

Elsworth C of E Primary School

Governors Newsletter



December 2025



New Changing Rooms!



Welcome to our Newsletter!

Letter from the Chair

As we approach the end of another busy term at Elsworth C of E Primary School and my first as Chair of Governors, I would like to thank every member of our school community – pupils, staff, families and governors alike, for all your hard work. It has been wonderful to witness the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment shown by all throughout the term. There have been many impressive events in school including Harvest Festival, our Remembrance Service and nativity play enjoyed by so many.

We say a fond farewell to Mrs Thomas and thank her for her hard work and support in school for over twenty years and wish her and Mrs McCarthy, who is also leaving for pastures new, well for the future. We also welcome our four new governors.

May you all have an enjoyable and peaceful Christmas holiday and we look forward to everyone returning for an exciting 2026.

With best wishes,

Dinah Papworth

Chair of Governors

"Pupils are proud to attend this school. They speak positively about being part of a small school where everyone is known, accepted and cared for." Ofsted 2023

A huge well done to all our staff and pupils for everything you have achieved this year. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas break.

Role of Governors

Governance is a key part of a successful school. The school governing body has four core functions.

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

What have the Governors been doing to improve the School this term?

- Approving and monitoring the School Development Plan (SDP) for 2025/26 to ensure all aspects of learning and wellbeing are of the highest quality in Elsworth C of E Primary School. Key elements of SDP this year include Oracy, handwriting, mental health and RE. We have been finalising our Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which forms part of the SIAMS Church of England inspection, and we will continue to monitor and evaluate this. Governors specifically check that our Vision is being delivered through our monitoring visits.
- Focusing on ensuring and being part of a culture of safeguarding. We have a safeguarding lead governor who regularly checks the school's central record to make sure safeguarding is being monitored effectively. We have new guidance on safeguarding this year that is currently being implemented and monitored by Governors.
- Ensuring high standards in Health and Safety including going over risk assessments and working with the school Health and Safety pupil leads. A new boiler was installed over the summer holidays along with new fire doors and the eagerly awaited new cloakrooms, with many thanks again to the PTA for their fundraising.
- Reviewing key policies including our Attendance policy and Complaints policy to ensure best practice and that statutory obligations are met. Governors ensure that policies are robust and are followed in school to improve outcomes.
- The Learning and Standards committee monitors learning outcome data. The committee reviewed the pupil academic data to look at any trends or areas of concern. Some cohorts get flagged as vulnerable for example due to Covid impact and are carefully monitored with governors informed on interventions the school is planning. One cohort we have been monitoring for several years is now achieving highly and no longer in the vulnerable category. Governors wish to thank staff for their hard work in this area. The committee has received updates on the Oracy strategy and have standing items around staff and pupil wellbeing and the breadth of curriculum as we hold these equally important for children's development as well as safeguarding. This includes outdoor learning, which as we now have a qualified staff member, is returning to being Forest School and also Den provision.
- The Finance and Health and Safety Committee has been monitoring the school's budget ensuring value for money and money spent to maximum benefit for our children including reviewing Service Level Agreements and staffing levels. The committee has also reviewed policies including the Fire Evacuation policy and the Accessibility Policy.
- Governors also support the school's Eco Council and Spirituality Day, see the reports by Clair Harrison and Rev.Matt Phillips for details and with thanks to both of them for volunteering their time in school.

"Governors know the school well and provide appropriate support and challenge. They carry out their role effectively." Ofsted 2023

Eco Council

I have been a member of the Eco-Council at our school for the last 4 years and I have seen it develop into something wonderful! The children are so enthusiastic and passionate about helping their environment and saving the world!

This year we are concentrating on the topics of Energy, Water and Global Citizenship. Watch out for our information on how to save water, how to join in with Earth Hour and how to take part in our 1.5 mile challenge! More information next term!

Clair Harrison
Governor

Spirituality Day

As both a Foundation Governor and the Rector of the Papworth Team of churches, I had the privilege of experiencing our recent Spirituality Day from a uniquely meaningful vantage point. One of our key School Development Priorities this year is nurturing spirituality within our school community, and last Friday I was able to witness that commitment come to life in a truly inspiring way.

The purpose of the day was to help children develop a deeper sense of identity, wonder, compassion, and connection. Pupils took part in a range of rich activities:

- They wrestled with BIG questions about existence, purpose, and what lies beyond the visible world.
- They discussed moral choices when faced with dilemmas, exploring what they would do, why they made these choices, and how their actions might impact others.
- They engaged in calming meditation sessions, learning the value of stillness and reflection.
- They wrote thoughtful poetry about themselves, demonstrating depth and self-awareness.
- They reflected on the beauty of nature and the world around them.

In all of these activities, pupils considered how they were thinking, feeling, and what actions they might be prompted to carry out. In other words, our hope was that they engaged fully using their heads, hearts, and hands! I was personally very struck by the sensitivity, openness, and natural curiosity the children displayed. As a governor, I was also very proud of our staff for creating such a safe, stimulating, and reflective environment.

