



Terms of reference – 2025/26

Agreed by FGB: 11th February 2026

Signed: *Jo Dunn*

Full Governing Board Terms of Reference

The Governing Board has a strategic role. It challenges and supports the school and is fully accountable for its decisions through collegiate decision making. It should set the aims and objectives and agree, monitor and review policies, targets and priorities.

Main duties of the Governing Board

- To agree constitutional matters, including procedures where the Governing Board has discretion.
- To seek to fill vacancies as they arise and to appoint new governors where it is possible for the governing board to do this, e.g. Community governors.
- To hold at least six Governing Board meetings a year.
- To appoint or remove the Chair and Vice Chair.
- To appoint or remove a Governance Professional to the Governing Board.
- To establish the committees or working party of the Governing Board and their Terms of Reference (where a committee is required, for example a separate Staffing Committee).
- To elect the Chair of any committee, or to delegate this to the committee itself.
- To appoint or remove a Governance Professional to each committee or working party.
- To suspend or remove a governor.
- To decide which functions of the Governing Board will be delegated to committees, groups and individuals, and review these annually.
- To work effectively for succession planning.
- To allow on exceptional occasions the ability for a governor to attend through the use of virtual technology such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, FaceTime or on speaker phone where a key vote is crucial.
- To receive reports from any individual governor to whom a decision has been delegated and to consider whether any further action by the Governing Board is necessary.
- To approve the first formal budget plan of the financial year.
- To keep school policies and practice under review and to make revisions where appropriate unless delegated to a committee (see policy schedule for delegation).
- Maintain a current pecuniary/ business interest register for governors.
- Provide induction and support and training for governors.
- To ensure that governors fulfil their monitoring responsibility.
- To ensure three governors have been suitably trained to undertake the Headteacher's performance management.
- To ensure that governors fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding under section 157/175 of the Education Act including accessing relevant training.

- Monitor incidents of racism, disability discrimination and safeguarding.
- Annually agree the Published Admission Number (PAN).
- Annually agree Governors with statutory responsibilities.

Quorum

At least 50% of the number of governors in post.

Core responsibilities

- To ensure that all aspects listed in each responsibility area are undertaken and reported back through minutes, clear monitoring reports and followed up where necessary through delegated actions.
- To review as necessary all policies/ documents according to the policy and document schedule.
- To make decisions that are delegated to the FGB.
- To abide by the governor protocols concerning conduct and visits to the school.

Responsibilities: School Improvement

- To ensure the School Self Evaluation (SEF) is accurate and up to date and to develop sections relevant to the need for focused governor monitoring in conjunction with the senior leaders.
- To respond as an FGB on matters relating to the preparation for, or action following, an Ofsted inspection.
- To monitor key issues of the School Improvement Plan.
- To receive and, where necessary, recommend action on reports of:
 - o behaviour of pupils both in lessons and around the school
 - o bullying
 - o views of pupils and parents

Responsibilities: Financial policy planning and monitoring

- To provide guidance and assistance to the Headteacher in all matters relating to budgeting and finance.
- To review, adopt and monitor a Finance Policy.
- To review, adopt and monitor all additional financial policies, including a charging and remissions policy.
- To recommend the level of delegation to the Headteacher for the day-to-day financial management of the school.
- To review any internal / external audit reports as to the effectiveness of the financial procedures and controls.
- To establish and maintain a three-year financial plan, taking into the account priorities of the School Improvement Plan, roll projection and signals from central government and (if applicable) the LA regarding future years' budgets, within the constraints of available information.
- To draft and propose to the Governing Board for adoption an annual school budget considering the priorities of the School Improvement Plan.
- To make decisions in respect of service level agreements and to consider the awarding of contracts by tender according to the stated amount within the Finance Policy.

- To ensure that enough funds are set aside for pay increments as set out in the Pay Policy and as recommended by the Headteacher.
- To monitor the income and expenditure throughout the year of all delegated and devolved funds against the annual budget plan and to approve any budget virements that will from time to time be necessary in response to the evolving requirements of the school.
- To monitor the impact of spending decisions upon educational achievement in school.
- To receive at least termly budget monitoring reports from the Headteacher.
- To report back to each meeting of the Governing Board and to alert them of potential problems or significant anomalies at an early date and provide them with the information they need to perform their duties.
- To review, complete and submit the School Financial Value Standard (SFVS).
- To undertake any remedial action identified as part of the SFVS.
- To receive and act upon any issues identified by a Local Authority audit.
- To recommend the amount which can be spent between budget headings by the Headteacher without prior agreement of the board.
- To consider each year's School Improvement Plan (or post-Ofsted Action Plan) priorities, and to draw up an annual budget plan for reporting to the Governing Board
- To ensure the audit of unofficial school funds (where in place).
- The Chair of Governors should ensure a financial skills matrix has been completed by those Governors directly responsible with financial management and signpost training where required.

