



Annual Report on the Evaluation of Governor Effectiveness, 2024-25

Background and Context

This annual report provides an evaluation of the Governing Body effectiveness during the period under review.

This report comprises the following sections:

- 1 Overview
- 2 Meetings of the Governing Body
- 3 Remit and achievements of the Governing Body and its committees
- 4 The composition of the Governing Body and its committees, and attendance

1 Overview

The governing body conducts its business to take account of the three roles of the governing bodies as outlined in the Governors' Handbook:

- 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 its money is well spent.

The day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the Head teacher and senior leadership team.

The governing body also ensures that the school complies fully with statutory safeguarding procedures. All staff have signed a record to confirm they have read Part 1 of the DfE statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education". The governing body has familiarised itself with the document and are working with the safeguarding lead in school to complete the annual safeguarding audit. Governors last attended safeguarding training in November 2023 and online safety in April 2024.

School was inspected by Ofsted in June 2024 and school remains evaluated as good. Feedback was received to suggest this is a strong and secure good, which is in line with governors' aspirations and expectations for school.

2 Meetings of the governing body and attendance

The Full Governing Body met on 5 occasions and each of the two sub committees met which met 3 times during the year. All meetings were clerked by a trained professional clerk.

Full Governing Body and TLPS meetings were in person apart from a couple of occasions when we moved to online at short notice for practical reasons and Resources meetings were all online. All Committee meetings enjoy a good level of attendance and positive engagement and debate throughout. Governors are a lively bunch and their passion for supporting school and its leadership shows through at every meeting.

Governors have good attendance at meetings overall. Apologies for non-attendance are considered on an individual basis; governors are aware through the code of conduct that non-attendance, which includes apologies not being accepted, will result in the removal of a governor six months from the date of first non-attendance. No Governors were removed as a result of non-attendance during this period.

3 The remit and achievements of the governing body and its committees

Through all activities Governors have supported and monitored the School against the key priorities for 2024-25, which are:

Shire Oak – Key Priorities

- To embed a consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of **English** including early reading and writing (phonics), reading and writing (including handwriting).
- To embed and sustain a consistent, whole school approach to the teaching of **maths** in line with mastery principles and continue to develop our use of adaptation to meet the needs of learners in lessons and class provision, particularly children with SEND or who require more challenge. (e.g. using Shire Oak list of adaptations, etc.)
- To develop and embed our provision for children with barriers to learning, particularly dyslexia/specific learning difficulties.
- To revisit and develop links with **previous subject learning** (particularly in foundation subjects) so that children make links with key knowledge over time.

Key Achievements during 2024-25

It is important for the Governing body to reflect on its key achievements over the last year. Notable achievements evidencing the impact of the Governing Body throughout the academic year include;

- **Curriculum updates** – Governors have changed the way in which we measure what we have heard at the curriculum updates on the FGB agenda. Now, after a member of School has provided an update we assign one or two Governors to visit school and meet with pupils and review books and other resources to

assess the impact of what we were told at FGB. This provides an excellent framework to hear direct from the pupils what they have learnt and see this in practice, and it really makes the subject come alive. Governors have reported their findings back to the next FGB and we have all found this process to add value to the curriculum reports and Governors understanding in these areas, especially in relation to testing the key school priority of revisiting and developing links with previous subject learning to ensure that key knowledge is linked over time;