I am also delighted to share that our school has recently been recognised by the Church of England as a **growing faith hub**. This recognition is a testament to the strength of the partnership between our school and church and our collective desire to support children's spiritual development. As we look to the future, and continue to develop links between school, church, families, and community life, I am confident that our children will continue to grow as thoughtful, compassionate, and connected individuals.

Rev. Matt Phillips

Spirituality and SIAMS at Elsworth

Our vision at Elsworth C of E Primary School is to develop motivated, aspirational and courageous learners. Through embracing the Christian values of honesty, happiness and compassion, we lay the foundations as a community to love and serve one another and to make a difference.

This year governors have continued to work with the school to embed our vision and mission into daily life at Elsworth C of E Primary School as we look forward to having our SIAMS inspection in 2026. This is a Church of England inspection looking at how our school vision enables our children and adults to flourish and how it is reflected in our school curriculum and collective worship. It helps to create a culture of justice and responsibility throughout school life and beyond.

Thank you to the PTA

The Governors are very grateful to our active PTA and all those who volunteer and support school events. This year has already been packed with brilliant activities including the disco, cake sales, cash 4 clothes, the shopping evening and Christmas fayre.

This valuable support means that our children are now benefiting from new cloakrooms. With coach costs for trips ever increasing, the PTA support to subsidise trips and events that enhance our children's lives are more important than ever.

Books and Bricks!

Thank you to everyone who has supported the school through the PTA Sponsor a Brick scheme and through buying from the school's book wish list so far. Both schemes are still open with the Sponsored bricks now in our corridor by the new changing rooms they helped pay for. If you want to support the school by buying a book please see https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/397UX23EKRGP?ref=wl_share

Farewell to Mrs Thomas

It is hard to describe how big a contribution Mrs Thomas has made to the school over the years. Her calm and steadfast presence during the difficult times of Covid meant that despite two interim headteachers before we were fortunate enough to appoint Mrs Bennett, our school never lost touch with its compassionate soul. We get so many comments from visitors about how caring and special Elsworth C of E Primary feels and during challenging times it would have been easy for the school to drift away from this without Mrs Thomas there to anchor us. Generations of children have left school having had their learning and school experience enriched and with beautiful memories of their times with Mrs Thomas from the excitement of Burwell and Young Voices trips and a joy of singing to knowing the Welsh for Happy Birthday!

Mrs Thomas was a governor for many years and we owe her a debt of gratitude for her wisdom and support. We wish her all the very best with future endeavours and will be adding her name to our wall of past staff and students.

Meet the Governors

We have 12 Governors at Elsworth

			
Dinah Papworth Chair of Governors	Clair Harrison LA Governor Vice Chair of Governors	Alan Mansey Chair of Finance Subcommittee	Kirstin Bicknell Chair of Learning and Standards Subcommittee
			
Hannah Holland Parent Governor & Safeguarding Governor	Nick Wright Foundation Governor	Kylee Todd Staff Governor	Jenny Fordham Foundation Governor
			
Jill Newton Associate Member	Jack Jones Foundation Governor	Rev. Matt Phillips Ex-Officio Foundation Governor	Kate-Lyn Piek Parent Governor

A bit about our Governors

Dinah Papworth

Chair of Governors

I have been a Foundation Governor for Conington Parish since 2018 and have been Vice Chair for the last four years. My background is a business one, working in the food industry for over 20 years and for the last 20 years in property management. I became a Governor at Elsworth C of E Primary School as I wanted a new challenge and give something back into the community. This year, I feel honoured to be Chair of Governors, to continue serving this wonderful Church school ensuring our children are given the best opportunity to learn and thrive.

Clair Harrison

Vice Chair

I became a Governor again at Elsworth school last year after a break of a few years. My background is Primary teaching and so I try to bring my knowledge and understanding of education to my role as Governor. Both my daughters came to the school and loved their time here. The school is very close to my heart and I love to spend as much time as I can working with the staff and children!

Alan Mansey

Chair of Finance and Health and Safety subcommittee

I am a retired Civil Engineer from Boxworth and have lived in this area since 1986. My son attended Elsworth C of E Primary School from 2007 to 2014 and following retirement I am pleased to contribute to the school as a Foundation Governor. I was an LEA Governor of Bourn Primary School from 1997 to 2001 where I chaired the Finance Sub-Committee and was a member of Appointment Committees for teachers and a Headteacher.

For most of my career I was employed as a government Construction and Maintenance Manager working on the UK and overseas MoD estate. My interests are playing tennis, walking, and volunteering at IWM Duxford.

Kirstin Bicknell

Chair of Learning and Standards subcommittee

I am an integrative psychotherapist and counsellor who runs a private practice in Elsworth. I was Chair at Elsworth Pre-School and have over 18 years experience in the voluntary sector, most recently as a trustee for Evolve Community Counselling Charity. My background includes arts administration, project management, marketing and fundraising and I'm a qualified secondary school teacher. I became a Foundation Governor in September 2020 and have a particular interest in wellbeing and inclusivity.