Responsibilities: Premises

- To provide support and guidance for the Governing Board and the Headteacher on all matters relating to the maintenance and development of the premises and grounds, including health and safety.
- To ensure that an annual inspection of the premises and grounds takes place, and a report is received identifying any issues.
- To inform the Governing Board of the annual inspection report and set out a proposed order of priorities for maintenance and development for their approval.
- To arrange professional surveys and emergency work as necessary. (The Headteacher is authorised to commit expenditure without the prior approval of the Board in any emergency where delay would result in further damage or present a risk to the health and safety of pupils or staff. In this event the Headteacher would normally be expected to consult the Chair and/or Vice Chair of Governors at the earliest opportunity).
- To create a project committee or working party where necessary to oversee any major developments.
- To establish and keep under review an Accessibility Plan and a Premises Development Plan.
- To review, adopt and monitor a Health and Safety policy.

Responsibilities: Staffing

- To ensure that the school is staffed sufficiently for the fulfilment of the school development plan and the effective operation of the school
- To establish and oversee the operation of the school's Appraisal Policy - including the arrangements and operation of the school's appraisal procedures for the Headteacher.
- To establish a Pay Policy for all categories of staff.

- To be responsible for the administration and review of the Pay Policy.
- To ensure that staffing procedures (including recruitment procedures) follow equalities legislation.
- To annually review and approve procedures for dealing with staff discipline and grievances.
- To monitor approved procedures for staff discipline and grievance and ensure that staff are kept informed of these.
- To ensure staff selection procedures conform with safer recruitment practice and the requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and to review these procedures as necessary.
- In consultation with staff, to oversee any process leading to staff reductions.
- To establish the annual and longer-term salary budgets and other costs relating to personnel, e.g. training.

Responsibilities: Safeguarding in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

- To monitor and review all requirements under Safeguarding to ensure that the Governing Board complies with their duties under legislation. To do this, they must ensure that:
 - policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are always effective and comply with the law.
 - they have a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility for their school's or college's safeguarding arrangements.
 - appropriate policies and procedures in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare including an effective child protection policy that is updated at least annually and is compliant with national and local guidance.
 - appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, are in place to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risk of them going missing in future.
 - a proportionate risk-based approach is in place to the level of safeguarding information that is provided to temporary staff and volunteers.
 - policies and procedures, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, and particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by all staff.
 - all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training should be regularly updated in line with local guidance.
 - all staff should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
 - all Governors should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This training should be updated regularly.
 - that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety.
 - recruitment and selection policies and procedures prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.
 - there are procedures in place to manage concerns/allegations, against staff (including volunteers) that might indicate they would pose a risk of harm to children.

- To receive regular reports on Safeguarding and act where necessary to address any issues.

Other committees are established for areas of specific need e.g. Headteacher's Performance Management Panel, Staffing/Pay Committee, panels for exclusion, discipline, complaints etc. These are formed as the need is required for specific instances.

Standing Order for Meetings of the Governing Body

Governors are expected to:

- Arrive in good time for the start of any meeting, having read all the paperwork sent to them in connection with the agenda, and prepared with questions to ask or comments to make.
- Bring a copy of the School Plan and be familiar with its milestones and priorities.
- Limit discussion to policies and actions and not people, ensuring challenge, support and celebration is captured within the minutes.
- Participate in discussion and listen to the views and comments of others.
- Work collectively as a team acting with integrity, objectivity, and honesty and in the best interests of
- the school.
- Be brief and adhere to any time limits placed against agenda items.
- Follow up on action points between meetings.

The following persons have the right to attend all meetings of the Governing Body

- Headteacher
- Clerk
- Any governor
- Associate members (unless the Governing Board requires them to leave for items relating to individual members of staff or pupils).

The following persons will be invited to attend regular meetings of the Governing Body

- Deputy Headteacher
 - Members of the senior leadership team
 - Subject leaders
 - School Business Manager
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- Full Governing Board meetings will be held at the school (or via online) 6 times each year, one in each half term. The clerk will prepare a suggested calendar of meeting dates for the following year for approval at the meeting held in term 6 of each year, following evaluation of impact of the structure.
 - The Clerk to the Governing Body will prepare a draft agenda, which will be finalised and approved by the Chair. Governors wishing to place items on the agenda should give notice to the clerk and provide a copy of any supporting papers.
 - Items of 'Any Other Business' will be taken at the beginning of the meeting and either added to the agenda, delegated to a pair, or placed on the agenda of the next meeting.
 - Voting, where necessary, will normally be taken by a show of hands; however, the Chair may determine a secret ballot where this has been requested by two or more Governors. Where there is an equal division of votes the Chair will have a second or casting vote.
 - All meetings will be convened by the Clerk. Any 3 members of the Governing Board may request a meeting by giving written notice to the Clerk, which includes a summary of the business to be

transacted. The Clerk will then prepare an agenda to call a meeting.

