



DOWNVIEW SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

# GOVERNORS OPEN DAY REPORT 2015

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**17/3/2015**

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## INTRODUCTION

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

Just like our individual Governor Visits, the Governors' Open Day had a focus which is linked to the School Improvement Plan. The focus for our visit this year was "Talk for Writing", this was the same focus as our day in March 2014. The reason behind us choosing it again was that when we did our visits last year this had just began throughout the school and we wanted to see how this had progressed one year later.

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

Reception – Owls after a visit from Owls about Town.

Year 1 – Using a story map.

Year 2 – Past, present and future tense using the story of the Great Fire of London in their stories.

Year 3 - The life of Alexander Graham Bell.

Year 4 –The Romans – the story of Pompeii.

Year 5 – Tudors after a visit to the Weald and Downland Museum

Year 6 – Documentaries on Animals following a visit by Zoo Lab.

We spent the morning visiting the classroom, talking to the children and staff about their work and looking at some of the children's work they were doing at the time. We took some lovely photographs during the course of our visit which will be included in a portfolio which will be in the reception area of the school.

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

The Governors had a tremendous morning and 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 in talking to us about what they were doing.

## Governor Report 1

We visited year 4, 6 and key stage 1 assembly.

Year 4 was studying the Romans and we witnessed children using story plans to help them gather and plan their ideas for their own piece of creative writing on the Romans. We witnessed children split into groups and some taking part in a group reading of a book about Romans and other children working hard on their plans. We visited both year 4 classes who were completing the same topic. The classrooms were purposeful environments with all pupils engaged and working hard.

Year 6 were working on their documentaries about animals. It was evident that they had had a visiting speaker about tarantulas, tortoises, snakes, African snails and rats. They were using this information and homework research to write a script for a documentary. There were useful tool kits on the board to help focus the task and to remind the children what needed to be included in their scripts. We had the pleasure of watching some of the beginning parts of the scripts being performed, and the content was both interesting and humorous! The displays in the classrooms about spiders were amazing!

We had the pleasure of attending the key stage one assembly. The teacher was taking the assembly for the first time and read a lovely story about 'Mucky Mabel'. The children were able to discuss Mabel's lack of manners and were able to suggest manners that needed to be remembered frequently and at the dinner table. We also witnessed some key stage 1 children receiving their house points badges and the look of delight on their faces!

*Mrs Mel Childs*

Vice Chair/Co-opted Governor

## Governor Report 2

My morning started with a visit to Year 4. Both classes were engaged in a number of activities. A group in each class were working with the teacher doing guided reading and were reading the book *The Code of Romulus*. Other children were writing the story of Pompeii their own words and some were writing reports depicting what they had been doing in the Spring Term, talking about what maths they had done, their work on the Romans and were also saying how much they were looking forward to going to Hooke Court. The children I spoke to about Hooke Court were all very excited about going.

One of the Year 4 TA's was working with a lower ability group on a table outside of the class environment. They had been reading a poem entitled *Don't Tread on Worms* which was a persuasive piece of writing. The children had to answer various questions about this poem which was about a worm being kind. This activity was to test the children on their levels.

The teacher then called the children to the carpet and gave them a picture of a toad. The children had to write on white boards as many words as they could to do with the picture. A link was made to maths by her asking if anyone had a two digit number amount of words - one child had managed twenty! The children who were sat with their talking partners then discussed each other's words. This demonstrated one of the strategies used in Talk for Writing.

From there I went over to Year 6, the children were in groups writing a script for a documentary they were going to produce. They were each given the topic of their documentary from their visit by Zoo Lab, these ranged from Millipede, Corn Snakes, Rats and Tarantulas! In order for the children to write their documentary they had to carry out some of their own research. One group I was talking to told me they had found out from their research that Tarantulas taste like Peanut Butter. Another group who were doing a documentary on Rats said that one of them was going to dress up as a rat.

I spoke to the children about Zoo Lab. Without exception they all really enjoyed the Zoo Lab visit and had found it both interesting and informative.

During the course of my time there some of the groups performed the start of their documentary to the rest of the class.

I was most impressed with the displays in year 6 particularly the spiders legs that hung from the ceiling. There were lots of models of spiders etc so this area was not for the faint hearted.

As it was then time for KS1 assembly I popped in to see it. The teacher read her favourite story to them and this then went on to them talking about manners. After this some of the children were presented with their yellow and green badges.

