



Downview School Governing Body

GOVERNORS OPEN DAY APRIL 2017

At Downview School we learn and grow together every day.

25/04/2017

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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 had a focus. The focus for our visit this year was "writing" as this is one of the Key Issues on the School Improvement Plan.

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, at work they had done over the past school year as far as writing is concerned, 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 and enjoying their lessons.

The Governors had a most enjoyable morning and would like to thank all the staff and children for welcoming us into their classrooms. We would especially like to thank the children who talked to us about their various projects. All of the children were proud of the work they had done and were extremely polite.

Governor Report 1

My morning started with a visit to Year 5 who were in the process of writing newspaper reports and discussing how these reports are compiled etc. The children had already written a report the previous day on their Easter holidays and after completing various tasks and information finding would re-write these reports and compare the two to see how much their second one had improved compared to their first.

The group task they were doing whilst we visited the classrooms included looking at various newspaper reports and highlighting various things. As a whole class they were sharing ideas of what should be involved when writing a newspaper report such as headings, writing in the third person and writing in columns. These ideas were then going to be hung on the washing line for the children to refer to when writing their reports.

Discussions were held on the content of various newspapers and how some of them were not completely true but instead had an objective to them.

The children learnt about the 5 W's:

Who
What
When
Where
Why

I had the pleasure of reading some of the newspaper articles that had been written by the children and have been promised that I will receive copies of the finished articles to put into the Governor Portfolio of our Open Morning. I am looking forward to reading these.

I also looked at some work entitled "Can I write a recount as a character from White Dolphin". I saw the first attempt and then the finished article after the children had looked at various aspects of that genre of writing.

From there I visited Year 6. A group of six children, Mrs Farrant and I took ourselves off to another room to look at the books they had written. The books were based on how they got to Indonesia and an adventure they had once they were there. The children explained that they had carried out research on Indonesia and Tsunamis. They had looked at newspaper articles, researched information on the Internet and this had taken them quite some time. They showed us their Magpie note books which we thought were a great idea, these books are where they write down notes and ideas that they can go back to and refer to for information etc. to help them write their books for example.

Their story books were amazing – they were divided into chapters, had illustrations and even the cost of the book on the back. The children told us about their stories and one child told us in his story he had made friends with a lion called Morris but at the end of the story Morris died. He said when he wrote the ending it made him cry. It had us welling up too!

At this point it was time for KS1 assembly which we went along to and listened to a story about a giraffe that could not dance. Mrs Holloway, who was leading the assembly talked to the children about how everyone was good at something, for instance ballet, playing a musical instrument etc. and related this to writing too. During the course of the assembly Mrs Holloway was talking about various types of dancing such as tap, disco etc and mentioned Scottish Reel dancing. She said she was not sure what this was and could anyone explain to her. One little girl from Year 1 not only briefly told her about it but got two other friends up with her to the front and demonstrated the dancing. We were all very impressed.

Immediately after this KS2 came into the hall and Mr Norris and Mrs Twine lead this assembly which was a singing assembly. The children knew that when they sang a certain song - 'When the Saints Come Marching In' that it would be sung in a round and this was split up into year groups. At the very end they all stood up and sang the Downview song. This assembly was very uplifting.

During both assemblies the behavior of all the children was impeccable.

From there we went to visit Year 1 who were all very busy. We looked at some of the work in Apple Class that had been displayed on the wall whilst they were busy playing a numbers game. The children had been writing weather reports and weather diaries which were split into the four seasons.

Pear class were playing a phonics game on the white board. This game was a picture of two monkeys sitting and a word came up on the screen. The children had to decide if the word was the "down" or "owl" sound, they all thoroughly enjoyed playing this game. They were then split into groups to do various activities. One group of children were doing an exciting writing task about what they did during the Easter Holidays. We had a little chat with this group of children and they told us what they were going to write about. We also took the opportunity to look in the writing folders at some of the work they had done previously. We were most impressed.

When we arrived in Peach class the children were in their groups doing a range of activities. The theme of the lesson was "I can read and follow instructions". The boys I sat with were showing me the pictures they had to colour in following the instructions they were given, for example colour two flowers pink. They were so proud they could do this. Another group working with Mrs McKenzie were following instructions of how to make something but as the instructions were not specific i.e. they were not told what colour card to use then each finished article was slightly different. The children had also been following instructions of how to plant seeds and we could see some of their plants growing. These plants also formed part of their science topic.

On display was a list of instructions that had not been numbered but instead included "bossy" words which told the children what to do.

Throughout the whole year group they were learning about the pre fix 'un'.

