

# GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER



February 2026

Hello to all in our Federation Community!

As we enter Spring Term 2, the governing board would like to reflect on some of the recent highlights and achievements that have been made throughout our schools, keep you informed on current governance structure, make you aware of the work we have undertaken as governors in collaboration with our schools' leadership team and our priorities going forward.

We hope you find the following information a positive way to keep our parental community engaged and informed regarding the vital work towards our schools' strategic vision.



# Current Governors

Mr R Cole	Chair/LA Governor
Mr M Timings	Co Chair / Foundation Governor
Mrs S Foston	Executive Headteacher
Mrs J King	Vice Chair/Cowley Trust Foundation Governor
Rev M Williams	Cowley Trust Foundation Governor
Rev R Rock	Foundation Governor
Mr D Spoons	Foundation Governor
Dr S Spoons	Foundation Governor
Mrs J Lambert	Foundation Governor
Mr T Keast	Foundation Governor
Mr S Walsh	Foundation Governor
Mr S Creasey	Foundation Governor
Miss L Craigie	Staff Governor
Mrs R Chapman	Parent Governor

# Governor Roles and Responsibilities

School governors are responsible for overseeing strategic school management. Governors work together to carry out their core functions:

- ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

Governors must also ensure that the Governing Body complies with all legal and statutory requirements.

Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives to the governing board and schools benefit greatly from working with skilled volunteers, for example anyone with experience of finance, law, premises management or human resources.

Governors must work in accordance with and uphold The Nolan Principles, or Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership, ensuring decisions are made solely in the public interest.

# Governor Monitoring

Background: - Governor monitoring involves strategically overseeing school performance, policies, and finances to hold leaders accountable, rather than managing day-to-day operations. Key methods include conducting focused, pre-arranged school visits (e.g., learning walks), reviewing data on pupil progress and attendance, and checking that statutory obligations like safeguarding are met (Source The Key for Governors).

The Governors have continued to carry out their monitoring duties with recent visits focused on Safeguarding, RE, Maths, Health & Safety, Pupil Engagement & Pupil Wellbeing. Through this we have identified that:

- Curriculum delivery remains consistent across both schools, due to the collaborative working practices between leaders and staff taking place across both settings.
- Standards and expectations remain high.
- Areas of strengths are known, and areas of focus continue to be prioritised.
- Health and Safety audits have been completed across both sites, in line with standardised checks.
- Children feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they ever have any concerns.
- Children are enjoying their lessons, some work can seem challenging at times, showing the continued ambitious curriculum offering and focus on pupil progression and building further knowledge.
- Pupil engagement is strong. It is heart warming to witness first hand just how much they are enjoying the content of their learning and the manner in which it is being delivered.
- Children are enjoying all of the extra curricular activities and enrichment opportunities they are offered, with particular focus from themselves being on Roots to Food, music content, Young Voices, sporting activities, choir, Chess Clubs, Board Games Club, swimming lessons, Bikeability, PGL, Alymerton Residential and the introduction of the '10 Incredible Experiences' everyone should experience before leaving primary school, to name a few.
- When asked what more we can do to make their school lives even better than it is now, we were asked if we could get 'a School Horse' or have a school trip to the Amazon Rainforest 😊

Although these suggestions may not be obtainable (for many reasons!), we will do our utmost to provide a reasonable compromise that the children will be happy with!!!

# Achievements



After nearly 4 years in the making and following rigorous external assessment, we are beyond proud that Donington Cowley has been awarded The Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM): Inclusive School Award. This national award recognises the commitment of Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School and the Horizon Schools Federation to embedding inclusive practice at the heart of everything we do. This achievement reflects the passionate drive and ambition of all stakeholders towards our shared vision. Through this we ensure that every child has opportunity to thrive and ‘become the best versions of themselves’ living out our shared values. There are very few primary schools in Lincolnshire that have achieved such a prestigious award. Please see link to the IQM website for more information. <https://igmaward.com/>. It is now our ambition to use the learning and experiences taken from the assessment process and the work undertaken over the past four years to strive to gain the same accolade at St Gilbert’s. Achieving this would truly set us apart as a Federation in holding prestigious award at both settings.

We continue our engagement with the English Hub to increase the profile of reading across our schools through working towards the Lincolnshire Reading Pledge. This award recognises a dedicated, school-wide commitment to fostering a love of reading. It focuses on establishing a strong, inclusive culture where all children, regardless of background or ability, become confident, enthusiastic readers. Last term St Gilbert’s was awarded the Lincolnshire Reading Pledge Bronze Award. This achievement recognised our school’s achievement during the first year of working towards this accreditation. Having previously achieved Silver Award, Donington now continues to work towards achieving Gold Award.

