



# Governing Body Report to Parents 2025 - 2026

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**Hardenhuish School**  
A High Performing Academy

## Purpose:

This report to parents reflects the activities of the governing body in the academic year 2025-26. The aim is to provide parents and the wider community with better information about governors work in providing oversight, support and challenge to Hardenhuish School. It outlines how governors have performed their statutory roles and how they have had an impact in supporting the school.

## Report Summary:

- Governors have played a full and active role in the life of the school.
- Governors meet as a full board six times a year and all attend at least one committee.
- The governors continue to focus on managing the school budget in a climate of increasing costs and not enough government funding.
- The governing body remains stable with an appropriate number of governors with targeted recruitment to fill specific skills gaps when vacancies arise.
- Governors have been involved in the recruitment of teaching staff throughout the year and have appraised the headteacher.
- They have also attended a variety of events and held targeted visits with various departments and faculties within the school.
- Governors have completed a range of training to enable them to best support the school.
- Governors have monitored attendance closely in line with the national priority.
- Hardenhuish remains a very popular choice with families, and we remain oversubscribed for Year 7. There is a waiting list in many year groups.

If you have any feedback about the work of the Governors or things you would like to see included in the report next year, please contact:

[ClerktoGovernors@hardenhuish.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:ClerktoGovernors@hardenhuish.wilts.sch.uk)

The detail of the report is in three parts. The first explains the structure and function of the governing body, the second outlines changes to the governing body and the third describes the work of governors over the last academic year.

# Part One: Structure and Function

The Governing Body of Hardenhuish School is made up of a mix of community, parent and co-opted staff governors. The headteacher also sits on the board with full voting rights.

The board, as determined by the Department for Education, provides:

- **Strategic leadership** of the academy trust - the board defines the trust vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the trust's culture and sets and champions the trust strategy.
- **Accountability and assurance** - the board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the academy trust, including the provision of education, pupil welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping their estate safe and well-maintained.
- **Engagement** - the board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement.

The full governing body meets six times a year at the end of a cycle of Resources, Education and Community committee meetings.

In addition, the Strategy committee met three times this year. Governors also form panels for matters such as admissions, pay and the headteacher's appraisal. Outside the meeting cycle, governors visit departments within the school, attend events, interview potential staff and liaise on finance, attendance, equalities and other areas. There are also governors dedicated to special educational needs, pupil premium, child protection and health & safety.

Governors work closely with the headteacher and senior leadership team and play a key role in monitoring the school finances with the chair of the resources committee actively involved in the audit and preparation of the annual report.



# Part Two: Changes in 2025 - 2026

Kirsty Martin stepped down as Chair in September after many years on the Governing Board. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kirsty for her service and ongoing support of Hardenhuish School. She remains involved as a Member and sitting on Hardenhuish Education Trust.

Kirsty was succeeded by Andrew Wilson who sadly had to step down in April due to work commitments and was succeeded by Nicola Wood who previously served as Vice-Chair.

We welcomed two new parent governors during the year and will be actively recruiting for further parent and community governors during the next academic year.

The governing body during the year was:

## Staff

*Lisa Percy*

## Community

### Governors

*Trevor Eddolls  
Isabelle Semichon  
Claire Smith  
Sophia Swatton  
Phil Townsend  
Viv Vines  
Nicola Wood*

## Parent

### Governors

*Neal Craig  
Sandra Gonzalez  
Adam Lees  
Paul Lortal  
Lisa Gibbons  
Victoria McMyn*

All leadership team members attend committees or the full board. All governors serve for four years.

An additional tier of governance provides oversight of the work of the governing body. This tier is comprised of the Members of Hardenhuish School and was established when the school became an academy in 2010. Documents explaining their role more fully can be found in the governor section of the school website.



[Our Governors – Hardenhuish School](#)



# Part Three: Impact Statements

The work of the governing body has been measured against the three core functions of governance and the four key features of effective governance.

## CORE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNANCE

### a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Governors scrutinised the school development plan (SDP) for the upcoming year and received updates as the year progressed. This is the roadmap for all development of the school and contains the core objectives encompassing teaching and learning; pupil progress; wellbeing; leadership and sustainability. A governor action plan was also drawn up and monitored throughout the year, to drive strategic projects and objectives for the governors. As part of this, governors have reviewed the role of link governors this year and in collaboration with the Leadership Team have developed a new protocol to ensure that governors maintain a strategic overview.