- Each meeting will commence at 6.00pm and will be limited to 3 hours in duration. Where business has not been completed within the agreed time, those governors present may resolve to continue the meeting to complete the agenda. Any business not completed will form part of the agenda for the next meeting.
- Draft minutes will be approved for upload to Governor Hub by the Chair within 3 weeks of the meeting, before being formally approved by the Governing Body at the next meeting.

Terms of Reference for Individuals or Monitoring Pairs

Any individual to whom a governor monitoring responsibility has been delegated is expected to work within the following terms of reference in conjunction with the protocols and procedures set out in the Governor Visits Policy.

Main duties:

To monitor an identified area on the School Plan or a statutory function of the Governing Body and report to the Governing Body, ensuring the challenge and support of the committee the monitoring is replacing is captured.

It is expected that 3 monitoring visits will be made to the school during the year unless school circumstances necessitate more. A visit does not necessarily have to take place during the time when pupils are in school and could be just as effective as a meeting between Governor(s) and the lead professional at the end of the day as mutually agreed.

Skill Set

- To meet with the lead professional within the school to gain an understanding of the scope of the area/target and the activities the school is conducting to achieve success.
- To ensure holding to account by the questions which would have been asked as part of a committee meeting are undertaken within the visit with the answers documented.
- To undertake any necessary training (in or out of school) to enable effective monitoring of the areas/subject.
- To monitor the progress of school activities towards the priority milestone or duty.
- To evaluate the extent of success at the end of the set timescale.

All visits to the school will be arranged with reference to the Headteacher and in accordance with the Circle Model Governor Visits policy.

Reports will be submitted for approval by the Headteacher and the Chair within the school within one week of the visit, and then be lodged with the Clerk of governors for distribution as soon as possible, at least seven days before the next Governing Body meeting.

The following designated Governor roles need to be appointed by the Governing Body.

- School Finance (monitoring pair)
- SEND
- Safeguarding
- Wellbeing & Mental Health (staff and pupils)
- Pupil Premium
- Health and Safety
- Governing Development and Training

SDP Priority links:

- Priority 1: Emotionally Healthy Practices and Strong Behaviour Management and Wellbeing
- Priority 2: Curriculum Leadership Development through Subject Leaders to ensure clear oversight of pupil groups and ensure inclusive, high-quality teaching and learning
- Priority 3: Curriculum Development in EYFS and KS1 so pupils have the best opportunity to achieve a Good Level of Development or the Expected Standard

Before undertaking any monitoring, governors will read the Governor Visits policy, Governing Body code of conduct and the school staff code of conduct.

Having designated/ delegated Governors does not reduce the collective accountability of the Governing Board for all its functions. The Board will need to ensure that its agenda and reporting mechanisms enables ALL Board members to have strategic overview and responsibility to enable effective decision making.

Terms of Reference for Monitoring the School Budget/School Finance

A pair of governors or an individual will be assigned to strategically monitor the financial management of the school on behalf of the Governing Board.

Three monitoring visits should be made each year, ensuring all financial questions and answers are captured within the subsequent report to enable collective decision making. The visits and reports should include monitoring of the following:

- To maintain an up to date 'balanced' three-year budget plan, which shows clear links to the 'School Development' and 'Staffing' plans.
- To report monitoring and rollover to the full Governing Body, highlighting any significant variances.
- To evaluate any virement recommendations and report to the Governing Body.
- Analyse and report on Tenders for Contract Services in accordance with Body delegated limits.
- To keep in-school financial procedures under review.
- To benchmark school financial performance against similar schools and report to the Governing Board.
- To evaluate proposed expenditure within the delegated limits following recommendations from the Headteacher and present to the Governing Board.
- To draft the Schools Financial Value Standard, following discussions with the bursar, using the support tools, for Governing Board approval before 31st March.
- To ensure that the school is working within the guidance of the SFVS recommendations.
- To ensure that all spending provides 'Value for money' in terms of raising standards in education and is wisely spent.
- To monitor benchmarking both locally and nationally and report to the Governing Body.
- To monitor and evaluate the management of the Voluntary Fund and to receive the audited accounts.
- To monitor the spend of extra funding such as pupil premium, ensuring its use has impact.
- Review finance policy; lettings policy; Whistle blowing policy; Governor allowance policy; making recommendations to the Governing Board.
- Ensure annual Governor financial skills audit is undertaken and evaluated.
- Review the business continuity plan making recommendations to the Governing Board.
- Review compliance audit reports, ensuring the Governing Board follows recommendations and actions in a timely manner.
- To make regular reports to the Governing Body and ensure that key financial decisions are recorded correctly in the minutes.

