



Thameside Primary School

Annual Governance Statement 2024-25

The Role of the Governing Body

The core strategic functions of Thameside's Governing Body are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The Board of Governors September 2024 - August 2025

Our Instrument of Governance specifies that The Governing Body shall consist of: three parent governors; one Local Authority governor; one staff governor; the Headteacher and four co-opted governors. The total number of governors for 2024/25 was 10. The term of office of governors is four years, apart from the staff governor whose term of office is two years. This year we said a grateful farewell to Lata Parbhoo who ended her term and welcomed Vania Costa-Krol to the Board.

Name	Type of Governor	Term of Office
Jo Cordy	Local Authority Governor	17 Jul 2024 - 16 Jul 2028
Paul Cowley	Co-opted governor	23 Nov 2022 - 22 Nov 2026
Robert Foster	Co-opted governor	17 Jul 2024 - 16 Jul 2028
Lata Parbhoo	Co-opted governor	24 Nov 2021 - 23 Nov 2025
Vania Costa-Krol	Co-opted governor	29 Jan 2025 to 28 Jan 2029
Vacancy	Co-opted governor	
Sophie Greenaway	Headteacher	
Ciara Finn	Staff governor	21 Apr 2023 - 20 Apr 2025
Guy Bickerton	Parent governor	10 Oct 2022 - 9 Oct 2026
Alex Stevanovic	Parent governor	12 Nov 2023 - 11 Nov 2027
Lisa Radford	Parent governor	27 Nov 2024 – 27 Nov 2028
Ingrid Burton	Associate Governor	30 Jan 2023 - present

Clerk to Governors

Sue Witten



Committees, Roles and Attendance September 2024 - August 2025

We operate the majority of our business as a Full Governing Body (FGB). We meet frequently; we held six Full Governing Body Meetings in 2024/25. We also hold an annual Governor Day where we spend a full day in school meeting staff and pupils, visiting classrooms, playgrounds and the dining hall and scrutinising the work of the school in action.

We have one sub-committee of our Full Governing Body. This is our Finance and Staffing Committee (F&S) which met six times in 2024/25. Its core function is to: ensure as far as is reasonably possible that the school finances and personnel are managed in the most efficient and effective way to support the strategic aims; and act as a critical friend and an advisor wherever possible.

The FGB convenes sub-groups for example annually a sub-group of three members of F&S is convened as The Pay Committee (PC) and a sub-group of three different members of the FGB is convened as the Head Teacher Performance Management Panel (HTPM).

Most members of the Board undertake a link governor role which provides a link between the governing body, committees and school staff. These are appointed annually in our first meeting of the year. Roles are assigned on the basis of those (e.g. Safeguarding) that we are required to have; those that support aspects of the schools' work and areas of development identified as priorities in the School Development Plan or from an OfSTED inspection report.

Name	Role on Governing Board	Committees	Sub-Group	Attendance at Meetings 2024-25	
				FGB	F&S
Paul Cowley	Chair of Governors Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	F&S	Headteacher Performance Management	5/6	6/6
Guy Bickerton	Health & Safety & Premises Sustainability Governor		Headteacher Performance Management	6/6	
Jo Cordy	Vice Chair of Governors Filtering & Monitoring Safeguarding	F&S	Headteacher Performance Management	6/6	4/6
Vania Costa-Krol				2/4	
Ciara Finn	Wellbeing Governor			6/6	
Robert Foster	Attendance Governor Curriculum Governor			4/6	
Lata Parbhoo	SEND, Inclusion & Pupil Premium	F&S	Pay	5/6	6/6
Sophie Greenaway	Head teacher	F&S		6/6	6/6
Lisa Radford	Cyber Security	F&S	Pay	2/4	4/5
Alex Stevanovic	Chair of Finance & Staffing Committee Curriculum Governor	F&S	Pay	5/6	5/5
Ingrid Burton	Deputy Headteacher			6/6	



Skill and Training - Paul Cowley, Chair of Governors



The governing body is made up of individual volunteers with differing backgrounds and experience. To ensure that the body as a whole has the right mix of skills to provide clear and consistent challenge to the schools leadership team, we undertake an annual self-evaluation of our effectiveness and regular audits of our knowledge, skills, competencies, and behaviours. These help to identify current training needs, and inform the recruitment of governors into co-opted positions.

We invest in tools and services to support effective and efficient operation of the Governing Body. We are active members of the Reading Governance Association (RGA), having had representatives attend numerous events across the year, including Directors Briefings and 'network' meetings covering finance, safeguarding and inclusion. We maintain a 'gold' membership of the governor services program operated by Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), providing access to quality support and guidance as well as

discounts on formal training and other support services.

