



Annual Summary of Actions & Achievements for the School Improvement Board of Grace College

2024-25

A Message from the School Improvement Board (SIB)

This report shares what the School Improvement Board (SIB) has done to support Grace College during the 2024–25 academic year. The Board is made up of volunteers who care deeply about the school and its community. We work closely with the Head of School and senior leaders to make sure Grace College continues to improve for all its students.

Our role is to support the Trust’s vision and values, while also asking the right questions to make sure decisions are in the best interests of students and families. We focus on things like education and outcomes, behaviour, attendance, inclusion, student wellbeing, and how the school uses its funding to name but few.

This year, the Board has helped guide the school through a period of change and development. We’ve taken part in regular meetings and monitoring visits, reviewing how the school is doing, listening to staff and student feedback, and keeping an eye on progress across key areas. From teaching and learning to safeguarding and site improvements, we’ve aimed to provide both support and challenge — always with students at the heart of what we do.

The SIB operates with delegated responsibility from the Emmanuel Schools Foundation board of trustees, and we follow its governance structure and expectations.

You can find more about governance at: [Governance – Emmanuel Schools Foundation \(esf-web.org.uk\)](https://esf-web.org.uk)

We are proud of the progress made this year and remain committed to helping Grace College grow stronger still.

Meet the governing board

Name:	Role/Responsibility:
Aileen Conlon	Chair, Monitoring – Safeguarding, Child Protection and Leadership & Management
Natasha Tyrwhitt-Drake	Vice Chair, Monitoring – SEND, Looked After Children
Shayne Elsworth	Monitoring – Pupil Premium and Quality of Education
Moirra Ledger	Monitoring – Health & Safety, Finance & Projects and Leadership & Management
Jessica Cooper	Monitoring – Attendance and People, Mental Health & Wellbeing
Tom Smyth	

Regular Attendees

Mark Pike	ESF CEO
Matt Waterfield	Director of Education
Rachael Hooker	Head of School
Darren Warburton	ESF Finance Director
Christine Taylor	ESF Company Secretary
Kelsey Stoddart	Governance Professional

2024-25 SIB Summary

Governance & Strategic Leadership

- The SIB reviewed and refined governor roles early in the year to ensure each governor’s focus matched the school’s top priorities. This helped strengthen the impact of monitoring and ensured no area was overlooked.
- Governors helped shape the structure of the academic year through their input into the Trust-approved Cycle of Business. This made sure that meetings and visits focused on what matters most for students, staff and families – not just routine procedures.
- Monitoring visits played a key role in how governors stayed informed. These included learning walks, discussions with staff, and reviews of systems such as safeguarding, SEND support, behaviour strategy, homework, and attendance tracking. What governors saw during these visits directly influenced school planning and board discussion.





- The Board kept pace with national and Trust-level policy changes. Governors adapted their oversight and understanding in areas such as safeguarding, attendance, complaints handling, and the governance of SEND.
- A tailored Governor Development Plan was introduced, based on honest self-reflection. This ensured governors continued to grow in confidence, knowledge and effectiveness throughout the year.

Teaching and Learning

- The Board welcomed clearer structures across lessons. Subject reviews were introduced which helped identify where things were working well and where more support was needed. Governors saw growing confidence in staff and more consistency in how lessons were delivered across subjects.
- A new student progress tracking system was introduced. The Board supported this work and ensured it would reduce duplication for staff while helping families better understand how their child is doing.
- Middle leaders were given more tools to lead their teams. Governors supported the school's approach to building leadership from within, particularly in curriculum planning and staff development.
- Homework has become clearer and more consistent. The Board reviewed the introduction of study packs and booklets and welcomed the positive impact on student engagement and parental understanding.

Support for Students with SEND

- Governors supported the restructuring of the SEND team to ensure stronger leadership and earlier identification of students needing extra help.
- SEND provision is now reviewed across all subjects. Governors asked how well teachers were adapting learning to meet different needs and supported the use of tools like student passports and new threshold documents.
- The school has made it a priority that SEND is everyone's responsibility, not just the SENDCo's. The Board fully endorsed this approach.

Student Wellbeing and Inclusion

- The Board kept a close eye on safeguarding updates. Governors regularly reviewed incident trends, staff training, and follow-up actions to ensure students are safe and supported.
- Mental health needs remain high. The Board backed the school's efforts to bring in external services and support families early. Governors also welcomed the introduction of the ROTH (Risk Outside the Home) framework to help staff spot and respond to risks beyond the school gates.
- In response to concerns such as racism or bullying, the Board challenged the school to act clearly and compassionately. Governors supported changes in the curriculum and behaviour systems to promote respect and belonging.
- Student voice has become stronger. Governors encouraged leaders to listen more actively to students and to use their feedback to shape future plans.

Behaviour, Attendance and Personal Development

- Behaviour systems were overhauled. Governors supported the restructure and tracked how new roles, including Behaviour Support Officers, improved consistency and calmness across the school.
- Students are receiving more praise and recognition. The Board encouraged this cultural shift, particularly for students who might not have felt noticed before.
- Attendance remains a challenge. The Board reviewed the new attendance strategy and questioned how well it was working, especially for students with barriers to coming in each day.
- Governors welcomed improved careers education. Gatsby benchmarks were reviewed and corrected, with stronger tracking of university visits, workplace experiences, and tailored provision for students in alternative education.

Wider Support and Investment

- A new space called *The Lodge* opened this year. Governors supported its development as an in-school provision for students who need something different to succeed and feel safe.
- The Board monitored ongoing investment in the site, including better internet, door safety, and improved classroom environments. Governors continue to support bids for major rebuilding projects.
- Financial oversight remained strong. The Board approved a well-planned budget, monitored spending, and ensured resources were aligned with the school's improvement plan.





Future Governance at Grace College

As we move into the next academic year, the School Improvement Board remains firmly committed to supporting Grace College on its journey of continuous improvement. Governors will continue to monitor how recent developments in teaching, curriculum leadership and staff development are being embedded across the school, ensuring they translate into positive outcomes for students. The impact of changes to pastoral care and SEND structures will be closely tracked, with a particular focus on how they support inclusion, wellbeing and early intervention. The Board will also oversee the school's engagement with the DfE-appointed Rise Advisor, maintaining a supportive but rigorous approach to ensure that any external input drives sustainable progress. Listening to students, parents and carers will remain a key priority, as we work together to strengthen communication, build trust and create a shared sense of ambition. Above all, governors will stay focused on helping the school provide a safe, inclusive and high-quality education for every child, rooted in values and driven by hope for the future.