- **Monitoring the financial position** – Resources Committee apply regular rigour and challenge to ensure that the budget and resources are managed despite challenging circumstances, ensuring that priorities are resourced. We were delighted when school showed a £13k in-year surplus in 2024/5 financial year, with a further surplus predicted in 2025/6. The 3 year cycle remains in deficit, so we're not out of the woods yet, but down to the hard work and efforts of the school team, the reality is much better than was predicted;
- **Monitoring Safeguarding** – Charlie Stobbart, with responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding works closely with school to monitor safeguarding processes. Our new Co-opted Governor Kitty Ferris has a background in Safeguarding which will further strengthen Governors ability to monitor this important area of school activity ;
- **Health and Safety** – David Walls reported that he was pleased that a number of minor H&S matters highlighted over the last 12 months had been resolved on his last H&S walk, and Governors are satisfied that we have robust processes in this area;
- **Supporting staff** –a staff survey was completed in April 2025 which provided positive feedback in most areas. This was shared with Staff and their input sought;
- **Stakeholder feedback** – pupil and parent surveys were conducted in 2024/5, in addition to the Staff Survey referred to above. A Governors newsletter was circulated in October 2025;
- **Children's Centre building** – this has been a significant concern for Governors for a number of years, yet we have had very little control over the situation. The original portacabin on site was condemned as unsafe for use in 2020, leaving an unsightly building on school premises and no usable provision from which to run Children centre activities which meant that we were not fulfilling our SLA. Credit to the Children Centre to have innovated and developed links with other premises in Headingley to be able to run some kind of provision, however, we are delighted that the portacabin was eventually removed by Leeds City Council and has now been replaced by a fantastic TiPi structure, which will serve as a fantastic Children's Centre site and is visually very striking on school premises. Whilst this was ongoing LCC started consultation and from September the Children Centre will no longer be run from school, going back into LCC provision. However, with the Tipi safely in place Governors are confident that the strong relationships with the Children Centre provision will continue and Shire Oak will remain very much at the forefront of Headingley community for families from birth;
- **Governor Board changes** – we had a number of new Governors join this year bringing some great skills and expertise. David Walls co-chaired with Antonia for the full year with a view to taking over as Chair from September 2025. David has attended the Effective Chairs Network sessions with Leeds for Learning so should be fully ready to take on the Chair role!
- **Governor development** – a skills audit for Governors will be shared over the summer vacation period in order to ensure that we identify any knowledge and experience gaps to maintain as effective Board of Governors as possible, especially with some new Governors joining over the last 18 months. The audit will ask Governors if they have any ideas for a development session, to focus on strategic developments as a committee that would be useful to spend some time on.

Statement from the Chairs of each sub-Committee on their work during the academic year 2024-25:

Dick Killington, Chair of Teaching, Learning and Pupil Support Committee (TLPS)

Introduction

Kitty, Tim, and David were welcomed to the Committee during this academic year. Kate was thanked for her many years input into TLPS (and as Chair of PPP). Kate moved across to Resources Committee part-way through the academic year.

TLPS Committee members are passionate about Shire Oak and all contribute fully to the work of the Committee, many having specific further roles in the group. We are lucky to have a broad range of expertise and knowledge amongst members and our meetings are lively, with much debate, discussion, and questioning. The primary remit of the Committee is to monitor and get assurance that all policies and practices meet appropriate requirements in the areas of eg. Teaching, Learning, Pupil safety and Well-being, and school interaction with stakeholders. This assurance is achieved by triangulated evidence through internal reports (written or oral), information from external sources, monitoring visits, questioning the Head and Deputy Head at meetings, speaking to staff, and interaction with stakeholders.

Meetings

We met three times during this academic session (two face-to-face, and one virtual).

- a) Part of our first autumn meeting was spent discussing the excellent ungraded Ofsted report from the June 2024 visit where Shire Oak was confirmed as being 'Good'. The Committee thanked the Head and Deputy Head and all staff, and praised them for their continued work and professionalism in achieving such a positive report. The report confirmed Shire Oak as 'continuing to be a caring and inclusive school where the needs of pupils continue to be at the heart of the school's ethos', and 'where safeguarding and the well-being of pupils is a priority'. The School was said 'to have a very balanced and ambitious curriculum which prepares pupils for a life in Britain'. The School objectives are clearly to continue in this vein.

However, the report also suggested that 'in some foundation subjects pupils do not regularly revisit previous subject learning which means that pupils sometimes struggle to connect what they have already learned in earlier topics with new learning'. As such the School has made this area a priority in its Development Plans (probably for the next two years). The School's new adviser, Rachel Mortlock, is helping the SLT in its strategy to rectify this Ofsted critique. It is also being debated at staff meetings and CPD meetings, and in addition TLPS Committee members are helping by discussing with pupils their understanding and links of foundation subjects. To date Kate (Music), Lauren (Computing), and David and Dick (Science) have looked at books and chatted with pupils from all years re. their understanding of this issue. This will continue with other subjects next academic year. The Committee is assured of, and welcomes, the initiatives the School is taking to address this issue.

- b) The Committee was informed that there has been a significant reduction in the working hours of both the Deputy Head and the Family Support Worker/Learning Mentor which could have a great impact on the School. However, this shortfall has been handled by the SLT internally with the help of all staff. The outcome of these initiatives has meant that the issue has had no negative impact on pupils' studies and well-being, and have meant only minor changes to some staff. The Committee congratulated the Head and Deputy Head on their management and resolution of this issue.

- c) As per our remit the Committee discussed topics on the broad and balanced curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, impact of government funding, assessment and data, pupil progression, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, health and safety, special educational needs, equality, inclusion, food and school meals, Acorn Club, and extra-curricular activities. In addition the Committee reviewed and revised a number of School policies.

Additional comments

- With respect to assessment and data the Committee very much welcomed being informed of the School's analysis and proposed actions when and where attention is needed in some subject areas or particular groups of pupils.
- The FFT phonics scheme is now well-embedded in the School and performances in the phonics test are very good.
- The Committee congratulated the School on receiving an FFT award for its excellent attendance and punctuality, reflecting its position in the Top 10 primary schools in England. As the Ofsted inspector said 'Children at Shire Oak want to come to school'.
- We recognize the huge amount of work Ms Strange has put in to redesigning and updating the School notice-boards; not only are they informative they also bring a fresh look to the walls and corridors of the School.
- I appreciate and would like to thank all Committee members for their input and the passion they have put into meetings, into School visits and the extra work and responsibilities they take on. It is much valued. In this respect I would particularly like to thank Charlie for her expertise and the time she puts into fulfilling her role as Safeguarding Governor.
- The Committee thanks Amanda for her help in preparing agendas and for the excellent minutes she produces. Her help is much appreciated.

Conclusion

During academic session 2024-2025 the Committee has been assured that Shire Oak continues to live up to its high expectations in Teaching and Learning, in Safeguarding, in the Well-being of its pupils, and in its interaction with stakeholders.

We are assured that all requirements were met and that all policies were in place. And once again we thank Jane, Marcelle, the SLT and all staff for their hard work and commitment to the School and its pupils.

Antonia Nicholls, Chair of Resources Committee

Resources Committee has focussed on the Budget and deficit action plan, which School continues to manage in ever challenging circumstances. The financial year ending April 2025 ended in a £13k in-year surplus which is a very positive outcome and one that I know the leadership team worked hard to achieve. We scrutinise financial decisions, Service Level Agreement arrangements and constructively challenge school leaders to ensure that they always seek to ensure good value for money and use finances wisely to support the key requirements of School.

During the 2024-5 academic year David has undertaken a school health and safety walk and has commented on how prepared and receptive the school staff have been to the suggestions that he has made. No major concerns were identified this year and minor issues have been addressed promptly by school.

Staff wellbeing continues to be important. Staff were asked to complete a staff survey in April 2025 and the response was very positive, with an average of 4 or more (out of 5) for 14 of the 21 questions asked. The most positive responses were that:

- Staff have the opportunity to use their own initiative

- Staff believe everyone is treated fairly regardless of ethnic background, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age
- Staff are well supported by their colleagues
- School provides a safe working environment

The most mixed response was to the question “I feel that I can influence key decisions in school”. Interestingly the same question was the lowest scored in the last two years as well.

There are some lovely individual comments in response to “the best thing about working at Shire Oak is...” indicating supportive and positive working relationships, the children, high standards of teaching and enjoying being part of a community, all of which are consistent with the last two years survey.

Governing Board Priorities for 2025-26

- Governors will continue to support and constructively challenge the School to ensure that its activities are robust and meet the objectives of School, as outlined in the School Development Plan, and its stakeholders;
- Governors will continue to monitor teaching, learning, pupil support and partnerships to ensure that they are effective and meet the strategic and educational needs of the school community.
- Governors will continue to monitor School finances, the premises, health and safety and staff wellbeing;
- Governors will continue to monitor academic, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of the children;
- Governors will monitor and support School on the achievement of a number of School priority projects, including the replacement of the Headingley Children Centre building which has been a challenge for some time and continues to be so and the Acorn club;
- Governors will review the Ofsted inspection report from June 2024 and monitor recommendations into next academic year.

5 The composition of the governing body and its committees, and attendance

The school's Governors are drawn from different groups associated with the school including staff, parents, the church, the local community and from Leeds City Council. The Governors have a wide range of skills and experience to be able to fulfil their roles to support the Head Teacher and school staff. In June 2025 I asked Governors to complete a skills audit and will feed this into our programme of events from next academic year.

There have been a few changes this academic year. Although we haven't lost any Governors, we have filled a number of positions that were vacant, notably with Tim Goodall (local authority Governor) and Kitty Ferris (Co-Opted Governor). It's always great to have new Governors on board alongside long standing members to ensure that there is plenty of lively debate and authentic interest in the work of the group.

There are currently no vacancies on the governing body.

The current constitution of the Shire Oak Governing Body is:

- Headteacher (Jane Astrid Devane)
- 1 Local Authority (LA) governor, recommended by the LA and approved by the governing body (Tim Goodall)

- 4 parent governors, formally elected through a ballot of parents unless the election is uncontested (Kate Wright, Charlie Stobbart, Jessica Watson, Laura McCullagh)
- 4 co-opted governors, nominated and appointed by the governing body (Dick Killington, Kitty Ferris, Ann Dudzinski, Antonia Nicholls)
- 1 staff governor, formally elected by staff employed at school (Bianca Woodruff)
- 2 foundation governors, appointed by the foundation (David Walls, Katharine Salmon)
- 1 Associate member (Marcelle Maver, Deputy Head), appointed by the governing body and can vote in committee meetings.

The governing body operates with the following committees:

Resources committee - responsible for staffing including the appointment and role of the SENCO, equality and diversity, finance, property management, health and safety and nutritional standards.

Members:

Antonia Nicholls (Chair)
Ann Dudzinski
David Walls
Kate Wright
Jane Astrid Devane

Teaching, Learning, and Pupil Support committee (TLPS) - responsible for monitoring teaching and learning and curriculum provision, target setting, standards and achievement, SEN, behaviour, safeguarding, attendance, children's spiritual moral social and cultural development, children, parent and staff voice, extra-curricular activities, cluster and other partnerships.

Members:

Dick Killington (Chair)
David Walls
Charlie Stobbart
Jessica Watson
Laura McCullagh
Kitty Ferris
Bianca Woodruff
Jane Astrid Devane
Marcelle Maver

Advisory Board for the Horforth, Headingley and Ireland Wood Children's Centre - We assume that this will no longer be in place after September 2025 when the Childrens Centre will be managed by LCC, although school will continue to work closely with the Childrens Centre and support Claire Birch through the transition if that would be helpful.

Members:

Jane Astrid Devane

Antonia Nicholls

Four members of Broadgate Primary School to include;, Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and representative stakeholders.

Four members of Ireland Wood Primary School to include Headteacher, the Chair of Governors.

Manager of the Children's Centre.

Governors with specific monitoring duties

- Looked After Children – Charlie Stobbart
- Child Protection and Safeguarding – Charlie Stobbart
- SEND – Jessica Walton
- Complaints – Antonia Nicholls
- Training – Antonia Nicholls
- Health and Safety – David Walls
- EYFS – Dick Killington

Headingley/Kirkstall Partnership

- Ann Dudzinski was delegated with making decisions on behalf of the governing board.

Current and recent (in the last 12 months) governors and business/other interests declared are provided in the table below. Governors and associate members, if appointed, are reminded that they should declare any changes as and when they occur.

Name of governor	Category of governor and committees served	Date appointed and term of office	Relevant business/personal interests	Any other educational establishments governed	Relationships with the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives
Katharine Salmon	Foundation	13/5/2024 – 12/5/2028			
Ann Dudzinski	Co-opted	20/11/23 – 14/03/28			
Kitty Ferris	Co-opted	24/3/25 – 23/3/29			
Jessica Watson	Parent	13/03/23 – 12/3/27			

Dick Killington	Co-opted	15/07/15 – 14/07/27			
David Walls	Foundation	26/09/22 – 25/09/26			
Antonia Nicholls	Co-opted	19/9/18 – 25/09/26			
Charlie Stobbart	Parent	6/11/23 – 5/11/27			
Laura McCullagh	Parent	3/11/23 – 2/11/27			
Kate Wright	Parent	6/11/23 – 5/11/27			
Tim Goodall	Local Authority representative	23/9/24 – 22/9/28			
Bianca Woodruff	Staff	21/9/24- 20/9/28			

The following is an attendance record for individual governors at meetings of the full governing body and committees.

Shire Oak CE Primary School Governing Body

Attendance List: 2024/2025

Y - in attendance

N - not in attendance and no apologies received/accepted

A - apologies received and accepted

X - not in post/not a member

	FGB 23/9/24	Resources 8/10/24	TLPS 15/10/24	FGB 18/11/24	TLPS 21/1/25	Resources 4/3/25	FGB 24/3/25	TLPS 13/5/25	Resources 10/6/25	FGB 7/7/25
Jane Astrid Devane	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ann Dudzinski	Y	Y	X	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y	A
Kitty Ferris	X	X	X	X	X	X	Y	Y	X	Y
Tim Goodall	Y	X	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y
Dick Killington	Y	X	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y
Laura McCullagh	Y	X	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y
Antonia Nicholls	Y	Y	X	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y	Y
Katherine Salmon	Y	X	Y	Y	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y
Charlie Stobbart	Y	X	Y	A	A	X	X	Y	X	Y
David Walls	Y	Y	X	Y	X	Y	Y	X	Y	Y

Jessica Watson	Y	X	Y	A	Y	X	X	Y	X	Y
Bianca Woodruff	Y	X	Y	A	Y	X	Y	A	X	Y
Kate Wright	Y	Y	X	A	X	Y	Y	X	X	Y