

Chapel Allerton Primary School

Annual Governance Statement 2025–2026

The Governing Body of Chapel Allerton Primary School remains fully committed to supporting and challenging the school to achieve its vision: to provide an exceptional, inclusive education where every child is valued, safeguarded, and supported to thrive.

This statement outlines how the Governing Body has fulfilled its statutory duties and wider responsibilities during the 2025–26 academic year, and demonstrates the impact of governance on school improvement, pupil outcomes, staff wellbeing, and community engagement. The day to day management of the school remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and senior leadership team.

Governance Structure and Membership

Jenny Hand was re-elected as Chair for a further year, with Gemma Dolden and Amy Sanderson elected as Co-Vice Chairs, and Steve Gilmore taking on the chairing of the Leadership and Management Committee. Terms of office for Gemma Dolden and Becca Pinder were extended to 2029 to preserve continuity, and the Local Authority Model Code of Conduct was adopted and signed by all governors.

Link responsibilities were reviewed and reallocated across the board, with Emily Webb taking on a new curriculum governor role. Nicola Allardyce resigned as a co-opted governor during the spring term, and the board worked to redistribute the SEND, attendance and pupil premium responsibilities she had held. Leah Magnall moved from Associate Member to Co-opted Governor and was also appointed Allergy Governor. Amy Wilson's term as parent governor ends in November 2026, and the Chair has begun recruiting associate members to build a stronger pool of governors for succession planning.

School Improvement and Monitoring

Governors monitored the School Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Form throughout the year, and received a detailed data briefing from external consultant Ian Stokes at the January QTLA Committee, questioning attainment trends across key stages and for specific pupil groups. Combined Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2 stood at 65% (down from 70% the previous year but still comfortably above national averages), and reading results remained outstanding at 86%, over 10 percentage points above national.

Governors were made aware of a difficult period of staffing disruption affecting Year 6 and Year 4, and challenged the Headteacher on the resulting interventions ahead of SATs week; the Headteacher reported that SATs went well, with results awaited in July. Governors supported the Headteacher's plan to strip back the non-core curriculum in favour of doing fewer things well, and were satisfied that a targeted staffing appointment was addressing a gender attainment gap in maths identified through committee scrutiny of the data.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remained the board's highest priority. The safeguarding link governor, Gemma Dolden, made regular visits to test the school's processes directly with staff, including questioning staff on their awareness of child sexual abuse indicators, and confirmed the single central record, safer recruitment and child protection procedures were robust. The updated Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance were reviewed and adopted.

The school's safeguarding audit took place in June 2026, and the outcome was excellent: of 74 areas assessed, 62 were rated green and 10 as exemplary practice, with only 2 amber (relating to completion of PREVENT and safer working practice training, both being addressed). Auditors highlighted the school's strong pastoral systems, tracking of vulnerable children, and proactive engagement with external agencies. Governors also resolved a concern regarding the school's use of Facebook and photo consent, agreeing tighter controls to be communicated to parents from September 2026, and extended CLA and SENCO access to safeguarding records following governor challenge.

Governors noted with regret that the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Lead, Tessa Robbins, will reduce to 0.6 FTE from the new academic year to pursue a Master's qualification; the school has been able to accommodate this.

Inclusion and Equalities

The SEND Policy and SEND Information Report were reviewed and approved by the PDBW Committee. Governors monitored the school's response to the cost-of-living crisis, satisfied that communications with families were handled

sensitively, and reviewed the school's approach to Relationships, Sex and Health Education ahead of updated statutory guidance from September 2026, including ensuring age-appropriate vocabulary is introduced earlier in the curriculum.

Staffing and Wellbeing

Governors supported the school through a year of operational change, approving flexible working requests from staff while weighing financial viability against wellbeing, and supporting a period of long-term staff absence with HR and legal input alongside governor involvement. The Leadership and Management Committee scrutinised and approved an expansion of the HLTA and TA team, including additional maths support, to reduce reliance on supply staff, and an ill-health capability process was concluded through the school's proper process.

The Headteacher's appraisal was conducted by the pay committee panel, with new targets linked to school improvement priorities. Governors were satisfied by evidence from a whole-staff training day on relational practice, informed by parent and pupil surveys, that behaviour and wellbeing practice is being embedded consistently across school.

Finance, Resources, and Premises

The Governing Body scrutinised school finances closely throughout a challenging financial year. The mid-year budget review was approved, and the 2026–27 budget was approved at the May Leadership and Management Committee meeting: the 2025–26 in-year position showed a deficit of £72,631 against a surplus carried forward of £69,890, while the 2026–27 budget is projected to carry forward only £940. The Headteacher described the position as tight but doable, driven by flat funding against rising costs, particularly for SEND provision, where the school must fund the first fifteen SEND pupils itself. Governors reviewed and approved the Schools Financial Value Standard self-assessment ahead of the 31 March deadline.

Pupil numbers remained strong, with 416 of 420 places filled and the school expecting to be full for the September 2026 intake. Governors monitored progress on the Victorian roof replacement, which is due to start now scaffolding and glazing challenges have been sorted, and were satisfied that IT infrastructure and management information system changes (including the move from SIMS to Arbor) were being managed with appropriate oversight of risk.

Parents, Community, and Wider Engagement

Governors reviewed the outcomes of the parent survey and discussed ways to capture the views of parents who do not respond to surveys. Governors supported the Headteacher's proposals for the Year 6 educational visit to London, ensuring the arrangements were equitable for pupils not selected by ballot and that pupil premium families were further subsidised. Complaints continued to be handled at board level with appropriate rigour and impartiality, with governors mindful of the distinct roles of the Governing Body and the school in any matter that proceeds further.

Governance Development and Effectiveness

Governors invested in their own development throughout the year, with individual governors completing training in safeguarding, safer recruitment, complaints handling, and finance, and all governors using GovernorHub as a source of guidance and mandatory training. The Leadership and Management Committee began work on an AI policy for the school in the absence of a Local Authority model. Following Nicola Allardyce's resignation, the board gave renewed attention to succession planning through the recruitment of associate members.

Governors considered the government's White Paper, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, and concluded that Chapel Allerton already meets its expectations on collaboration, inclusion, attainment, and attendance, with no immediate case for pursuing academy status. At the final meeting of the year the Chair considered the Governing Board to be highly effective, and committed to preparing this Annual Governance Statement.

Looking Ahead

The Governing Body has agreed the following priorities for 2026–27:

- Addressing the two amber areas identified in the June 2026 safeguarding audit and continuing to build on the exemplary practice recognised by auditors.
- Embedding the new writing scheme, the stripped-back non-core curriculum, and continued work to close attainment gaps, particularly in maths.
- Managing a tight 2026–27 budget position, particularly the pressures around SEND funding, while progressing the roof replacement.
- Recruiting associate members to strengthen succession planning and board resilience.

- Finalising an AI policy for the school.
- Continuing to embed relational and restorative practice across school, building on the training delivered this year.

Governance is a continuous journey, and we remain committed to representing the interests of the entire school community while ensuring the highest standards for every pupil at Chapel Allerton Primary.

We thank the staff, pupils, families and fellow governors for their continued dedication, energy, and support.

Jenny Hand
Chair of Governors
Chapel Allerton Primary School