

I am very proud to serve as the Chair of Governors at Highdown. As an elected parent governor from 2013, I chaired the Teaching and Learning Committee for four years before being elected as Chair of Governors in January 2020.

I currently have two children attending. My eldest graduated from the Sixth Form in 2020 and is now at University.

Highdown School is committed to excellence and constant cycles of evaluation and improvement. We believe in all students achieving academic success in an environment where young people are happy, stimulated and supported in all-round development and wellbeing. Students leave Highdown at 16, or more usually at 18, ready to move on to the next stage in their education or employment. We are proud of our inclusive provision, one which ensures that no one leaves without a positive destination.

Our curriculum is broad and balanced. Progression through the compulsory years leads to a wide range of A levels and vocational courses in our outstanding Sixth Form, where students achieve in the top 5% of all providers nationally. One of our unique selling points is our offer of Mandarin, which is embedded in our curriculum with students progressing to Mandarin and Oriental studies at university. We are also one of the few state schools to be part of the Mandarin Excellence Programme led by University College London.

A global perspective is part of our philosophy and we encourage students to take full advantage of our wide range of curricular and extra-curricular trips: China, Iceland, Poland and Spain are among regular destinations. In recent years, our House System has underpinned our all-round provision in celebrating the Arts, Sports, Sciences, Careers and Community. The system promotes inter-year-group collaboration and is the basis of our student leadership programme. All students take part in leadership skills development through the accredited PiXL Edge programme and many are successful in The Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Our students are prepared to achieve in the modern world following a Highdown education.

The Governors of Highdown believe we have established a regional centre of excellence in our outreach work and leading of teacher development through our extensive networks. This ensures talented teachers are in our classrooms and continually working on their skills. We are delighted that our numbers have increased and we are the most popular choice of school in north Reading. Our liaison with our primary school partners and our thorough transition programme ensures that young people in the Caversham area feel part of the school long before they actually become Highdowners in year seven.

I am proud to lead the team of Governors who are committed to supporting our Headteacher, Rachel Cave, and her leadership team. We hope you will come and visit us soon, be it as a prospective student, parent or colleague.

Professor Arttu Rajantie  
Chair of Highdown Board of Trustees  
September 2021