The Cedar Federation Annual Governors' Statement 2026

Statement from Chair of Governors

The Cedar Federation was formed in September 2024 by the formal federation of Freezywater St George's CE VA Primary School and St James' CE Primary School following a two-year informal partnership between the two schools. The two-year partnership had proved to be very successful and a period of consultation took place during Spring 2024. This was followed by a final joint decision in the Summer and it was unanimously agreed to proceed to formalise the process. The formation of the Federation enables us to establish a robust and secure future for the schools by pooling resources, sharing expertise and fostering a closer community between the institutions.

The Governors are committed to creating a strong and sustainable Federation for the future to improve the education and opportunities for pupils to excel and flourish in the local area. With this in mind we agreed to enter into a partnership with Forty Hill CE Primary School in January 2026. This partnership is in the early stages of development but we have already seen some positive benefits e.g. financial benefits for all three schools.

The Cedar Federation has had another very positive year. Both schools have been successful with positive results in the formal statutory assessments. There have also been amazing achievements in sports (first and second place in District Sports and our partnership school in third place), music (taking part in Proms Praise at the Royal Albert Hall), drama and dance (two fabulous Year 6 productions at the end of the summer term). The pupils have been fantastic ambassadors for their schools when out on visits and also in school when governors and advisors have made observation visits. St James' achieved the School Games Gold Mark Award for the 2025/26 academic year, based on PE lessons and also on the sporting opportunities that are offered. The school has also been awarded the platinum Award in Sport as they have achieved the Gold Mark for 4 years in a row. This is a great achievement and recognizes that the school allows the children to flourish in so many different sports.

Freezywater St George's had a successful Ofsted Inspection under the new framework at the end of the summer term. Ofsted made the following gradings:

- Leadership and governance: How well leaders run the school and drive improvement – **expected standard**
- Curriculum and teaching: The quality of the education and how subjects are taught – **expected standard**
- Achievement: How well pupils learn and progress - **expected standard**
- Attendance and behaviour: Standards of student conduct and school attendance – **strong standard**
- Personal development and wellbeing: Support for wider pupil development – **strong standard**
- Inclusion: How effectively the school meets the needs of all pupils – **expected standard**
- Safeguarding – met

‘Pupils take pride in belonging to this welcoming and inclusive school. They know that staff value them as individuals, and they speak positively about the care and encouragement they receive. Pupils demonstrate the school values of 'respect and reverence' through their considerate attitudes towards one another. Pupils help to create calm and purposeful classrooms because they have high expectations of themselves and understand the routines that support learning.’

‘Governors provide effective strategic oversight and fulfil their statutory duties, such as safeguarding. Governors know the school well and understand its priorities. They provide appropriate support and challenge and work closely with leaders to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Governors' contributions support improvements that enhance pupils' learning and wider experiences.’

The governors are very grateful for all the hard work that all the staff have made throughout the year to support all the pupils and make these fantastic achievements.

The pupils in both schools have embraced the Global Neighbours Project by advocating the need to change to improve the environment locally, nationally and across the world. Pupils at Freezywater St George’s have highlighted the need for clean water for all and raised important funding for this goal and pupils at St James’ have a better understanding of recycling and reducing litter. Posters around the school encourage the local community to be more responsible with their rubbish.

During the coming year the governors will continue to hold the school to account and celebrate the successes. We will also work together to face the challenges that all schools face of falling pupil numbers and the impact this has on school budgets. The strong school community remains positive and we work together as a team to ensure all pupils flourish and thrive.

Governors

The Cedar Federation has an effective set of governors who have a range of experience, skills and backgrounds ensuring that we have the right balance of knowledge and capabilities on the board. These skills range from Education back grounds, Health and Safety, Business/Finance skills along with a wide variety of other skills and experiences.

Governors attend various training courses to ensure we are up to date with the latest information required to help us govern the school.

Governors holding the school to account

Governors have a duty to hold the school to account and ensure that we are giving our pupils the safest environment to get the best possible level of education. The governors use a host of external validation specialists outside of Ofsted to ensure that we deliver at the highest standard. These specialists range from local authority school improvement partners, education experts and LDBS Advisers.

