

Governance Impact Statement Full Report. September 2026

Governing Role

The role of the Governing Board is an important one in relation to the leadership of the school. This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Board articulates their role in relation to the strategic leadership of the school and the impact that we have had on school improvement. The Governing Board is made up of a group of volunteers, who have a range of diverse knowledge and skills. Their purpose is to ensure high-quality education for every child in our school. The Government requires Governing Boards to support the Headteacher and all the staff to shape the strategic direction of the school. As Governors, we are accountable for the performance of our school pupils, and we are measured by three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure the money is spent effectively.

Governors work in partnership with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in monitoring the School Improvement Plan. (SIP). The SIP is a live document which sets out the objectives for the coming year. It is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Governing Board to ensure that priorities are progressed and actioned.

Training

All members of the Governing Board have a range of relevant training to support them in their role. A skills mix and gap analysis is undertaken each year, and training needs are identified. The impact of this is that the Governing Board is kept abreast of their responsibilities regarding the latest requirements and expectations. New governors undertake induction training and are provided with a mentor to support them. All governors are required to undertake yearly Safeguarding and Prevent training and then take relevant courses to up-skill themselves in areas of practice related to their responsibilities. All governors must also sign a Code of Conduct each academic year, which sets out the behaviour, ethical, and professional standards required of them.

Impact of Full Governing Board Meetings

Governors attend two Full Governing Board (FGB) meetings in the first two terms and one in the summer term. In addition, some governors meet three times a year as a Finance and Premises Committee. Governors are linked to areas of the SIP and have regular link visits and meetings with staff to monitor progress against the SIP objectives. Academic staff also present work to the governors during FGB meetings which allows for a further opportunity to question and challenge issues. Governor visit reports are recorded digitally and are available to all governors and senior academic staff. The visits and reports impact on the governing body's ability to effectively challenge and act as critical friends and hold senior leaders to account. This is vital as there have been real challenges retaining key governors who have time to visit the school during its working day, and therefore it has been important to be creative in how governors can develop their understanding of the workings of the school.

School Policies

Governors review and approve policies on a regular basis and there are a group of governors with a remit to undertake this responsibility (Policy Committee) and to ensure that the policies are live and evidence based. Policies are regularly updated and those relevant to children and their parents/carers are uploaded onto the school website. The Chair of Governors has oversight of these policies and signs them off to ensure that current ones are in use. We have recently appointed a Chair for the Policy Committee to ensure the effective running of this important aspect of the governing role.

Performance Management

The role of the Chair of Governors includes leading the Governing Board in managing the Headteacher's performance through a rigorous, robust, and supportive appraisal process. A panel of governors (including the Chair) supported by a local authority member, set annual targets, which are reviewed at points throughout the year. The panel and the external adviser meet with the headteacher at year end to assess performance against agreed criteria and write an appraisal report. There are also regular meetings between the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors to offer an opportunity to explore areas of concern and provide a supportive and listening environment to consider any challenges.

The Governing Board as a whole meet regularly to act as critical friends and challenge where necessary, to improve outcomes for both pupils and staff. Both academic staff and governors have undertaken a considerable amount of work to improve communication with parents, as this was identified as an area for improvement. The electronic communication systems for parents have been rationalised to reduce the number of sites parents need to access. Staff have also undertaken training around communication and de-escalation, and this has received a positive response from the latest parent survey.

Monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan is a multi-year road map that defines a school's long-term vision, core priorities, and actionable goals. Against the school's Strategic Plan (2023) the Governing Board has continued to uphold the Vision and Ethos of the school. The Governing Board has taken steps to revisit, review and evaluate the key pillars that make up the Strategic Plan and continue to scrutinise and check progress against each of these priority areas. This work is on-going to ensure that the plan stays relevant and up to date.

School Improvement Plan and Governor Visits

A School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a live strategic roadmap that guides a school's continuous development, resource allocation and academic goal setting. Link governors have responsibility for specific areas of the SIP. Each link governor conducts monitoring visits to review their area, and they produce governor visit reports identifying strengths and offering recommendations for change/improvement. Reports are shared digitally and there is an opportunity to discuss these at Full Governing Board meetings, resulting in greater accountability for staff. Monitoring visits are a mix of classroom visits and learning walks. Governors have found covering all these difficult, due to the number of governors who can access time from work during the day to undertake these. This is now a key area of concern as we face the new academic year depleted in numbers.