We were then shown the display board of the poems they had written and were honoured to be given a free copy of their book of poems that they had produced for Comic Relief. This book will be in our portfolio. They did extremely well selling their poems as they managed to raise £130.

My last port of call was year 4 who were looking at Ghana as their topic. The children were sat round tables looking at various photos and writing down questions they wanted to ask from looking at the photos, after a while they moved tables and then looked at another set of photos. Their drumming music was being played in the background and when their favorite song came on they all burst into song! It was great, they were doing the actions too – we remarked on how lovely that was to see.

Some of the questions the children said they wanted to find out about were:

What is the population of Ghana?

How many elephants are there in Ghana?

What do the children learn at school?

Whilst we were there we also looked at the work the children had done on Pompeii and the stories they had written. These were good too.

We were also shown the teeth the children had produced which had on them “Top Tips from the Tooth Fairy”. Every Year 4 child had given a Year 2 child one of these teeth to keep. The Year 4 children really enjoyed producing these and giving them to the Year 2 children and from what I have been told the Year 2 children were thrilled to receive them. What a lovely gesture.

By now it was lunchtime and the children were packing up and getting ready for lunch.

I had a most enjoyable morning which seemed to pass by all too quickly. We did not see one child misbehaving or being disruptive in the class in any way. What we did see were happy children, enjoying their learning and being totally engrossed to boot.

Sue Hawthorn

Chair of Governors

Governor Report 2

Reception – Focus on Life cycle of a Frog, all three classes.

Year 2 – Focus on one child's Writing books from Year 1 and Year 2.

Year 3 – All the class were writing a story based on one they had heard and made notes from on a white board.

Reception: When we arrived at the Reception classes they were all very busy choosing what to do. They cleared up in a brief organised way and got ready for Wake Up, Shake Up which was very energetic and fast but we joined in. They sat on the carpet and decided what day it was and what the weather was like using rhymes and actions. They then sang the alphabet rainbow letters. We then observed two teacher's introductions to the writing they would be doing, writing about the frog life cycle. There was an emphasis on a capital letter at the beginning, finger spaces and a full stop at the end and where to find the sounds on the wall if they needed help and actions for different sounds. The teachers wrote a sentence on the board to show the children what they were expected to do. Each teacher did it in a slightly different way but the end result was similar. They divided into groups and one had some pictures of the life cycle to cut and paste onto paper and then write a sentence about each one. Another group had some creatures to colour and write about. They had some froglets and tadpoles in a tank to observe. I was impressed with the attention of the children on the carpet and the effort they were putting into their writing after.

Year 2: The class were all working as a group and the teacher had detailed two children to share their writing books with us. They were keen to do so and I was able to share a Year 1 book first and then a Year 2 still with lots more to put in as the term goes on. It was lovely to see the progression from the beginning of Year 1 and she loved telling me all the details with nothing forgotten. She told me about talk partners, story maps and there were pages where concentration had been on adjectives, vowels, punctuation, capital letters and more, such a vast range for only a Year2, I was impressed.

We then went to the Key Stage 1 assembly and heard a story about a giraffe who could not dance, the emphasis was on not everyone can do everything and we should be tolerant and help others. They went out to play and we stayed to listen to a Hymn/song practice for the second assembly.

Reception: We then went back to Reception to observe the third class that were doing the same topic but in a different way again, on the carpet in a circle not using the white board. They went through the alphabet rainbow singing the sounds. Then they talked about the life cycle of the frog. Using the 'sentence washing line' to help them. There was also an emphasis on using a 'wow' word (adjective) to make the sentence exciting writing. The teacher wrote a sentence with the children's help and then they had the same activity, to write their own sentence using the pictures and getting them in the right order. We then shared a

writing book with a willing, enthusiastic child. Again I was impressed at the work involved in the book and the progression she had made.

Year 3: This was our last class of the morning and just as inspiring. The class were working in silence with just some gentle music playing and they were all on task and eager to share what they were doing with us. We were given a child to share their writing books with. A very confident boy told me all the details of his writing of poems, letters, factual writing, glossaries, diaries, stories and more. He explained to me about cold tasks, self marking, teacher marking, some writing on the computer and punctuation and grammar. He also had lovely handwriting so it was all very legible and easy to read.

I very much enjoyed my visit. 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 teachers were all very accommodating.

Thank you to everyone.

Val Morris

LA Governor

Governor Report 3

Our first visit of the morning was to Blueberry and Strawberry classes in Reception. We watched the children arrive and quickly settle to their various tasks. There were several opportunities to choose writing activities including making cards, labelling insects and a “we are writers” area. We all took part in the “Wake up, shake up” song which was enjoyed by children and grown-ups alike! The children then went into their class areas.

