



Governors' Annual Report 2024-25

Introduction

The Governors of Ferndale Primary School oversee the work of the school from a strategic perspective seeking assurance that the day to day activities reflect the commitments of the school. Governors have a variety of skills and experience and it is important to acknowledge and thank them for the time they give so freely in the role.

A major aspect of the Governors' role is to ensure that pupils progress well during their time with us, and appreciate that for this to happen, all pupils must be supported by a well led, professional and motivated team, all working together to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils.

Governors also appreciate the requirements of children's parents and carers, and their need to be satisfied about the overall leadership and management of the school, and how it affects safety, learning and the enjoyment of their children.

To achieve their objectives, Governors too must continually evaluate the role they have played within the life of the school, and publish relevant information to all interested parties. This statement to parents is part of that evaluation and publication process.

This statement will focus on the successes during the year and the progress made.

What have we achieved this year?

The year of the app, the website and the site! Being able to embed your views and our new motto from last year into flags, badges and really push that we are here to BELONG BELIEVE ACHIEVE.

School has again achieved the Music Mark and were Regional winners in the National Reading Challenge. We also gained EQUALITY GOLD AGAIN! Only around 4 schools nationally have achieved this. We also got ArtsMark Gold, PE (AfPE) Distinction, School Games Gold and are working towards other awards this year.

The CPD (Continued professional development) work with local schools across Sandwell and Walsall called 'Teach Like a Champion' has gone well and a Summer learning walk from local Headteachers and our Advisor showed the implementation of this well. Governors acknowledge the significant level of effort by pupils, parents, carers, teachers, and others to ensure school life at Ferndale continues to thrive.

We do hope you feel listened to and think that our school's communication is improving now we have the app.

Year 6 data supports all of the work undertaken to support achievement across the school and this journey will continue.

Through the year, we have:

- Continued to work co-operatively with the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team to monitor progress with the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP). This considers feedback from staff, parents, children and other agencies. The plan then sets out the priorities for the school in the forthcoming year.
- The 2024/25 SIP was based on priorities identified from data, school self-evaluation and our OFSTED priorities. The SIP was set out with clear aims, the key tasks which will be completed in order to achieve these aims, and success criteria in order to measure progress towards priorities – Thrive, Learn, Protect. The SIP is monitored and reviewed at termly governors' meetings and through termly School Improvement Advisor visits, using a traffic light system to evaluate progress. The SIP was underpinned throughout by well-being and equality for all stakeholders. The plan focused on how Ferndale uses data to support all to achieve their potential- through their groups, IT, support and the Ferndale 50. Our top priorities reflect the needs of our school, in terms of our environment, inclusion for all and ultimately, the quality education we want for our pupils. We are extremely proud of the well-being and personal development offer we provide and this is at the heart of all we do.



- This has led us to the next stage of our SIP for 25/26, where we have matched our SIP to our motto- belong, believe, achieve.

Governance

The Governors nominate a Chair and two Vice-Chairs. The Chair leads the Full Governing Body Meetings and the Vice-Chairs each take the lead on either Quality of Education Committee or Finance and Wellbeing Committee.

The Quality of Education Committee focuses on the educational Quality of Education of pupils against targets, how Pupil Premium and Sports Premium is spent against targets. The application of curriculum is also reviewed. Given the focus of this Committee, all Governors are invited to attend.

The Finance and Wellbeing Committee focuses on Health and Safety, the resources of the school, for example the budgets, the physical environment, wellbeing, personal development, and the deployment of staff. It links with Quality of Education Committee to make sure school is using all of its resources in the best way possible to advance our children's learning.

Governors also provide oversight in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Leadership and Management and the Equality Duty.

The Full Governing Board meetings include all governors and considers all strategic matters as well as matters escalated by the Quality of Education and Finance and Wellbeing Committees. The focus of the full governing body includes:

- Agreeing the values, aims and objectives of the school,
- Setting challenging targets for school leadership,
- Agreeing the school improvement plan and approving policies to inform the basis of day to day decisions.
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy, which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.

Meetings have been held virtually and in person, in order to comply with Government guidance and to support the work life balance for members. For 24/25 2 meetings were in person. This has also supported Governors to walk around school in addition to their specific visits.