In the last year governors have attended training that covered complaints management, performance management, data privacy, data security, e-safety and safeguarding.

I would like to thank all the Governors for their work throughout the year and especially for their contribution and support to the school over the course of the Ofsted inspection in 2025.

The Work of The Governing Body 2024-25

Our work is driven by our Strategic Plan which was updated in 2025 as part of our annual Governors day and is available on the school website. This sets out our vision, ethos and long-term direction for the school. This plan is used to inform decision-making and to assess progress against our priorities. We also approve, evaluate and monitor the School Development Plan (SDP) a summary of which is also available on the school website.



Attendance – Robert Foster

The governing body receives regular reports from Mrs Greenaway and Miss Roseaman (the school's Emotional, Behaviour, Well-being, Welfare Officer) documenting the positive impact of the Family Hub in working with families to break down barriers to good attendance. Miss Roseaman is supported in her role by Mrs Julie Withers who is the school's allocated Attendance Support Worker.



The link governor for attendance meets with the Family Hub Lead each term (and more often if required) to discuss attendance issues in school and reports back to the governing body from these meetings. The governor also joins some meetings with the Attendance Support Worker.

Although there was a slight drop in attendance for the academic year 2024/25, attendance at Thameside has for several years been broadly in line with national averages, and the beginning of the 2025/26 year is back in line with this pattern. Both overall absence rates and unauthorised absence rates show a significant drop since last academic year.

The school recognises the importance of good attendance in terms of children's academic development, as well as their emotional development and personal well-being. Attendance continues to sit as one of the five key focus points on the School Development Plan for 2025/26.

Persistent absence for a small number of pupils continues to be a key area of focus: individualised, dynamic strategies are in place to support those children and families most in need. Alongside these cases of persistent absence, school leaders have identified term-time holidays as one of the factors which have the biggest negative impact on school attendance rates. There is an additional focus this academic year on reducing the number of holidays taken in term time. The local authority is fully supportive of the school in this regard, and more generally.

All staff at Thameside understand the benefits of good attendance, as well as the risk factors linked to persistent absence. The importance given to promoting good attendance through a range of strategies, not least by providing an enriching and welcoming learning environment, is a notable feature of the school.



Outcomes and progress - Sophie Greenaway, Headteacher

In 2024–25, pupils in Year 6 (KS2) completed statutory assessment tests (SATs), and baseline assessments were undertaken for pupils joining the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Thameside's outcomes reflect strong progress across the school and continue to demonstrate the impact of high-quality teaching alongside the school's inclusive ethos. Full results are available on the school website [here](#).

KS2 outcomes for 2025 show strengths in reading, writing and SPaG, with several areas performing close to national figures and notable success at the higher standard.

In Reading, 71% of pupils achieved the expected standard, just below the national figure of 74%. A strong 35% reached greater depth, with an average scaled score of 105.3 compared to the national 106.



In Writing, 69% of pupils met the expected standard, slightly under the national average of 72%. A smaller proportion, 8%, achieved greater depth.

For Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG), 71% of pupils reached the expected standard, closely aligned with the national figure of 72%. Notably, 20% achieved greater depth. The average scaled score was 103.3, compared with 105 nationally.

In Mathematics, 63% of pupils achieved the expected standard, below the national average of 73%. Meanwhile, 18% reached greater depth. The average scaled score was 100, compared with 105 nationally.

When looking at combined Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM), 49% of pupils achieved the expected standard in all three subjects, compared with 62% nationally.

Leaders are proud of the Year 6 outcomes, particularly the strong performance in reading and SPaG and the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth. The Year 6 team provided exceptional support across all subjects and pastoral needs, ensuring that every pupil - including those with significant additional needs - was prepared for KS3.

Writing continues to be an area for further development and remains a school-wide priority for 2025–26.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 75.7% of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD), representing a substantial improvement from 62% the previous year. This strong progress reflects the impact of high-quality interactions and a sustained staff focus on developing communication and language skills. The outcomes highlight the effectiveness of current practice and the commitment of the EYFS team to nurturing early learning. Looking ahead, planned professional development for 2025–26 will build on this success, further strengthening EYFS provision and supporting continued improvement across the phase.

In the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, 86% of pupils met the expected standard. This marks an improvement on 2024 and reflects the continued effectiveness of the school's systematic approach to phonics teaching.

At Key Stage 1 (Year 2), teacher assessment outcomes demonstrate secure judgements and strong attainment, particularly in reading and mathematics. In Reading, 67% of pupils achieved the expected standard, with 30% working at greater depth. In Writing, 58% reached the expected standard and 12% achieved greater depth. In Mathematics, 74% of pupils met the expected standard, with an impressive 35% attaining greater depth.

