



Governors Newsletter

Welcome to Our First Governors Newsletter

Hello Parents and Carers,

As the school's governing board, we wanted to round off the year by sharing some of the fantastic work happening across both Shirley schools, not just the visible achievements, but also the important things taking place quietly behind the scenes.

We've spent time this year in classrooms, meeting staff, reviewing plans, talking to children and asking questions (lots of them!). We hope this newsletter gives you a clearer picture of the **care, effort and ambition behind the schools' work**, and how governors support and monitor it all.

As governors, we get to see the beating heart of both Shirley Infant and Junior Schools, the thoughtful planning, the responsive teaching, and the small (but mighty) changes that can make a real difference to your child's day.

We want to give you a glimpse behind the scenes and share some of the achievements we've seen and supported over the year.

What We've Been Doing This Year

Over the year, we've:

- ✓ Visited both schools to observe lessons, review behaviour and speak with staff
- ✓ Monitored how the School Improvement Plans are being implemented
- ✓ Carried out a dedicated SEND governor visit at the Infant School

- ✓ Met regularly with school leaders to ask questions and provide challenge and support
- ✓ Reviewed data, curriculum development and safeguarding procedures
- ✓ Scrutinised leadership plans and School Improvement Priorities
- ✓ Conducted safeguarding audits and health and safety reviews and parent/carer workshops
- ✓ Supported with Ofsted and Hamwic assessments

We're there to ensure leaders are on track, that resources are used wisely, and most importantly, that every child is safe, supported and learning. Our role is to support, question and reflect, and to ensure both schools continue to meet the needs of every child.

Shirley Infants School

Ofsted Success

We're delighted to share that Shirley Infant School was inspected over two days by three inspectors, a particularly thorough process, and was judged **"Good in all areas"**, with no concerns raised.

Inspectors were full of praise, noting:

"Pupils are safe, happy and enjoy their learning."

"Staff have high expectations for all pupils and encourage them to do their best."

"Pupils are confident and polite... There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school."

The Early Years leader also received specific recognition for the positive impact on the Early Years setting, something we know makes a lasting difference to children's start in school. Inspectors praised the leadership, inclusive ethos and thoughtful teaching, and we couldn't agree more.

SEND Provision Excellence

The school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision has grown in clarity and consistency this year. Aimee Reilly, the SENDCo, has introduced a clear 'Waves 1-5' model for staged support, which helps staff

match support to a child's individual needs and ensures early intervention, especially in Reception and Year 1.

This includes targeted interventions such as NELI, Speaking Space, and Colourful Semantics for communication and cognition needs to support our SEND pupils.

Importantly, the school is currently providing 1:1 or additional adult support for a number of pupils who do not yet have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This support is paid for using the school's core funding, whilst additional funding is sought for these pupils through an EHCP. This reflects the school's strong commitment to inclusion.

Governors attended a SEND monitoring visit in January and found:

- ✓ Consistent use of SEND strategies across classrooms
- ✓ Excellent staff knowledge of children's individual needs
- ✓ Proactive liaison with external professionals and families
- ✓ A strong culture of inclusion where children with SEND are actively supported to access the full curriculum

"The team work extremely hard and are knowledgeable... It was a joy to meet the children, all of them were proud to talk about their learning."
Governor visit report, January 2025

Writing Development

Improving writing has remained a key focus, especially in Year 2. Staff have trialled grouping pupils for writing to better match support to need, with continued focus in professional development sessions. Staff have also concentrated on planning and scaffolding writing activities, particularly for children with SEND or English as an additional language.

This consistent effort is working. Over the last two years, the difference between outcomes for more vulnerable groups and the wider cohort has narrowed by **15%**, meaning children who need extra support are catching up with their peers.

During our learning walks, we saw pupils highly engaged and supported:

"Children were engrossed in their writing... the support from both teachers and TAs was excellent."
Governor monitoring, May 2025

The Hamwic Oracy Project

This year, the school has joined the Hamwic Oracy Project, which helps children become more confident speakers and listeners, a vital skill for life. We met with the leadership team this term and saw how oracy, the ability to speak and listen well, is being prioritised.

