The De Curci Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 10646541
Registered office address: Springfield School, Central Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, United Kingdom, PO6 1QY

Governors' Annual Statement 2026-2027

The major focus of the governors is to ensure that pupils at The Solent Schools progress appropriately in their education. The Governing Body appreciate that for this to happen the pupils must be supported by a well-led, enthusiastic, professionally competent and motivated staff all working together within a safe, supportive, stimulating environment.

Governors appreciate too the requirements of our children's parents and carers and their need to be satisfied about the overall leadership and management of the school and how it affects the safety, learning and enjoyment of their children.

To achieve their objectives governors must continually evaluate the role they have played within the life of the school and publish relevant information to all interested parties. This statement is part of that evaluation and publication process.

Governor visits

Governors are invited to visit both schools as part of their monitoring of the Education Improvement Plan (EIP) and gain evidence which can be fed back to the full Governing Body. Governors have link roles and responsibilities, for example in Maths or English, and they tailor their visits to the EIP. We also have a SEND link governor.

Guidance in terms of the roles and responsibilities of statutory link governors are provided to the relevant governors, and regular training is undertaken to up-skill our team.

As well as joining presentations to and meetings with parents and carers throughout the year we also attend fun activities in which the pupils participate; sports events and class or whole-school performances are always enjoyed.

Policies

Governors review all relevant policies on a programmed basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Specific attention is paid to ensure that the schools comply with the Department of Education mandatory policy list and those required and generated by The De Curci Trust.

Financial management

Members of the governing body have been trained in School Finance management. In addition, we have a CIMA qualified accountant on the governing body. School accounts are audited and scrutinised by the De Curci Trust and its Chief Finance Operating Officer. Financial reports are seen by Governors on a monthly and termly basis, ensuring that the budget is managed effectively; that correct purchasing procedures are followed; that improvements are effective and continuous.

Trust-wide engagement

The Chair of Governors meets regularly with The Chief Executive of The De Curci Trust and their opposite number at Springfield School to review best practice and drink tea.

Specialist link Governors –such as Safeguarding Link – from each of our schools also carry out peer and external reviews.

Governor expertise

The Governors bring a wide range of expertise to our schools, and this helps to ensure the schools continue to progress. Our members have a range of abilities including a background and knowledge in education, project management, finance, IT, and Human Resources. Examples of the impact of Governor expertise on school improvement include:

- Funding for continued and improved staff CPD
- Evaluating and deciding priorities for Capital Project funding bids
- Appraisal of Solent Schools Senior Leaders
- Evaluation and contribution to the Education Improvement Plan (EIP).

Staff recruitment and appraisals

The Executive Headteacher and Heads of Schools are trained in safer recruitment and are part of each recruitment process. They also carry out staff appraisals alongside an experienced team of senior and middle leaders. Governors sit on both pay and appraisal panels and work with the CEO of the De Curci Trust for the Executive Headteacher's appraisal. The impact of this is to ensure all staff have targets which are highly appropriate in terms of their own professional journey, whilst also reflecting school improvement priorities, as well as staff having access to continued professional development.

Governor Meeting Attendance

Governor attendance last year was at an excellent level-around 80%. Bearing in mind all our governors are volunteers and most of our governors are in full-time employment, this demonstrates their commitment. Much of the work done by governors takes place outside meetings –for example reviewing and adapting policies to reflect changes in legislation or sitting on panels and appraisal boards. Any absences from meetings are subject to being accepted and approved by the governing body. There are no causes for concern at the level of commitment shown by any member of the governing body. The impact of this is an engaged, committed and knowledgeable team who work cohesively with senior leaders.

Annual Review

The Governing Body, Executive Head teacher, Heads of School and all members of staff are constantly striving to improve and develop The Solent Schools. Areas needing development are known and being focussed on.

During the last school year, 2025-26, the Governing Body focussed on:

- Continued expansion of our engagement with all stakeholders and the wider community. Sharing what we consider to be our areas of excellence with outside partners to support other schools in developing in these identified areas.
- Continuing our wellbeing strategy to ensure that all staff can understand and best support the mental health of our pupils. We will continue to monitor the wellbeing of staff and pupils and provide resources for pastoral care provision linked to complex behavioural, social and emotional needs.
- The partnership with the Portsmouth City Digital Strategy team.
- The internet usage filtering and monitoring system now in place in response to the document Keeping Children Safe in Education and further guidance surrounding Artificial Intelligence.

Specific governor targets last year were:

Governor visits to the schools being tailored to support their work on their priorities at the time and as indicated by the EIP.
Success criteria - structured visits and regular reports to LGB.

Safeguarding: maintaining an appropriate culture within the schools, keeping abreast of and fulfilling our statutory duties and continuing to support our wider community with safeguarding in general and particularly, online safety.
Success criteria - survey feedback and peer reviews.

Inclusion: Monitoring how leaders review how marginalised voices are listened to within their subject to ensure all sectors of our school community are represented and promoted. (Examples of marginalized communities include but are not limited to racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, individuals living in poverty and those with Special Educational needs and disabilities.) In the current climate this focused closely on developments in SEND provision.
Success criteria - effectiveness of responses to challenges set by potential new legislation and improvement in outcomes for SEND pupils.

Education Improvement Plans (EIPs)

Governors work co-operatively with both the Executive Headteacher, Heads of School and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) in contributing to and monitoring the EIPs-one for each of our schools. These plans evolve and develop annually as the schools', and educational, demands change.
The EIPs thus guide the strategic priorities and focus of the Governing Body.

Strategic priorities and focus for the coming year

Safeguarding, inclusion and equity

Ensure that all pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or have SEND, are safe, included and enabled to achieve and participate fully.
Safety and inclusion bring together two particularly important strands of the EIPs. Both schools emphasise context-responsive safeguarding, effective Teams Around the Child, research-informed inclusive practice and accessible environments. Governors are explicitly identified as recipients of timely safeguarding information and as participants in the development of the relational behaviour policy.

Educational quality and achievement

Ensure that every pupil receives consistently high-quality, ambitious and inclusive teaching and a coherent curriculum, leading to strong progress and attainment, particularly in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.
"Quality of education and outcomes" captures the central academic responsibility of the governing body. Both EIPs require greater consistency in adaptive teaching, robust pupil-progress processes and improved outcomes in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. They also identify the need for evidence-informed curriculum development through SPARC and better use of assessment and retrieval.

Culture, wellbeing and personal development

Ensure that the schools develop a consistent, relational culture that promotes excellent attendance, positive behaviour, resilience, wellbeing and personal development.
Culture, attendance and wellbeing reflect the strong emphasis in both plans on a relational approach in which behaviour is understood as communication, with consistent language, de-escalation, restorative practices and attention to staff wellbeing. The Trick Box programme provides an important complementary strand around resilience, emotional literacy and self-regulation.

Leadership, governance and sustainable improvement

Ensure that leaders evaluate the impact of school improvement activity rigorously, use resources effectively, develop staff capacity and provide governors with the evidence needed for effective strategic challenge and oversight.
Leadership and improvement are particularly important from a governance perspective. The EIPs repeatedly emphasise monitoring impact, evaluation, evidence-informed decision-making and strategic planning. The Junior School EIP, for example, requires leaders to use evidence of impact to inform future strategic priorities. The Infant School EIP similarly expects environmental improvements and future SEND priorities to feed into strategic planning.

Arrivals and Departures

We recently appointed a new Parent Governor, Joe Smith. Joe brings a wealth of finance expertise (pun irresistible!). Joe, you are most welcome.

We currently have further Co-opted Governor vacancies which will be advertised during this half term. Sadly, these are not open to parents of our children as we have a full complement of Parent Governors, but we are currently advertising locally.

We said goodbye in July to Ged McNamara whose work with the Digital Strategy team was invaluable - thank you Ged.

We also said farewell, after many years' service, to Kath Murriman whose expertise around safeguarding is legendary - thank you Kath.

You will both be missed.

We will continue to invite "subject matter experts" to attend meetings as and when appropriate.

Current Governing Body at The Solent Schools

Co-opted Governors

- Karen Howe (Wellbeing Link)
- Jon Pugsley (EYFS Link)
- John Wademan (Chair of Governors, English Link, Health & Safety Link)
- Dave Dorrington (Vice Chair, SEND/Inclusion Link)
- Vacancies (to be advertised)

Parent Governors

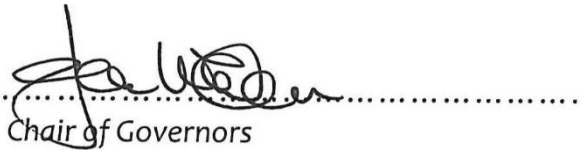
- Adam Threadingham (Safeguarding Link, Whistleblowing Link)
- Joe Smith (Pupil Premium link)

Headteacher Governor

- Lucy Wilby (Executive Headteacher)

Clerk to Governors

- Jean Loy (Without whom the whole edifice would collapse)



Chair of Governors 01/09/2026