

Rudgwick Primary School

Governors' Report 2023–24

Hello! Thank you for opening this document! I hope that it will help to demonstrate the governors' roles within the school, and what we have been doing this year on behalf of the school community.

What are the governors for?

The governors are one part of the school management framework, along with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The easiest way to think of it is that the SLT (led by the headteacher) are the day-to-day, operational leaders, and governors are the strategic leaders. The core functions of the governing body are statutory and are the same for all maintained schools.

As governors, we must ensure:

1. that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined.
2. that the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school.
3. the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

How does governance work at Rudgwick Primary School?

To govern the school, we have regular meetings of the Full Governing Body (FGB), where we cover statutory and other important items. We also maintain two committees to focus on more specific detail. These committees are the **Finance**, **Staffing and Health & Safety (FSHS)** committee, and the **Curriculum** committee. We have recently reassigned the function of the **Pay** committee back to FSHS. The committees report back to FGB but do have certain delegated powers.

In addition to our committees, we have a panel to deal with Headteacher Performance Management and a Strategic Working Group. If a complaint is escalated through the school, a panel of governors may be convened according to the Complaints policy.

To enable all this, we employ Kate Mayo as Clerk to the Governors. In this role, she ensures smooth sailing at all our meetings, meticulously recording minutes, advising on procedural matters, and keeping everyone organised and informed.

Who are the governors?

Governors are unpaid volunteers dedicated to supporting and improving the school. They can be appointed as co-opted governors (selected for their skills), parent governors (elected by parents), staff governors (elected by school staff), or local authority governors (appointed by the local authority). Additionally, the headteacher automatically serves as a governor by virtue of their position. Associate governors may also be appointed to bring specific expertise to a committee or to assist with a particular initiative or project for a set duration.

Regardless of their appointment route, all full governors share equal status and responsibilities during their terms, which are normally 4 years.

I am pleased to report that we continue to enjoy a full complement of governors. This is not a situation that all schools are fortunate enough to experience often and is not to be taken for granted.

Governor APPOINTMENT	Role(s)	FGB	FSHS cmte.	Curriculum cmte.
Fairley Allen CO-OPTED	Safeguarding, Pupil Premium	X		X
David Buckley CO-OPTED	Well-being	X	CHAIR	
Fiona Bull PARENT	EYFS, Training	X		X
Insi Davenport CO-OPTED		X	X	
Hayley Edwards STAFF		X	X	X
Mike Flower LOCAL AUTHORITY	Health & Safety	VICE-CHAIR	X	
Nick Goundry PARENT	Digital	X	X	
Erin Herman CO-OPTED	SEND	X		
Tom Hewitt CO-OPTED	Curriculum	CHAIR		CHAIR
Joy Rolland CO-OPTED ASSOCIATE	Associate to Curriculum cmte.			X
Terry Ryan HEAD		X	X	X

You can find out more about the governors on the school website at <https://www.rudgwick.w-sussex.sch.uk/our-governors-1>.

Updates from governors

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Erin Herman—SEND Governor

The proportion of SEND students in our school remains below the national average. Our children are well supported by the SENCO and headteacher, with support plans that are well-considered and relevant for all staff. Applications for assessment and EHCP are submitted as required, with staff aware of the urgency due to national delays. Despite national funding challenges, the school goes above and beyond to ensure pupils are appropriately supported. We consult with experts, including educational psychologists, and maintain good relationships with the LA and specialists to meet our pupils' needs effectively.

Curriculum

Tom Hewitt—Chair of Curriculum Committee

This academic year marked the first full year of the Curriculum committee's operation. Our focus has been on monitoring the foundation subjects and the unique Woodland Learning provision, which differentiates our school. We have conducted in-depth reviews and monitoring visits for subjects including Art, History, Geography, DT, and Woodland Learning. These visits have highlighted the strengths of our curriculum, such as the well-sequenced history lessons and the diverse artists studied in Art, which contribute significantly to our students' personal development and academic success.

Finance and Staffing

David Buckley—Chair of SFHS Committee

The Finance, Staffing, and Health and Safety Committee plays a crucial role in managing the school's resources and ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and staff. This committee oversees the strategic direction, educational performance, and financial management of the school. Meeting termly, we monitor current and future spending, plan budgets, and ensure the school's financial health. With an annual budget of approximately £1 million, the support from the PTA is invaluable in providing additional experiences for our children. We appreciate the diligent work of the school's business manager (Claire Dunsby) and the headteacher in managing finances under challenging conditions.

Health and Safety

Mike Flower—Health and Safety Governor

We conduct regular inspections and audits to ensure compliance with our Health and Safety policy. This includes checking training for the new premises officer, ensuring tree safety, inspecting play equipment, and reviewing new government guidance on estate management. Health and Safety is a standing item at all committee and full governing body meetings, ensuring ongoing focus and compliance.

Chair's update

I took over the role of Chair in September 2023 after David Buckley finally managed to persuade somebody else to do it. Fortunately for us, he remains an active member of the school's governance team. I would like to thank him on behalf of all the governors for his (most recent) stint in the chair.

This year, we have created two new roles within the governance team, appointing David Buckley as Well-being Governor and Nick Goundry as Digital Governor. These roles will enable us to enhance our focus on staff well-being and digital compliance. By prioritising these areas, we aim to ensure a supportive work environment for our staff and maintain high standards of digital security and compliance, ultimately benefiting the entire school community.

Attainment

The results are in! It has been a fantastic year for pupil attainment. As governors, we use data—particularly attainment and progress data—as a key tool in assessing school teaching and learning, to help determine where to focus our limited resources. To enhance our effectiveness, the governance team has group training scheduled for September 2024, which will focus on our school's data, exploring best practices and strengthening our ability to utilise this information.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): This year, an impressive 87% of our children in the EYFS achieved a Good Level of Development, significantly surpassing the national average of 67%. This highlights the strong foundation our youngest learners are receiving at our school.

Phonics Screening: Both Year 1 and Year 2 students performed exceptionally well in the Phonics Screening. Year 1 had a 90% pass rate, higher than the national average of 82% and last year's 79%. By the end of Year 2, 90% of the students passed (an additional 11%), exceeding the national average of 89%. This demonstrates continued success with the Read Write Inc framework after last year's full staff training.

Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC): The MTC results showed notable improvement, with the average score rising from 15.8 last year to 19.1 this year. This progress reflects the hard work of our students and the effective teaching strategies employed by our staff. The 'Times Tables Rockstars' platform has been a hit.

Year 6 Science: 93% of students have met the standard. Science is internally assessed.

Year 6 Writing: Our Year 6 Writing results (internally assessed) indicate a positive trend. 63% of students achieved the Expected standard, up from 61% last year, and 50% in 2022. 11% achieved Greater Depth, an improvement from 6% last year and 0 in 2022. These achievements are close to the national averages, showcasing the dedication of our students and the high quality of our teaching in rebuilding these skills since the pandemic.

Year 6 Reading: 93% of students met the Expected standard, up from 87% last year, and well above last year's national average of 73%. An incredible 52% of the class demonstrated Reading skills at Greater Depth.

Year 6 Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS): 78% met or exceeded the Expected standard (above last year's national average of 72%), including 26% working at Greater Depth. While the proportion meeting the Expected standard is slightly down from last year, an additional 11% were within 3 points of the threshold.

Year 6 Maths: 74% met the Expected standard (just above last year's national average of 73%), with a further 11% of the class within just 2 points of that threshold. An encouraging 22% are working at Greater Depth in Maths, slightly below last year's national average of 24%, but with an additional 7.5% just one point shy of that threshold.

Congratulations to all our students and staff, who should be proud of their achievements this year.

Attendance

Attendance is a regular topic at all FGB meetings and has been highlighted nationally as a key focus for schools this year. Rudgwick Primary School continues to demonstrate strong attendance figures. At the end of the year¹, our attendance rate stands at 95.7%, placing us 32 out of 223 primary schools in West Sussex and within the top 10–20% nationally.

Effective teaching can only happen when students are present, making attendance crucial for their academic success. We greatly appreciate your ongoing support in ensuring your child's regular attendance.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a top priority at Rudgwick Primary School. Each September, all governors, alongside staff, complete the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) training to stay updated on the latest safeguarding protocols. This training ensures that everyone involved in the school understands their roles and responsibilities in protecting the well-being of our students.

Throughout the year, safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda for both the Full Governing Body and committee meetings, emphasising our ongoing commitment to this critical area. Our Safeguarding Governor, Fairley Allan, plays a pivotal role in monitoring compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures, conducting regular checks of the Single Central Register, and ensuring that any issues are promptly addressed.

This year, the governors have also reviewed and approved several safeguarding-related policies, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. Regular safeguarding updates from the headteacher ensure that the governing body is well-

¹ DfE data up to and including Thu 11 Jul 2024

informed about any concerns or incidents, enabling swift and effective responses to maintain a safe environment for all students.

Pupil Premium

The effective use of Pupil Premium funding is a key focus area to ensure that all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can succeed. The Pupil Premium Governor oversees the strategic deployment of these funds to enhance educational outcomes. This year, the governors have closely monitored the impact of Pupil Premium expenditure through regular reviews and discussions at both committee and FGB meetings.

Significant initiatives funded by Pupil Premium include additional catch-up tuition, ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) sessions, and targeted support for students' academic and personal development. Despite budgetary constraints, the school has managed to allocate resources effectively to support students in need. The Pupil Premium strategy is detailed on the school's website, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Regular updates from the headteacher, along with data on student progress and attainment, enable governors to assess the effectiveness of Pupil Premium-funded interventions. This rigorous monitoring ensures that the funds are making a tangible difference in closing the achievement gap and supporting the well-being of our most vulnerable students

School Vision Statement

This year, our Strategic Working Group focused on refining our Vision statement, incorporating substantial input from the school community and our Young Governors. This collaborative effort aimed to align the school's strategic direction with the collective aspirations of students, staff, and parents. The new Vision emphasises mutual respect, well-being, and personal development through a diverse curriculum. It commits to maintaining high teaching standards and fostering a positive learning attitude, ensuring students' holistic growth and academic excellence. This initiative enhances community cohesion and provides a clear strategic direction for the school's future.

Policy Review Highlights

This year, we conducted a thorough review and update of several key policies to ensure they align with current best practices and statutory requirements. The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy was revised to reflect the latest guidance from the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) framework, ensuring all staff and governors are well-informed about safeguarding responsibilities. The Health and Safety policy was updated to include new government guidelines on estate management and risk assessments, enhancing the protocols for regular audits and inspections.

Additionally, the Charging and Remissions policy was adjusted to clarify guidelines on financial support, promoting inclusivity for all students. The Teacher Appraisal Policy was streamlined to better support professional development and accountability. The SEND policy was enhanced to improve the timely assessment and support for students with special educational needs and disabilities.

Acknowledgments

As Chair, I would like to thank all the governors and our associate governor for their dedicated voluntary service this year. Your commitment and hard work have been instrumental in the governance and strategic direction of our school. I also extend my gratitude to our clerk, the SLT, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff for their tireless efforts in supporting our governance role and ensuring that our children receive the best possible education.

To expand on David Buckley's comments above, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the PTA this year, together with the generous support of all parents, carers, families and friends, whose fundraising makes so much difference to the school's continued success. The significance of this cannot be understated. Crucial aspects of the school's curriculum offer, such as our fantastic music lessons or Year 3 swimming, would not be possible without this support.

Together, we have made significant strides in enhancing the educational experience at Rudgwick Primary School, and I look forward to continuing this collaborative effort in the coming year.

Wishing everyone a fantastic summer! See you in September!

Tom Hewitt

Chair of Governors, Rudgwick Primary School

July 2024