



ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/26

The Core Functions of the Governing Body

- ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
- ensuring that the Headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

This statement seeks to outline the impact of governance arrangements at the school throughout the course of the 2025/26 academic year.

Governor Membership, Vacancies and Attendance

The Instrument of Government allows for 9 governors across different categories.

Current membership: 9

Current vacancies: 0

LA Governor retired after 21 years service. Recruited Mrs Ruth Hopkins from the Parish Council to take over. A parent governor whose term was due to complete in September 2026 has stepped down due to family and work commitments. Mrs Zara Leeder has been successfully recruited as a replacement parent governor. Looking ahead, two co-opted governor's terms of office are due to conclude in the next academic year, and we will look to recruit into these positions.

Chair: Joanne Dale

Vice-Chair: Kirsty Miller

Clerk: Kay Naughton

Attendance: Over the course of the year, Governors at Lionel Walden Primary School demonstrate an overall positive attendance and engagement with their work.

http://www.lionelwalden.cambs.sch.uk/web/attendance_at_governing_board_meetings/234309

The Structure of Governance

The Governing Body operates under the Circle Model of governance and has convened as a Full Governing Body on five occasions during the 2025/26 academic year. In addition to these formal meetings, governors have had additional information focused on the teaching of reading and writing across the school.

Safeguarding and attendance remain key priorities for the Governing Body and are monitored regularly throughout the year via dedicated governor monitoring visits, as well as monthly meetings between the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher. Both areas are standing agenda items at each Full Governing Body meeting, ensuring consistent oversight. Responsibility for safeguarding, including the regular review of related policies, rests with the Governing Body as a whole. In addition to these core functions, the Board convenes a Pay Committee and a Headteacher Performance Management Panel annually. Other committees—such as those convened for complaints, exclusions, or other statutory matters—are constituted on an as-needed basis, in accordance with the relevant policies and procedural guidance.

Impact of the work of the Full Governing Body

Impact of the work of the Full Governing Body Over the course of the 2025/26 academic year, the Governing Body has provided strategic leadership and robust challenge, resulting in several notable achievements:

- **Continued Strong Academic Outcomes:** Key Stage 2 outcomes in Reading, Writing, Maths, and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) were excellent, reflecting the school's continued commitment to high standards. EYFS also remains strong at 82% GLD. Clear and systematic teaching of phonics has led to strong progress and outcomes – 90% Year 1 Pass Rate. The school achieved outstanding results in the MTC, with 67% of pupils attaining full marks and an average score of 24.2. This success reflects a continued whole-school focus on times tables fluency, supported by initiatives such as targeted questioning in assemblies, regular chanting, and the use of Times Tables Rock Stars, all underpinned by a coordinated progress strategy.

Reading, Writing & Maths combined – expected standard 77%

Reading expected standard – 83%

Writing expected standard – 80%

Maths expected standard – 93%

- **Data and Assessment Improvements:** Insight continues to support data input and analysis, improving the quality and efficiency of reporting, and supporting informed decision-making.

- **School Development Plan (SDP) Progress:** Targets outlined within the SDP have been achieved and have led to measurable improvements across the curriculum. In reading, developments in approaches to whole class teaching, especially fluency and prosody, have led to increased progress. Developments in writing have made a significant impact on the quality of children's independent writing. This has been acknowledged during recent moderation by the LA. In mathematics, the continued focus on recapping fundamentals means that children are better placed to use reasoning skills when solving problems.

- **Financial Oversight:** The Governing Body has continued to manage the budget with diligence amid significant financial constraints. Ongoing restructuring has been necessary to ensure staffing levels and deployment remain aligned with pupil needs and educational standards. Significant

decreases have been seen in the In-Year deficit, although the school still needs to have careful management of the budget to make further savings.