The focus of the session was Literacy. The children first sang songs to say good morning, select the day of the week and the weather. Everyone was involved in the singing and the actions. The teacher then told the children they were learning something new and introduced the alphabet rainbow on the whiteboard. They sang the alphabet song to practise saying letter names rather than letter sounds.

Next the teacher recapped their learning about the “frog on a log” by showing the life cycle of a frog on the whiteboard and discussing each stage. The teacher emphasised the use of the words first, next, then and finally which were used in the writing. After this the children had to try to think of a sentence about a frog. One child said “First it is frogspawn.” The teacher worked with the class to write this sentence on the whiteboard modeling the use of sounds, letter formation, finger spaces, capital letters and full stops. Quite a list to remember!

The children then went to work in their groups where one group practiced writing a sentence and another group cut out and labelled the life cycle of a frog.

We moved on to Year 2 where it was arranged for us to look at some Learning Journals and talk to the children about their writing.

The first child I talked to showed me his work about ‘The Great Fire of London’. He explained that they had watched a performance by the Rainbow Theatre company and then tried to write a diary of events. He chose to write from the perspective of a “fine gentleman”! Some of his writing involved time connectives and he knew what they were and had used them correctly. I also asked him about the past tense and he explained that it was something that had “already finished”. All the writing was marked with positive comments and suggestions for improvement. I especially liked the “Punctuation Police” directive to make the children review their writing for correct punctuation. I finished by asking him about his neat handwriting. He explained that he uses joined-up writing sometimes and that he had copied up a piece of his work to practise his handwriting. He was proud of his work and enjoyed talking about his achievements.

When I talked to another child I noticed that the Year 2 writing expectations were stuck in the front of the book for easy reference. I was impressed by how many different types of writing there were, including labelling, a diary, a recount, a report and a set of instructions. She was keen to read her writing to me and could discuss her ideas very well. She also showed a good knowledge of the various grammatical terms covered during the year such as adjectives,

adverbs and verbs. She had obviously tried hard to include this learning in her writing. I asked her about her writing targets at the back of the book and she explained how they are updated when a target is achieved.

Both Learning Journals were a pleasure to look at. It was interesting to see how the standard of the writing had improved during the year.

We then attended KS1 assembly. The teacher told the children a story called “Giraffes Can’t Dance”. The focus was on activities that can be challenging and how we can develop skills to help us to achieve new goals. Writing was mentioned and the need to learn certain skills to help us write such as holding the pencil correctly and using finger spaces.

KS2 had a singing assembly. The children joined in enthusiastically and the two-part singing was very good. We enjoyed listening to the Downview song and also “Obla-di Obla-da” which some of us could remember from our youth!

Our next stop was back in Reception in Blackberry Class. They were following the same Literacy session as the other two classes with the alphabet rainbow and “frog on a log”. Again the teacher modeled the writing and emphasised how to use the rules of writing to help. She also encouraged the children to try and make their writing exciting by using descriptive words such as big or slimy. The children’s attention was drawn to the phonic cards on the wall where they could find capital and lower case letters. One child knew that “ee” was a digraph! The class then went to their groups with the song “Do you know what your learning is?”

We had another opportunity to share a Learning Journal. The child I spoke to was very happy to show me his book. He had used some simple descriptive words in his writing and I asked him how he knew about adjectives. He replied that it was because he was “super clever”!

When we arrived in Year 3 the class was in the middle of a Literacy lesson. The teacher explained that the children had listened to the story of “Pumpkin Soup” the day before and were now rewriting the story to develop “stamina“. They had picture prompts and words on a whiteboard to help them remember the story. The atmosphere was quiet and industrious with background music playing. The teacher also explained that future lessons would focus on the story in more detail and it would be used to develop other aspects of writing such as descriptive and creative writing. We walked around and saw how the children were trying really hard to retell the story.

To finish our visit I talked to a child about her Year 3 Target Book and her Learning Journal. She explained that the work in the Target Book about “Mr. Fox” had to be “corrected for polish” and she had tried to add any missing punctuation. A wide range of writing activities

were covered in the Learning Journal and she was very keen to read them all to me! As time was short she chose two favourites. One was a lovely poem written after a visit to the Arundel Wetland Centre and the other was a story she had written about a character she'd invented called the "Gruffato" which was inspired by "The Gruffalo" story. As in Year 2, the work was well presented and marked with positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

It was altogether a very busy but thoroughly informative and enjoyable morning. It was impressive to see the amount of work covered and how hard all the staff are obviously working to develop and improve the standard of writing. In all the year groups, and in some corridors, there were examples of the children's writing on display celebrating their achievements. There were also many charts and displays to help the children produce their best work. We intend to show examples of these in our portfolio. Thank you to everyone in Reception, Year 2 and Year 3 for making us so welcome.