### b) Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff

The headteacher was appraised by a panel of governors in the autumn and a mid-year review was held with the Chair. School Improvement Partner (SIP) reports continued to be presented to the board. The role of the SIP is key to the governors' understanding of the school as they provide checks and balances in operational areas which are outside governors' scope. They also provide support in areas which need to be targeted. It should be noted that the SIP continues to consider the school and, the governing body to be in a strong position.

Across the year many policies have been reviewed and posted on the website. These policies, some statutory, provide the framework for the operation of the school and to help maintain high standards in all areas.

The majority of work in this area is conducted through committees as follows:

## Education Committee

### Chair: Phil Townsend

The Education Committee monitored progress throughout the year and reports on the school development plan were shared with the full governing body.

Governors monitored expected results via mock exam reviews, highlighting any areas for strategic improvement. Exam results were scrutinised and progress reviewed. Governors had presentations on Chemistry, English, Sports Studies and Art, DT and Photography.

Nicola Wood continued as the special educational needs link governor.

Andrew Wilson continued as the pupil premium link governor and attended review meetings with the pupil premium strategy group.

Pupil premium and special educational needs remain standing items on agendas and there was considerable discussion and monitoring of both by committees and by the named governors.

## Community Committee

### Chair: Phil Townsend

The Community Committee held extensive discussions on the exclusions and behaviour report. The committee also heard from pupils who are members of school parliament in order to learn more about their experience in school and continued to support the work on young carers. The committee has also played a key role in monitoring and scrutinising safeguarding matters.

Sophia Swatton continued as safeguarding link governor and met frequently with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jo Glossop. The annual safeguarding audit was scrutinised by the community committee. The whole board received updates regarding Keeping Children Safe in Education and new governors undertook full training as part of the induction process.

## Resources Committee

Chair: Nicola Wood

The Resources Committee receive monthly budget reports and scrutinise the accounts at every meeting. The budget proposal and revisions have been considered and taken to the full governing board.

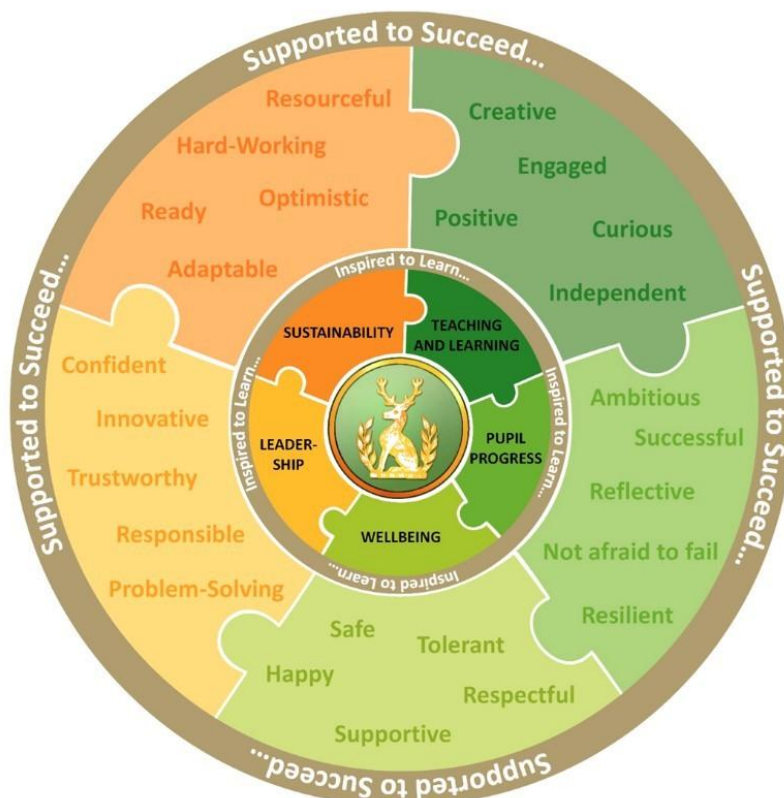
The Resources Committee examined staff exit surveys, took part in appointment panels, approved flexible working requests, discussed recruitment and departure and considered staff appraisal.

