



The Willows Primary School

Annual Report from Governors – Academic Year 2025/2026

Introduction to the Governing Board and Governance Structure

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Board are to:

1. ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. hold the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
3. oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent.

The Instrument of Government can be viewed on the school website in the About Us section, under "Governors".

In 2025/2026 the full Governing Board met on ten occasions. The Chair of the Governing Board was Kate Parietti, and the Vice Chair was Nikki Stevens.

Individual governors take on responsibilities for key areas of the school and report to the Governing Board on issues and progress in those areas. In 2025/2026 governors taking lead roles were as follows:

Name	Key areas of responsibility	Meetings attended
Jo MacArthur	Headteacher	10/10
Kate Parietti	Chair of Governing Board Curriculum Planning: English	9/10
Nikki Stevens	Vice-Chair of Governing Board SEN Safeguarding PPG	8/10
Chris Pritchard	Health and Safety/Finance	10/10
Sarah Wilson	Curriculum Planning: Maths	10/10
Steve Moreton	Staff Governor	10/10

In July 2026, Sarah Wilson stepped down as parent governor. The governing body would like to thank Sarah for her contribution and commitment to the school over the past 5 years.

Governor recruitment is an ongoing challenge for the Board with three vacancies remaining open for the whole academic year. The Board as a whole has been actively seeking to recruit new governors and this will continue into the new academic year.

Safeguarding

The Board takes very seriously its duties and obligations to ensure the safeguarding of pupils at the school. Our nominated safeguarding lead governor communicates regularly with the school leadership to review safeguarding arrangements, and the outcome of the governor's work is reported to each Governing Board meeting. We also ensure that all training is up to date.

The governors continue to have an ongoing safeguarding question to their monitoring documents to ensure that they consider this on every visit to school.

Ofsted looked at safeguarding as part of their inspection in February and judged it to be effective.

The School Development Plan

The School Development Plan (SDP) is the key strategic document for the school, defining its aims, plans, and priorities for development and improvement over the coming year. The SDP is drafted based on evidence from a number of sources, including data (both the results of Key Stage testing and internal data) and the school's Self Evaluation document. The Governing Board formally reviewed the SDP at the start of the 2025/2026 academic year and then reviewed the progress of the SDP each term.

Curriculum

The school continues to place significant emphasis on planning and delivering an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that enables pupils to build knowledge and skills securely from Nursery through to Year 6. Governors welcomed the February 2026 Ofsted inspection findings, which recognised Curriculum and Teaching as a Strong Standard. Inspectors noted that leaders oversee an ambitious curriculum in which pupils' knowledge and skills are built meticulously over time, with tasks designed to support the intended learning and encourage pupils to think deeply.

During the year, governors have triangulated the School Development Plan through learning walks, book looks, pupil voice activities and discussions looking specifically how the curriculum supports all pupils, in particular those in receipt of the pupil premium grant. Governors, through their own triangulation, recognised the creativity and enjoyment in classes and the focus on quality of teaching.

Governors were particularly pleased that Ofsted recognised the school's sharp focus on getting the basics right. Early reading was judged to be taught effectively, enabling pupils to become fluent and confident readers, and inspectors noted that pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, use important vocabulary with confidence. This reflects the work seen by governors through monitoring visits and through the Headteacher's regular reports to the Board.

Governors also saw first-hand the impact of leaders' work to make the curriculum inclusive and accessible. Ofsted reported that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well because carefully considered adaptations help them to access the same curriculum as their classmates. Governors are assured that senior leaders continue to focus on securing strong outcomes for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Pupil Progress and Attainment

Governors receive a comprehensive written Headteacher's report each term as well as detailed data reports covering pupil progress, attainment and the school's wider performance. We carefully review

these reports, questioning and challenging school leaders where appropriate. Ofsted recognised Achievement as a Strong Standard and reported that pupils achieve well in national tests by the end of Year 6. Inspectors also noted that pupils develop secure knowledge and skills in English and mathematics and that, across the wider curriculum, pupils develop and apply detailed knowledge regardless of their individual or additional needs.

The school has continued to use Pupil Premium funding carefully to support the learning and development needs of eligible pupils. Governors monitor this through published information, school reports, our own school visits and discussions with leaders. Ofsted noted that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is narrowing, while also identifying the need for leaders and governors to maintain their focus on disadvantaged pupils so that improvements are sustained and built upon.

The Board will continue to use both internal assessment information and external outcomes to monitor progress and ensure that every group of pupils is supported to achieve well.

SEND

The Headteacher kept governors fully informed about provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND. The SEND governor reviewed provision through learning walks, book looks and discussions with the SENCO. Ofsted recognised Inclusion as a Strong Standard and reported that leaders identify pupils' needs early, adapt teaching carefully and work closely with families and external agencies to remove barriers to learning. Governors are assured that inclusion remains central to the school's work.

The full Governing Board also reviewed a selection of pupil passports and transition documents, helping governors understand how support is planned and communicated as pupils move through the school. This evidence aligns with Ofsted's finding that pupils with SEND benefit from carefully considered adaptations and learn well alongside their peers.

School Site and Premises

Our health and safety lead governor regularly visited the site with the Caretaker and the Headteacher to review premises and health and safety issues, reporting the outcome to the Governing Board. Through these visits and regular updates at meetings, governors have sought to ensure that the school is well maintained and that any potential issues are identified and addressed appropriately.

Finances

The Board and its Finance Committee regularly monitor the school budget to ensure that funds are appropriately spent. Despite the financial challenges faced by all schools, the school has continued to run a balanced and robust budget with a reasonable level of reserves. Governors continue to scrutinise financial decisions carefully, including through the annual Schools Financial Value Standard process, to ensure that resources are used effectively to support the school's priorities and pupils' outcomes.

Governor Effectiveness

Governors continue to create and monitor their own development plan to identify the key areas on which the school and the Governing Board need to focus. This supports ongoing monitoring and provides impact indicators so that governors can assure themselves that agreed actions are improving outcomes for pupils.

Following the 2026 Ofsted inspection, governors reflected carefully on the findings relating to Leadership and Governance, which were judged to be a Strong Standard. Inspectors recognised that leaders and governors have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school, identify priorities

clearly and keep pupils at the centre of decision-making. Governors will continue to use training, monitoring visits and evidence from school leaders to provide robust support and challenge.

Governor recruitment has remained a priority. Gaps in the Board's skill set have been considered, and governors continue to seek new members who can strengthen the Board's capacity and contribute to effective governance.

Governors know and understand their statutory duties and carry these out effectively. The Board supports and challenges school leaders and is assured, through triangulation activities and the Ofsted inspection findings, that it has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for further improvement.

Looking Forward to 2026/2027

Governors will build on the positive outcomes of the 2026 Ofsted inspection by continuing to monitor the areas identified for further development. This will include maintaining a strong focus on disadvantaged pupils and ensuring that improvements for these pupils are sustained and strengthened.

Governors will also continue to monitor attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, as this was identified in the inspection as an area for continued focus. The Board will use school data, leader reports and monitoring visits to ensure that actions to improve attendance are having the intended impact.

The governors would like to thank Miss MacArthur and all of the staff at The Willows for everything that they do to provide a high-quality, ambitious curriculum and positive experiences for all children. The 2026 Ofsted report reflects the dedication, professionalism and care that governors see throughout the school. We look forward to continuing our work over the coming months and to supporting and challenging Miss MacArthur and her staff as the school continues to flourish.