Hazel Jones

(Co-opted governor)

Governor Report 4

My morning began with Year 5 who were learning about how to write a newspaper report. The class began with the whole class contributing to ideas of what you might see on the front page of a newspaper. There was lots of enthusiastic class participation.

The 5 W's were listed on the board for the pupils to refer to who, what when, where and why. This gave the pupils guidance in what to include in their report.

I looked at examples of work the pupils had completed before the Easter break where they had written stories and over the term using spelling, punctuation and grammar improved their stories. The pupils had then re-written the stories using these tools. The improvement in the examples I viewed was very impressive and showed clear structured improvement.

Next I moved onto to visit the pupils in Year 6 where I observed some beautiful displays of work focusing on Indonesia. A group of pupils shared their stories with me, where they had to create a story based in Indonesia on the theme of a disaster.

The pupils had spent approximately two months researching different aspects of Indonesia, they wrote their stories, drew pictures, created front covers and had the books bound. The project looked fascinating and the pupils were enthusiastic to share them with me. The detail and emotion which the pupils showed in their work was amazing. They are a credit to the school and are leaving Downview with very creative and imaginative minds.

Mid morning was spent observing KS1 and KS2 assemblies. It was lovely to see the pupils all together. They were all very well behaved and engaged with what they were listening to or singing about.

KS1 were read a story called the ' Giraffe who couldn't dance'. It was a poignant story which focused on what the giraffe could do rather than couldn't. Mrs Holloway raised the importance of focusing on the pupils' strengths and achievements, and how not everyone is good at everything. Then KS2 had a singing assembly lead by Mr Norris and Mrs Twine, I was very pleased to finally hear the words to the Downview song!

I then moved onto Year 1 who were learning about plants. The first group I observed were having to read and follow instructions to colour in different parts of the flower. The second group were adding the prefix 'un' when looking at writing instructions for planting seeds. There was a lovely display of 'bossy verbs' displayed on the board for the pupils to refer to. The pupils were following a sequence of activities which related to several areas of the curriculum around the topic of plants, which they would take part in over a number of sessions.

I saw a beautiful display of poems which the pupils had written, the poems had then been made into a book, which the children sold and raised £130.

The second class I observed were using the white board to play phonics games. The pupils took turns using the pen to move the sound to the correct word. The game made silly noises and sounds depending if the pupil got the answer right or wrong. This was a great way to get to the pupils to engage with the phonic sounds.

After the game, the pupils split into groups. One group were writing about what they did in their Easter holidays.

In Year 4 I was greeted by Ghanaian music, as the pupils were working on their topic of Ghana, the music playing was to inspire the pupils' thoughts. This was music which they use in their drumming sessions. It was lovely to hear the pupils joining in with the songs and sounds, they were very enthusiastic!

The pupils were working in groups and rotating around the tables looking at different pictures from Ghana. From the pictures, the pupils formed questions which they would then research the answer to another day. The class shared their questions with each other which covered a wide range of topics.

I looked through some of the pupils work which focused on writing letters from the tooth fairy. These letters were then given to Year 2 pupils. I know that these were gratefully received as my daughter received one and still talks about the letter from her tooth fairy and often reads it. This promotes working with others and especially looking out for pupils in younger year groups. There were displays which referred to SPAG in the classroom which the pupils could refer to.

That is where my morning sadly ended, I did not want to go back to work.

The pupils of Downview are happy, polite and enthusiastic, they are a credit to all who work at Downview.

The examples of work which I saw covered some fascinating topics which help inspire the pupils in their learning. There was a clear SPAG focus through all year groups which I observed, each with the building blocks to assist and encourage the pupils.

I look forward to many future visits, my heartfelt thanks goes to all the Downview team for making me feel very welcome.

L. Farrant

Parent Governor



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3rd May 2017

All Members of Staff,
Downview School

Dear All,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Governing Body of Downview School to say an enormous thank you for allowing us to visit your classrooms on Tuesday 25th April 2017. We all had a thoroughly great and enjoyable morning.

The ambience of the school was lovely; clearly both adults and children alike were having an enjoyable time but at the same time we saw a tremendous amount of hard work taking place.

Without exception, everywhere we went the children were engrossed in their work, please pass on our thanks to all the children; they were extremely polite and welcoming to us all and as usual more than happy to talk to us about their work.

We all came away feeling very uplifted!

Kind regards

Sue Hawthorn
Chair of Governors