

Annual Governance Statement 2025-26

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of Marland School Governing Body are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Executive Principal and his leadership team to account for the overall performance of the school;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance arrangements

The Governing Body of Marland School is made up of 2 staff governors (including the Executive Principal), 2 elected Parent Governors (inc. 1 current vacancy), 1 Local Authority Governor, 2 Foundation Governors and 3 Co-opted governors. Co-opted governors are appointed by the Governing Body and are people who, in the opinion of the governing body, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

Non staff Governor's skillsets / experience includes:

- A highly experienced Chair with longstanding Governance and Local Authority committee representation & chairing expertise.
- A retired special school Senior Teacher / SENCO with extensive SEMH and ASC teaching experience at management level.
- An ex-MOD senior officer and HR specialist.
- An ex-Local Authority Senior Health & Safety Manager.
- A Local Authority SEND Advisory Teacher.
- A local businessperson with construction industry technical expertise.

The Governing Body currently has one vacancy – this has a potential candidate appointed but temporarily unavailable.

The full Governing Body meets at least twice each term (more frequently if / where need dictates). Supporting this we have 'Lead Governors' who have respective responsibility for Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Teaching & Learning, Residential Care, Finance and HR.

In addition, there are committees that meet if required to consider student discipline, staffing matters and/or other Governor short term priorities.

See 'Structure of Marland School Governing Body' summary document published on the Marland School website for a full list of Governors and their allocated responsibilities:

www.marland-school.co.uk/governing-body-structure-1/

Attendance record of governors	Governors generally have excellent attendance at meetings, and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not “quorate” (<i>the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made</i>). Refer to ‘Governor Attendance’ document for a summary of Governors attendance at meetings.
The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing body	The Governing Body has again had a busy but successful / positive 2024-25 academic year. Despite the time and working pressures faced, they have continued to meet on the same regular basis, with priorities including: • Continuing school improvement in all areas with particular focus on further embedding the existing good practice: - Safeguarding effectiveness. - Standards of learning, including the curricula requirements of the Current Ofsted inspection Frameworks for Education. - Student and staff wellbeing. • Supporting, guiding and challenging the school to continue to achieve and further develop its existing high quality Ofsted inspection standards: - Education Full Inspection: GOOD (7-8 March 2023). - Residential Care Inspection: OUTSTANDING (4-6 March 2025). • Embedding and further developing THRIVE across the whole school / all sites. • Funding of a new ‘Thrive Hub’ buildings on both the secondary day school sites (Bideford and Barnstaple). • Successful appointment of a new Headteacher to replace the retiring one at the Bideford secondary day school in September 2025. • Supporting the recent extensive redevelopment of the whole school curriculum to ensure consistency, across school unification and ‘Pathways’ compliant pedagogy. Safeguarding Lead Governor/s Mrs Butler, supported by fellow Lead Governor (Mrs Martin), are both are trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding (in addition, 3 other Governors have also undertaken this Level 3 training). Between them, these Governors: • Liaised on a regular basis with our individual school site Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs): - Marland Residential – DSLs: ▪ Mrs Lee (DSL & Safeguarding Manager) ▪ Mr MacIver (DSL) - Marland Primary Day – DSOs: ▪ Mr Lawrence ▪ Mrs Nightingale-Jones ▪ Mr Chopra

- Marland Secondary Day (Roundswell) – DSOs:
 - Mr McAuley
 - Mrs Thomas
- Marland Secondary Day (Bideford) – DSOs:
 - Mr Sanders
 - Mrs Klingenstein

Mr MacIver & Mrs Lee take the overall whole school safeguarding lead roles.

Each school site currently has at least 2 designated Level 3 trained Safeguarding staff. Due to increased age-related need, an additional senior teacher was trained in 2024 to increase capacity within our Primary Day School. Duties include but are not limited to:

- Liaison with the HR team to monitor key safeguarding requirements such as the 'Single Central Record' and staff recruitment files.
- Liaison with the 'Online Safety Coordinator' (Mr Davage) to ensure that all aspects of 'Online Safety' remain safe and compliant.

