

Governors' Annual Report 2025-2026

The Autumn term saw a record number of pupils on roll with 165 starting the year. 25 children were welcomed into EYFS, where, as one of the school's development objectives, a key priority was to develop fundamental language skills. This entailed reinforcing the use of important vocabulary and correct spoken grammar to enable meaningful conversations.

In the summer term, Mr Matthew Potts, from the Leicester Primary Partnership (LPP) visited the school to conduct an audit on EYFS provision. His report was extremely positive, observing that strong relationships and routines support the children in settling well and working with each other successfully. He concluded that the school's Early Years setting demonstrates strong foundational practice, effective routines, and a commitment to both academic and emotional development.

In May, the Year 6 pupils received their SATs results. The children performed well in all areas, especially in writing, where 79.3% of pupils achieved the expected standard. This reflected the concerted efforts of the teaching and support staff to build pupils' confidence in their writing and thus improve outcomes. The school has also benefited from the expertise of Mrs Heidi Bastock, a School Improvement Lead, and from collaboration with other local primary schools.

The school has seen a growing number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Mrs Horan continues to work with external agencies and Leicestershire County Council to secure additional funding and access any support available, thus ensuring that appropriate provision is made for all children with additional needs.

Following extension and restructuring, the before- and after- school club has continued to be very popular, under the enthusiastic leadership of Mrs Amy Bryan. Mrs Bryan also strives to ensure that every child has the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports, and to experience sports competitions and festivals. Amongst these were wheelchair basketball and a morning of orienteering at Belvoir Cricket Club. The exceptionally high temperatures in the summer meant that the Race for Life had to be cancelled, but Sports Day was able to go ahead and was enjoyed by a large number of spectators.

Mrs Mel Castledine was elected as Chair of the PTA in October. The PTA provides invaluable support for the school with its programme of fundraising events and experiences for the children. As a result of its efforts, the school was able to purchase stage lighting, which enhanced both the nativity and summer productions, and also new playground lines.

In the Spring term, the school's new website was introduced, which was very well-received. The school welcomed visitors from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Melton Building Society and Coram Life Bus. In addition, years 5 and 6 enjoyed watching Nottingham Panthers Ice Hockey team train, before spending some time on the ice themselves. Other children have benefited from science and technology experiences offered by Loughborough Grammar School and the Leicestershire Education Business Company.

Three groups of children have had the opportunity to participate in residential trips. Year 2 pupils participated in a residential visit to Beaumanor Hall, whilst Year 4 pupils spent three days exploring Castleton, Mam Tor and Treak Cliff Caverns during their residential trip to the Peak District. The trip to Whitby in the summer provided unforgettable experiences for Year 6 children with their friends, as they prepared to leave for secondary school. In May, all children enjoyed a nature walk in Dalby Woods to mark Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday.

In April, the governors made the significant decision to increase the number of classes in the school from six to seven, commencing August 2026. The staff and governors had been considering this move since the new classrooms were built, along with the implications of this change. Projections indicate further growth in the number of pupils on roll over the next few years, such that the amended class structure becomes financially viable. As governors, we believe that there are numerous benefits to moving to single year group classes, not least smaller class sizes. Teachers will be able to focus on a single age-appropriate curriculum. With a more uniform group, teachers can provide more one-on-one time, immediate feedback, and targeted support to address specific student needs. This change generated a huge amount of work for the leadership team in terms of logistics, curriculum planning and recruitment, to ensure that everything was in place for the start of the new school year.

Moving to seven classes will be the latest step in the school's expansion since it was first established in 1840, by the Reverend Sawyer. In conjunction with the Village Heritage Group, Mrs Browne has been conducting some research into the history of the school, with a view to preparing a timeline of its development and reviving some of its original traditions.

There have been some changes to the Governing Body. Following Mrs Fowkes's retirement last year, we were delighted to recruit Mrs Amy Bryan onto the Board as a Staff Governor. Mrs Bryan brings her wealth of experience to the role and her energy and positivity are much appreciated.

At the end of the school year, the Governors were sorry to say goodbye to three members of the Governing Body. Mrs Steph Greaves retired from the teaching staff after many years of service. In her role as a Staff Governor, she was instrumental in establishing the school's Climate Action Plan, and her contributions were consistently thoughtful and well-considered, always with the children's interests at the forefront. Her insight and experience were greatly valued by the Governors. Our two parent governors, Mr Michael Nicholson and Ms Catherine Page served on the governing body for the required period of four years, giving generously of their time and talents. Both were members of the Finance and Personnel Committee; in addition, Catherine acted as the governor responsible for Safeguarding, whilst Michael rewrote the school's Risk Register and contributed his knowledge to the governors' work on environmental sustainability. Their expertise, enthusiasm and commitment have proved invaluable and we are enormously grateful to them for their service. New parent governors will be recruited during the Autumn term.

During the year, Governors have undertaken various training sessions to assist them in their role. Run by the Local Authority, these have included instruction on Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment, the new Ofsted framework, Using Data for Improvement and Wellbeing in Education.

Governors have visited the school on a number of occasions. These visits usually have a particular focus, often linked to the school's improvement priorities, and serve to inform the governors about procedures and practice. Visits this year have examined Safeguarding, SEND provision, Early Years teaching, Old Dalby School data, pupil voice and the teaching of writing. As governors, it is always fascinating to see the school at work and we invariably receive a warm welcome from staff and pupils.

It continues to be a privilege to serve as governors for Old Dalby School. We have nothing but respect for the dedication and commitment of the Headteacher and her staff, who work tirelessly to ensure that each and every child reaches their full potential. The governors have overseen the school's strategic direction, financial management, and safeguarding responsibilities, ensuring that policies and practices reflect the best interests of every pupil. Collectively, we have endeavoured to ensure continued progress and improvement across all aspects of school life. We are pleased to report that the school continues to thrive and we remain dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and enriching learning environment for all our children.