

Chertsey and Dorking Nursery Schools

Meet the Governing Body 2024-25



Jennifer Devane – Staff Governor

I am beginning my fifth year at Chertsey Nursery School. My previous experience of Early Years education has been working in and managing Children's Centre's. This has provided me with a wealth of experience of working with a range of families in providing advice and support where needed. I am passionate about early years as it's the most important part of a child's education. I believe this is where children and their families can get the advice, support and interventions needed to provide them with firm foundations for their future education and life chances.



Donna Harwood-Duffy – Executive Headteacher

As Executive Headteacher at Chertsey and Dorking Nursery Schools and Mole Valley Family Centre, I am automatically a member of the Governing Body. I have been the Headteacher at Dorking since 2013 and thrilled to share this expertise in the role at Executive Headteacher over Chertsey and Dorking from 2018. I believe if we can make the Foundation Stage of a child's education count, then it will most certainly lay the foundations for them for the rest of their lives. I welcome the varied skills and expertise on our Governing Body, to not only challenge me, but also the whole team. This helps to drive the improvements of the entire organisation and by working together; we can give our children and families the best possible start.



Ella Hood – Co-opted Governor

Every child deserves the best possible start for their journey on the road to lifelong learning. I have two grown up children who benefitted from high quality education in their early years, so I know the value of this phase of learning. I worked as a qualified actuary for many years at Pixham End in Dorking, so I bring skills & experience in finance, critical analysis and strategic development to the governing body.



Oliver Hughes – Parent Governor

My journey into School Governance was inspired by my own experience as a parent. My son attended Dorking Nursery School, it was during this time that I became acutely aware of the importance and where I witnessed firsthand the invaluable impact of early years education. Motivated by a desire to give back to the community and support educational excellence, I decided to become a Parent Governor.

With a professional background in business analysis and solution architecture, I feel I bring a unique set of skills to the Governing Body. My role involves understanding how companies work and to enable companies to reach their potential by helping them articulate and meet goals, identify and overcome challenges, ensuring that the right outcomes are achieved in the most effective manner. My primary goal as a School Governor will be to contribute to the continued delivery of high standards within the organisation, fostering an environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

I am deeply committed to the well-being and development of the school community, and I look forward to working collaboratively with parents, staff, and fellow Governors to ensure that the school remains a place of growth, learning, and excellence.



Mary McCrea – Co-opted Governor

I have lived in Dorking for almost 30 years and have 2 daughters now in their 20s. My background is in HR and Learning & Development and I have a passion for coaching individuals to be the best they can possibly be. I now hope to bring some of that experience into the Nursery Schools and Family Centre and I feel privileged to be part of such a strong team who put the children at the heart of everything we do.



Sylvina Mellor – Co-opted Governor

I have a 30 year career in local government - education authority administration, across a range of services including admissions, finance and local management. Working knowledge of SENDIST- legal framework, service management and front line service delivery. I speak Polish - enough to have a simple conversation with a native Pole. Why did I want to be a Governor? I've spent the majority of my working life in education and passionately believe that education is a critical factor in society's development, social mobility and enhancing choices and opportunity for individuals. I maintain an interest in current developments and I'd like to continue to contribute and make a difference, if possible.



Neeva Shore – Co-opted Governor

I am very passionate about children's education and a firm believer every child should have access to good education. I come from a business background and run a very successful Corporate Florist company in London, which I started over 20 years ago. With that in mind I bring a wealth of experience in marketing and sales to the governing body.



Jo Suchy – LA Governor, Vice Chair of Governors

I have worked as an Educational Psychologist for over five years now, including four years across Surrey schools and settings. I became a governor for Chertsey Nursery School in 2017 and have enjoyed supporting both Nursery schools and more recently the Family Centre since this time. In my professional role I understand the importance of quality early education in giving children the best life chances, and enjoy being able to contribute to this in my role as governor.



Helen Sutherland – Co-opted Governor

As a parent myself and recently a grandparent, I am convinced that what happens in the first few years of a child's life can shape their opportunities and outcomes in the future. I am committed to helping every family get the support and encouragement they need in the early years to enable them to overcome the challenges they face and for their children to be able to flourish. What better place to see this happen than at a Maintained Nursery School! I have been involved in family support, early years services and community work in both my professional and voluntary roles and I am looking forward to being a part of the team again.



Andy Whitehouse – Co-opted Governor and Chair of Governors.

Originally from Solihull, I have lived in Dorking since 2000. I am a qualified actuary having worked at Friends Life in Dorking and London. I believe I bring general business skills to the team, having had significant experience in finance and managing budgets as well as general management and project management skills. I feel I can use these skills in a different environment, and also to learn new skills whilst, I hope, contributing to the local communities. I became a governor at Dorking Nursery School in 2014 and at Chertsey Nursery School in 2018, and I am pleased to now be part of the Federated Governing Body covering both schools and the Mole Valley Family Centre.