



24th April 2026

RE: Letter from the Governing Board

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the summer term at Phoenix! It has been another successful year so far and we look forward to seeing how much our children continue to progress and wait with anticipation to meeting our new children joining us in September whilst celebrating the year 2 children preparing to move on to their Key Stage 2 journeys – an exciting and emotional time for many!

Governors have been busy this academic year working behind the scenes supporting the school achieve the very best for every one of our children. As part of our first communication to families, we wanted to give you a little information on what we do and introduce ourselves with a short bio. We have also popped our photos on the end of the letter and on the staff board in school, so you know who we all are. Please do say hello if you see us in school!

What does the Governing Board do?

As governors, we are responsible for:

- Setting the school's vision, values and strategic direction, ensuring these reflect the needs of our children and community
- Holding leaders to account for the quality of education, pupil outcomes, and the wellbeing of children and staff
- Overseeing the school's finances, making sure resources are used wisely and provide value for money
- Ensuring statutory duties are met, including safeguarding and equality responsibilities

Who are the governors?

The Governing Board is made up of a group of volunteers with a wide range of skills and experiences, including education, finance, leadership and community engagement. Governors may be parents, staff, or members appointed by the local authority or governing body. We are all committed to continuous learning so we can carry out our roles effectively and responsibly. Please see our details below:

Sonya Hand- Chair

My name is Sonya and I have been a governor at Phoenix since 2017. I became Chair during Covid, and I have been proud to support leading the school for almost 10 years. Both my children spent many happy years at Phoenix, which is one of the many reasons I want to give back to the school even though they have both moved on now – one to Priory Juniors and the other at Carlton Academy. Professionally I am a senior manager with the criminal justice system and draw upon my professional expertise in my link roles of Safeguarding governor and in ensuring that all our children including those that may face more disadvantage achieve their potential.

Helen Derby- Vice Char

My name is Helen and I have been a governor at Phoenix Infant and Nursery School since 2017. I became Vice Chair during Covid and work closely with Sonya to support her in her role as Chair. I have strong connections to the school, as both of my boys attended Phoenix and had many happy years here. They now attend Carlton Academy in Years 7 and 8. Professionally, I have over 20 years' experience working across education, health and community sectors in Sport and physical activity. I am extremely passionate about inclusive education, pupil wellbeing and ensuring every child gets the best possible start in life. I am also the link governor for SEND, training and represent on the finance committee overseeing the schools' resources and strategic planning.

Kirsty Thompson- Parent Governor

My name is Kirsty and I'm proud to be serving as a Parent Governor at the school. I've seen first-hand how much care and commitment goes into creating a supportive and joyful learning experience. With a professional background in education specifically design and technology, I'm passionate about helping children develop confidence, creativity, and a love of learning. I'm also the governor linked to OPAL Play, which is something I'm genuinely enthusiastic about, as I believe high quality play is vital for wellbeing, social development and happy school days. I'm looking forward to working closely with the school community, listening to parents' views and supporting the continued growth and success of our children's experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Laura George- Staff Governor

I have worked at Phoenix for 11 years as a teaching assistant developing a strong background in Special Educational Needs. Following my recent early years qualification, I am really enjoying my time working with Nursery where I bring a wealth of hands-on experience in supporting children across a range of needs. I bring practical child centred approach to my role as a governor with interests in inclusion, early intervention and wellbeing. Outside of work I value fitness and healthy living, enjoy long walks with my dog and I am developing a love of gardening alongside cooking and baking.

James Saunders- Co-opted Governor

I'm James. and I've been a Governor since 2019. I'm a link Governor for Health and Safety and Attendance and chair of the PPS Committee. I work as a director at a manufacturing company, based in Mansfield. Before that I was responsible for school building projects in Leeds. In my spare time I love to play and watch sport, especially football. These days I do more watching than playing, as I'm sure my family would agree! I'm the proud dad of two boys, both of whom first joined school in our fabulous nursery.

Anna Healy- Co-opted Governor

I joined the governing board at Phoenix in Jan 2025. As a parent of a daughter currently attending the school I am deeply invested in the school's continued success and the well being of all its pupils. I bring over 13 years of private sector experience in Operations Management and planning to this role. This professional background provides a strong foundation for my work on the finance committee where I help oversee the schools' resources and strategic planning. Adaptationally I am the link governor for OPAL, ensuring play remains vital and high-quality part of the children's school day.

Jack George- Co-opted Governor

I'm Jack and I joined the governing board as a co-opted governor in December 2021, as a previous student at Phoenix I wanted to give back and support the school the best I can. I am a technology fanatic who works as an audio-visual engineer in Cambridge, you can usually find me at the school discos as the DJ as well as many of the school events supporting around all thing's technology. Outside of work I enjoy refurbishing technology devices, biking and appreciate good food!

Working together

We value strong relationships with parents and carers and recognise the vital role you play in your child's education. Governors regularly visit the school, attend events, and engage with feedback to ensure we understand what is working well and where the school can continue to grow.

If you would like to know more about the Governing Board, including governor roles and responsibilities, this information is available on the [school website](#).

We want to thank you for your continued support of Phoenix Infant and Nursery School. Working together, we can ensure every child gets the very best start to their learning journey.

Kind regards,

The Governing Board
Phoenix Infant and Nursery School

Phoenix Infant and Nursery Governing Board



Sonya Hand
Chair of Governors



Helen Derby
Vice Chair of Governors

Phoenix Infant and Nursery Finance Committee members



Helen Derby
Finance chair



Sonya Hand



Anna Healy



Jack George

Phoenix Infant and Nursery Pupil, performance and strategy (PPS) Committee members



James Saunders
PPS chair



Kirsty Thompson



Laura George

If you wish to contact us, please either email myself or Helen on the below email

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Helen Derby- helen.derby@phoenix.notts.sch.uk