Terms of Reference for Staffing/Pay Committee

The Governing Board will delegate all pay decisions except for decisions relating to the pay of the Teaching staff to the Headteacher. All decisions relating to the pay for members of the Teaching staff, Leadership team, including the Headteacher will be taken by the Staffing/Pay Committee of the Governing Board.

Main duties:

- To ensure the achievement of all the pay policy objectives and principles in a fair, reasonable, and equitable manner.
- To undertake an annual pay review for all staff and reach decisions through the application of any relevant criteria measured by the school's performance appraisal process.
- To consider fully all recommendations for pay progression and any other relevant information made available.
- To ensure all members of staff are informed individually of the outcome of the annual pay review in writing within ten working days of the decision being made.
- To observe all statutory and contractual obligations.
- To recommend to the Governing Board changes to the policy and to consult with staff and recognised unions on those proposed changes.
- To seek advice from the Local Authority where appropriate.
- To maintain an accurate written record of all meetings and, having due regard to confidentiality, to report its decisions to the Governing Board.
- To recommend to the Governing Body the annual budget for pay and to ensure that sources of external funding for pay are accessed to maximum effect.

All decisions made by the Staffing/Pay Committee will take due account of the appraisal statement and all relevant information available from an appraisal or other review of an employee's skills, abilities, performance and any other factors deemed to be relevant. This will include any recommendation made by an employee's appraiser.

Membership [3 governors]

Membership of the Staffing/Pay Committee will not be open to anyone who could benefit financially, directly or indirectly from such membership or any of the decisions of the committee.

Neither the Headteacher nor staff governors may serve on this group. The Headteacher will attend the Staffing/Pay Committee meetings to present appraisal information and pay progression recommendations.

Associate members may be elected by the Full Governing Board to serve on the Committee if they have relevant expertise, additional skills and or can offer a different perspective. However, they do not count towards the membership or quoracy of the meeting.

Associate members:

- Can chair committees and vote in committee meetings if:
 - It's been agreed by the governing board, and

- They are over 18
- Can't cast deciding votes in a committee if the vote is evenly split

This is set out in section 5.3.5 of the [maintained schools governance guide](#), and regulations 7, 12, 14(3), 24 and 26(6) of [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#).

The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors should not both be members of the Staffing/Pay Committee as this will inhibit one of these key senior roles being available for any pay appeals that may arise.

Terms of Reference for Panel Hearings

Main duties:

- To make any decisions under the Governing Board's personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, grievance, capability, where the Headteacher is the subject of the action.
- To make any decisions under the Governing Body's personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, grievance, capability, unless delegated to the Headteacher.
- To make any determination or decision under the Governing Board's Complaints Procedure for Parents.
- To consider any appeals against a decision to dismiss a member of staff or to a decision short of dismissal e.g. disciplinary, grievance or capability.
- To make any determinations on behalf of the Governing Body in relation to staff redundancy and redundancy appeals.
- To consider any representations by parents in the case of an exclusion (parents/guardians do not have to be invited).
- To consider the appropriateness of any permanent exclusion or fixed term exclusion which totals 15 days or more in one term or where a pupil is denied the chance to take a public examination (parents/guardians must be invited).

All panels are to be convened by the Clerk to the Governing Board.

NB Any governor who has participated on a panel for a staffing decision, cannot sit on the appeal panel.

Membership [not less than 3]

Any three governors from a pool of governors comprising the whole Governing Board, who are:

1. Suitably qualified to undertake the role, and
2. Available on the date specified.

The Headteacher is disqualified from serving in this role.

Any governor having a connection with either a pupil, a member of staff or the incident in question which could affect their ability to act impartially should not serve on the panel.

Terms of Reference for the Headteacher Appraisal Panel

Main duties:

- To meet annually before the 31st December with an independent advisor to discuss and determine the Headteacher appraisal objectives for the coming year (the planning meeting).
- To review, with the support of the independent advisor, the performance of the headteacher against the agreed appraisal objectives and determine the recommendation on pay progression (the review meeting).
- To prepare and agree the Headteacher appraisal review statement, and report to the Governing Board.
- To monitor through the year, including a mid-year review meeting, the performance of the Headteacher against the agreed objectives and to ensure that appropriate support and development opportunities are provided.
- To make recommendations to the Governing Board in respect of pay progression.

Membership [3 governors + Independent Advisor]

Membership of the Headteachers Appraisal Panel will not be open to anyone who could benefit financially, directly or indirectly from such membership or any of the decisions of the panel.

Staff Governors may not serve on this panel.