



Governors Annual Statement and Impact Report 2024/2025

The role of the Board of Governors is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school. This annual impact statement is one of the ways in which the Board attempts to demonstrate its role in school leadership and show the impact of its policies and procedures on school improvement. It is also the means of ensuring governor transparency.

The Governor Handbook published by the DfE in 2023 clearly sets out the four core functions of the Board of Governors:

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of Staff

Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Ensuring the voices of school stakeholders are heard

The work of the Board of Governors is focused on meeting the requirements of these functions. The Board knows the school well, is confident that all statutory and legal requirements are met and ensures that issues within school are addressed in a timely and effective manner. The Board also contributes to the Raising Standards Plan to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the school.

To achieve their objectives, Governors have an annual Governing Board Improvement Plan which is on the agenda at each meeting and reviewed at the end of each academic year.

This ensures that there is a continual process of evaluation and review of Governor activity and outcomes.

This statement and report are part of that evaluation and review process and should be available on the school website.

Background and Context

The Board of Governors has supported the Headteacher and Senior Leadership throughout the year. Full Governing Board meetings are held termly and Governor Committee meetings are held every half term. Staff join these meetings to report to the governors on curriculum development and innovation. Regular reports on pupil progress, safeguarding and the National Minimum Standards for residential schools are presented at each Governors' meeting.

The Co-chairs evaluated the Headteacher's Performance Management targets from 2023/2024 in December 2025 with the support of our independent school adviser. As part of this process, they were then able to set new and appropriate targets for the coming year and to discuss priority areas. The targets set for 2025 were reviewed in July and will be finally evaluated in the next academic year.

Ofsted Inspections

The Social Care Inspection

This took place in November 2024, and it reported on the school's residential provision. It found the overall experiences and progress of the Children and Young People continued to be Outstanding. The report said:

"Children's experiences of staying in the residential provision of the school are excellent and the Staff are dedicated and committed childcare practitioners."

"The Governors act as a critical friend to the Leadership Team and are a force for continued improvement. The Governors are committed to supporting and developing the residential

provision and provide an added level of scrutiny with a focus on improving outcomes for Children.”

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before 2024

This ungraded inspection took place on the 10th and 11th December 2024, and it reported that the school had taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection:

“Expectations are high for all pupils. Pupils work hard to achieve the ambitions that Staff have for them. As a result, these expectations are typically achieved”

“Governors and Trustees provide a careful balance of support and challenge to the school”.

Raising Standards Plan. (School Development Plan)

Governors have worked with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to develop and monitor the 2024/25 Raising Standards Plan (RSP). This plan was based on priorities identified by the Headteacher from data and school self-assessment and Performance Management Targets which were needed to move the school forward.

A key aim has been to embed Quality Assurance across the whole setting. To self-improve teaching and learning using research and best practice while considering the individual complex needs of the Children and Young People to ensure outcomes are evidenced in the progress seen by students.

The Pupil Wellbeing and Attainment Committee

This has continued to monitor and review the RSP at every half termly meeting. Members of Staff and the Headteacher have been invited to give details about the progress of certain sections of the plan and to respond to questions from the governors. The plan is continuously evaluated and RAG rated (Red not started, Amber in progress, Green completed) so that areas completed and those still in progress can be clearly seen. RSP targets are based on four areas each with three clear strategic objectives or areas for development. These are:

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management.

These objectives are monitored termly by the Headteacher and senior management and RAG rated accordingly. Governors can access the plan through the Governor Hub and see progress being made. Feedback from the committee meetings is presented to the full Governing Board to allow governors the opportunity to question and challenge any issues raised. The Headteacher also prepares a report prior to the meetings.

Governor visits

All Governors have received Safeguarding training and have continued to visit the school regularly. Governors go into residence houses, classrooms and attend meetings and events as part of their monitoring programme. They have met regularly with Staff and Young People. These visits are a valuable and essential opportunity for governors to monitor aspects of the National Minimum Standards for residential schools. Governors also respond to the half termly reports of the residence Independent Visitor. Visits to school enable Governors to gain knowledge of the curriculum and standards of behaviour, and to observe Staff and Young People at work.

A record of monitoring visits by the Governors has been kept throughout the year to ensure all areas of school life have been covered. The documentation means that an accurate record of targets identified by these visits and their outcomes are available to all the Governors for follow-up. Those Governors with particular responsibilities have arranged more frequent visits with specific Staff. Regular visits to monitor the robustness of safeguarding practice was noted by Ofsted.

"The Governor responsible for links with the deaf community has fed back on initiatives and events".

It was also commented on by Ofsted that Staff appreciate that their wellbeing and workload are important to all the Leaders.

The Co-Chairs have continued to have regular meetings with the Headteacher, input from J Ward, an Independent School Adviser, and also updates from the Deputy Heads of Achievement, Care & Guidance and also from the Company and Charity Secretary.

