



Governing Body Newsletter

Forest Of Dean Community Schools Federation



July 2026

The purpose of this newsletter is to give an overview of the work of the governing body over the last year and what it currently sees as the key challenges for the year ahead.

Dear Parents and Carers,

As another successful year comes to an end, the Governors of the Forest of Dean Community Schools Federation would like to thank Mrs Burke and all staff for their continued hard work, dedication and commitment to providing the best possible opportunities for every child across our two schools. This has been the third year of our two schools federating and both schools continue to find new ways to collaborate and go from strength to strength.

Responsibilities: Our Governing Body consists of a group of volunteers from staff, parents and the local community. We come from a variety of backgrounds; some from education and teaching, while others bring skills from finance, human resources, IT and Safeguarding.

As Governors, we work hard with the school leaders to ensure the education at both our schools is of the highest standard possible. Our role is to hold the Executive Headteacher to account for the performance of each school. We carry out our role through: attending full governing body and committee meetings, carrying out monitoring visits, triangulating evidence, meeting with staff, pupils and parents and the Local Authority.

The School Budget: The Resources Committee has continued to focus carefully on the school budget for 2026/27. The level of funding for schools continues to be challenging when set against rising costs and changing pupil numbers locally and nationally. Despite this, our Federation has worked hard to keep both schools running to budget and governors are pleased that a balanced budget has again been set for the next financial year. Due to the popularity of both schools, pupil numbers remain strong, with parents continuing to appeal for places.

Staff Development: Investing in staff remains a key priority across our Federation. This year marks the completion of two successful years as part of the Education Endowment Foundation's Writing Journey Pilot. Staff report increased confidence in delivering consistent, high-quality writing lessons, helping children to write less, but better while developing a deeper understanding of the writing process. We have also continued our successful work with the Maths Hub and are delighted to be entering a third year of partnership ensuring that mathematics continues to go from strength to strength across both schools.

Welfare of Children and Staff

We continue to receive positive feedback on the behaviour of our children both within our schools and during visits. We are proud that both of our schools continue to be recognised for the strength of their provision in this area. It is always a delight when governors visit our schools and see how well behaved our pupils are.

Wider Curriculum:

Our Federation continues to offer a wide range of activities that enrich learning and provide new experiences. Highlights this year have included joint visits, local trips and our London Residential. Children have enjoyed music, performances, Forest School, and a variety of sporting activities and competitions. The bike project has helped build cycling skills and confidence, while our successful 'Future Me Day' encouraged children to think about their aspirations and future careers.



Recognition: Over the year, both schools have kept or re-gained Further Awards:

- **NEW** Heathy School Award 2026-2028 Both
- Mental Health Award 2025 - 2027 Yorkley
- **NEW** Music of Recognition Award 2026 Both
- **NEW:** School Games - Platinum Both
- **NEW** Young Carers Award 2026-2028 Both
- Bronze REaction Award 2025 - 2027 Parkend
- Silver Reaction Award 2025 - 2027 Yorkley
- The Virtual Schools Award 2025-2026 Both
- Gold for Arts Mark 2025 - 2027 Parkend
- **NEW** GAPH Oracy winner – 2026 Yorkley
- **NEW** Local History Awards – Gold Both
- **NEW** Picture News Gold Impact Award Yorkley



Feedback: Our Federation places great importance on working in partnership with our families and we value your feedback. Thank you to those of you who took time to fill out our parent view questionnaire in May. The responses highlighted the many things we are getting right as well as a few areas for improvement which are already being acted on including through the launch of our new Schools app to streamline our communications.

Staff Management: Staff wellbeing remains high on our agenda, as we passionately believe that staff wellbeing directly affects the progress and achievement of our pupils. The Federation continues to employ staff on both full and part-time contracts. Throughout the year the Governing Body ensures the school makes good use of its staff, that staff are supported, and that everyone understands what is expected of them and the priorities of the school. More staff will continue to work across both schools to ensure children receive similar opportunities and support through targeted interventions. To support workload, staff continue to have joint staff meetings, INSET days and shared training. We kindly remind parents that abuse towards or harassment of any of our staff or other parents will not be tolerated, either verbally, in person or online.

Governor Visits: Throughout the year, individual Governors have made monitoring visits with subject leaders and visited lessons to see how the school ensures the curriculum is delivered effectively. Throughout the year all teachers across both schools were met with at least once whereby discussions were linked to pupils' voice, learning, data, subject knowledge, achievements and wellbeing.

Curriculum and Standards: Governors on the Curriculum and Standards Committee meet to review pupil progress across the school. They contribute to the two-year School Development Plan, examine data across subjects and challenge the reasoning and judgements made. They have reviewed progress for pupils throughout the school, including groups of children as they move through the school and differences in progress between groups, including children with particular educational needs.

Congratulations to all the children who completed statutory assessments this year. Early Years, phonics and Year 6 outcomes remain a key focus for governors, alongside the continued drive to enhance foundation subjects. Where training or parent sessions are offered, we encourage parents and carers to attend so that home and school can work together to raise standards further.

Governors' Awards: Linked to our behaviour expectations, any child who receives 15 or more 'green slips' over the year has their name put forward to Governors Awards. One child from each year is then voted our winner (At this stage we don't see names, just read complementary paragraphs about their learning, attitudes and contributions over the school year). This year Dr Alan Castle and Mrs Vicki Cocking presented the awards:



The Governing body has three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of Vision, Ethos and Strategic direction for each school.
- Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Who are we?

Executive Head Teacher: Mrs K.Burke, Staff Governor: Mrs T.Wood

Chair of Governors: Mr Robert Rawlings Vice Chair: Miss Sophie Thorne

Parent Governors: Mrs Kerry Madrick (Yorkley) & Mrs Jemma Halford (Parkend)

Co-opted Governors: Dr Alan Castle, Mr Jon Meager, Miss Gemma Screen, Mr David Green, Mrs Vicki Cocking
Mrs Frances Day – Clerk to Governors.