

## Whitworth Community High School

### Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025

The Governing Board at Whitworth Community High School has continued to play a crucial role throughout this year, providing strategic leadership and accountability to support the school in its mission to provide the highest standards of education and care for its students and are confident in their ability to lead Whitworth High School through its next chapter of development and success.

#### **Role of the Governing Board**

The role of the Governing Board in a Local Authority maintained school is to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement'.

The board also has a legal responsibility to promote pupil wellbeing.

It does this by: Setting Strategic Direction

- Ensuring clarity of vision and ethos
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Making sure statutory duties are met. Creating Robust Accountability
- Accountability for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety
- Strengthening and supporting school leadership
- Performance managing the Headteacher
- Contributing to school self-evaluation. Ensuring Financial Probity
- Making sure the school's money is well spent
- Monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium grant and other resources to overcome barriers to learning.

#### **Governance Arrangements**

Headteacher 1

Governors 12 (Co-Opted)

Local Authority 1

Parent governors 2 (elected)

Staff governors 1 (elected)

Associate Members: 0

### **Eco-Friendly Building and Community Impact**

One of the most significant achievements this year has been the transition into our brand-new, eco-friendly school building, part of the Government's School Rebuilding Programme Capital Project. This state-of-the-art facility reflects our commitment to sustainability and provides students and staff with a modern, inspiring environment designed to support high-quality teaching and learning. The new building strengthens our connection to the wider community, creating opportunities for local groups and families to engage with the school and its resources.

### **Wellbeing Focus**

The Governing Board remains deeply committed to the wellbeing of staff and students. Over the past year, the Headteacher, SLT, and staff have worked tirelessly to provide a safe, nurturing environment where mental health and emotional resilience are prioritized. We have also introduced measures to support the wellbeing of all staff, recognizing their invaluable contribution to the success of the school.

### **Governance and School Development**

The Governing Board has maintained close collaboration with the Headteacher and SLT, meeting regularly to monitor key areas of school performance, including safeguarding, the implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and financial management. The SIP has been updated to reflect the changing needs of the school, with clearly defined priorities, actions, and success criteria.

Governors have challenged the school leadership team to ensure that robust systems are in place for monitoring progress against key targets and regular reviews of school policies ensure that they remain fit for purpose and aligned with the school's overarching vision of "Climbing Higher."

### **Future Succession Plans**

Looking ahead, the Governing Board will focus on several priorities, succession planning for leadership roles, and further embedding the school's commitment to sustainability and community engagement. We remain dedicated to ensuring that the right people, with the right skills, are in place to support and challenge the leadership team effectively.

### **Acknowledgment and Gratitude**

On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to express our gratitude to our new Headteacher, staff, students, and parents for their hard work and resilience during a year of significant change. Together, we have navigated challenges, embraced new opportunities, and strengthened our school's position as a cornerstone of our local community.

The Governing Board looks forward to another year of continuous improvement, striving to achieve the best outcomes for all students while staying true to our vision and values.

## **Leadership, Management and Resources Committee**

### **(Finance, Staffing, Premises, Health & Safety)**

- Members of the Committee have a range of experience both in Local Government and Private Sector organisations of budget setting and monitoring, and in human resources.
- Financial management, budget-setting and monitoring is carried out including ensuring effective and appropriate use of Pupil Premium.
- Financial reports are presented termly to the Committee, scrutinised by governors, and reported to the Full Governing Board in order that appropriate actions may be determined to secure the immediate and longer-term financial viability of the school.
- Staff recruitment, performance and pay reviews are carried out taking into consideration financial implications on school budget.
- Assessment is undertaken to ensure that we are meeting the Schools' Financial Value Standard. Governors continue to use available data to compare expenditure with other similar schools to highlight any areas to be addressed where expenditure is higher than might be expected.
- Health and Safety monitoring of the school premises is regularly carried out and reported to governors, with results providing input into programming of timely and appropriate minor maintenance.
- Building improvements. Reports are received and reviewed concerning ongoing repair and upgrades to fabric and resources within the school to ensure best value for money and efficient use of limited financial resource. There are also updates on the outstanding building issues that we have with the building contractor for the new school.

### **Impact**

The continued sound financial planning of school staff and robust monitoring of the school's financial plans has ensured that the school's budget remains in a relatively healthy position. Priorities are identified and appropriate levels of funding applied.

## **Quality of Education**

### **(incorporating curriculum intent/implementation/impact and teaching, learning and assessment)**

The work of the committee is underpinned by the following key purposes

- Monitoring and evaluation of the standards and achievement of the school and quality of education provided, whilst ensuring that all students have equal opportunities.
- Advise the Governing Board on matters concerning assessment and improvement
- Review, monitor and evaluate the curriculum offer.
- Recommend for approval to the full Governing Board the School Self-evaluation record, and School Improvement Plan.

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the improvement plans which relate to the committee's strategies.
- Contribute to reviews of the: Curriculum, Assessment and the Teaching and Learning protocol to ensure that these policies are operating effectively.
- To liaise with the Leadership, Management and Resources committee on the relative funding priorities necessary to deliver the curriculum.
- Ask challenging questions to ensure that the school is progressing towards identified priorities and targets.