Hannah Holland

I am delighted to represent parents of the school in my role as Parent Governor. I have two children at the school. My professional career has been dedicated to education, working with two of the largest educational publishers and assessment awarding bodies. I feel privileged to be working collaboratively with my fellow members of the Governing body to ensure the safety and highest quality learning experience for every child at our school.

Nick Wright

I am an arable farmer from Conington and a director of the White Swan pub. My four children attended Elsworth C of E Primary school between 1994 and 2006 and thrived. They went onto Swavesey Village College, Sixth form in Cambridge and beyond to university. I was chair of governors when my children attended Elsworth and I was delighted to be asked back for a second term. I'm stepping down after this year and am currently supporting Dinah as she now steps into the Chair role.

I am an experienced councillor having been chair of Conington Parish meeting for 25 years and district councillor for the Caxton and Papworth Ward at South Cambridgeshire district Council for 18 years. My interests are local history, rugby, cricket and enjoying our wonderful countryside.

Kylee Todd

I grew up in Norfolk and at the age of 11, I was fortunate to win a place at Elmhurst Ballet School. Over the next eight years, I trained in a variety of dance styles including ballet, musical theatre, tap, jazz, contemporary, and flamenco. After completing my A-Levels, I decided to change direction and pursued a degree in Primary Education at Bishop Grosseteste University Lincoln, specialising in Early Years education. Following my graduation, I taught at a school in Huntingdon until 2014, when I made the decision to focus on raising my family. After spending seven years at home, I returned to teaching at Elsworth CofE Primary School when my youngest child started school in September 2021. I currently teach four days a week in Sapphire Class working with Reception and Year 1. I lead the curriculum areas of Early Years, English and Science where I have implemented whole school initiatives. I am currently completing my National Professional Qualification in Senior Leadership. I will look forward to supporting the governing body in strategically guiding the school forward with our vision.

Jenny Fordham

I have been a primary teacher since completing my PGCE in 2013, and over the past decade I've developed a deep passion for supporting children's learning, confidence, and wellbeing. I currently work at a school in central Cambridge. Outside of school, life is wonderfully busy. My husband, Harry, and I have two young children: Lyla, who is hoping to join the school in September 2026, and Oscar, who is 1. We love spending time outdoors, especially going on long family walks with our dog. I'm excited to use my expertise as a teacher to contribute to the governing body and support our school community.

Jill Newton

I was born and brought up in Cambridge but spent many years of my adult life in Colchester in Essex. When my children were small, we lived and worked in Singapore for two years which was a fascinating experience and allowed lots of travel in South East Asia, which I loved.

We moved to Cambridgeshire in 2014 and have lived in Elsworth since 2015. I retired from being a governor last year but have returned as an associate governing member to mentor a new governor in SEND monitoring. I volunteer because I want to make a positive contribution to the lives of our local children. My professional life has been in various aspects of education. I continue to work for the Local Authority as an educational psychologist.

In my spare time, I enjoy being Grandma to five girls and one boy. I like walking, cycling and swimming and I have always loved singing in choirs. Music has always been an important part of my life.

Jack Jones

I've recently joined the Governors and I have two children at the school, with a third joining in 2027. My background is predominantly Construction related, having both practical and professional experience in leading a variety of projects. I look forward to helping and supporting the Governing body, utilising my experience outside of a school environment.

Where time permits outside of work and family life, I enjoy getting outside and a variety of sport.

Rev. Matt Phillips

As the Team Rector of the Papworth Team of churches, I serve as an ex-officio Foundation Governor. I have previously worked in rural parishes and as a theological educator, but immediately before arriving here my role was as Chaplain and Assistant Head of a large secondary school in Lincolnshire, where I taught Religious Studies and Philosophy and was part of the safeguarding leadership team.

I am deeply committed to supporting young people in their full development: intellectually, spiritually, morally, and socially. I value the close partnership between school, church, families, and the local community, and I am dedicated to helping children grow into thoughtful, confident, and compassionate individuals.

Kate-Lyn Piek

I'm excited to be joining as a new parent governor at Elsworth C of E Primary School. My background is in HR, where I am used to supporting people, listening to different perspectives, and helping make fair decisions. I put myself forward because I want parents' voices to be heard and to make sure every decision we take benefits the children. I'm looking forward to working with staff, governors, and families to keep building a school community where our kids feel happy, supported, and ready to shine.

Clerk to Governors

Our previous Clerk Helen Andrews has moved on and we wish to thank her for her knowledgeable and efficient contributions to our governor meetings. We currently have a temporary clerk Kerry Thompson while we get a new Clerk via the County CamClerk service.



ELSWORTH C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNORS WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR
STAFF, PARENTS, CARERS AND CHILDREN A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU BACK IN 2026