The committee is aware that there are sector-wide recruitment and retention issues due to low volumes of newly qualified teachers and an increase in those leaving the profession. The recruitment cycle has been busy and governors support the leadership team in ensuring that early careers teachers receive the support they need. Governors also make sure that the CPD programme is effective and that staff wellbeing is considered in all decisions.

## Strategy Committee

Chair: Andrew Wilson and Nicola Wood

The Strategy Committee continued its focus on strategic issues linked to the School Development Plan.



## c) Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The chair of governors and chair of resources receive monthly budget reports and scrutinise the accounts at every meeting. The budget proposal and revisions have been considered by the resources committee and taken to the full governing board.

The school has worked hard this year to use resources effectively and efficiently and to continue to save money where possible. Management Accounts forecast a positive year end surplus, over and above the anticipated budget forecast.

All discussions, planning and decision making by the governors and the Leadership Team are driven by the financial situation with various cost saving measures now embedded into school culture and processes. These include:

- ✓ The draft budget for 2026/27 indicates that 78.1% of our total revenue income is allocated to staff costs. This represents a decrease in expenditure in comparison to 2023/2024, which stood at 81.6%.
- ✓ Recruitment decisions only being made after analysis of the school curriculum costing data and budget affordability and platform replaced with more cost-effective solution. Support Staff vacancies reviewed to ensure the role is still required and not being recruited based on historic decision making.
- ✓ Curriculum budget expenditure tightly managed in support of the School Development Plan
- ✓ Emergency cover provided internally where possible, and every effort made to reduce supply cover costs.
- ✓ Regular review of ICT software to ensure appropriate usage and affordability.
- ✓ Regular monitoring of bank accounts to maximise interest.

Governors took part in the preparation of the annual accounts and ensured they were provided to the Members and filed prior to the deadline. There continue to be no red flags raised by external auditors. A school resource management self-assessment was completed with positive answers.



### a) People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity

Governors have undertaken the annual skills audit to identify gaps and training needs and some have undertaken tasks based on their professional experience. Training for the board this year has been a priority and has included safeguarding, Prevent, the new Ofsted framework and the work of link governors.

Governors are offered individual training opportunities to improve the quality of governance. The new governors took part in three local authority run induction sessions and completed their induction training. The chair and headteacher joined local authority and regional government briefings. In addition to routine safeguarding training, some governors followed additional courses including cyber security and enhanced Prevent training.

### b) Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities

The code of conduct, which clearly spells out the function of the distinct role of governors and members, were signed in September. Governors are reminded that their role is strategic and not operational.

The scheme of delegation was reviewed and revised for 2025-26.

### c) Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements

The Musts from the Academies Financial Handbook are subject to rolling governor and staff review and the school risk register is regularly reviewed.

The clerk has made sure companies house has been updated when necessary. The policy review cycle has been checked to ensure statutory policies are all in hand and others are reviewed at appropriate intervals. The governing body is satisfied it is compliant in all areas.

Internal auditors have also regularly visited the school to ensure it is best practice.

## d) Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

The chair has ensured that the quality and impact of governance is a continued focus with a re-writing of the link governor role and training to ensure that governors understand their role in their visits to link areas.

The clerk has continued to embed efficiencies and improvements to the capturing of information, supporting governors in their voluntary role of supporting the school and its aims.

The board has assessed its work against self-evaluation questions published by various sources to support Governing boards and has identified areas to continue to work on to improve the impact of governance in the coming year.

## Additional Impact and Contributions

Governors attended awards and open evenings and continue to be represented on the Hardenhuish Educational Trust. Governors were also present at the Christmas Fayre, Open Evening and New Year 7 induction evenings.

In their link roles, governors attended events such as the celebrating success assemblies and poetry slam and held meetings with leaders in all areas of the school curriculum, across the range of year groups and in specific focus areas such as safeguarding, special educational needs and pupil premium.





The school has a strong moral intent. Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils at the school. They are reflective in their practice and review the success of any changes that are made regularly and thoughtfully. Staff feel valued as professionals. Trustees share the passion of senior leaders. They know the school well. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision the school provides.

**November 2023**



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