Key Challenges Addressed

The Governing Body has engaged proactively with a number of key challenges:

- **Financial Pressures:** Operating within a deficit budget has required difficult decisions, particularly regarding the deployment of support staff and the allocation of resources to meet individual pupil needs. Due to the retirement of our long-standing Finance Manager, a suitable replacement with enough knowledge of school budgets has been difficult to find. We have successfully appointed but ongoing training will need to be given to ensure that she has effective oversight of the budget and support the headteacher effectively.
- **Premises Issues:** Persistent issues with kitchen facilities have posed ongoing operational challenges and required careful monitoring and liaison with relevant contractors and providers.
- **SEND Provision:** Meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has been increasingly complex, particularly where behaviour needs are high. Limited funding has necessitated the allocation of additional resources, which in turn has had implications for provision across the wider school. The reduction in the number of TAs (down from 16 to 9 over the past 2 years) has impacted on the quality and quantity of interventions that have taken place.

Governor Training

Governors work collectively, so we are always able to benefit from our different points of view and considerations within meetings. However, the Governing Body has also benefitted from training courses on the following topics throughout the course of the year;

- Safeguarding training
- Cyber Security for staff
- The New OFSTED Framework
- Staff Wellbeing
- Pupil Premium Strategy Training

Governor Monitoring

In addition to attending formal meetings, governors are expected to engage actively with the life of the school through planned monitoring visits. These visits provide valuable insight into the day-to-day workings of the school and enable governors to deepen their understanding of specific priority areas, often aligned with the curriculum or School Development Plan.

Throughout the 2025/26 academic year, governors have undertaken focused monitoring in the following areas:

- **English**– Governors explored teaching approaches, pupil engagement, and the impact of curriculum developments on progress and attainment.
- **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)** – Monitoring focused on how effectively the school identifies and supports pupils with additional needs, and how provision is adapted within available resources.
- **Curriculum** – including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Online Safety – Governors reviewed the school’s approach to delivering statutory curriculum content and how it supports pupils’ personal development and digital awareness.
- **Wellbeing** – Visits considered the ways in which pupil and staff wellbeing are promoted and how this contributes to a positive school culture.
- **Early Years** – Governors examined Early Years, the structure of learning and the progress that children make.
- **Pupil Premium** – Monitoring considered how funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils and the impact of targeted strategies on learning outcomes.
- **Attendance and Safeguarding** – Governors reviewed systems for monitoring attendance and ensuring safeguarding procedures are robust and consistently applied.

Compliance

Safeguarding Governance: The Governing Body has continued to prioritise the development and maintenance of a strong safeguarding culture across the school. This commitment is reflected in several key areas of our work:

Safeguarding as a Standing Item: Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at every Full Governing Body meeting. The Headteacher provides regular updates and detailed information, enabling governors to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and maintain effective oversight.

Policy and Procedure Review: The Governing Body ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and ratified in line with statutory requirements. Link Governors play a key role in this process by scrutinising relevant documentation and working with school leaders to ensure that all policies are up to date and reflect current practice.

Through these measures, the Board ensures that safeguarding remains embedded in the school’s culture and that the welfare of pupils is always a central focus.

Forward Planning

Looking ahead, the Governing Body has identified several key areas of focus to ensure continued strategic oversight and school improvement:

Governor Succession Planning: The term of office for The Chair is due to expire next year and the governing body will look to replace from within. Measure to support this transition will take place during the next academic year.

Inclusion for All Framework: Inclusion is the removal of barriers and ensuring a culture of belonging for all pupils. Within the 'Inclusion for all Framework' we will create a sense of belonging and promote well-being and attendance through safeguarding, curriculum, special education needs and disabilities support, behaviour and transition.

Strategic Curriculum Priorities: The School Development Plan for the upcoming academic year will focus on key areas including improving attendance, developing reading fluency and prosody, embedding new teaching strategies for writing and ensuring the foundations of maths, reading and writing are secure.

Other information and contact

Further information regarding the work of the Governing Body can be found at:

<http://www.lionelwalden.cambs.sch.uk>

Stakeholders can contact the Governing Board via the school office: telephone 01354 740405, email: Office@lionelwalden.cambs.sch.uk or by emailing the Chair of Governors: chair@lionelwalden.cambs.sch.uk