The Executive Principal / Governor (Mr Bennett) is also trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding.

Teaching & Learning Lead Governors

Mrs Martin, assisted by support Governor Mrs Rollinson, advised and led on the monitoring of the following:

- The implementation of a new 'Pathways' whole school core subjects curriculum. Major rapid progress was made on all fronts during this academic year and remains an ongoing priority to further hone and expand to other subjects.
- Ofsted 'Quality of Education' inspection framework compliance.

Finance, HR and Residential Care Lead Governor

Mr Spencer had designated responsibilities for these 3 separate areas:

- **Finance** - Advising Governors on the monitoring of all such related matters:
 - How the school should use its budget most effectively and cost efficiently.
 - The ongoing maintenance and development of all school premises / sites. This was greatly assisted by the further extensive development of the expanded Premises and Facilities Management Team.
 - Monitoring and advising on the necessary financial cutbacks, including staff redundancy.
 - The balanced budget plan for the whole school. Governors continue to monitor this closely with the aim of ensuring ongoing financial stability, balanced with the need to adequately resource the school to meet the significant and often complex special needs of its pupil / student cohort.

	• HR - Advising Governors on the monitoring of all such related matters: - Our own HR team and the advisory support team from DCC HROne. - All aspects associated with ensuring that the HR requirements of our expanding whole school (all sites) continue to be fully met. - Direct advisory support to the SLT in relation to a range of specific HR challenges faced (including redundancy). • Residential Care - Advising Governors on the monitoring of all such related matters: - The commissioned Residential Care Independent Monitoring Visitor (IMV) Service provided by NYAS. - Undertaking regular Governor monitoring visits of the residential facility. - Liaison with the residential provision Independent Visitor. - All aspects associated with ensuring that the residential care offered by the school continued to be fully appropriate and met all Ofsted National Minimum Standards. This included retaining the Ofsted 'Outstanding' grade for the fourth successive year. - Residential Care Development Plan. - Providing a direct link to the Governing Body for the residential students and staff. Whole Governing Body Additional full Governing Body regular responsibilities: • Reviewing and agreeing school policies on a rolling cycle to ensure that they remain up to date, legally compliant and good practice. • Reviewing the strategic direction of the school to ensure that ongoing need is fully met. • Recruitment of senior staff: - A new Headteacher for the Bideford secondary day school to replace the original Headteacher who retired in August 2025. - a successor for the current Executive Principal when he retires in August 2026. Part 1 Minutes of Governing Body and Committee meetings are public documents. You can ask at the school office if you would like to see any of these minutes of our meetings.
Future plans for the governors	Our key priorities for the forthcoming year are: 1. Addressing all recommendations made during the 2 most recent successful Ofsted inspections. 2. Further developing the curriculum, especially in relation to: - Differentiated 'Student Progress Pathways' in all subject areas. - 'Pathways' associated National Curriculum 'Knowledge &

	Skills' acquisition and retention in all subject areas. - Tracking & monitoring of student progress (academic, vocational, skills based, emotional and social). 3. Sustaining the hard work by governors, staff and students to ensure that standards (educational, pastoral, safeguarding, etc.) continue to improve to maximise learning opportunities, progress, achievement, attainment and positive transition outcomes for each Marland student. 4. Further developing and embedding good practice in our relatively new Day Secondary School in East of the Water, Bideford. 5. Ongoing honing of 'THRIVE' methodology and ethos across all school sites. 6. Development of the whole school vehicle fleet to ensure efficiency, sustainability and best value. 7. Sustaining and further honing the budget efficiency savings wherever feasible to further to stabilise the overall whole school finances. Including but not limited to, maintaining a stable, solvent budget whilst providing appropriate resource levels that meet the holistic needs of our students on an efficient, sustainable and cost-effective basis. 8. Continue to work with, advise and strategically / operationally support the Devon Local Authority with their high demand for SEMH student places.
How you can contact the governing body	We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors, Mrs Butler, via the Clerk to Governors Mrs Larkworthy at the main school site: 01805 601324 b.larkworthy@marland.devon.sch.uk