Governors visit the school as part of their monitoring of the School Improvement Plan; named governors had a responsibility for reporting on the progress of specific priorities in the SIP. Some of these meetings have again been held virtually.

The Chair and Vice-Chairs have regular meetings with the Headteacher, which are at least termly, and Governors with specific curriculum responsibilities meet with lead teaching staff and leadership team, at least twice a year.

2024/25 Governor subject feedback at governor meetings

Finance & Wellbeing meeting

SMSC – GH

- GH informed the committee that Jo Connor had applied for an award and that discussions had been held with Jo and that the school would be looking to apply for the assessment in Spring 2025 and reviews had been arranged.

Well-being - GH

- GH explained that she wanted to liaise with CS and then set up a session for staff and that, if necessary, she would seek advice from the Chair of governors and the HT to resolve any matters that may have arisen.

Behaviour - RV

- RV explained that there had been an analysis of the reflections system.

Well-being - GH

- GH explained that she was in the process of arranging an afternoon session with staff. GH added that she had been into the school and had spoken with pupils for pupil voice.

Pupil voice – GH

- GH reported that she had met with pupils to discuss their journey at school and expectations, the meeting was said to be very positive and from a personal level it was heart-warming, aspirational and pupils were confident with their ability to speak.

School core visit – RE

- RE informed the board that he had been part of the recent core visit and had visited different classrooms and noted positive interactions.

Pupil Premium – RE

- RE added that there was a risk to pupil premium funding as this was likely to reduce with the school reducing to two forms of entry and that this was a concern.

Behaviour – RV

- The number of pupils in reflection had reduced, teachers were in contact with parents for behavioural issues.

SMSC – GH

- GH informed the committee that she had met with the member of staff for SMSC and that the school would be applying for the quality mark.

Well-being – GH

- A well-being afternoon was in the process of being arranged and staff would be welcome to attend.

Quality of Education

Behaviour and Religious Education – RV

- RV confirmed that she had planned to meet with the lead but that in the interim she was aware that long term plans had been changed and that books would be checked, and it was evident that there had been a positive impact from the recent training.

IT and Science – CW

- CW informed the committee that she had met with staff and that for science pupils had been taken to a fair to discuss various topics and an assembly had been booked in.
- For IT there had been pupil voice, pupils also wanted to be more involved in competitions and there had been the sharing of information on the DFE digital support, CW added that the member of staff had been booked onto a course for assessing.

Maths – PG

- PG confirmed that he had been into school for maths moderation and that the AHT – BF had also attended to support the process. BF expressed that it was good to have a governor in and to discuss and to be challenged as it helped to think about rationale.

Humanities - DL

- DL reported that the Gold Arts mark award had been achieved recently and that this was a fantastic achievement and that it had encouraged the team further.
- The school were now collecting non-core subject data and comparing this with Reading, Writing and Maths as well as national data. The school were utilising skills ladders to support.

Religious Education - RV

- RV reported that she had met with Sarah and that she reported that Sandwell SACRE was being mapped. Books and content were noted to be consistent, and that Sarah had attended the West Bromwich north learning community and that Ferndale's examples were used in the meeting.

Climate and sustainability – GH

- GH explained that she had met with CS virtually and that the work with the eco team was very encouraging and that this included the weighing of food waste and recording results.
- There had been planting of trees to encourage the growth of nature, and it was helpful as the school were already an eco-friendly school.
- Pupils from Ferndale would be presenting at the Govern Sandwell meeting that would be taking place on 11 June at 2.00pm. Governors were encouraged to attend to support pupils, GH would attempt to be present.

SEND - GH

- The school had approximately 24 pupils with EHCPs and that there were 17 further pending. Pupils were progressing well; this was quality assured by the SIA who had sampled books and had spoken to a pupils,

Staff Well being -GH

- GH confirmed that she was in the process of finalising a date for staff to drop in from 2.30pm-4.30pm to support their well-being.

EAL - JM

- JM informed the committee that she had met with Tom as per her report and that they had discussed the number of EAL pupils at the school and how the school would be looking at celebrating the diversity in languages. There would be a link to parent proficiency to pupil progress. Tom would also be presenting at the EAL conference in Sandwell.
- In terms of the future there would be a focus on monitoring and JM offered her support if this was required.