Last year, our increased sports profile at St Gilbert’s was recognised as we were awarded the Gold Sports Mark. The School Games Mark is a government-led award facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust that recognises schools for outstanding dedication to physical education, competition, and school sport. It signifies a high level of engagement, providing diverse sporting opportunities, and promoting student wellbeing. Building upon previous successes, Donington went on to achieve the highest award of Platinum!! We will continue to build upon our sports offer across both schools, with Governor oversight of sports funding, ensuring opportunities for continued development.

As an outward facing federation, we are proud to have been recognised for Professional Generosity by Lincolnshire Local Authority. As a locality representative, our Executive Headteacher, is involved in strategic planning with the LA, working alongside other headteachers and sector professionals to support educational development at a wider level.

Governors are particularly proud of the achievements of both schools. External verification supports our own school evaluation, verifying judgements and solidifying our ambition of offering opportunities for all of our children to be the best versions of themselves through a broad and ambitious curriculum and a wealth of enrichment opportunities. In celebrating our successes, this also raises the profile of our schools for future enrolment, and confirms that strategic planning and use of available funding streams are effectively utilised to maximise impact for the benefit of all of our children.

## Governor Welcome

After several years of not having a local Vicar in the Pointon area, I'm sure everyone locally is thrilled to welcome Reverend Rebecca Rock as the recently appointed Priest in Charge.

Within our Federation Instrument of Governance there are always two spaces left available for the local Priests, one to represent the community of Donington, and the other to represent the community of Pointon.

We are delighted to have now welcomed Reverend Rebecca on to the Governing Body. We are sure that alongside her many other roles in the community she will play a pivotal role in building and maintaining community links between the School and all stakeholders, while maintaining focus on Pointon's Church of England status and SIAMS objectives. We are sure you will all join us in wishing her all the best going forward with her multiple roles within our community.

## Governor Vacancy

We have recently had to say a sad farewell to Laura Powell from her position as a Parent Governor. Laura has been on the Governing Body for several years, and her input has been invaluable. Laura has greatly enjoyed her time as a Governor, however increasing family and work commitments have led to her decision to step down. We would like to pass on our sincere thanks to Laura for giving up her spare time in the past to be a part of our combined journey with our schools. With Laura's departure that leaves the Governing Body with a vacancy for a Parent Governor. Communications have recently gone out for applications to be made for any parent across both schools that would like to join us as a Governor.

**Governor role** - Generally, school governors work as a board to provide strategic leadership, acting as "critical friends" to senior leaders to ensure high-quality education, financial efficiency, and proper safeguarding. Their core roles include setting the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction, holding the Headteacher accountable for educational performance, and overseeing the budget. Governors are not responsible day-to-day school management. A Parent Governor has all the same duties and responsibilities as any other Governor but is elected by other parents to provide a parental perspective on strategic decisions. Please note that the appointment of the Parent Governor is solely controlled by the parents of the schools, across both settings.

If you feel you would like to know more about this role, please do read the information which has been shared as part of the recruitment process and contact our Clerk to Governors or Executive Headteacher should you have any further questions.

## Additional Information

Governors continue to carry out the necessary and ongoing training to fulfil their roles effectively, including membership to the National Governance Association. We also have a training session booked in March with the Diocese of Lincoln Board of Education to focus on Collective Worship.

Budget setting will be taking place soon, working with our schools Bursar and Lincolnshire County Council's Finance Team to ensure robust financial planning in both schools, including a comprehensive Medium Term Plan, as is statutory regulation for schools and Governing Boards.

We continue to invest heavily in our staff CPD (Continued Professional Development) across our schools. Many staff members have completed or are engaged in NPQs (National Professional Qualification). NPQs are a suite of DfE-accredited qualifications designed for teachers and school leaders in England to develop expertise in specialist and leadership roles aimed at improving school outcomes. Presently staff are completing, or have completed, NPQs in Leading Literacy, Primary Mathematics, Early Years, SEND and Behaviour and Culture as well as National Qualifications in Senior Leadership and Headship.

Our Safeguarding Team continues to develop their current knowledge and expertise, working with Lincolnshire Local Authority to access training and support and disseminating information and updates as appropriate with staff and governors.

As a Governing Body we strongly believe in staff development and are actively investing in and encouraging enhanced training and qualifications for our team. We believe that this not only strengthens the depth of experience and knowledge for the benefit of our schools but also acts as personal and professional growth to all members of our Federation team.

We hope this information has been useful and we look forward to continuing our work as a Governing Body, working with all stakeholders to ensure that our schools continue to flourish for the good of all.

*Matt Timings & Rob Cole*

(On behalf of The Governors of Horizon Schools Federation)