Governor Effectiveness – academic year 2025-26

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

- Governors reviewed, challenged and approved the School Development Plan, ensuring priorities were ambitious, achievable and aligned to the schools' values of Trust, Community and Education
- Governors engaged in extensive strategic discussions regarding Local Government Reorganisation, SEND reforms, falling birth rates, admissions trends and long-term sustainability across both schools.
- Governors monitored future strategic planning throughout the year, with future viability and financial sustainability becoming a standing agenda item.
- Governors reviewed the implications of the new Ofsted Framework and undertook governance self-evaluation against the Leadership and Governance judgement criteria.
- Governors were prepared for the Ofsted Inspection in April 2026 at Dorking and were able to provide clear evidence that the Governing Body's activities at Dorking Nursery School were aligned with its statutory duties and were effective in supporting school improvement and accountability.
- Governors challenged leaders on nursery place occupancy, community engagement, marketing strategies, partnerships with local schools and opportunities to increase flexibility for families.
- Governors reviewed admissions arrangements and monitored projected numbers on roll across both schools.
- Governors supported succession planning through governor reappointments, role allocation and committee membership reviews.
- Governors reviewed the impact of family support services, including the Early Bird Programme, and considered how these initiatives strengthen family engagement and community support

Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance of staff

- Governors received and scrutinised detailed leadership reports covering pupil outcomes, SEND, attendance, safeguarding, admissions and School Development Plan progress.
- Governors challenged leaders on attainment trends, communication and language outcomes, disadvantaged children, SEND outcomes and the progress of pupils receiving enhanced funding.
- Governors reviewed and approved the EYPP Strategy and monitored how additional funding was being used to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.
- There was a continued and significant focus on safeguarding, including KCSIE updates, EYFS safeguarding reforms, SCR monitoring, safeguarding audits, case reviews, attendance, whistleblowing, cyber security and lockdown procedures.
- Governors undertook regular safeguarding monitoring visits and SCR checks across both schools and received external audit outcomes to provide assurance on safeguarding arrangements.
- Governors challenged leaders regarding staff training, appraisal, induction processes, professional development and workforce capacity to meet the increasing complexity of children's needs.
- Governors reviewed parent and staff feedback and monitored leaders' responses through "You Said, We Did" actions and improvements to communication and engagement.
- Governors approved and reviewed a wide range of statutory policies, including Safeguarding, Recruitment, SEND, Online Safety, Complaints, Attendance, Equality, Data Protection and Behaviour.

Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

- Governors scrutinised budget forecasts, staffing expenditure, funding assumptions and three-year financial planning to ensure both schools remained financially sustainable.
- Governors challenged leaders regarding the financial implications of falling birth rates, increasing SEND needs and the sustainability of staffing structures.
- Governors reviewed and approved the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and monitored actions arising from financial review processes.
- Governors closely monitored capital projects, including the Dorking specialist needs toilet development, Chertsey building improvements and future premises planning.
- Governors challenged project costs, sought assurance regarding value for money and monitored additional capital funding secured through Local Authority and grant funding streams.

- Governors monitored recruitment activity, staffing levels and the allocation of Early Intervention Funding to ensure resources were directed appropriately to support children's needs.
- Governors approved the closure of the school fund account and ensured compliance with Local Authority financial requirements.
- Governors considered opportunities for income generation and provision development, including extended services, whilst ensuring decisions remained aligned with community need and financial viability

Next steps for 2026-27

- Monitor the impact of Local Government Reorganisation on both schools and ensure continuity of services and support.
- Continue strategic planning to address demographic changes, SEND demand and long-term financial sustainability.
- Monitor implementation of SEND reforms and any resulting changes to funding, provision and statutory processes.
- Strengthen governor visibility and engagement with parents, carers and staff across both schools.
- Continue to monitor admissions trends and develop strategies to maximise occupancy and sustainability.
- Monitor the impact of Early Intervention Funding and ensure robust evidence of outcomes for children.
- Continue to strengthen safeguarding oversight, particularly around cyber security, attendance, online safety and emerging national guidance.
- Ensure governors are fully prepared for Chertsey Ofsted Inspection.
- Monitor the completion and impact of capital projects and ensure value for money is achieved.
- Strengthen governor monitoring visits and clearly align evidence from visits to School Development Plan priorities.