SEND - JM

- JM highlighted as per her report that there had been discussions in relation to monitoring progress of those pupils with an EHCP.

Science - CW

- CW informed the committee that she had met with Jasmine and that the passion and excitement was obvious and that she was very keen to develop Science further and that pupil voice was very successful.
- Staff were looking for ways to improve and that they were mindful of the budget when looking at workshops.

IT – CW

- CW had met with Matt; he had completed a course in relation to digital support and he would be looking into the new framework to prepare. An assessment had been prepared to support monitoring, and he was exploring digital ways to display work.

Full Governing Body

English – JE

- A visit had been conducted by JE on English and it was highlighted to be a positive visit as per the notes that had been circulated ahead of the meeting.
- A visit had also been conducted on Attendance by JE and in terms of the Attendance summary, JE had challenged the data and had added commentary for governors to view.

Attendance - WG

- The HT informed the board that Warren had met with the Attendance officer and had raised some points for consideration, these included researching the impact on attendance for non-uniform days, and having an audit conducted, the HT confirmed that this was already in place with an audit every term by the EWO.

Site walk – Chair

- The Chair informed the board that prior to the meeting a site walk had been conducted and the site looked good and there were no areas of concern to report.

EYFS – CP

- CP informed the board that he had conducted a walk around the early years setting and noted that the team were fantastic and he highly recommended to all governors to take a look around the setting, particularly the new calming corner. Pupils were well engaged and were well looked after.

The Zone - CP

- CP added that the zone seemed calmer and that this was likely to be as a result of the decision to close the focussed provision to new pupils with a view of phasing this provision out fully.

Attendance – WG

- WG informed the board that he had attended training on Inclusive attendance and asked if the school were aware of it. The HT stated that both the DHT and an AHT (CS) had attended the two-day course. The DHT highlighted that attendance had improved at that this was credit to the positive relationships between staff and parents.

Data Analysis

In 2024/25 statutory assessments continued and predicted data and current assessment data was monitored, analysed and discussed as an agenda item at Governor Meetings. The use of the new Insights package has dramatically supported this. Governors have previously received training in analysing performance data. In this way, Governors are able to benchmark their data against similar schools, the Local Authority and schools nationally to ensure the school's standards and expectations are high and are able to be closely scrutinised to ensure good progress is made. It is this level of data analysis, which informs and leads school improvement planning and spending.

Governors particularly scrutinise pupil progress across all ability groups, including vulnerable groups, and the effective use of pupil premium. This year has again shown a particular focus to support children who are EAL (English as an Additional Language) to address an area picked up by OFSTED, as well as considering the impact of our SEN provision and Pupil Premium spending.

It continues to be the governors' view that school data systems are strong, school leadership and teaching staff know their cohorts and individual student's data, using it effectively for interventions. This is an area that will be additionally considered in 25/26. Regular discussion takes place between governors and staff on the data. As the data has been collected over a sustained period, Governors are now able to review trends and consider if changes to operations have had a good impact on improvements to children's development.

Policies

Governors review all relevant policies on a programmed basis, to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Policies which are required to be published publicly can be found on the school website.

Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department for Education mandatory policy list.

Attention paid to the Attendance policy, given the national push in this area has supported improvements in 24/25. School considered the way teaching strategies impact on outcomes for children and how this then is translated into pupil outcomes.

Financial Management

Our Governing Body contains Governors with significant expertise in financial management. Working with the Finance and Wellbeing Committee, they drive the financial management of the school. In recent years, the Governors have worked with school staff on an annual basis to achieve the School's Financial Value Standard (SFVS).

The impact of the Governors' role in school ensures that the school's budget is managed well; improvements are effective and contribute to pupil Quality of Education. The School's finances are scrutinised, and an audit report is provided to the governors on a termly basis. The Governor responsible for finances undertakes regular meetings with the School Business Manager including viewing in year transactions.

Staff

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, School Business Manager, Chair and Vice Chair are trained in 'Safer Recruitment'. Governors are involved in the recruitment and selection of all teaching staff and use the appointment process to ensure that high quality staff, who share the school's ethos and aims, are appointed.