**This academic year the committee has worked on the following priorities.**

1. Creating consistency in the classroom by the use of "Silent Starts" to ensure that pupils are ready to learn, therefore learning time is maximised leading to excellent outcomes for students.
2. Supporting and developing a reading culture whereby students begin to read for pleasure which, in turn, will lead to progress.
3. Focus on marking and giving more specific feedback to students to enable them to make more progress.
4. Focus on retrieval practice techniques to learn and remember.

### **Impact**

The governors have received regular updates of student performance through detailed analysis of data. Strategies to improve student learning have been monitored to ensure that improvements are made across school and the governing body have been pleased to see targets met. We will continue to ensure the continuous support for both staff and students in school.

### **Behaviour, Attitudes, and Personal Development**

#### **Pupil Welfare and Discipline**

The remit of this committee encompasses all matters concerning student behaviour, development, and wellbeing, with a focus on student welfare, safeguarding, and mental health. The committee supports the leadership team through regular reviews of key policies, including the Behaviour for Learning Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and Home/School Agreement.

The committee gains insights into student experiences to address daily challenges and long-term priorities. Governors play a proactive role in strategic decision-making, policy monitoring, and participating in Behaviour and Attendance Panels.

## **SEND and Pupil Premium**

The Governing Board prioritises the provision and monitoring of support for SEND students and those eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

A designated SEND governor collaborates with the SENDCo to ensure awareness of the diverse needs of the school community.

The proportion of SEND students continues to rise, while provision from external services becomes harder to access. Although not directly a factor of this reporting period, it was known that there would be about 12 students with EHCPs joining in year 7. This did increase the workload on the SEND department, due to making plans to properly accommodate this unprecedented number of EHCP students.

### **Pupil Premium**

The Pupil Premium governor regularly reviews funding allocation and deployment, ensuring support for eligible students. The inclusive curriculum and flexible approach enable vulnerable students, including those with complex SEND and Pupil Premium needs, to engage fully and achieve alongside peers.

### **Overall Impact**

Governors' engagement with SEND and Pupil Premium staff provides a balanced perspective on the school's inclusive practices. High levels of oversight and collaboration ensure all students, regardless of need or background, have the opportunity to thrive.

## **Attendance and Behaviour**

Whole school attendance was 95.5%, an increase of 0.5% above the 2023/2024 academic year. Whitworth Community High School is in the top 10% for attendance nationally, reflecting the ethos of the school, and the dedication of the staff.

Attendance for Pupil Premium students was 93.79%, with staff seeking to intervene in the cases of PP students with the lowest attendance.

The governing body are very pleased with the targets that have been set, and staff continue to go the extra mile to support and encourage the best outcomes for all students at the school.

Governors work closely with the pastoral team to address attendance and behavioural concerns, holding meetings with parents, carers, and students to resolve issues and set clear expectations.

- Exclusion percentages remain below local and national averages, reflecting the school's effective pastoral approach.
- Attendance data continues to exceed national figures across all year groups, positioning the school in the top 10% nationally.

"Our school's above-national attendance figures demonstrate how students value their education, supported by the pastoral and attendance teams."

The committee's strategic oversight fosters a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment. Through reinforcement of positive behaviour rewards, the school nurtures a culture of achievement and respect.

## **Future Plans for Continuous Improvement**

### **Governor Recruitment**

The Governing Board is continually looking at succession planning to ensure that recruiting any new governor will continue to ensure that the right people are round the table with the right skill set. The Board has a nomination committee and the committee considers governor applications and then makes a recommendation to the full Governing Board for consideration. Parent governors are elected by parents whenever a vacancy arises. Similarly, the staff governor is elected by staff at the end of the previous incumbent's term of office.

### **Succession Planning**

The Governing Board is proactive in succession planning with all committees having a chair and vice chair. Governors prioritise training and as a result the governing board have numerous governors trained in link areas i.e. safeguarding and child protection, finance, data, curriculum, recruitment, PREVENT. This ensures adequate governor knowledge with succession planning at the forefront.

### **Monitoring**

Continue to support, nurture and challenge the new headteacher. Continue to monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making to ensure best value for money and the best outcomes for every student in our mission of 'Climbing Higher.'

### **Governance Development and Impact**

During this academic year, the Governing Board has undertaken some significant development to ensure we strengthen the strategic planning and align with the Ofsted framework. A skills matrix was used effectively to re-establish and refine the role of Link Governors, ensuring that individual governors' expertise is matched closely to key school priorities. This will help to focus link visits, improve challenge, and enable clearer lines of accountability, a key development in the effectiveness of WCHS governance. While the year began with three committees, governors trialled the amalgamation of committees to form both a Curriculum and a Standards Sub-Committee. This change was implemented to ensure a wider group of governors are fully informed about curriculum performance, standards, and inclusion, and to reduce duplication and crossover of agenda items such as SEND and behaviour. The trial has strengthened governors' understanding of school improvement priorities and improved the quality of the strategic discussion and challenge ahead of the full implementation and to ensure we remain in line with the Ofsted framework.

Agreed by Governing Board: TBC

Signed by Chair of Governors: