

**Annual Governor Impact Statement for the Governing Board of
Higher Walton C of E Primary School
School Year 2025 2026**

Role of the Governing Board

The role of the governing board in a local authority maintained school is set out in education law, namely to ‘conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement’. The board also has a legal responsibility to promote pupil wellbeing. It does this by:

Setting Strategic Direction

- Ensuring clarity of vision and ethos
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Making sure statutory duties are met.

Creating Robust Accountability

- Accountability for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety
- Strengthening and supporting school leadership
- Performance managing the Headteacher
- Contributing to school self-evaluation.

Ensuring Financial Probity

- Making sure the school’s money is well spent
- Monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium grant and other resources to overcome barriers to learning.

Responsibilities of a maintained Church School

- Leading on Christian Distinctiveness and ensure *“that the interests of the Church of England are safeguarded, and that the religious character of the school is preserved”*
- Forging strong links and working with Diocese of Blackburn.
- The responsibility of monitoring whether the school is run in accordance with its historic Trust Deed and the guiding principles of the C of E

- Clarify the makeup and appointing bodies of Foundation positions
- The employer of staff and involved in recruitment
- Set admissions policy and arrangements
- Define the board's collective responsibility to embed the school's Christian vision into all policies, curriculum choices, and strategic decisions
- Assign specific responsibility for monitoring the quality and impact of collective worship and the RE curriculum (aligning with local agreed syllabuses or DBE guidelines).
- Detail the board's role in supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the school against the SIAMS framework.
- Action Plan Implementation: Specify the responsibility of governors to act upon, resource, and review recommendations or development points identified in previous SIAMS reports.
- Leading the spiritual and religious ethos of school
- Outline the specific role designated to liaison with the local parish church, the wider deanery, and the local Diocese Board of Education.

Governance Arrangements

The governing board is made up as follows:

- Parent Governors: 2 (1 vacancy)
- Headteacher: 1
- Staff Governor: 1
- Co-opted Governors: 6 (1 vacancy)
- Local Authority Governor: 1 (vacancy)
- Foundation: 3 (including 1 Ex-Officio Governor)

The full Governing Board meets four times per academic year and Governors also meet at least termly as committees to consider various aspects of the school in detail. At Higher Walton CofE Primary School, we have the following committees which focus on:

Resources: finance, staffing, health and safety and premises.

Achievements: curriculum provision and quality of education, academic attainment and progress, pupil attendance, behaviour and discipline, pupils' personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, engagement with the wider community.

Standards and Effectiveness Committee: the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school, the impact of quality of teaching on rates of pupil progress and standards of achievements, the continuing professional development on improving staff performance.

Governors also have specific areas of accountability and visit school regularly to meet pupils and staff, in addition to monitoring specific aspects of the curriculum or areas such as SEN and safeguarding.

There are also committees that meet, if required, to consider pupil discipline, staffing appeals and complaints.

A list of Governors, their terms of office and positions of responsibility is published on the school website.

Governors' Attendance Record

Governing boards make decisions collectively, though they may choose to delegate responsibility to committees, or individuals (including the Headteacher). Attending Governing Board meetings is an essential part of a governor's role and the attendance record for the governors of our school is very good. This ensures that all governors receive the necessary information all at the same time and therefore important and informed decisions can be made as and when necessary on all aspects of the school, staff and pupils.

The attendance record for all governors for 2025 2026 is available on the school website

Assessment and Impact of the Governing Board during 2024 2025 School Year

Full Governor Impact

- Governors supported school on it's first inspection under the new framework. Successful outcome with recognition of the strength of school leadership and governance.
- CPD on Inspection; SIAMS; Equality; Use of the Key from Gov Hub

Resources Committee

The Resource Committee has challenged and supported the development of the following areas during 2025 2026:

- Governors identified the following impact of the committee's considerations and decisions: · Governors noted that despite the significant levels of work being carried out attendance data was still below national averages. Governors were satisfied that all avenues to reduce absence were being explored. · The committee agreed steps to improve governors' involvement in stakeholder engagement and agreed a focus was required on nominated governor visits to make them more impactful, effective / efficient. · Governors requested the launch of the new website be expediated to improve the schools' marketability and to ensure parents could access all relevant data.
- Opportunities identified to strengthen the governing board through new appointments, re-allocation of roles and responsibilities and a structured training plan to address gaps in knowledge or experience. · The board noted the key development priorities for the year to further improve the school, education standards and pupils all round development and agreed robust processes to ensure that information provided by the headteacher in the SIP / SEF was evaluated on a termly basis. · Arrangements agreed for the board to discharge their statutory duties through established monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the academic year.
- SFVS agreed and budget set with advice from LCC finance.
- Scrutiny of the finance monitoring report highlighted that the school continued to closely and effectively manage the budget despite the significant challenges being faced. · Governors discussed the long term impact of the reduced pupil numbers on the budget and sought to ensure that any decisions were in the best interest of the school and the children. · The headteacher had worked tirelessly to ensure that changes to staffing had minimal impact on the quality of education delivered and pupil and staff wellbeing. · Life in all its fullness was evident in all decisions made with staff / child wellbeing forefront in all conversations. · Possibilities to explore outsourcing out of school club were explored.
- The committee put on record their thanks for the significant and impactful journey taken in the last two years and were ensured that the school finances were being effectively managed.
- Scrutiny of the budget, identification of reduced income streams and the desire to improve the school's reputation in the community led to the decision to investigate the possibility of launching a school / church led toddler group.
- A thorough review of finances indicated that the headteacher continued to deliver positive and prudent financial planning to move the school out of recovery.
- The committee supported the schools planned approach to communicating the planned changes to the school structure.
- The need for continued support of the headteacher, and staff, wellbeing through the upcoming period of instability was stressed

Achievements Committee

The Achievements Committee has challenged and supported the development of the following areas during 2025 2026:

- Governors scrutinised attendance data and were assured the school had all necessary policies and procedures in place to improve absence levels. Summer term data was encouraging and appropriate and feasible interventions were in place to address identified improvements.
- Governors sought to ensure that SEND pupil progress, against Pivot targets, was measured effectively and anonymised data shared with the SEND governor on a regular basis.
- The summer term parent survey indicated that communication and engagement with parents was improving.
- Several initiatives including the Rainbow Room and new drop-in sessions were ensuring that the children's wellbeing remained a priority throughout the school.
- Whilst the reduction in teacher numbers had impacted morale in terms of increased subject leader workload etc, staff had adapted well and engaged with new ways of working.
- Governors welcomed the school's approach to maintaining discreet year teaching for maths which had positively impacted data outcomes in 2024/5. They further welcomed the SLT's decision to consider the impact on staff workload in their considerations of alternative methods of curriculum delivery.
- The committee agreed specific steps to ensure the governing board were prepared for the new Ofsted framework and agreed training topics for the academic year. The introduction of increased extra-curricular activities and nurture interventions contributed to the children 'living life in all its fullness'.
- Governors strengthened their oversight of attendance and confirmed robust procedures were in place, as highlighted by the local authority, school advisor and virtual school.
- Through scrutiny of the headteacher's report, in particular, attendance, safeguarding and wellbeing, the committee understood the significant impact a rising number of Early Help Referrals and complex safeguarding needs were having on the SLTs workload.
- The committee offered strategic challenge and support to ensure the school continued to progress towards its theologically rooted vision of life in all its fullness whilst minimising the impact on workload.
- The committee raised concerns about parental engagement and agreed to be involved in a drive to improve parental engagement through attendance at the upcoming parent's evening to support collection of parent voice.
- Governors confirmed observation of the teaching of British Values, strong behaviour and policy compliance on recent visits to school.

Full Governing Board

The Full Governing Board has challenged and supported the development of the following areas during 2025 2026:

- Ways of working reviewed to ensure the governing board filled all statutory requirements and delivered effective challenge and scrutiny to ensure ongoing developments and improvements throughout the school.
- Embedding governor roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Identification of School Improvement Priorities for 2025/26 that underpin the school's vision and ethos.
- Data scrutinised and headteacher challenged on how highlighted issues would be addressed and improvements made to ensure a high quality of education was delivered to all children.
- Ofsted training was extremely well attended allowing purposeful discussion and a better understanding of how the board can meet Ofsted expectations.
- Governors agreed that all communication to parents, regarding Ofsted and potential class structure changes, should be well timed, considerate and focus on the positives for all stakeholders and the school as a whole.
- Challenge of attendance figures highlighted the significant impact a small element of the school population was having on overall outcomes.
- Governors welcomed the exceptional levels of time and resource being dedicated to improving outcomes but noted that the Ofsted judgement would be negatively impacted.
- Governors highlighted numerous examples of the school aiming to ensure all children, and the wider school community, were 'living life in all its fullness' including attendance, the pupil premium strategy and safeguarding initiatives,
- The board confirmed its structure and organisation for the academic year to ensure effective governance and adherence to statutory requirements.
- Governors committed to strengthening the governing board through the development of a robust governor's action plan incorporating output from the external governance review.
- The need for a clear and achievable training and development programme was agreed.
- Governors had a clear understanding of the 2025/26 school Improvement priorities and would use nominated governor visits and challenge at meetings to triangulate progress.
- Nominated governor visit policy and procedures were agreed to support the board in fulfilling their statutory responsibility of ensuring the school is meeting its objectives.
- In support of SIAMs governors agreed that all work the board carried out should support the school's vision of 'Life in all its fullness...' and opportunities should be taken on visits to identify examples of children and staff living out Higher Walton's vision and values.
- A parent forum would be established to improve stakeholder engagement and support 'life in all its fullness...' for the wider school community.
- SIAMs training provided for all governors
- OFSTED training and potential Q and A provided for all Governors
- Opportunities to strengthen the governing board were explored.
- Supervision was identified as a high priority to ensure staff wellbeing and the ability for all to live 'life in all its fullness'.
- Governors discussed creative ways to improve parent engagement and feedback including parents involvement in parent workshops
- A greater focus was required to ensure a balanced, effective and achievable approach was taken to nominated governor visits.

