



## Walter Halls Primary School

### Governors' Impact Statement 24-25

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, our core function is to;

- Set **the strategic direction** of the school (vision, ethos, and long-term priorities).
- Hold **the headteacher and senior leaders to account** for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.
- Oversee **the financial performance** of the school and ensure money is well spent.

Our **Key Responsibilities** are:

- Approve and monitor the **school development plan**.
- Monitor **teaching, learning, and pupil outcomes** (through reports and data, not by direct involvement in teaching).
- Ensure the school meets its **statutory duties** (safeguarding, health and safety, equality, SEND, curriculum, etc.).
- Appoint, support, and performance-manage the **headteacher** (and sometimes senior staff).
- Review and approve the **annual budget** and monitor spending.
- Engage with **parents, pupils, staff, and the wider community** to understand stakeholder views.
- Contribute to developing and upholding the school's **values, policies, and procedures**.
- Act as a "**critical friend**" - offering challenge, support, and fresh perspectives to school leadership.
- Ensure the school provides a **broad and balanced curriculum** that prepares pupils for the next stage of education or employment.

The main focus of the Walter Halls Governing Body is ensuring that our pupils make good progress in their education and we appreciate that for this to happen, the school must be well-led by a professionally competent leadership team with motivated staff who all work together within a safe, caring, supportive yet professionally challenging environment.

Our schools motto is:

***'Be your Best' - we want personal development to be at the heart of what we achieve for every child with every child being the best possible version of themselves.***

In this statement, we aim to outline some of the impact we have on the school through our role of challenge and support during the academic year 2024-25.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Governing Body of Walter Halls Primary School is made up as follows:

Co-Opted Member	Parent Governors	Staff Governors	LA Governor
James Sullivan (Chair)	Anna Hodgson	Alex Epton	Vacancy
Caroline Brookes	Lucy Robinson	Andrea Cox	
Julie Miles	Shani Melbourne		

### Context of our school:

Walter Halls is proud to serve an urban city school with an **extremely diverse catchment area** that includes an area amongst the 10% most deprived in England in the St Ann's Ward. In contrast we have a few families from the more prosperous owner-occupied area of Mapperley Ward. Factors such as: parental engagement, attendance, in-work poverty, unemployment and relative aspiration vary substantially. These factors have compounded further since the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to present complexities. **38% of Walter Halls Primary School pupils reside in LSOA which are ranked in the most deprived 10% of LSOA nationally, compared to 43% of Nottingham city pupils.** 83.0% of Walter Halls Primary School pupils reside in LSOA which are ranked in the most deprived 30% of LSOA nationally, compared to 81.8% of Nottingham city pupils. Nottingham ranks 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 317 districts in England of Income Deprivation Affecting Children (January 2025 census).

The school has seen a continued rise in the number of pupils identified with **Social Emotional Mental Health Needs (SEMH)** and school has a high level of weekly Child Protection referrals and active cases. Domestic violence, children witnessing violent crime, parental mental health concerns and parental drug or substance abuse are some of our most frequent referrals. A substantial number of our families are accessing the foodbank. School has a full-time dedicated family support worker as well as a trained Play Therapist and Child Welfare Officer. **Persistent absences** are almost entirely attributed to those children who are currently supported within the Children and Families welfare system or are experiencing homelessness or other significant homelife barriers to their education.

**Pupil premium and Pupil Premium plus** currently sits at around 35% compared to 25% nationally with 38% of children having **EAL** compared to 21% nationally with the school having 16 out of the possible 17 different **ethnic groups**. Just over 15% of children at Walter Halls are classed as having **SEND** including those on an EHC Plan. The school currently has **mobility** above the national average.

**Walter Halls is a two-form entry school** with a sprawling site comprising of 4 different buildings for our Nursery through to Year 6 children. The Nursery element offers provision to 3+year olds for morning, afternoon or 30-hour places on staggered entry points.

**During the academic year 2024-25, Walter Halls staffing continued to stabilise from several maternity and long-term absences, returning to a more stable picture, only by summer term.** During this academic year we have also seen a rise in admissions of children with **significant special needs**, matched to the national and local picture as well as **in-year admissions** from families who have arrived from other countries or from difficult backgrounds.

