

Annual Governance Statement July 2026

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

As well as ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

The Instrument of Government for Butlers Court Primary School allows for 12 governors (four parents, one Local Authority appointed (LA), one staff, one headteacher and five co-opted/independent governors). The Governing Board currently stands at eleven, with a parent governor vacancy that we are working to fill, and is supported by three associate members. During the year we thanked Lara Brown, Angel Nayar and Lucy Louis, who stepped down from the Board, and welcomed Matt Linford as a parent governor and Michele Taylor as our Local Authority governor, together with two new associate governors; Luke Schembri Burch and Oscar Schonfeld. The Board continued to be chaired by Alison O'Dornan, assisted by Vice Chair Alison Howman, with 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 governors' 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.

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. This year also marked the school's 60th anniversary, celebrated with former headteachers returning to school and the creation of a time capsule for future generations.

During the year the school hosted an independent Buckinghamshire Local Authority Headline Visit (February 2026), providing external scrutiny of standards, safeguarding and provision. The adviser described Butlers Court as a high-performing and stable school, with attainment consistently above local and national averages across the core subjects and attendance above the national average. Safeguarding was identified as a strength of the school, and behaviour was found to be strong and stable.

The priorities for the school this year were:

- **Curriculum priorities:** Enhancing the English curriculum to develop pupils' oracy, reading and writing, and the Mathematics curriculum to develop mastery of number, with continued emphasis on oracy as lead school for the local liaison group.
- **Early transition:** Developing provision in Year 1 and strengthening the transition between Early Years and Key Stage 1.
- **Inclusion and standards:** Continued commitment to high-quality provision for SEND, Pupil Premium and disadvantaged pupils, narrowing attainment gaps through Quality First Teaching and targeted interventions.
- **Wellbeing:** Implementing strategies and processes to support the wellbeing and mental health of all staff and pupils.
- **Environment and enrichment:** Joining the Bucks Greener Schools Network and adopting the school's first Climate Action Plan, reflecting our commitment to a positive future for our children.

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. Particular considerations this year have included oversight of the completed KS1 and KS2 toilets, hall refurbishments and the new KS2 outdoor shelter, IT infrastructure resilience, as well as monitoring of the Dolce catering contract.

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 focussed this year on:

- The school's work on oracy; where we act as lead school in the local liaison group.
- The continued development of Mathematics and English
- The strengthening of Year 1 provision and Early Years transition.
- The 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, and Online Safety.

The Finance & Personnel Committee

Effective financial management is crucial to the smooth operation of the school, and the Finance & Personnel Committee, now chaired by Matt Linford, has worked diligently to ensure the budget is rigorously monitored and prudently managed. A significant development this year was the school's transition to Non-Cheque Book School status, with updated financial procedures and staff training put in place.

Although the year began with a forecast in-year deficit — reflecting the funding pressures faced by many schools nationally — careful cost control, including lower-than-expected energy costs and the prudent management of grant funding, meant the school ended the year in a stronger position than budgeted and carried a balance forward. Looking ahead, the forecast in-year deficit is expected to reduce further, placing the school on a more sustainable financial footing with a positive carry-forward projected. Around 97% of core funding is allocated to staffing; our staffing model prioritises a high-quality team. Risks are actively monitored through a live risk register, with particular attention to safeguarding, health and safety, IT continuity and recruitment and retention, and we continue to benchmark our spending against other schools.

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 remaining programme of premises improvements, including the major library refurbishment. From September, the school will introduce its smartphone-free policy — an initiative strongly supported by parents that will help children build friendships and spend more time simply being children.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Alison O'Dornan
Chair of Governors