



Governance Annual Report

2025-26

Dear Families,

It is my pleasure as the Chair of Governors to share with you the Governance Annual Report for the academic year September 2025 to August 2026.

The core functions of the Governing Board are to provide:

- **Strategic leadership:** the Governing Board defines the school vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with the charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the school's culture and sets and champions the overall strategy.
- **Accountability and assurance:** the Governing Board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the school, including the provision of education, student welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping the school's estate safe and well-maintained.
- **Engagement:** the Governing Board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The Governing Board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement.

With respect to **strategic leadership**, the school seeks to provide an outstanding all-round education provision with high academic achievement at its heart. The vision of the school is *'Our community is vibrant, curious, creative and inspires positive change. We dare to be wise'*. Working with senior leaders, the Governing Board sets strategic objectives to help the school reach its goals.

With respect to **accountability and assurance**, the Governing Board and its committees meet throughout the year to scrutinise reports from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and ask questions, particularly regarding the impact of strategic developments, e.g. embedding the school-wide focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. The Governing Board triangulates information received at meetings with discussions held with staff and students during visits to the school to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the school.

With respect to **engagement**, the Governing Board receives detailed reports of annual student, parent and staff surveys. Data is examined and themes identified so that the Governing Board can be mindful of these stakeholder groups when making key decisions for the benefit of the school.

Reflections on the year

While this report highlights the many achievements and successes of the past year, it is impossible to reflect on this time without acknowledging the deep loss our school community experienced, in April, with the passing of Minh Hoang, a cherished Year 11 student. It hit us all exceptionally hard, coming at an already intense and challenging time for the Year 11s as they prepared for their GCSEs. Yet the true heart of our community shone through, as everyone pulled together with remarkable selflessness, demonstrating how deeply caring, supportive and compassionate our school family is. For three weeks, a book of memories remained open to students and staff and, after the examinations concluded, we held a memorial event. This gave both the staff and Year 11 students a peaceful space

to gather, reflect warmly on Minh's time with us and light candles in her memory. Our thoughts and heartfelt love remain with Minh's family as they continue to navigate their devastating loss.

It is alongside this deep sense of loss that we also reflect on the remarkable dedication of our students, whose achievements this year have been truly exceptional, as demonstrated by our Year 11 and Year 13 students in their GCSE and A-Level examination results. 90.5% of A-Level exams sat were awarded A*-B grades; a truly phenomenal set of results has enabled the vast majority of them to reach their destination of choice. Our Year 11 students produced the school's best ever results, with an astonishing 95.3% of GCSE exams sat achieving grades 9-7.

The GCSE and A Level results enabled the school to remain one of the leading state schools in the country and ranked 5th in The Times top 10 state secondary schools. We fully recognise that these results would not be possible without the outstanding teaching and learning that happens at the school, day in and day out. Our thanks go to all the staff who regularly go the extra mile to engender a love of learning in the students, as well as imparting their expert subject knowledge.

On the 6 and 7 January 2026 Ofsted visited the school, following the launch of the new inspection framework the previous November. The school was judged to be 'Exceptional' in 6 categories: Curriculum & Teaching, Achievement, Attendance & Behaviour, Personal Development & Wellbeing, Post-16 provision, Leadership & Governance. In addition, Inclusion was judged to be 'Strong' and Safeguarding was 'Met'. We also received a letter from Sir Martyn Oliver, His Majesty's Chief Inspector, congratulating the school on its remarkable achievement. The full report can be found here: <https://www.tiffingirls.org/about-us/ofsted-report/>

As you will know, this school is not all about academic results, important though they are, but about our vision to provide the very best all-round education for our students, focused on our values of 'Community', 'Love of Learning' and 'Character'. You will know that extra-curricular activities here are flourishing and at the same time students are involved in volunteering and charity work, creating a happy and inclusive environment. Over the last year, we were able to offer 72 clubs in the Autumn term, 61 in the Spring term and 56 during the summer term.

The Digital & AI Strategy continues to be a major focus for the school. We upgraded all devices to Windows 11 and rolled out the provision of laptops to all teaching staff, enabling technology efficiencies and Cyber Essentials accreditation. The use of Gemini was launched with year groups 9 and upwards, providing detailed presentations to all year groups ahead of adopting its use. We have also provided parent digital information evenings, held digital training days for Years 8, 9 and 10, delivered specific training for staff, and updated our AI policy. In addition, we held the first Digital & AI conference for local Kingston and Richmond secondary schools, working with King's College London, which was led and designed by our students.

The Governing Board very much appreciates the role and contribution to the School community made by both the Parent Staff Association and the Tiffin Girls' Music Society, and their financial contributions have enhanced the school environment and had a direct impact on the students' positive learning experience. Our particular thanks are extended to all those who have supported the PSA fundraising events this year, which initially contributed to the astro pitch replacement project, but pivoted to the boiler and heating system replacement project, raising over £50k in the process.

We remain ever grateful for all the donations from parents to the Support Tiffin Girls' School Company (STGSC) throughout the year. The STGSC have funded classroom resources across all departments in support of teaching and learning, including: hockey goals, tennis tables, and springboards for PE; a spindle sander, bandsaw, a 3D printer, and a STEM racing kit for DT; robotics kits for Computing; books for English and the LRC; new textbooks for History; a significant contribution to the new Grand Piano in Music; and some new interactive screens in a number of classrooms.

We were delighted to secure funding from the DfE's Urgent Capital Support team, to replace the school's defunct Boilers and Heating System. The school was awarded £1.8m but had to contribute in excess of £400k towards the project. Parent contributions have helped significantly and the project, which started in the February half term and continues to make excellent progress. In addition, the school secured £640k from the DfE's Condition Improvement Fund, to replace the roof and roof skylights on the Art, DT and Computing block. This will make the 1950s built block finally watertight and more thermally efficient.

At the end of the academic year, we bade a fond farewell to Headteacher Ian Keary. Over a decade of dedicated leadership, Mr Keary successfully navigated the school through a period of significant change across the education sector, leaving Tiffin Girls' in an exceptionally strong position. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to him and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Following a rigorous recruitment process, we were delighted to appoint Ms Emma Kilburn as our new Headteacher. As a former Tiffin Girls' student and Senior Deputy Head, Ms Kilburn brings an exceptional blend of deep institutional knowledge, continuity, and forward-looking vision to the role, and we look forward with great confidence to the school's future under her leadership.

We welcomed Kavitha Chandrasekaran (parent governor) and Catharine Mackey (staff governor) to the Board from September, and we thank all our governors for their continued service and commitment to the school. We said a fond farewell and sincere thanks to Brian Austen, one of our signatory members of the Academy Trust, after over 30 years of committed service to the school.

How has the Governing Board helped the School achieve its vision?

Each year the School Development Plan (SDP) sets out how the school plans to deliver its vision. The SDP is developed by the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), then reviewed and approved by the Governing Board. It includes, amongst other information, key outcomes and the actions required to deliver. Each Governing Board meeting has strategic foci and agenda items that are linked to specific outcomes in the SDP. This ensures that the governors remain focused on strategic matters that directly impact the education provided for your child.

During 2025-26:

- We held eleven Governing Board meetings, as well as three Finance and Contracts, three Pay and Personnel, three Audit and Risk and two Admissions Committee meetings.
- We received reports from Mr Keary and SLT covering a variety of areas related to school development, including student progress, attendance, safeguarding, health and safety, premises and infrastructure, risk management, data protection, equality, diversity and inclusion, sustainability and the Digital & AI strategy.
- We received presentations from Heads of Department about the curriculum for their subject area and presentations from the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator on the SEND provision at the school.
- We monitored the 2025-26 financial performance against the budget and both reviewed and approved the school's budget for 2026-27 and the medium-term financial plan to 2029.
- We continued to support investment in IT upgrades to meet the Department for Education cybersecurity requirements, enabling the school to achieve Cyber Essentials accreditation
- A working party of governors and SLT researched alternative solutions to boiler replacement in terms of environmental sustainability and finance and contributed to the successful Urgent Capital Support bid.
- We engaged in further AI in education discussions and contributed to the Digital & AI conference delivered to local secondary schools.
- We received reports on the school's outreach activities, including hosting an eco-conference for 12 primary schools, a medics conference for 12 local secondary schools, running a Shaping

Futures Programme for local primary school students focused on English and maths, our Year 10 Sports Leaders running an event for a local primary school, and how the school was sharing its learning from the Ofsted inspection with a wide selection of schools (20) nationally.

- Individual governors received training on a variety of topics; including safeguarding, Ofsted, Protecting your school against terrorism, Safer recruitment, and understanding the schools white paper. Governors also attended a strategic conference hosted by the Grammar School Heads Association and the National Governance Association on outreach and widening access and enhancing the cultural strength of the school.
- We reviewed and approved a significant number of policies, many of which are statutory. These included safeguarding, pay policies, student attendance, relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), health and safety, curriculum, online safety and artificial intelligence.
- We conducted our annual governor skills audit and questionnaire. These documents are used to identify any gaps we need to fill to improve our effectiveness and to obtain feedback from individual governors.
- All governors participated in a self-evaluation questionnaire regarding how the Governing Board operates and meets its core responsibilities.
- As per our Governor Visits Policy, we visited the school during the school day and received presentations from and engaged in dialogue with staff and students covering a range of topics. Each visit is tailored to specific SDP objectives and includes student learning, student welfare, and premises and infrastructure related matters. A particular highlight was hearing from the student love of learning reps and neurodiversity champions.
- Governors with individual responsibilities for Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Careers, Data Protection, Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, Digital & AI, Sustainability, and Sixth Form Bursary had meetings with the responsible SLT members and reported the results of their visits to the Governing Board.
- Governors have attended a number of school events, including music concerts, drama productions, parent focus evenings and the Digital & AI conference, KS3, KS4 and KS5 celebration events and the school birthday assembly.
- We received a report following the Ofsted parent view survey and were delighted to see that the overriding response was extremely positive about the school, its leadership and the all-round education provision.
- We led a rigorous recruitment process for a new Headteacher, with Ms Emma Kilburn being selected as the successful candidate. We also supported the school with the recruitment of a new Deputy Head, Mrs Margot Johnston.

Looking forward to 2026-27

We will:

- Use the foundations of Mr Keary's exceptional track record to support Ms Kilburn to implement the school's vision statement and ongoing values – focusing on 'Community', 'Love of Learning' and 'Character', which dovetails with the school's Digital & AI Strategy of 'Interconnected', 'Interdisciplinary' and 'Interpersonal'
- Continue to monitor student wellbeing, student progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance, curriculum provision, safeguarding, health and safety, staff workload and financial performance
- Continue to hold leaders to account in fostering and delivering an inclusive environment for all students to thrive.
- Continue to focus on encouraging girls from disadvantaged (under-served) backgrounds and/or those who are local to sit our admissions test and also to apply to our Sixth Form
- Monitor the impact of the school's sustainability strategy
- Monitor implementation of the school's digital and AI strategy, including a focus on cyber security
- Maintain a sharp focus on financial performance against the school's budget
- Continue to ensure the school remains compliant with all the current government guidance and statutory requirements.

A full list of the governors, their responsibilities and the governor role description can be found on the school website [here](#). The Governing Board welcomes feedback and suggestions from parents regarding governance and strategic planning. The Governing Board can be contacted via governance@tiffingirls.org

Thank you for your continued support of the school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Beeching'.

Sarah Beeching
Chair of Governors