Leaders note that the move away from formal SATs papers has enabled pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and skills more authentically. As this approach becomes further embedded, it is expected to support even stronger transition into Year 3, ensuring pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning journey.

Governors recognise and commend the dedication of staff in ensuring that every child, regardless of starting point or additional need, is supported to make strong progress. The outcomes achieved this year reflect the impact of that commitment, with particularly notable strengths in the significant



improvement in EYFS Good Level of Development, the strong performance in Year 1 phonics, the greater depth outcomes in KS1 reading and mathematics, and the continued success in KS2 reading and SPaG.

Looking ahead, the school remains ambitious in its vision for all pupils. Priorities for 2025–26 will focus on further strengthening writing across all year groups, continuing to refine adaptive teaching approaches in KS1, and embedding high-quality interactions and language development within EYFS. Alongside these, leaders and governors are determined to ensure that ambitious progress is secured for every pupil, including those with SEND or lower starting points, so that Thameside continues to be a place where all children thrive and achieve their potential.



Finance - Alex Stevanovic, Chair of Finance

The governing body has clear and robust oversight of the school's financial position through the Finance & Staffing (F&S) Committee, which includes the Headteacher, the School Business Manager, the Committee Chair Alex Stevanovic, the Chair of Governors Paul Cowley, and governors Lisa Radford and Jo Cordy. The committee meets six times a year and scrutinises all aspects of the school's financial management. This includes detailed review of budget outturns, in-year variances, deficit movement, forecast accuracy, staffing costs, and medium-term sustainability.

The school's financial position does not exist in isolation but reflects wider pressures affecting many maintained primary schools locally and nationally. Funding allocations have not kept pace with rising costs, and maintained schools in Reading are collectively moving further into deficit each year. This is driven in large part by the shortfall in funding for the 'high needs block' (SEND). Local demographic trends compound this challenge. Falling birth rates means that fewer pupils are enrolling in schools in North Reading each year. This has resulted in funding challenges for many schools in the local area. As a result, the school had a deficit at the end of FY 2024/25 as it has done for a number of years.

Like a growing number of maintained schools in Reading, Thameside is operating within a licensed deficit arrangement with the local authority. This ensures the school can continue to operate safely, with payroll and essential costs met, while also establishing a clear framework for oversight and recovery planning. The Senior Leadership Team and governing body are working closely with Reading Borough Council Finance, School Effectiveness, and SEND leads, recognising that the deficit is part of a wider local authority-wide pattern and cannot be resolved by the school alone. We continue to participate actively in place-planning, SEND reviews, and strategic discussions to ensure decisions across the locality are aligned and sustainable, whilst managing the school finances responsibly and as sustainably as possible in the context outlined above.

The school recently underwent a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) review, which provided an independent assessment of our financial position and resource deployment. Governors welcomed the recommendations and are now working with the Headteacher, SLT, and local



authority partners to evaluate which measures can be implemented, over what timeframe, and how to do so without undermining the quality of education, inclusion, or the school's ethos.

The governing body is committed to implementing actions that reduce the deficit in a planned and responsible way, ensuring any changes to staffing, curriculum organisation, or provision are phased, evidence-led, and fully aligned to the needs of Thameside's pupils.

Despite the challenging national and local financial context, our priority at Thameside remains to deliver high-quality, inclusive education for all pupils. Governors will continue to monitor the financial position rigorously, advocate for fair and adequate funding, and work transparently with the local authority to stabilise and improve the school's financial standing over time.



Safeguarding – Jo Cordy, link governor

This area continues to underpin work throughout the school and is the fundamental framework in which the school operates. As governors we take our responsibilities very seriously to ensure and verify that statutory obligations are being met, for example through regular meetings (three times a year) between the safeguarding governor and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and also meetings with the School Business Manager (SBM) to ensure that the Single Central Record is being maintained. In 2024-25 these meetings included reviewing the annual audit of our safeguarding provision to be submitted to the Local Authority, and a separate audit of our safeguarding policies and procedures carried out in partnership with the School Effectiveness Officer from Brighter Futures for Children.

All governors keep up-to-date with safeguarding training and developments, for example with the Keeping Children Safe in Education framework and its updates for 2024-25. The safeguarding governor ensures that any relevant local or national developments are brought to the attention of the rest of the governing board, during the standing safeguarding item in our governor board meetings.

