



Western House Academy

where every opportunity shapes a life



to question is to grow

ACADEMY COUNCIL IMPACT REPORT – 2025/2026

Western House Academy is a 3-form entry primary school in the heart of Cippenham, Slough. We are one of 10 schools that make up The Park Federation Trust. We are a culturally diverse, successful school that is rich in aspiration for our children and we pride ourselves on strong values and a curriculum that offers breadth of opportunity.

Our collective responsibilities as an Academy Council are:

- Ensuring clarity of strategic vision and ethos;
- Holding the School Principal to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Overseeing financial performance and that money is well spent; and
- Ensuring that Western House Academy is a safe environment for our pupils & staff.

GOVERNORS

The Academy Council is made up of Community Governors, Parent Governors, Staff Governors and the Principal who together bring a diverse range of experience, perspectives, background and skills. Governors are all volunteers who give their time freely, and the role is not remunerated. This year, we welcomed Raman Chahal as a Parent Governor to succeed Ecaterina Calderi at the end of 3 years of service on the Academy Council. The governors during the academic year 2025/26 were:



Academy Council

Simon Carter – AC Chair & Community Governor
Liz Herod – AC Vice Chair & Community Governor
Sukh Chatha-Johal – Parent Governor
Claire Pearce – Parent Governor
Raman Chahal – Parent Governor
Helen Haines – Staff Governor
Hazel Ryder – Staff Governor
Coral Snowden – School Principal

The school has benefited from a strong balance of business and board leadership, education, finance, Health & Safety and governance expertise over the course of the year. This year, we have also been able to strengthen our links with the 'Friends of Western House' Parent Teacher Association through our parent governors being active members of both forums.

Each governor also assumes a link role for a specific aspect of the school. Link roles this year were: Safeguarding, Finance, Health & Safety, Inclusion, Sustainability and Accreditation.

ACADEMY COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Academy Council has met 4 times over the course of the year, with average attendance around 90%. Meetings are held during the school day to ensure governors are visible and see the school in a working environment. Meeting agendas routinely cover finance and resource, a report from the

Principal covering, amongst other things, educational performance, safeguarding, and progress against the school plan, and then internal governor business to ensure their activity is coordinated.

ACTIVITY

Governors in School Day: A highlight of the Academy Council calendar is 'Governors in School' day, which this year was 23rd January. Governors spread themselves around the school to join lessons in all year groups, see the children at play during breaks, and join them for lunch. Each governor will also spend time talking with key pupil groups: this year governors spent time with the Inclusion Team, the Sustainability Team, the Digital & Curriculum pupil leads, as well as a selection of pupils from across year groups to hear about safeguarding, and a selection of staff to hear about staff welfare. And, of course, they spend time seeing Western House Academy's newest addition at work, Jessie the school therapy dog. Some governors will be on school gates that morning to meet parents. As a result, governors spoke directly in a focused setting with over 40 pupils and 12 staff over the course of the visit, as well as speaking with numerous pupils and staff in class, on the playground and whilst having lunch.

Their impressions from all of this activity are reported directly back to the Principal and staff.

Link Reporting: In addition, governors independently conducted 20 link visits this academic year to provide oversight or an external perspective on their link areas or other aspects of the school. Link activity this year ranged from Safeguarding, Finance, Inclusion, Wellbeing, Health & Safety, SEND and PPG to the school's allotments, Junior Duke scheme and Sustainability. A feedback report is generated after every link visit for the school.

Engagement: Governors support as many school events as possible through the year, where there is opportunity to see the breadth of school activity and meet more parents and pupils. This year, governors attended: the Allotment Site opening, Sustainability Day, Wellbeing Day, Wellbeing walks with Jessie, Sports Days, the Colour Run, Christmas Discos, Year 6 performance of the Lion King, and the Year 6 Leavers Assembly.

Oversight/Participation: Governors supported exam invigilation for both weeks of SATs and Mock SATs. Parent Wellbeing Committee meetings have also been supported by a governor. There has been a governor present at each of the Termly Assessment Reviews of academic performance data conducted by the Park Federation, and in support of external consultancy reviews. And a governor has conducted a sample check of the safeguarding Single Central Register each term.

Federation Support: The Park Federation seeks to use staff and governors from across the federation to make up members for panel and disciplinary hearings, in order to maintain fairness and independence. Western House Academy governors have supported 11 hearings over the past year.

The Chair is a member of the Park Federation Slough Hub of Academy Council Chairs, who meet termly as a conduit for communications with the board of directors, to share knowledge and provide mutual support.

In addition, two of the governors serve as a Trust member and Board Director for the Park Federation, with the associated commitment to meetings and sub-committees.

DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

All governors completed their mandatory Safeguarding training at the start of the year. Raman Chahal was provided a comprehensive induction package on becoming elected as governor and has been mentored by a more experienced governor for her first year. Additionally, governors have

maintained Academy Council competence and awareness through pursuing their own development and training in: Prevent, Online Security, Cyber Security, Child-on-Child Abuse, GDPR, managing Allegations and Fire Safety Awareness.

STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

The Academy Council ratified this year's Academy Development Plan in September 2026, along with the school's priorities and broader direction of travel. In parallel, the Academy Council conducted its annual review of school's the strategic risk register.

The Academy Council has input to strategic discussion on the budget submission and priorities, the relative merits and demerits of a 2-week half term, and submissions for use of reserves to support school improvements and temporary staffing needs. Navigating the school's particular challenges in closing the disadvantaged gap and unfunded SEN challenges have been regular themes in Academy Council discussion, as has following the development and implementation of the new Ofsted framework and the government's vision in its 2026 Schools White Paper.

IN SUM

It has been another characteristically busy year for the Academy Council whose governors have spread themselves actively and widely across a spectrum of school activity to ensure they collectively have currency, awareness and visibility without losing sight of their core purpose. Strong attendance at Academy Council meetings has ensured diversity of thought in oversight, debate and challenge, as well as the ability to share perspectives and insights gained individually. The school has benefitted from the external feedback of 20 link visits where topics are explored in depth with lead staff; the Principal openly states the value of these link visits to her and the school.

Looking ahead the Academy Council anticipates a further a period of stability that will maintain its current broad experience and backgrounds. Even as we write, governors are engaged in the next yearly cycle as SATs results come in, Academy Development Plans are reviewed, and the year-end financial position crystallises.

It has been a privilege for each of us to serve on the Academy Council and Western House Academy's governors remain committed to another year of supporting the school deliver on its driving belief that *'every opportunity shapes a life'*.



Simon Carter
Academy Council Chair
Western House Academy