Academic Year 2025/26

Introduction and Context

Hethersett VC Primary School is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school serving children aged 4 to 11 years. The governing board works in partnership with school leaders to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education within a caring, inclusive and Christian environment.

During 2025/26 the governing board continued to fulfil its three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding school leaders to account for educational performance and the wellbeing of pupils and staff.
- Overseeing financial performance and ensuring resources are used effectively and sustainably.

This statement summarises the work undertaken by governors during the academic year and the impact of governance on school improvement and statutory compliance.

Governance Structure and Membership

The governing board operated in accordance with its agreed constitution and terms of reference throughout the year. Governors reviewed governance arrangements, link governor responsibilities and monitoring processes to ensure governance activity remained focused on the School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP).

During the year the board maintained designated responsibilities for safeguarding, SEND, finance, health and safety and other key statutory areas. Governors also reviewed succession planning and board vacancies. At the end of the academic year there remained one Foundation Governor vacancy and one Co-opted Governor vacancy. Governors discussed recruitment opportunities and future board development needs.

The governing board continued to strengthen links between governors and school priorities through a revised monitoring framework designed to align governor visits and challenge activity with school improvement priorities.

Hethersett VC Primary School Annual Governance Statement

Governance Effectiveness

The governing board met regularly throughout the year and received detailed reports from the Headteacher, link governors and external partners.

Governors routinely reviewed progress against the School Improvement and Development Plan and challenged leaders about educational outcomes, staffing, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and financial performance. Questions and challenge from governors focused on areas including:

- The impact of curriculum developments.
- The effectiveness of writing improvements.
- Pupil outcomes and attainment trends.
- SEND provision and capacity.
- Staffing deployment and recruitment.
- Attendance and behaviour.

The governing board reviewed governor monitoring arrangements and agreed improvements to support greater governor engagement with school visits and monitoring activities. Governors also considered the outcomes of governance audits and board effectiveness processes as part of ongoing self-evaluation and improvement.

Action logs were reviewed at each meeting to ensure agreed actions were completed and that governance remained focused on strategic priorities.

As part of Norfolk County Council's Local Authority Maintained (LAM) schools governance quality assurance programme, the governing board participated in a governance review at its final Full Governing Board meeting of the academic year. The review considered the effectiveness of governance arrangements, strategic oversight, challenge and support, statutory compliance, and board development.

The review recognised the governing board’s strong understanding of its strategic role, positive working relationships and commitment to continuous improvement. It highlighted effective strategic oversight, constructive challenge and support for school leaders, giving governance an overall rating of **Good**. Areas for further development included strengthening governor training and induction, maintaining a strategic focus in discussions, clarifying governance roles and continuing to improve monitoring, compliance and transparency.

Educational Performance and School Improvement

Governors maintained a strong focus on educational outcomes throughout the year.

The board received regular updates on progress against the School Improvement and Development Plan, including priorities relating to:

- Culture and vision.

- Pupil advocacy and leadership.
- Writing and curriculum development.
- Teaching and learning.
- School self-evaluation and monitoring.

Governors considered pupil performance information across the school. Particular strengths highlighted during the year included:

- Early Years outcomes above national averages.
- Strong mathematics outcomes.
- Strong reading performance.
- Positive multiplication check outcomes.
- Continued development of teaching and learning approaches.

Governors received information regarding writing outcomes and supported the introduction of a revised writing curriculum approach. Leaders were challenged on how improvements would be measured and how the changes would impact pupil outcomes.

The board also received reports from the school's School Improvement Partner and considered evidence from monitoring activities to support its evaluation of school performance and improvement planning.

Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare

Safeguarding remained a standing item on governing board agendas throughout the year.

Governors scrutinised safeguarding arrangements through:

- Regular safeguarding reports.
- Safeguarding governor monitoring activity.
- Parent safeguarding surveys.
- Pupil safeguarding surveys and pupil voice evidence.
- Safeguarding self-evaluation processes.

The board received assurance that safeguarding remained effective and monitored progress against identified safeguarding actions. Governors also reviewed outcomes from wellbeing and safeguarding questionnaires and considered how engagement with parents could be further strengthened.

SEND provision remained an important area of focus. Governors considered monitoring reports, SEND capacity challenges and plans to develop Enhanced Support Provision (ESP) arrangements to support pupils with increasingly complex needs.

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Financial Oversight and Value for Money

The governing board maintained robust oversight of the school's finances.

Governors reviewed budget monitoring reports, budget revisions, financial health information and Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) requirements throughout the year. The board received assurance that financial planning remained sustainable and that resources continued to be targeted towards educational priorities.

At the final meeting of the year governors reviewed Budget Revision 1 and approved its submission. The board considered future funding changes, staffing implications and risks affecting school budgets over the coming years.

Governors also monitored themed audit findings, including whistleblowing and finance-related assurance activity, and ensured appropriate actions were implemented where recommendations had been made.

Compliance and Statutory Duties

During the year governors reviewed and approved a range of statutory and non-statutory policies.

These included consideration of:

- Safeguarding arrangements.
- Behaviour policy updates.
- Admissions arrangements.
- Complaints procedures.
- Artificial Intelligence policy.
- Equality-related matters.
- Religious Education and collective worship requirements.

Governors also monitored:

- Health and safety.
- Data protection and cyber security.
- Whistleblowing procedures.
- Attendance.
- SEND compliance.
- Training and Development

The governing board remained committed to continuous professional development.

Governors accessed a broad range of training opportunities covering:

- Safeguarding.
- SEND.
- Finance.
- Monitoring practice.

- SIAMS and church school governance.
- Attendance.
- Pupil premium.
- Leadership and performance management.

Governors were encouraged to utilise training opportunities provided by Norfolk County Council, VNET and the Diocese of Norwich. The board also promoted attendance at whole-school safeguarding training to ensure governors remained up to date with current statutory requirements.

Strategic Priorities for 2026/27

The governing board will continue to focus on:

- Monitoring progress against the School Improvement and Development Plan.
- Supporting the further development of writing across the curriculum.
- Monitoring educational outcomes, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Strengthening SEND provision and capacity.
- Supporting the development of Enhanced Support Provision.
- Monitoring attendance and behaviour.
- Strengthening governor monitoring activity and evidence gathering.
- Maintaining high standards of safeguarding and statutory compliance.
- Ensuring continued financial sustainability.

Conclusion

The governing board would like to thank pupils, parents, carers, staff and the wider school community for their continued support during 2025/26.

Governors remain committed to providing effective strategic leadership, constructive challenge and strong support for school leaders in order to ensure that Hethersett VC Primary School continues to flourish and provide the highest possible standards of education and care for all pupils.