

Simonside Primary School

Governor Newsletter Spring Term 2026



Dear Parents and Carers,

The Governors here at Simonside will be sharing Newsletters with you every term. We will use this opportunity to share any news and discuss what we have been getting up to in our roles.

Simonside's governors 2025-2026

Governors work alongside the Headteacher to provide strategic leadership and accountability, acting as a 'critical friend' to improve school performance. They help set the school's vision, monitor educational standards and ensure safeguarding is effective.

Governors do not get involved in the daily management of the school. This is the responsibility of the Headteacher. Governors are unpaid volunteers who attend meetings and make visits into school to help them monitor what school is doing. They speak to staff and children, gathering evidence about school's work.

Recent visits to school

Accompanied by the ONE Trust CEO (Chief Executive Officer), governors had the chance to visit classrooms on 22nd January to look at children learning. We visited all classrooms and left extremely impressed by the quality of the children's speaking, listening and work in books. Equally impressive was all the work staff do every day to ensure children enjoy their learning and achieve well. Governors write a formal report following a visit which is discussed at governor meetings. Below is some of the feedback from governors on their visit which is featured in their report.

"Governors walked around the school and into classrooms, observing teaching and children working independently. There were opportunities to observe support staff working within and beyond the classrooms and to observe children moving between learning spaces, providing a sense of the atmosphere and environment in school."

"All classes had a calm environment. There was mutual respect between teachers and pupils and between pupils - whenever someone was talking, this was respected with eye contact and attention. When pupils spoke out of turn, this was quickly corrected by the teacher in a way that maintained the positive environment and without causing disruption. Teachers spoke in a calm manner, addressing children in a way that was appropriate for their age, it felt like a very safe space. Teachers spoke clearly and gently, but firmly. There was plenty of praise, even praising for tasks that were yet to begin, e.g. 'I know you can do this'. Teachers addressed children a lot

by name. Some teachers were using humour to engage children making it feel light and positive."

Extract from ONE Trust's CEO:

"Thank you so much for inviting me to the Learning Walk at Simonside this morning. It was great to see the progress that had been made around your School Development Plan since my last visit, and the impact that this is clearly having on teaching and learning, and pupil behaviour.

The use of oracy strategies was clearly evident in all lessons. The children were able to effectively discuss their learning and this greatly increased their participation and engagement in the sessions.

What struck me most was the calm and purposeful atmosphere around the whole school. Pupil behaviour was excellent and the high expectations of the teachers to ensure this continued in and outside the lessons was notable."

An update from Governors

Safety on the school site

When governors spoke to parents last term, car parking and safety in the car park was a major concern. We have addressed these concerns by improving signage at the school gates and installing a speed bump to remind drivers of the need to slow down. We have contacted the City Council to make it aware that Simonside has to deal with the same issues of traffic around the majority of schools. This is something which is monitored and there are frequent reminders in newsletters. We are very lucky to have a school car park open to staff, visitors and parents/carers and would not like to have to close it because of safety concerns. Let's work together to keep everyone safe in the car park.

Vehicle entrance to school

Pedestrians must not walk through the vehicle entrance under any circumstances. We appreciate the pedestrian entrance is a little further to walk, but it is a much safer option. Please take note of the signage - pedestrians use the vehicle access at their own risk.



Attendance

One of the next meetings of governors is on 19th March and will focus on school attendance. This is a real 'hot topic' and was the sole focus of the Headteacher's newsletter on 24th November. In this was a reminder that parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable, full-time education. It also listed the actions parents could do to support their child's good attendance. Please work with us and follow those steps linked to keeping school informed.

Did you know that if your child is late in the morning, this affects their attendance? Children arriving after 9:15 miss their morning registration in class which essentially marks them as absent for the morning session. Children are then marked as late on the register, which we call a 'U code' (an unauthorised late arrival). Punctuality every morning could make a **huge** difference to your child's attendance.

All the research shows that children who have good attendance achieve better in the short and long term. Consequently, all schools have been set targets to improve attendance and to consider what they are doing to support good attendance. We will be looking at Simonside's data and what school is doing in this area in particular. Legal proceedings are very much a last resort and we would much rather work with families to support children being in school. School does not get the money from any fines issued!

Thank you to all the families who make such a consistent effort to have children in school every day and on time. Your support truly makes a difference.

🍎🌟 **Grab and go breakfast** 🍌🌟

Did you know we have a 'grab and go' breakfast trolley in the entrance of school? Children can help themselves to make sure their brains are fuelled for a day of learning. If you are running a little late and your child has missed breakfast, please encourage them to pick up something to eat. We have toast and fruit.



Thank you for working hard with us to ensure your children can have the most positive experience in school. Please reach out to us via the school office if there is anything we can do to help.

Mrs L. Rae Chair	Mrs E. Hills Head teacher	Mrs V. Carter Associate Governor	Mr C. Stott Co-opted Governor
Mr M. Harbottle Parent governor/Vice Chair	Miss J. Mohan Parent Governor	Mrs V. Armstrong Co-opted Governor	Mrs S. Betts Teaching Staff Governor
	Mrs A. Thomas Non-teaching Staff Governor	Mrs G. Anderson Co-opted Governor	