As governors, we also ensure that a culture of awareness and vigilance is maintained across all aspects of the school's safeguarding provision so that we uphold our very high standards in this regard and there is no room for complacency. Our Governor Safeguarding Statement, which sets out our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, can be found on the school website.



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Pupil Premium - Vania Costa-Krol, link governor (updated in this report by Paul Cowley)

Whilst all of the governing bodies have responsibility for and interest in SEND, we also have a member of the governing body who has specific responsibility for oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND. They undertake two monitoring visits a year. During the 2024/25 school year, continued focus has been given to Thameside's alternative learning provisions - Rainbow room, Garden room and the Nest, and to how well our Pupil Premium budget is being spent. This has included examination of evidence and outcomes for pupils throughout the school.

Schools receive Pupil Premium funding to help close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. As a governing body we monitor the use of this funding to ensure that it is used effectively and has demonstrable impact.

In the 2024/25 academic year the school continued to successfully operate the SEND Resource Base. This has seen long term benefits with funding confirmed for the installation of an active play area outside, designed to meet physical and sensory learning objectives on children's Educational, Health and Care Plans, and to provide regulatory opportunities throughout the day for those children in need of this provision. This will also improve the accessible space available to these children, and allow them a safe place to play, with their classmates and mainstream peers as appropriate.

The link Governor has regular meetings with the Inclusion manager and reports back to the governing body on the school's SEND provision, budget and resources and the strategic oversight of the school's systems and processes for supporting pupils with SEND.

The Curriculum – Robert Foster, link governor



The governing body maintains oversight of the curriculum, and curriculum delivery in school. Subject leaders regularly deliver presentations at full governors meetings: in the last year, for example, we have had presentations on Geography, Music and Science.

In addition to this, two governors share the responsibility for more in-depth curriculum overview, including meeting with subject leaders and reporting back to the governing body. Most recently these governors have met with the subject leads for: Geography; History; Music; Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE); Modern foreign languages (MFL); and Science. A curriculum link governor has also undertaken a phonics walk with the phonics leads, looking at provision across Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The curriculum sits at the centre of the school development plan, with several of the main focus areas specifically related to the curriculum. These include: Scaffolding, which focuses on providing clear structures for learning in lessons for children who may need extra support to access and succeed in the curriculum; Assessment, whereby the children's progress is carefully assessed to



identify any gaps in learning, and to inform future planning; and Interactions, with a specific focus on Foundation Stage and Year 1 continuous provision, with the aim of enhancing children's language and communication skills as a basis for rich lifelong learning.

In all areas of the Curriculum, the Governors have sought to ensure that the school continues its focus on well-being and that lessons are tailored for pupils with additional needs who may learn more effectively in different ways.



Well-being – Ciara Finn, link staff governor

Well-being is interwoven amongst everything we do at Thameside and has a key focus within our policies and practise as a way of ensuring that the well-being of pupils and staff at Thameside is at the forefront. We aim to promote good mental health and well-being through our curriculum but also through extra-curricular opportunities provided.

As a governing body, we have continued to ensure that structures are in place to allow both staff and pupils to work in a safe, healthy, and productive way. Surveys are held throughout the year for both pupils and staff so that they are able to voice their opinions and share things that they think would support their well-being.

The results of these surveys have been reported back to governors at FGB meetings, allowing governors to have oversight and ask questions to further their understanding of well-being at Thameside. The survey used with staff has been adapted this year to ensure that the results are comparable each time the survey is completed. The well-being link governor has continued to feed back to the governing board all that has been put in place to support well-being and its effectiveness across the school.



Health and Safety & Premises – Guy Bickerton, link governor

Providing a safe environment for pupils to learn and staff to work effectively continues to be a key priority at Thameside. As a governing body we ensure that all policies and procedures are being followed correctly, for example ensuring fire alarms are conducted periodically and all staff are effectively trained in Health and Safety.

As always there has been a lot going on in school, you may noticed the recent Nest refurbishment enhancing the sensory space, which were completed over the summer holidays. A big thanks to all those individuals who joined the helping hand day over the summer to ensure our school looks better than ever! The school business manager has worked tirelessly to ensure the continued quality of the school, keeping on top of all improvements, be those planned or unplanned.



Lots more is planned for the year ahead to ensure our school continues to provide the best possible environment for educational development and staff welfare. Look out for the new playground installation coming soon!

Contacting the Governing Body

This report represents some, not all, of what we have done and what we have achieved this year. We are always happy to discuss aspects of our work further.

We always welcome suggestions, feedback, and ideas. Look out for us around school in our Governors Hoodies. You can contact the Chair of Governors, Paul Cowley, via the school office or by email: chair@thameside.reading.sch.uk