As part of the project, pupils are building confidence and skill in speaking and listening through poetry recitals, structured talk tasks, and peer collaboration. This supports vocabulary development and participation across subjects. We've seen how this is becoming a clear area of focus, and we look forward to following its development next year.

Walkthrus Teaching Approach

Teachers have continued using a professional development model called Walkthrus. This involves using consistent, research-based strategies to help improve how lessons are delivered and how children learn.

The Walkthrus approach supports:

- Clear and consistent routines at the start of lessons
- "I do, we do, you do" structure (teacher models → joint practice → pupil independence)
- Tools such as response boards, cold calling, visualisers and modelling

Governors have seen how this is helping ensure lessons are engaging, clear and inclusive across year groups. We've heard how this is improving the consistency of teaching across the school, and supporting new and experienced staff to continually develop their classroom practice.

Playtime Improvements

One focus this year has been improving breaktimes and the transition back into learning. Staff reviewed playground routines and transitions between play and learning, introducing structured activities like skipping, dance, scavenger hunts and chalking, and establishing 'quiet corridor' routines for re-entering the building.

This change has resulted in:

- ✓ Calmer transitions back into the classroom
- ✓ Fewer playground incidents spilling over into lesson time
- ✓ Pupils returning settled and ready to learn
- ✓ Improved mood and readiness to learn after break

Teachers report that, across the school day, around **10 extra minutes of learning** have been gained, time previously lost to post-play disruptions. All staff and pupils were consulted during this process, and feedback was

overwhelmingly positive, showing the value of involving the whole community in behavioural routines.

“The school looked tidy and calm. Children were focused on their learning and no time was being wasted after playtime.”

Governor visit, April 2025

We've also supported updates to the environment, with less clutter and more celebration of pupil work throughout the building. The library is getting some much-needed love, thanks to a parent volunteer looking to relaunch it as a vibrant hub for reading. If you'd like to get involved, let the office know!

Across Both Schools

Building Stronger Family Partnerships

Both schools are building stronger partnerships with families to support learning at home. This includes:

- ✓ E-library phonics logins to help with reading support
- ✓ Staff developing workshops and coffee mornings to support parents
- ✓ Online phonics tools and log-ins for home use
- ✓ Clearer communication about the support already in place

Pupil Premium champions have also been checking in with families about potential barriers to accessing clubs or enrichment activities, and the school is signposting additional support where needed. Governors support this direction and will continue to monitor how it's implemented.

Safeguarding & Health and Safety

Both schools continue to operate strong, effective safeguarding systems. We take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and will continue to monitor this closely.

Key highlights:

- ✓ Staff are well-trained and confident in knowing what to do if they have concerns
- ✓ Pupils learn how to stay safe, including specific teaching around road, rail and water safety
- ✓ Children are taught how to stay safe both offline and online
- ✓ Governors have reviewed incident logs, safeguarding audits and follow-up actions
- ✓ Any incidents are followed up promptly and appropriately
- ✓ Health and safety checks have been completed and any issues addressed quickly

Safeguarding systems remain strong and robust in both schools, with staff understanding their responsibilities and training kept up to date.

Our Shared Vision



Looking Forward

We're lucky to work with two fantastic teams of leaders and staff. It's been particularly impressive to see how staff have adapted to changes, including stepping into new roles, with skill and positivity. From behind-the-scenes data tracking to emotional support in the classroom, both schools are striving to meet children's needs in every possible way.

It's our job to make sure the schools are not only doing well, but improving in the right ways, and that all children are included in that journey.

The schools are working incredibly hard, often behind the scenes, to provide not just a **strong education, but also a nurturing, inclusive and thoughtful environment.**

We'd like to thank all the children, staff and families for your continued support this year. We'd like to thank all of you, the parents and carers, for your ongoing support. And of course, a huge thank you to the **brilliant pupils and dedicated staff** across both schools, who've worked incredibly hard.

We're proud to be part of this community and excited about what next year holds.

Wishing you all a safe and happy summer,

Your School Governors

This newsletter will be published each term to keep you updated on the work happening across both schools and how governors support and monitor progress. If you have any questions about our work or would like to know more about becoming a governor, please contact the school office.