After a short break I headed off to Reception where they were learning all about Owls. Owls formed part of their maths as well as their literacy. The children had talked to either their partner or in groups about owls. They were writing facts about Owls, but first of all they were talking about what a fact actually is. Children could then record their sentence they were writing about Owls onto a sound button. If they then forgot their sentence they could listen to it again on the sound button. These sound buttons have proved to be an invaluable learning tool.

From there I went over to Year 5 whose topic was the Tudors. The children were in pairs interviewing each other so that by the end of the week they could write a story about going back in time to the Tudor period and who they met and what experiences they had when they went back in time. The idea was that they were going to go back to Hampton Court at the time of the reign of Henry VIII.

The children had recently visited the Weald and Downland Museum which they thoroughly enjoyed and had drawn on their experiences there and when they visited Preston Manor in year 3 to give them inspiration about their story. The children were keen to tell me about their ideas for their stories which sounded really good. I have been promised by two boys they will let me have a copy of their story to read which I am looking forward to immensely.

My last port of call was with Year 3 where they were learning about Alexander Graham Bell. The whole class were deciding on questions they were going to ask him as he was visiting them that afternoon. The teacher then proceeded to ask questions about what the children thought he was like. She used describing words and they were doing thumbs up/thumbs down to show if they agreed with this particular trait of his personality.

The morning was thoroughly enjoyable and time just flew by. All the children were keen to talk to me about their work and were very confident in doing so. I was most impressed with the classroom displays and the tool kits and strategies used for Talk for Writing.

*Mrs Sue Hawthorn*

Chair of Governors/ Co-Opted Governor

## Governor Report 3

Reception: When we arrived at the Reception classes they were both very concentrated on number work on the carpets and then went to do number work at the tables, we did take some photos, talked to some children and looked in some of their Journals with their owl work in.

Year 1: One class was doing number work and was very happy to share it with us. The other class was using a story board on the white interactive board to write a story about a ship. They had done actions to the story and the teacher had videoed them (she showed us) so they could look at it to remind them of words they used when talking about the story. The children had laminated letters and double sounds on the tables eg. 'oo', 'ai', 'ch' to help them. We thought it was a novel way of getting their attention when the teacher sang – 'are you listening?' and they sang back 'yes we are'. The children were again happy to share their work with us.

Year 2: One class was doing handwriting practise and then number work. The next class was using the white board to put sentences into columns of Past, Present and Future tenses. They had four phonic students so when they split into groups they had an adult with each one – great for the teacher and the children. The emphasis on their writing was on the day after the Great Fire of London – how they felt, what did they see, smell, taste and how did they feel. What would they do? They had written about the day of the fire before and were to edit that before they went on to the day after. The idea was to get some really good descriptive words and so words like 'nice' and 'boring' were 'jailed' and they had to think of better ones.

We felt sorry for one lad as he was looking up in a large dictionary the word 'saw' and when he found it, it was the tool or the verb 'to saw' not what he wanted but we helped him find 'see' and there were lots of other words he could use.

Year 3: The focus was on finding some good questions to ask Alexander Graham Bell when he 'visited' that afternoon. Lots of talk about what they wanted to find out about him, his character, where he lived when he was a boy, etc. They had been discussing inventions and some had done some research on Mr Bell.

Year 5: We went to one class who were interviewing each other in pairs asking and answering questions and writing the answers which would eventually build up to a story. The teacher intervened to ask them to be more descriptive so eventually to make their stories much more interesting. The times they were writing about was the Tudor times and they had been to the Weald and Downland Museum to give them lots of inspiration.

We very much enjoyed our visit, as usual there was not enough time to talk to as many children as we 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 everyone.

*Mrs Val Morris*  
LA Governor

*Mrs Eileen Lord*  
Co-Opted Governor





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19<sup>th</sup> March 2016

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 massive thank you for allowing us to visit your classrooms on Tuesday. We were made to feel extremely welcome everywhere we went.

As normal, we thought the atmosphere of the school was happy and hardworking and of course the children were not at all resistant to showing us their work or posing for photographs.

Please pass on our thanks to all the children; they were without exception polite and welcoming to us all. They brought a smile to all our faces many times during the morning with some of the things they said and did.

Many thanks to you all too for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to us and answer any questions we may have had.

We had a lovely morning.

Kind regards

Sue Hawthorn  
Chair of Governors