

Elsworth C of E Primary School

Governors Newsletter



March 2026

Welcome to our Newsletter!

Letter from the Chair

As we reach the end of Spring Term I would like to take the opportunity on behalf of the Governing Body to thank you for your continued support of our school community.

This term has been a busy and rewarding one for our pupils and staff alike. We have seen children engage enthusiastically in both their learning and take part in a wide range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. This includes very creative costumes for World Book Day and Number Day and sporting competitions and quizzes – Special Congratulations to our Tag Rugby Champions and well done to our year 6 team that successfully reached the Cambridgeshire Schools English Challenge final.

Our Easter service was attended by the whole school as well as many parents. It was fantastic to see Elsworth Pre-school there too and was a wonderful end to this term with its message of Hope, the congregation enjoyed listening to fabulous readings and singing, one even in Spanish.

Thank you also to our dedicated staff team for their hard work and commitment to ensure high standards of teaching and learning. We congratulate Mrs Wilkinson for her appointment as our new Deputy Headteacher and we look forward to her starting her role in the summer term. We welcome one new governor to the Governing Body and thank the PTA for their hard work in arranging activities for the school which contribute so magnificently to the whole school.

I wish everyone a peaceful and joyful Easter break and look forward to everyone returning on 13 April for another busy term.

With best wishes,
Dinah Papworth
Chair of Governors

A huge well done to all our staff and pupils for everything you have achieved this term. We hope you have a wonderful Easter 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?

- 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. A recent school visit from the County Council praised the level of challenge and support from governors.
- Completing our Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which forms part of the SIAMS Church of England inspection, which we will continue to monitor and evaluate. Governors specifically check that our Vision is being delivered through our monitoring visits. Governors also had a presentation from Miss Barker on how our Spirituality framework is being inclusively developed with involvement from Rev. Matt.
- 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 and safeguarding is a standing item in every meeting and monitoring visit.
- Ensuring high standards in Health and Safety including going over risk assessments and working with the school Health and Safety pupil leads. There are no current areas of concern but this is regularly monitored.
- Governors have also been focusing on SEND provision with an update from Miss Barker our SenCo on how SEND provision is being developed and delivered.
- Reviewing key policies including our Attendance policy and the Home School Agreement to ensure best practice and that statutory obligations are met alongside promoting our Vision. 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 in depth to look at any trends or areas of concern including specific interventions for disadvantaged pupils. The committee has received updates on the Oracy strategy implementation 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 with Forest School being available to all years 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. This includes preparing the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS), which was approved by the Full Governing Board. The committee has also reviewed policies including the FOI policy.
- Governors also support the school's Eco Council and Spirituality Days.

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

Spirituality in School

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.

As a governor, it is a real privilege to have a window into the strategic life of the school and to see first-hand how seriously spirituality is taken. What has struck me most in recent months is the positive and thoughtful way pupils are being encouraged to reflect on themselves, others, the wider world, and even the big questions about what might lie beyond.

My observations in the last few months have led me to see that spirituality at Elsworth is not something abstract or distant. Instead, it is something lived and explored in everyday moments in an inclusive way that welcome pupils of all faiths and none. I love the way pupils and staff are constantly encouraged to engage their heads, hearts and hands and to consider how their learning impacts the way that they think, feel and act. Whether through collective worship, classroom reflection, or simple acts of kindness, there is a real sense that pupils are growing not just academically, but as whole people.

We were recently treated to a really helpful presentation from Katy Barker at one of our governor meetings, exploring this theme of spirituality more deeply. Katy works closely with me on this area, and it was encouraging to see how much thought and care is going into shaping a shared understanding of spirituality across the school.

It is also exciting to be building on this work in partnership with the Papworth Team Ministry. We have recently been awarded £20,000 of funding to support a new project focused on spirituality in our local context. As part of this, we have appointed Hannah, our new Children and Families Minister, will be helping to lead a piece of work that listens carefully to families and explores what spirituality means to them. We would love as many families as possible to be part of this. When the questionnaire is released, please do take a few moments to share your thoughts. Your voice will help shape something really special for the future.

Rev. Matt Phillips

Thank you to the PTA

The Governors are very grateful to our active PTA and all those who volunteer and support school events. There have been many brilliant activities this term with cake sales, school disco, Mother's Day craft and the Easter fayre.

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. The PTA have asked the school for a Wishlist for what we can use funds for next, which will be published in the Summer term.

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 including for World Book Day. 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

New Governor

We're pleased to introduce Rob Witherow as our newest Foundation Governor. Here's some information about him:

I became a Governor in March 2026. I live in Boxworth, though have previously lived in Elsworth for a few years. For the last ten years I have been an arable farm manager, looking after the farming activity of my family and others' in the area, mainly in Boxworth, Elsworth, Knapwell, and Childerley. I'm pleased to join the governors to help ensure Elsworth C of E Primary School continues to thrive as part of our community. I grew up in Boxworth. Outside of work I enjoy spending time outside particularly with my wife, Briony, and our horse and two dachshunds.

Rob Witherow

Meet the Governors

We have 13 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
			
Rob Witherow Foundation 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

We've welcomed Michelle Dodson as our new Clerk from the County CamClerk service.

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

WE HOPE YOU HAVE A RESTFUL BREAK