- Governors scrutinised persistent absence data and agreed a continued focus on persistent absence was required by the nominated governor for attendance.
- Evaluation of the governor action plan ensured the board were working to continually improve the quality and impact of governance.
- Nominated governor visits ensured the board were monitoring and evaluating the schools progress against the approved goals for the academic year. Actions were on track and further progress had been made against Ofsted inspection targets.
- The board scrutinised attendance data and were reassured that the school had taken all measures available to them to improve absence rates.
- The board celebrated the significant progress made throughout the school in the last 2 years and reviewed strategies to further progress quality of education and personal development despite numerous challenges impacting the school including reducing pupil numbers and budget.
- Through its scrutiny of the School Improvement Plan, SEF headteacher's report and data updates the governing board provided strategic challenge and support and confirmed robust processes were in place to accelerate progress. This was backed up by observations on governor visits

Governor Action Plan

Key areas of focus for 2025 2026 completed

1.1a All governors know their role, nominated role and responsibilities and contribute to the effective board. Ensure an induction process/ booklet is in place to describe all aspects of their role.

1.1b Clear understanding of stakeholder voice to enable decisions made with this in mind. Agree a timetable of parent, student and staff voice questionnaires to be fed into committee meetings.

1.1c Stakeholders know how the board is using their views to improve issues. Consider how key messages from views are fed back to stakeholders, e.g. newsletter, school visits, involvement in school events etc.

1.2a All governors are able to challenge the school on its external and internal data. All governors receive relevant training relating to data, progress and assessment.

To reflect on Governance understanding of :

- Prevent and online safety
- Curriculum elements required by law
- How the school applies and adheres to the Equality Act
- GDPR, FOI, SAR – or know how they are handled
- Complaints
- Whistle blowing

1.2b Upskill Governors on monitoring responsibilities in relation to the New OFSTED Inspection Framework.

1.3a All members of the board are clear about their own contribution to the whole. Review each member's contribution in terms of attendance, training and visits at least annually through 1:1 meetings.

1.4a The board is diverse in terms of age, gender and background and as such considers diverse opinions. Analyse the current board via the skills audit and consider how to increase its diversity.

1.4b Training is regularly attended by each individual according to his/her role and shared with the board. Agree a minimum training schedule for each member of the board and suggest areas for development according to role. Ensure this is fed back at meetings to share learning.

1.5a Governors have the opportunity to take on more responsibility and succession planning is effective.

Vary the chairing of each subcommittee and encourage the role of vice-chair for each to increase levels of responsibility.

To ensure minutes or governor reports highlight involvement of Governors in evaluating school strategies eg PPG, sports funding

1.6 To support school leadership in raising the profile of school through positive marketing

Procedures for Monitoring Actions

- SL walkthrough
- SL presentations
- Governors reporting termly
- Subject action plan
- Audits
- Meeting locations
- Timetable of meetings
- Minutes of stakeholder meetings

Procedures for Monitoring Impact

- Subject leader reports
- Parental Questionnaires
- MIT/ Diocese reports
- Governors minutes
- Governor questionnaire
- Data- external and internal
- School Visits
- Training

Christian Distinctiveness

- Decision making underpinned by our Ethos and Christian Values
- Inclusion of our Christian distinctiveness in whole school action plan
- Close involvement with the Church and Diocese
- Recruitment process with the Diocese of a Christian leader in deputy appointment
- Maintain oversight of the new RE scheme
- Decisions made in funding additional staff hours for Pastoral role and send with the aim of a flourishing community

Summary

Significant improvement had been made in the school throughout the academic year with governors more informed and confident in understanding, and challenging, attainment data and progress. Improvements had been seen in staff morale, pupil and staff wellbeing, teaching and learning and the fabric of the building. Financial challenges are still real and some decisions have been curtailed due to the finance recovery programme.

Successful OFSTED Inspection this year with 'At Standards' in all areas except Behaviour and Attendance and Attainment.

MIT has continued to support school throughout the year, in particular areas such as Leadership and Curriculum development.

Further refinement of nominated governor reports – strong examples seen this year.

Governing board self-evaluation and seeking recruitment to happen in Autumn 2026.

Agreed by the Governing Board on:

Signed by the Chair: