

Meet the Governors



Tom Gray – Chair/LA Governor

I have lived and worked in West Sussex for my entire life, and I'm keen on providing something back to the local community that has provided so much for me.

I have worked as a software developer for a little over 10 years, and have produced, managed and maintained simulation products primarily in the air training and simulation domain, but more recently within the space and maritime sectors.

I'm passionate about all things Science, Maths and Engineering, and outside of computers I pretty much play and/or watch any sport! I'm eager to bring my enthusiasm in these areas to the Governor role at Thakeham, but also to continue to learn about and contribute to other areas – I firmly believe you are never too old to learn something new.



Liam McDonald – Headteacher (ex-officio Governor)

I am the Headteacher of Thakeham Primary School. My most recent roles involved working as a Deputy Headteacher and SENCO of a large primary school in Eastbourne and as Deputy Headteacher of a Special School. I joined Thakeham in April 2022 and I am excited to see where the next few years of school improvement take us! I firmly believe that every person has something about them that is good. I am passionate about finding that 'special something' in people that can be nurtured and grown. I believe in the power of a collective community who all work towards a common goal and for the greater good of everyone. Thakeham is a very special place of which I am proud to be part.



Emma Hopkins – Deputy Head/Associate Member

I am an Associate Member of the Governing Body and Deputy Headteacher at Thakeham Primary School. I have been teaching for over twenty years and have held the position of Deputy Head and staff governor in another West Sussex school. I joined Thakeham in 2013 as the PPA music specialist and have continued to develop music throughout the school. I am currently the Year 5 /6 teacher and I coordinate English, Computing and Music across the school. I am the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and work closely with the Headteacher on assessment. I am passionate about enabling each member of our community to achieve their best and to enjoy their time spent learning. As an Associate Member, I can work closely with a dedicated team who have the child at the centre of everything they do.



Karen Bridle – Parent Governor

I am a Parent Governor here at Thakeham Primary School. I'm Mum to 3 children with my youngest attending Thakeham School and the two older ones at Steyning Grammar School. In my professional life, I have worked for 20 years in the NHS as a mental health practitioner after qualifying as an Occupational Therapist in 2002. For the past 5 years I have worked in Higher Education leading mental health and wellbeing services for university students. I have a strong passion for ensuring the wellbeing needs of young people are met and as such belong to a provider's forum for Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health in West Sussex. I hope my knowledge and skills in this area will contribute to the development of the school to help ensure our children's wellbeing needs are met within education.



Marilyn Osborne – Co-Opted Governor

In 2016, after nearly half a century of full-time work, I moved from Hertfordshire to nearby Shipley taking on a house and garden retirement project. My daughter, who lived in Rustington suggested I put my work experience to good use and indirectly support my grandchildren by becoming a School Governor. Never having worked in education before, it was a steep learning curve, but I found I had transferable knowledge from my roles in the public, private and charity sectors. During my four-year term I became Finance Chair, Pupil Premium and Sports Premium Governor as well as being involved in school events, interview panels etc. I have seven grandchildren all of whom are currently at primary school. Every child deserves the best all-round education possible and so, I am looking forward to supporting the Head and his team in these challenging times in my role as Co-Opted Governor.



Jaime Younger – Staff Governor

I am a former Thakeham pupil and have worked here now for 13 fantastic years. I grew up in Thakeham and I have recently moved my family back to Thakeham from Storrington. I am a staff governor and TA in Wonder class, I am very lucky that I work to with and know all the children well and watch them flourish.



Debbie Goodwin – Co-Opted Governor

I am a Co-Opted Governor and was previously the Executive Assistant to the Director of Secondary Education at United Learning. Prior to that I was PA to the Principal at Burlington Danes Academy. I have had a varied career from managing a dental practice to working with children with ASD. I am married with two daughters and 4 grandchildren ranging in ages from 4 to 10 years. I am retired and live in Ashington after moving here from London.