

Wheatfields Primary School – Governing Body

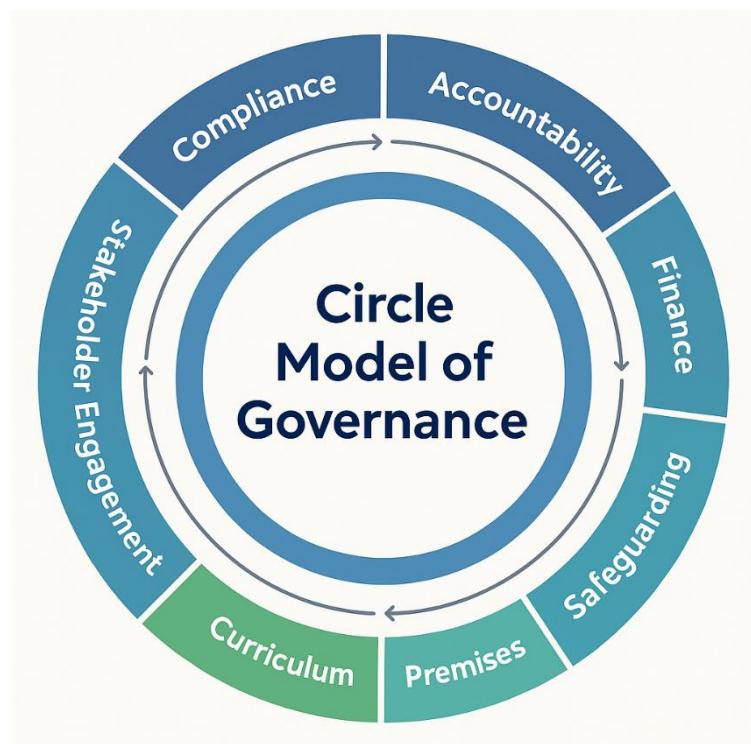
The Governing Body at Wheatfields Primary School oversees the strategic leadership, accountability and compliance of the school. Governors are legally responsible for ensuring the school is run effectively, meets statutory duties, and delivers high-quality education for all pupils. The board consists of governors with a wide range of expertise who work together across the full school year.

Our Approach to Governance: The Circle Model

Wheatfields operates the **Circle Model of Governance**, meaning all decision-making sits with the **full governing body**, rather than being delegated to standing committees.

Under this model:

- All governors meet regularly as a single group to consider the full breadth of school business.
- Discussions and decisions flow continuously from meeting to meeting across the year—hence the “circle.”
- Panels are still formed when legally required, for example for complaints, exclusions, staffing matters, or pay decisions.
- Working groups may be created for short-term tasks but do not have decision-making powers.



This approach reduces duplication, strengthens consistency, and ensures all governors have oversight of every strategic area.

What the Governing Body Does

The full governing body meets half termly, with additional meetings scheduled when needed. Its statutory and strategic responsibilities include:

1. Strategic Leadership

- Setting and maintaining the school's **vision, values and strategic direction**.
- Developing and monitoring the **School Improvement Plan**.
- Ensuring **equality, diversity and inclusion** principles shape the school's culture.

2. Educational Performance & Curriculum Oversight

- Monitoring **pupil progress** and **outcomes**.
- Ensuring the **curriculum** meets statutory requirements, including religious education, collective worship, and relationships/health education.
- Understanding and scrutinising **assessment** data and supporting school leaders to improve outcomes.
- Overseeing the school's responsibilities for **pupil wellbeing and inclusion**, including mental health, medical needs and nutrition.

3. Financial Oversight

- Approving the annual **budget** and ensuring spending reflects the school's **priorities**.
- Monitoring **financial performance**, ensuring money is used effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring **compliance** with local authority schemes for financial management.
- Considering audit outcomes and ensuring **robust financial controls**.

4. Safeguarding & Health and Safety

- Ensuring statutory **safeguarding** responsibilities are met.
- Overseeing **policies**, training and safer recruitment practice.
- Monitoring **health and safety** arrangements and ensuring risks are assessed and managed appropriately.

5. People & Leadership

- Appointing the Headteacher and **holding school leaders to account**.
- Conducting Headteacher **performance management**.
- Ensuring staff have access to appropriate **professional development**.
- Upholding a culture of professionalism, good conduct and **governor self-evaluation**.

6. Compliance & Statutory Duties

The governing body ensures the school complies with all legal and regulatory requirements, including:

- SEND and inclusion duties
- Data protection
- Complaints procedures
- Equality legislation
- Behaviour and attendance expectations

7. Engagement

- Engaging with parents, carers, the community and the local authority.
- Ensuring the school listens to stakeholders and maintains transparency in its work.

Working Practices Under the Circle Model

- **All key areas (finance, standards, staffing, premises, safeguarding, SEND)** are discussed within full governing body meetings.
- Link governors may support areas such as safeguarding, SEND, curriculum or finance by monitoring and reporting back, but **decision-making remains with the full board**.
- **Panels** are convened only when legally required (e.g., exclusions, staff discipline, formal complaints, pay appeals). These panels operate on an ad-hoc basis and dissolve after their task is completed, consistent with statutory expectations.

Why We Use This Model

- **Improved information flow:** All governors have sight of the same issues at the same time.
- **More efficient decisions:** Matters do not need to be passed between committees for approval.
- **Stronger accountability:** Governors develop a holistic understanding of school operations.
- **Reduced duplication and overlap** between traditional committees.
These advantages are also highlighted in sector guidance on the Circle Model.

If you require any further information about governance at Wheatfields, please contact the clerk: jane.learner@cambridgeshire.gov.uk