Areas of particular focus this year have been around SEND children and finding the best way to support them with limited resources. The school's SENCO has been very proactive in chasing funding and fighting for the best funding outcomes possible for each child. She has also been active in training staff in relation to Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP), which is a framework to understand behaviour and support the emotional well-being of children.

Behaviour and mental health have been a further focus of attention and there have been some positive findings observed through governor monitoring of these areas. Academic staff are now all trained in the new behavioural techniques, and this has positively impacted on behaviour, with work continuing into the next academic year, particularly around the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.

More support for children with emotional and mental health difficulties has been sourced from outside the school including MIND, CAMHS and Educational Psychology and the School Nursing Service, and this has been positively received by parents and their children. As Chair of Governors, I am personally very eager to ensure that children's mental well-being retains its high focus within the school, and this coming academic year there will be further work in relation to anti-bullying as well as recognising the importance that the use of smart phones and other electronic devices has on the developing brain. Children need to develop resilience and the importance of playing with peers, using their imagination, being allowed the freedom to resolve conflict and to explore and challenge themselves physically are key to improving mental health. The OPAL scheme that the school has in place encourages this, and as a Governing Board we are pleased to see this thriving. Children need to go back to free play and connect with children on a face-to-face basis rather than isolating themselves on electronic devices where there is now clear research evidence of the damage this has to the developing brain.

Progress and Attainment

Governors have provided support and challenge throughout the year in relation to pupil progress and attainment.

Data is made available to governors at FGB meetings with verbal and written presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions with the Headteacher and members of the SLT. Governors have been provided with a range of data and the level of this has increased on the request of governors.

Governors ask questions to ensure the school's standards and expectations are high and that staff 'teach to the top.' Governors challenge the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team on the data, holding them to account, especially for pupils or groups of learners who may have lower attainment. Particular scrutiny is placed on pupil progress across all ability groups, including the more able, and on the effective use of Pupil Premium Funding.

Standards remain high in all areas of the school curriculum and pupils identified as more able receive targeted interventions and enrichment activities. For those pupils at risk of not meeting their expected standard, interventions are put in place to support them.

A focus for the current year will be in relation to handwriting, which is an important life skill. When handwriting becomes automatic, pupils free up brain power to focus on planning, spelling, and vocabulary choices rather than the physical act of forming letters. Handwriting fluency directly impacts on a pupil's academic confidence and willingness to express ideas therefore it is a very important attribute for all pupils to develop competency in. As a Governing Board we will be paying particular attention to this across the school.

Capital Projects

Over recent years, security at the school has improved, with new high-level fencing around the whole school site. This has been adapted and appropriately secured to reflect the new entrance to the school from the newly appointed car park. An outside door to the Willow Room has been established over the summer holiday to avoid children going through a classroom to access it. This is a positive step for all the pupils concerned. Children are proud of their school and feel safe, and this was noted in the last pupil survey. Money for key projects is very limited, and the school Business Manager works extremely hard to balance the books. This is an on-going problem which the Finance and Premises Committee continues to monitor. Government funding is not keeping up with the additional needs placed on schools.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Governors are responsible for data protection, and a policy is in place for this purpose. The policy is available on the school website and is monitored during safeguarding visits with the headteacher.

Impact of Finance and Premises Committee Meetings

The school budget is scrutinised and reviewed in detail at these meetings. On this committee, we have governors with strong finance skills who review end-of-year budgets, attend pre-budget meetings and question deficit/surplus balances. Using benchmarking information, the committee scrutinises the effect of pupil numbers on the budget and how these impact on staffing and resources. There have been some challenges with pupil numbers in some classes, but the picture is an improving one with most classes full for the academic year 2026-7. This needs to be continuously monitored as lower class numbers reduce income to the school.

Through working closely with the School Business Manager and Headteacher, the Finance and Premises Committee continue to ensure that money is used effectively and that the school remains in a positive financial position. The financial position continues to be a concern as the budgets provided for schools in real terms have been reduced year on year, however the school is thankfully in a better position than many. Delegated funding to support children with SEND continues to be an issue. The Government announced that it is providing an extra £4 billion for SEND over the next three years, however only £1.6 billion has been allocated over three years to help schools, colleges and early years settings to improve inclusive support. Whilst this is welcomed, the current situation is that schools continue to struggle with underfunding to support the growing numbers and the complexity of SEND children within mainstream provision. Our SENCO is very proactive in relation to ensuring that children with SEND in the school are appropriately supported, and much of her time is spent chasing the appropriate level of funding, however this is still an area of concern.