**Walter Halls set a deficit budget for the academic year 2025-26** and is in the process of planning its recovery. At the end of 2024-25 academic year, a FTE teaching post was removed from the staffing structure and a long-standing Deputy Head and SENDCO retired from post. This has led to new leadership structures and a new SENDCO being employed. Walter Halls is large site with many areas of the site now in disrepair and in need of investment from the local authority.

**The reputation of the school** within the local community is exceptionally strong with social media platforms and parental feedback sharing that both current and previous families highly recommend our school to others. **Pupil numbers** fluctuate with relatively high mobility and in-year admissions. In 2024-25 there were 41 in-year admissions with 33 of them arriving from different countries, the majority speaking no English. In Summer term there was a surplus of 29 places across all year groups. Reception year has 53 filled places, out of 60, for September 2025; the

drop in pupil numbers shows a similar pattern in many schools across the city. Our nursey continues to be popular with many children already on the admissions list for as far ahead as 2026/27 and is already full for 2025/26 year.

**Ofsted last inspected the school in November 2024 with many positive strengths recognised.**

Ofsted recommendations made (November 2024)	Progress made against recommendations
Sometimes, staff do not check carefully enough how well pupils have learned key vocabulary, including the language associated with British values. Pupils do not always develop the necessary communication and spoken language skills they need to express their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. The school should ensure that all staff focus closely on pupils' oracy and language development, so that pupils can communicate their learning in a meaningful way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior leaders have ensured that actions associated with this improvement are mapped out clearly in the Whole School Improvement Plan as well as in specific English and foundation curriculum action plans. These plans span from 2025-2027 with termly evaluation of impact</li><li>• Leaders continue to work closely with local English Hub to develop strategies for improvement in the teaching of Oracy and Vocabulary development. Leaders continue to prioritise Reading and Phonics skills as a foundation for these improvements</li><li>• Leaders have re-focused monitoring exercises to ensure that children's voice and opinions are captured more regularly and to support children's continual rehearsal of describing their learning to others</li><li>• Leaders have invested in Makaton training. They will launch this additional and inclusive method of communication learning to all children and staff in September 2025 with a clear plan for how this will be rolled-out over time.</li></ul>

### **Committees and Meetings**

Full Governors meetings are held 6 times a year (2 each term), along with an extra ordinary meeting which is held in April to agree and set the financial budget for the school.

We generally split our meetings into "Strategy and Performance" which is held at the start of the term, and "Financial & Operational (including personnel)" in our second meeting.

At all full governing body meetings, Governors receive a report from the Headteacher (in advance of the meeting) which covers all aspects of the running of the school. This includes quality of teaching and learning, attendance, behaviour and safety. Governors discuss this report and ask questions of the Headteacher thereby improving their knowledge and understanding of the school. It is also an opportunity to challenge the Headteacher and to question aspects of the schools performance. At these meetings, we also review the School Improvement Plan, School Financial Value Standards, Self-Evaluation Form and review/set policies with the schools leadership team.

### **Strategy & Performance**

In this meeting we are tasked with ensuring that we fully review the School Improvement Plan and scrutinise the current performance of the school against this plan with the Head Teacher and Senior Leaders. We also ensure that the school is compliant with policies.

We evaluate the school's current data, identifying trends, and use this as a base to ensure to check that we are meeting the targets on the school improvement plan. An example of this would be to review attendance and help to shape the schools plans to tackle persistent non-attendance. Over the last academic year this has been vital as all schools get back to normal post the Covid-19 pandemic (where national school attendance has still been a challenge).

We review Pupil Premium within this meeting, which is led by our Pupil Premium Governor, along with the Head Teacher.

Examples of key successes/highlights during this academic year;

- Continued support of the OPAL Provision
- School Absence monitoring and reporting
- Supported the school through Ofsted November 2024
- Worked with the Headteacher through the change of leadership structure and the retirement of the longstanding deputy headteacher

## **Financial & Operational**

In this meeting we are tasked with ensuring that all monies allocated to all areas are accounted for and spent accordingly.

The key elements of termly business are discussed and governors hold the Headteacher and school business manager to account for the financial performance of the school as well as approval of the draft and final school budgets.

Governors receive a Pupil Premium Grant Allocation/Provision and Impact report which helps us to assess whether this funding is being spent correctly supporting the highest possible outcomes for these children.

The governing body is competent in financial management.

The governors have worked with school staff to achieve The Schools Financial Value Standard accreditation which is reviewed annually, as well as keeping a safe stewardship of the school finances during a cost-of-living crisis.

The governors bring a wide range of expertise to the school, and this helps to ensure that budgets are monitored effectively and improvements are effective and continuous. The impact of the governors' role in the school ensures that the budget is managed effectively, and the school is continually moving forward. We have worked very closely with the Business Manager and the Nottingham Schools Trust on the procurement procedures and contracts we have in place. We have used the experience of a governor who has procurement experience in the public sector to deliver efficiencies for the school.

In this meeting, we also look at building maintenance, building improvement and the health and safety audit. The governors have been tirelessly working with the school, and the LA over the school roof improvements which became urgent. Governors understood the impact this had on staff, and children within that provision.

As governors we strive to ensure that our pupils and staff reside in an environment conducive with learning while also providing a feeling of security and wellbeing.

This committee also monitors staff absence, staff well-being and the school staffing structure. We recognise that as governors we need to be the critical friend to the school, but also keeping the well-being of staff at the forefront of our mind.

Additional committees linked to resources and finance are:

- SFVS Panel
- Additional meeting regarding 3 year financial planning
- Pay Committee
- Headteacher's Performance Management Committee.

## **Governor Attendance**

Our governors' meetings are well attended ensuring that governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and where the school is focussing its energy on improvement. We consider ourselves to be a pro-active not a re-active governing body with well committed members who genuinely care about the school and wanting to fulfil their role.

Outside of meetings, we aim to be proactive in school, by supporting the school at events such as the summer fair, meetings with the head students, and working with the Friends of Walter Halls.

Attendance at meetings for the 2024-2025 Academic Year												
Governor Name	Autumn 2024				Spring 2025				Summer 2025			
	FGB1 8.10	FGB2 3.12			FGB3 4.2	FGB4 25.3			FGB budget 29.4	FGB5 20.5	FGB6 15.7	
James Sullivan	Y	Y			Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	
Lucy Midgley- Robinson	Y	Y			Y	Y			A	Y	Y	
Leslie Ayoola	A	Res										
Katrina Benjamin	Y	Apols			Res							
Caroline Brookes	Apols	Y			Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	
Andrea Cox	Y	Y			A	Y			Y	Y	Apols	
Alex Epton	Y	Y			Y	Y			Y	Apols	Y	
Anna Hodgson					Y New	Y			Y	Y	Y	
Shani Melbourne	Y	Y			Y	Y			Apols	Y	Y	
Julie Miles	Y New	Y			Y	Y			Y	Apols	Apols	
Emma Beardah	Y	A			Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	

## Individual Governor Responsibilities

As well as attendance at full governing body meetings, Governors have a number of individual responsibilities. Wherever possible linked to our own skills and expertise. We refer to these as "link governors".

Whenever possible due to work commitments governors will try to visit school to discuss relevant areas. If this is not possible, virtual meetings are held with members of staff to ensure that the relevant governors are still carrying out their role. The presence of Link Governors provides an additional source of evidence upon which governing body decisions can be made. This additional evidence should enable the Governing Body to better challenge information presented by the school and also better support the school to meet its strategic objectives. The role of the 'Link Governor' is not to supervise or manage school staff, more to offer guidance, support, and a critical friendship.

The governors are made up with people from different backgrounds, and we use these variety of skills to fit people into the correct area.

## Policies

Governors review all relevant policies, during the relevant full governing body meeting on a programmed basis to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements, and that all guidance is relevant and up to date. Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list and the Local Authority recommended list.

## Training

As a Governing Body we buy into the Nottingham City council training programme, which is offered termly to all governors across Nottingham city schools. This is comprehensive, and wide ranging. New Governors are expected to attend LA training for new Governors.

Governors are encouraged to attend any training that is relevant to their role. Governors may also attend any training that is of particular interest to them.

Sometimes school staff will offer additional support or training if relevant to a governor. In the last year, Governors will also attend webinars from the national governor's association. We have all attended "schools finance in a challenging time" and "safeguarding" over the last year.

Through our work as a governing body, we have provided strategic leadership, robust accountability, and careful oversight of the school's resources. Our challenge and support for leaders have helped to strengthen teaching and learning, improve outcomes for pupils, and ensure that the school continues to provide a safe, inclusive, and ambitious environment for every child. We remain committed to working in partnership with staff, parents, and the wider community to secure the very best for our pupils, both now and in the future.