

Annual Governance Statement July 2025

The purpose of Butlers Court School's Governing Board (GB) is to provide strategic leadership, support and challenge to the school in order to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. The three core strategic functions of the Governing Board are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Appointing the Head Teacher and holding them to account for the educational performance of the school & 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 stakeholders are heard

The Instrument of Government for Butlers Court Primary School allows for 12 governors;

- a) Four parent governors
- b) One LA governor
- c) One staff governor
- d) One headteacher
- e) Five co-opted governors

The Governing Board membership remains full at twelve, with one associate governor, Simona Cara. Over the course of the year we expressed our thanks to **Sarah Bisschop**, who stepped down from the Board, and we welcomed **Sarah Phillips** and **Rachel Selmes**.

Through the course of the 24-25 Academic Year, the Governing Board has been chaired by Alison O'Dornan assisted by Vice Chair Alison Howman.

The work of the Governing Board has been supported by Rachel Lawson, as Clerk to Governors.

Attendance Record, Training & Monitoring Visits

Governors continue to have good attendance at meetings and have not had to cancel a meeting because it was not "quorate" (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). Further information about governor's attendance at committees and governing board meetings can be found on the school website.

In addition to formal meetings, Governors attend the school during school hours to carry out monitoring visits. These are reported on in detail at a meeting of the full governing board. Monitoring visits might look at, amongst other things, the implementation of policies and the effectiveness of teaching methods, the condition and safety of the premises, or the safeguarding of children. Governors also assist and visit the school as volunteers in all sorts of ways, for example, at Parents evenings and other school events.

The effectiveness of the Governing Board depends on the skills and knowledge of its members. All governors complete **safeguarding training either with staff at the INSET day or online**, and the Chair continues to attend the **Buckinghamshire LA Directors' Briefings** each term. Governors also undertake finance and strategy training to ensure we remain well-equipped to provide effective governance. These sessions ensure that we are well-equipped to fulfil our responsibilities and provide effective governance.

The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing board

During the year, the Governing Board and the Senior Leadership Team have continued to focus on delivery against our detailed strategic plan. Headline performance for 2024/25 remained **significantly above Buckinghamshire LA and national averages**. The priorities for the school this year were :

- **Curriculum priorities:** Sustained emphasis on **Oracy** (Butlers Court as **lead school** for the local liaison group), alongside continued strengthening of **Mathematics** and **English**.
- **Inclusion and standards:** Continued commitment to high-quality provision for **SEND** and **disadvantaged pupils** through **Quality First Teaching** and targeted interventions; **attendance improving** in partnership with parents; an **inclusive enrichment offer** ensuring access for all pupils.

- **Investment and fundraising impact:** With the support of the **PTA** and the **School Enrichment Fund (Reg. charity no. 3968526)**, over **£60,000** has been invested this year in projects directly benefitting pupils, including **hall refurbishment, Rainbow Road track repairs, KS1 shed replacement**, and significant **IT upgrades** (new server and faster connectivity).
- **Catering oversight:** The school successfully switched to on-site catering delivered by **Dolce** (external contractor); the Governing Board **monitors contract performance** through reports and stakeholder feedback.
- **Forward works (sequenced for value and minimal disruption):** **KS2 outdoor shelter – Autumn 2025; KS1 & KS2 outdoor toilet refurbishments – 2025/26; major library refurbishment – 2026/27; site-wide Wi-Fi upgrade** within the digital plan.

An important part of school governance is the work of three focused committees focusing on Finance & Personnel, Premises and Risk, and Curriculum. Matters covered by these committees are discussed below: -

Premises, Risk & Resources Committee

The Premises & Risk committee is responsible for ensuring that the school continues to provide a safe and suitable educational environment through a rolling programme of works. Monitoring visits include regular health and safety audits and walks around the school by governors alongside the school caretaker.

Governors check and approve a suite of premises and safety-related policies to reflect the latest needs of the school, and ensure that the continued professional development of staff has taken place. Particular considerations this year have included oversight of priority maintenance (such as track and paving works), IT infrastructure resilience, and monitoring of the move to Dolce catering delivering meals onsite to the required standards.

The Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee

The Curriculum Committee monitors all aspects of the school curriculum, including detailed examination of the school's performance data, and the progress and attainment of all pupils. Outcomes remain above local and national averages. The committee has looked closely at the school's work on oracy as lead school in the liaison group, at the continued development of Mathematics and English, and at provision for SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Monitoring visits were made by governors to meet with staff and pupils on wellbeing, discuss attendance, and review the impact of interventions for our disadvantaged children. The committee reviews and approves the school's policies, such as those relating to Special Educational Needs, Behaviour, Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and Online Safety.

The Finance & Personnel Committee

Effective financial management is crucial to the smooth operation of the school. The finance committee has worked diligently to ensure that the school's budget is rigorously monitored, and managed prudently. Like many schools nationally, our budget is under pressure and **around 97% of core funding is allocated to staffing**. Budgets are tight and are being carefully controlled through rigorous monitoring and value-for-money decisions. Our staffing model prioritises a **high-quality team**; we continue to recruit and retain excellent staff and, in a small number of year groups, operate a **planned job-share model**. This provides pupils with the **combined strengths of two experienced teachers**, supports robust co-planning and continuity, and promotes staff wellbeing and retention—helping to sustain high standards for children. Risks are actively monitored through a live risk register, with particular attention to safeguarding, health and safety, IT continuity and recruitment and retention. We continue to benchmark our spending against other schools and plan with prudence.

Other roles

In addition to the above, individual governors act as link governors with subject teachers and in roles such as Safeguarding, Pupil Premium and SEN, building relationships with staff and allowing for greater scrutiny of the operations of the school. Headteacher Performance Management is delegated to appropriately trained

governors annually with the help of an external advisor, and committees related to purposes such as dealing with complaints or exclusions are constituted as they are required.

Future plans for the governors

The Governing Board, the Headteacher and senior management team and indeed all members of staff are constantly striving to improve and develop the school. The Governing Board will continue to monitor and review the School's financial position and implementation and impact of the curriculum and wider extra-curricular activities, alongside the wellbeing of the Headteacher, staff, pupils and parent communities. We will also oversee the programme of premises and digital improvements, including the KS2 shelter, the KS1 and KS2 outdoor toilet refurbishments, the whole-site Wi-Fi upgrade and, in due course, the major library refurbishment.

We are proud of the progress made this year and remain dedicated to our mission of providing an outstanding education for all pupils. We look forward to building on our successes and addressing any challenges that arise in the coming year.

Thank you for your continued support. As parents, you are a key part of the school and we always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas – please contact the Chair of Governors, Alison O'Dornan, via the school office. You can see the full list of governors and more information about what we do, on the Governors' page of the school website.



Alison O'Dornan

Chair of Governors