Data analysis

Presentations of data have been given to governors at both the Pupil Wellbeing and Attainment committee and at the Full Governing Board meetings. These have been followed by question-and-answer sessions with the Headteacher and individual members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Classroom Monitor was no longer being supported and has now been replaced by Arbor. This has involved a considerable amount of work by the Deputy Head Achievement, but it is now up and running and will be fully operational ready for the new academic year. It will enabled Staff to identify areas of pupil need and put in place necessary intervention. Data reported to Governors will now be more tailored to their monitoring needs.

The Aspire curriculum is firmly embedded and has been welcomed by governors as a means of assessing the emotional wellbeing and development of all pupils.

The effective use and impact of both Pupil Premium and Sports Premium has been monitored by the governors. The Governors have been involved in reviewing the Wellbeing Programme and the positive impact it has had on Young People.

Policies

Governors have continued to work with the Senior Leadership Team to review all the relevant policies on a rolling program. Scrutiny of Policies ensures that all guidance is current and up to date and that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list.

Financial management

The Governors' Finance & Resources Committee

This meets every half term in order to fulfil one of their core functions - ensuring that the budget is managed efficiently, and that reporting is effective and continuous. The Governors have a wide variety of expertise and experience which has helped to ensure positive outcomes and continuous improvement. They have supported the Company and Charity Secretary in checking and monitoring the school financial systems. They have worked with the Trustees to ensure there is an effective long-term plan for premises maintenance and upgrade. This has included plans to reopen and upgrade Lydia House in the next academic year to develop the school's residential facilities.

Ensuring the effective deployment of Staff and resources is also part of their remit.

The Co-Chairs of the Governors attend the Trustees meetings to both contribute to and understand the financial and planning decisions made by the Trustees.

Staff recruitment

The Headteacher and the Governors ensure that all recruitment practices are safe and effective. Several of the Governors are now trained in Safe and Effective Recruitment.

Governors have been involved in the shortlisting and interviewing of Staff at all levels within the school and across all departments

Governor participation in interview panels has ensured that high quality, skilled Staff, who share the school's ethos and aims, are appointed.

Governor Meeting Attendance

All meetings in this academic year have been quorate and mostly in person but on-line attendance has been used occasionally. Parents and Carers of Pupils from any Local Authority can now have the opportunity to contribute to the governance of the school. All documentation can be accessed online by Governors for comments and scrutiny. The annual programme of sub-committee meetings has been maintained 3 Resources, 3 Finance, 6 Pupil Wellbeing and Attainment meetings.

The Co-Chairs of the Governors have continued to work effectively together, and the mutual support and shared responsibility have ensured quality school governance. They have decided to step down after 6 years in the role and after two successful Ofsted Inspections this academic year. The Governors feel that this is a good time to refresh the Governing Board and add new skills and have advertised for new Governors to join the board. The school has had a good response to this and are in the process of appointing new members of the board to start in September. This will include a Parent Governor. The retiring Chairs wish them well in their future role.

Governing Board Improvement Plan 2024/2025

This plan enabled the Governing Board to demonstrate its focus on its four core strategic functions: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding the Headteacher to account for educational performance of the school and its Young People; overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. A fourth core function has now been added which is to ensure the voices of school stakeholders are heard

The 2024/2025 Governing Board Improvement Plan aligned the Governors' focus with the school RSP. An evaluation of the Improvement Plan has shown the following:

Strategic objectives are being put in place to develop Quality Assurance around whole school education.

The curriculum on offer is broad and balanced across all key stages. Staff presentations have demonstrated this to the Governor committees and Governor monitoring visits to school have reinforced this.

The Trustees working with the Governors and the Company and Charity Secretary have ensured the financial health of the school and the efficient use of Staff and resources.

The Governing Board continued to be an effective team The current Governors have led the school well this is evidenced in the successful Ofsted inspections this year. Succession planning is in place for a new Governing Board in September which will provide new skills and a possible change of direction to move the school forward.

The school's reputation as an outward facing resource for deaf education with an outstanding reputation continues to grow and is shown by the number of applicants who came forward to join the Governing Board.

Governor Annual Report and Impact Statement Evaluation

The Governing Board, Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and all members of Staff are constantly striving to improve and develop the school and to fulfil the school's vision for all the Children and Young People at RSDD.

The Governing Board Improvement Plan has helped to contribute towards this by ensuring that the school is an environment in which Children and Young People are given the tools and skills to achieve their potential and where they feel safe and happy and able to express their views in their preferred means of communication.

The Governors are continually monitoring the work of the school and have promoted the school's values encouraging Children and Young People to enjoy their education and to thrive in a school which is well managed and rich in culture, languages and experiences.

The Governors role as critical friend & support has been invaluable and good relationships with the Senior Leadership Team have continued.

A detailed review of the Governing Board Improvement Plan, the minutes of meetings and governor monitoring feedback, all form part of Ofsted inspection reports.

Janet Hall and Heather Flockton July 2025
Co-Chairs of RSDD Governors