Our governing board

Position	Name	Date of Appointmen	End of Term of Office
LA Governor (1)	Shai Ilivitsky	12.02.2026	11.02.2030
Parent Governors (2)	Agata Mabena	04.02.2025	03.02.2029
	Titilayo Oshun	04.02.2025	03.02.2029
Staff Governor (1)	Karyn Goodison	10.09.2024	09.09.2028
Foundation Governors (6)	Tony Zotti (DS)	01.09.2024	31.08.2028
	Louise Whitaker (LDBS)	01.09.2024	31.08.2028
	Richard Paterson (LDBS)	27.11.2025	26.11.20.29
	Sarah Field (PCC)	01.09.2024	31.08.2028
	Veronic Battley (PCC)	01.09.2024	31.08.2028
	Vacancy (DS)		
Executive Headteacher	Michelle Sheehan	01.09.2024	n/a

Governor meetings

The Cedar Federation governors use a range of meetings throughout the school year either virtually or in person. We have a set of Full governing body meetings where ALL governors are in attendance to receive the Executive Headteacher report and also discuss the outcomes of the sub-committee meetings.

We have two sub committees. The Standards Committee overseeing and monitoring the curriculum and evaluating pupil attainment and progress data. The Resources Committee responsible for financial planning, budget allocation and asset management, including staffing and facilities.

Each year we will also hold governor mornings, where governors attend school(s) as a group to carry out workshops, class visits and general observations which have proved really effective over the past few years. The governors especially enjoy discussing learning with pupils and looking at their books. These visits are always insightful and leave us feeling joyful and inspired.

The Chair of governors is also in regular contact with the Executive Headteacher to ensure that general operational matters have a platform to be discussed.

The governing body also have delegated roles to govern throughout the school year based on their skill set and expertise.

Standards Committee

Resources Committee

Appointment of Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Panel

Panel to include the following:

Chair of Governing Body

Vice-Chair of Governing Body

3 other governors as appropriate

Appointment of Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

Delegated to Headteacher, plus one additional Governor if requested by the Headteacher

Staff Capability and Discipline

Delegated to Headteacher up to and including dismissal. Governing Body to be involved at appeal stage only: Appeal Panel – 2 or 3 Governors to be formed when necessary.

Staff Grievance

2 or 3 Governors: Initial and Appeal Panels to be drawn from the Governing Body without any overlap of membership.

Redundancy and Re-deployment of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

An initial Panel (2 or 3 Governors) to be drawn from the Resources Committee and Appeal Panel (2 or 3 Governors) to be established if required.

Pay and Performance Management

To be considered by the Chair, Vice Chair and School Improvement Advisor

Complaints Panel

Any three Governors as available.

Pupil Discipline Committee (to hear pupil exclusions)

Any three Governors as available who had no prior knowledge of the circumstances leading to the exclusion.

Recruitment Panel

Any three Governors as available.

To identify the skill set of the Governing Body, any gaps in the skill set, and to then seek to identify suitable candidates for the Governing Body to appoint to the Governing Body.

The Headteacher would meet potential candidates but not be on the panel of a HT recruitment.

Individual Governor Responsibilities

SUBJECT	**Governor(s)**
SEND & Inclusion	Titilayo
Personal, Social, Citizenship and Emotional/RSE	Louise
Humanities	Tony
Science	Agata
English & Phonics	Richard (English) and Sarah (Phonics)

Creative Development (Music/Art/DT)	Agata
Maths	Shai
Physical Education	Titilayo
Religious Education/Collective Worship	Louise
Well-Being	Louise
Child Protection/Safeguarding	Louise
Health and Safety	Roni
Computing & ICT - Online Safety	Roni
Data Protection & GDPR	Karyn
ECO	Shai
More and Most Able Children Governor	Karyn
Pupil Premium	Louise
Early Years Foundation Stage	Sarah
Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)	Agata
Member Governor Forum Representative	Louise
Training and Development Governor	Roni

Kindest regards

Louise Whitaker

Chair of Governors