Managing the estate and the associated costs, particularly of the older part of the school, continues to be problematic. Energy costs and building repairs continue to place a burden on school finances. Financing staff pay awards in the past has put a strain on the budget and the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) has recommended that from September 2026 teachers and leaders will receive a pay award of 3.5% followed by a further increase of 3% from September 2027. These recommendations have been accepted in full, and the Education Secretary has committed to fully funding them, which is positive. The role of the Finance and Premises Committee and subsequently the Full Governing Board is to follow the money and ensure that the budget works hard for every child and every aspect of their education. This has become increasingly difficult in the current economic climate.

Pupil Premium Funding

Pupil Premium Funding is extra Government money given to state funded schools in England to improve educational outcomes and to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. Pupil Premium (PP) funding is not allocated as a direct personal budget for individual pupils. Schools are required to spend their grant on evidence-based activities such as high-quality teaching which is monitored by the Governing Board. The Finance and Premises Committee approve the planned spend of PP funding each year and challenge the Headteacher and senior leaders on the impact of the spending. Governors scrutinise evidence of impact on the outcomes for PP Children. There is a designated governor for PP children who monitors evidence of impact and reports back to the governing board. PP children within the school achieve well compared to their non-PP peers.

What were the significant challenges for the governing body?

One of the most significant challenges that the Governing Body has faced over the last year has been the continuing change in governors. This turnover was for very valid reasons including end of tenures and sickness, but this has meant that everything we would like to have achieved has not been possible. The Governing Board is currently very depleted and there is concern about this situation as other governors come to the end of their tenures.

Like with many schools across the country, the Governing Board currently still has several vacancies. However, the quality of the team that we do currently have is exceptional, with a huge range of expertise, skills and enthusiasm. This has been clearly identified in the recent skill-mix review, and it is hoped within the next few months we will be able to fill our gaps with people who have the knowledge and expertise to enhance our current team.

How were the challenges met?

Safeguarding

The 'CPOMS' specialised software system helps staff record and monitor child protection, safeguarding and general welfare or pastoral concerns. The platform acts as a secure, centralised digital repository for incident reports and is now fully embedded. It offers an effective means of safeguarding children, and it has encouraged a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Previously the school had used a system called 'Safeguard,' but CPOMS is now being used as it provides the necessary systems at a lower cost. The one thing it does not provide is training packages, but these can be found for governors from other providers that the school is signed up to. The Headteacher works closely with the Safeguarding Governor/ Chair of Governors in relation to monitoring, and the structure now in place for safeguarding visits is being used to good effect.

Pupil absenteeism is still being closely monitored, as is the situation whereby parents remove children for the purpose of taking a holiday. This is still an area of concern which governors continue to monitor, as children can lose out on learning and understanding new concepts by being absent from the classroom. The Chair of Governors/ Safeguarding lead meets fortnightly with the Headteacher to monitor any safeguarding issues as well as address any other areas of concern. An annual Health and Safety tour of the school is also undertaken by the Safeguarding Lead/Chair of Governors and offers a good insight into the work that the school does to ensure pupils' safety.

Governor monitoring visits, which are conducted by most school governors, also include a focus around safeguarding.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

A focus for this academic year has been around the teaching and learning of Art. The school applied for and successfully achieved an award from ArtsMark. ArtsMark is a creative quality standard and school improvement framework for arts and culture in English schools, accredited by Arts Council England. ArtsMark empowers teachers with the skills that they need to embed arts, culture and creativity across the whole curriculum. It was a pleasure as Chair of Governors to be involved in this initiative and to see the creativity across the whole school.

The Governing Board also continues to gather, analyse and review a range of data that helps the board to have a greater insight and understanding of academic performance in the school. Teaching staff have presented aspects of their work to the Governing Board over the last year. This allows the board to develop a better understanding of the types of packages used for teaching and offers the opportunity to challenge. A focus of the board has been around ‘added value,’ teaching to the top’ and evidence-based practice.

Learning Walks where governors visit the school with a specific focus, have been undertaken recently exploring aspects of the curriculum. These have included learning walks in relation to Art, Curriculum, Behaviour and Mental Health. Visits are linked to the School Improvement Plan. These learning walks have been successful in providing more information to governors about how the curriculum is delivered and how the children engage with the learning opportunities offered to them.

