

Governors Report 2024/2025

We began the year with the very sad news that Mari Palmer, our outstanding headteacher for the past ten years, had decided to leave us.

Having spent the past 17 years as Headteacher of two small North Yorkshire schools, overseeing the early education of thousands of youngsters, Mari has accepted God's call as the Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of York. We are immensely grateful to her for all that she has done at Settrington All Saints Primary School and, as Mari leaves our school, we can look forward to a very positive future thanks in no small part to her legacy of hard work and dedication.

Much of the strategic work of the governing board was necessarily put on hold as we embarked upon the process of finding Mari's successor. We are most fortunate in having a very experienced senior staff at the school and were therefore able to confirm Mrs Caryl Shephard in the role of interim Headteacher from January 2025.

This interim appointment enabled the governing board to take the proper time to find the right permanent replacement for Mari. Recruiting a headteacher is not a quick process and we wanted to be sure that, under the guidance of the North Yorkshire Education Service, we had conducted a thorough and effective recruitment process.

After reviewing the short list of high calibre candidates who came forward, it was obvious to all the governors that there was only one candidate who matched all the selection criteria. Consequently, we were delighted to be able to offer Mrs Shephard the permanent role of Headteacher at Settrington All Saints Primary School. The Governing Board would like to formally congratulate her on her appointment and wish Caryl well for her time leading our school.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the commitment and professionalism of our extraordinary School Business Manager, Kate Towse. The role of School Business Manager is challenging, pulling together the educational team and the administration of the school. They are the glue that holds the school together and are one of the most influential people at the school. To do the role effectively, they must be organised, efficient, decisive and diplomatic and they must have a comprehensive understanding of the workings of the school.

Throughout the past year, Kate Towse has provided unfailing support for the governors, the staff, the parents and pupils and, most importantly, for Mrs Shephard as she has embarked upon her new role. Kate has always put the school first, often to the detriment of her own personal time, and has quietly demonstrated our school values day after day. I personally would like to thank Kate for everything she has done to make the past year such a success and to ensure that the 'Shephard era' has got off to such a positive start.

North Yorkshire Coast Research School

In addition to leading our school for the past 10 years, Mrs Palmer was also responsible for establishing the North Yorkshire Coast Research School at Settrington All Saints Primary School in 2017. This partnership has brought tremendous benefits to our school, including access to best teaching practice across a range of subjects and a valuable insight into evidence-based approaches to small schools and rural education.

Mari's departure in the autumn also necessitated the appointment of a new Director of the Research School. Working in partnership with the Regional Delivery Lead for the Education Endowment Foundation, the governors conducted a thorough recruitment process and we were delighted to appoint Emily Smeaton to the role in January 2025.

Emily has settled well into the role and is now working closely with Caryl Shephard to build on the excellent foundations established by Mari and her team. The governors look forward to seeing their exciting plans translate into a positive reality for the Research School and for Settrington All Saints Primary School over the coming years.

Governing Board Business

The core functions of our governing board are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding the executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of the staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

4. Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

In addition to the recruitment processes outlined above, the governing board also exists to make sure that the school is well run and governors are accountable for the appropriate and responsible allocation of the school budget.

The governors have reviewed and approved all statutory policies and familiarised themselves with other school policies throughout the year. The governing body has also approved the budget and monitored expenditure against budget. We are delighted that, with the appointment of Emily Smeaton, the school will once again benefit from Research School funds and from the knowledge and expertise that this association brings.

At the start of this academic year, our Governing Board consisted of:

Sue Blagden – Chair, Safeguarding Governor
Helen Patterson – Vice Chair, Chair of FOCAS
Helen Smith – SEND Link Governor, Chair of Pupil Progress Committee
Cate Turner – Ex-officio Foundation Governor
Kelly Reppold – Chair of Resources Committee, Research School Link Governor (resigned in December 2024)
Charles Mackain-Bremner – Parent Governor, Health & Safety Link governor
Louise Hampson – Foundation Governor
Mari Palmer – Headteacher (resigned in December 2024)
Caryl Shepard – Staff Governor
Laura Waites – Clerk to the Governors

With the appointment of Caryl Shephard as interim Headteacher in January 2025, we welcomed Rebecca England to the board as our new staff governor. Beckie is the current Year 3 teacher and has a particular interest in science. In addition to representing the staff body at the governing board, she serves as a member of the Pupil Progress Committee.

The future

As this year of change comes to an end, the school starts a new chapter under the able leadership of Caryl Shephard. She has stepped into the role of Headteacher seamlessly and the school is already starting to benefit tremendously from her influence. I am confident that, in building on Mari's legacy, Caryl will bring her own inimitable personality and undoubted skills to

bear in taking the school forward and achieving even greater success than it already enjoys.

Christian values shine through everything we do. Everyone in our school should be happy, fulfilled and valued as an individual. Everyone in our community should thrive in a safe environment, challenged and stimulated to achieve their very best.

This is a nurturing school where everyone matters.

Sue Blagden
Chair of Governors
July 2025.