomed everyone to the assembly with the children politely welcoming each teacher and guests in turn.

Another teacher popped in to launch this year's writing competition. The children can write about anything that is of interest to them and present it in a fun and interesting way. The children have a chance to win a £10 book voucher for each year group. I know that is an initiative of the UPS Writing group and will inspire our children as budding writers.

***'Mrs Twine to launch a Writing competition in association with Rotary to inspire writing INCLUDING Boys writing'***

The teacher leading the assembly introduced St George's day. She explained why some children wore their Beavers or Rainbows uniforms to school the previous day to mark the celebration. She went onto re-enact a short story at St George; four volunteers were able to dress up as either one of two princesses, a dragon or St George. The moral of the story was about being frightened of something and overcoming your fears and be brave just like St George.

Time for a quick coffee to recharge before returning to see Blueberry Class in Reception.

The children were all sitting on the carpet looking at the interactive white board with a jumbled up sentence about a frog, green. Frog is A

The children were asked what is special about A? The children were able to answer that it is a capital letter, using the appropriate action.

The teacher chose a child to move the words into the correct order, remember to use 'finger spaces', using the large laminated finger!

The children went onto look at what is special about the word 'green.' It had a full stop at the end, again using a 'punch action' motion for stop.

Using a sound button the teacher spoke the sentence Frog spawn is in a jelly egg.

Different children came to the board to help write the sentence using the appropriate SPAG (spelling punctuation and grammar). The children sounded out the words, checked for finger spaces and letter formation.

I had an extremely enjoyable morning visiting so many classes and well-behaved children. I was made to feel very welcome by all staff and children.

*Laura Farrant*

Parent Governor





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9<sup>th</sup> May 2018

All members of staff  
Downview School

Dear all,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Governing Body of Downview School to say a huge thank you to you and all the children for allowing us to visit your classrooms on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 for our Governors Open Morning.

We all really enjoyed ourselves. We learnt lots about writing throughout the school and were very impressed with what we saw. As usual the children were extremely polite and welcoming and loved to talk to us about their work. Please pass on our thanks to the children.

We are all very proud to be Governors of such a great school.

Kind regards

Sue Hawthorn  
Chair of Governors