Governors are confident in the leadership team and the governors undertake the Headteacher's appraisal using external advice in the form of a School Improvement Advisor.

Governors have ensured that staffing is deployed effectively and for children's needs by measuring the impact of interventions linked to Quality of Education.

School Performance

Governors ensure school leaders are accountable for Quality of Education for all children. Since school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2022, leaders have continued to work tirelessly to improve and maintain Quality of Education for all children across school resulting from the improved inspection grade of **Good** from Ofsted (Report on our website: <https://ferndaleprimary.co.uk/ofsted-performance>). The last set of data for 2025 results saw us above National data in many areas for Expected and GDS. A real improvement on 2024 and shows the work we put in for this year's SIP was the right focus. The School Improvement Plan for 2025-2026 takes steps to further improve this work using TLAC to improve outcomes for all.

Governor Meeting Attendance

Governor attendance has continued to be monitored, with all absences being fully explained, accepted and approved by the Governing Body. Below are details of all Governing Body Meetings held in 2024/25.

- Three Full Governing Body Meetings
- Three Finance and Wellbeing Committee Meetings
- Three Quality of Education Committee Meetings
- One Annual Pay Committee Meeting
- One Headteacher Appraisal Meeting

These meetings are complimented by informal school visits with school leads, meetings on specific topics/issues and attending school meetings such as the school improvement advisor visits. Some of these have also been held virtually.

Complaints

We have duty to report to parents about complaints made to the school. In 2024-25 there was one formal complaint made to the Governing Body. Any other complaints were dealt with according to policy and made to school staff.

Governor Training

Governors undertake mandatory and optional training both online and in person. This may include safeguarding, Prevent Duty, induction, cyber security, understanding school finances, effective governance. Records of training are kept by school and regularly checked to make sure no gaps are

evident. 1:1 meetings have taken place with Governors, along with changes in some responsibilities to complement the skill set of Governors. This work will continue in 25/26.

Transparency

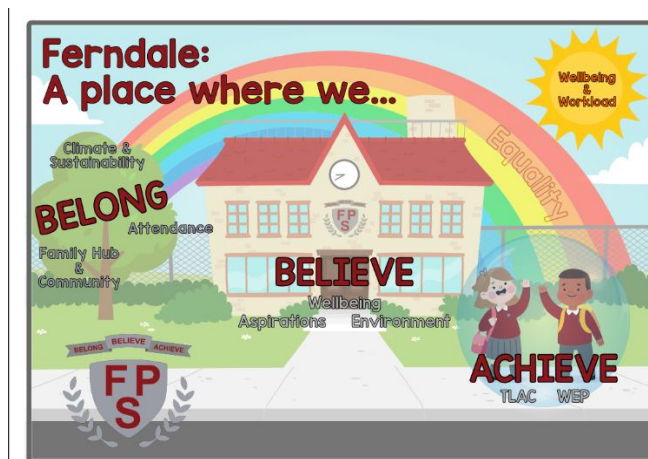
Governors have listened to parents/carers and have ensured that the school offers high quality, timely information through its new school website, and that communication is improved, most importantly through the app but also including SLT presence on the gates and Arbor. We want to further enhance this by using the app even more for forms etc as we get more used to it in 25/26.

We would urge parents/carers to make sure they are actively receiving communications from school and that they take every opportunity to engage in two way communication as this feedback will help school in making positive change for the children.

Governors are working hard to ensure that Pupil Premium funding is deployed effectively, the pupil premium plan and reports can be found on the website <https://ferndaleprimary.co.uk/pupil-premium>. Equally information about Sports Premium can be found <https://ferndaleprimary.co.uk/sports-premium>.

Future & Continuous Improvement

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team are constantly striving to improve and develop the school. The priority areas for 2025-26 (below) allow further development of our Good with Outstanding features Ofsted grade aspiring for the best possible outcomes in all areas in our next inspection.



Thank you for taking time to read this statement. As always should there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Governing Body or the Chair of Governors, Mr Sparkes, via the School Office. Should you wish to see more details on the targets and achievements of school, then the school website has many documents, some of which I have linked to in this report.

Mr S. Sparkes
Chair of Governors
Autumn 2025