Special Educational Needs

The SENCO has continued to support individual children and their families over the last year as well as working to ensure that each SEND child gets the funding that they need. This is very challenging as adequate funding is not always available to meet the complexity of need.

The SEND governor/ Chair of Governors meets with the SENCO each term to discuss the individual progress of SEND pupils, discuss funding issues and generally offer support. The SENCO only works part-time as there is no funding to support a full-time role and therefore, she supports academic staff to support the SEND children within their classes.

The SENCO has also been actively setting up a new area called ‘The Willow’ room for children with additional needs that may find a quieter environment more conducive to their needs.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Governing Body takes the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils extremely seriously and strives to monitor and support the school’s work in this area. The most recent staff survey was very positive with staff feeling supported. Surveys now use an evidence-based tool from the Anna Freud centre for undertaking staff surveys. One of the learning walks focused on Child Mental Health and Well-being and there was clear progress in the behaviour of pupils. However, what was acknowledged was that there still appear to be several children who do present with some behaviours which may suggest that they are struggling with their mental health. This is not

surprising as research indicates that 4-5 children in a class have a mental health issue which often is unrecognised (NHS England, 2023). The school has and still is currently addressing this concern and has now got support for children and their families in the form of MIND, CAMHS, Educational Psychology and the School Nursing Service.

Leadership

The Headteacher has worked closely with the SLT, the Chair of Governors and the Governing Board to meet the current challenges faced by the school over the last year. There has been a focus on staff development, and she has proactively ensured that all staff are now trained in the Paul Dix principles of behaviour management and on the Essex County Councils Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP) approach. These approaches are now being imbedded.

The Chair of Governors meets with the Headteacher on a fortnightly basis to monitor issues and discuss any concerns. These meetings are key to ensuring rigor in the monitoring process. All meetings are summarised for the Governing Board.

Sustainability

The school integrates sustainability as a core strategic pillar. Sustainability is formally recognised as one of the six foundation pillars guiding long- term development and resource planning.

A specific governor has been assigned to monitor the sustainability pillar, track progress and report back to the FGB. There is also a member of the SLT who has responsibility for the sustainability remit who has been to FGB meeting to report back on her work.

There are a range of activities that go on in the school to support the sustainability agenda including one meat free day each week in relation to school meals; environmental walks, outdoor learning using the outdoor pond and vegetable garden as active teaching resources. Each class elects two monitors to reduce energy waste and maintain tidy safe learning spaces, and student representatives meet with SLT members on a regular basis to propose and execute environmental improvements.

The Governing Board also ensures that education around sustainability and the environment is driven through the curriculum and the School Parliament.

What have been the achievements of the governing body over the last 6 months?

- Ensuring that we continue to have a functioning Governing Body following the loss of several governors and our newly appointed Vice-Chair.
- Prioritising the well-being of the Headteacher, staff and pupils.
- Developing confidence in the use of a range of strategies that are evidence based where possible, for effective governance, training, monitoring and reporting.
- Rigorous interrogation of financial spending priorities and budget setting.
- Exploring and supporting life-long learning for all staff including training around understanding behaviour.
- Using validated tools for stakeholder engagement

- Working to improve effective communication by listening to parents and offering opportunities for discussion alongside sharing knowledge in key areas i.e. mental health. Also, by offering communication from governors using medium like face-to-face discussions, termly newsletters and being available in the school when key initiatives are taking place where possible.
- Proactively getting involved with new school initiatives i.e. ArtsMark

How have these achievements improved areas of school life (impact)?

- Successfully establishing a governing board that has ensured that the school is better supported and constructively challenged whilst still coping with changes in the governor base.
- Ensuring that the governing board use evidence-based tools for monitoring have improved the reliability and validity of the data collected and ensured a more rigorous approach.
- Effectively utilising electronic reporting systems ensures a more rigorous approach to monitoring which is available to both the FGB and SLT.
- Continued rigorous monitoring of the financial position of the school by looking at spending priorities and budgeting.
- Prioritisation and monitoring of the well-being of the Headteacher, staff and pupils should keep the School Community happier and healthier.
- Continuing to Promote CPD and life-long learning should impact on pupil learning and improve outcomes for children, ensuring that academic staff are up to date with the latest evidence – based knowledge in their curriculum areas.
- Stakeholder engagement is improving particularly in relation to effective communication, and this work is on-going to ensure that stakeholders feel that they are being listened to and heard, know who the governors are and what role they play in ensuring the quality of provision within the school.

Yvonne Crome Chair of Governors September 2026