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# Introduction by Ginny Rhodes

CEO

The Circle Trust is an educational charity, and it exists to do one thing and that is to advance education for the public benefit. This is our sole purpose.

The multi-academy trust sector is still relatively young and so it is important to remind all stakeholders (as often as I might!) that The Circle Trust is not a “mini-local authority”: the schools together are the Trust, the Trust is the schools.

**Our Trust brings tangible benefits in working together for the benefit of children and young people, their families and staff that could not be achieved working alone.**

In our eighth year, we continue to grow. Our Growth strategy aptly named “Expanding our Circle” aims for our Trust to become 10,000 pupils, this means we are now just over half way! At twelve schools we can now speak with certainty as to the significant benefits of working together but it would be equally right to highlight that our work remains effortful against the background of current economic conditions, strain on resources and the long lingering negative effects of the pandemic. The newly released White Paper will be seminal in tackling some of these most prevalent issues.

Our essential work is to improve schools, but this is not enough. Education has wider purposes in intellectual, social and cultural development, the formation of character and helping pupils understand they play a role and contribute to society to support the common good. Schools hold a unique position in society; they are anchors of communities and communities in themselves.

We end the last era of OFSTED inspections in a wonderfully strong place with all schools in our family circle judged in all areas as Good or Outstanding. Later in the Circular I set out the new grading arrangements for the new inspection framework. As it ought to be, the revised inspection framework is rightly exacting.





“The Virtuous Circle” remains, against stiff competition, my favourite circle pun! A virtuous circle is of course an image where actions produce positive results for the benefit of all involved, so a wholly apt name for our Trust staff continuous professional development work. In April 2026, we gather for our second Full Circle common training day with the title “to flourish”. We look forward to meeting together and enjoying speakers who will remind us all of the important work of education. This would not be possible without the great generosity of Wellington College in gifting their magnificent facilities.

As an educational charity we welcome our civic duty to give back to the system. We embarked last year to innovate the way we arrange governance in the Trust. This work has been admired across the sector and we are very pleased to share this learning with other Trusts who are similarly keen to move to next generation governance.

Of course, all of this work always “circles back” to our core purpose, which is to improve education for the public benefit and especially for the children and young people for who we are responsible.

**To do this work is nothing short of a privilege.**



# Our History

The Circle Trust, established in 2018, was created to serve the local area and be geographically committed to our central location in Wokingham and the surrounding counties.

The Circle Trust was borne out of a desire that all children and young people have an excellent well-rounded education and flourish in first-rate schools where the best teaching, the best facilities and the most up-to-date resources are made available to them. The phrase “to flourish” captures our unlimited ambition for children, young people and adults in this Trust.

In the early days we spent hours debating our name! On the one hand a name seems a rather frivolous thing, but on the other we do think names matter.

We chose “The Circle Trust” as it symbolically reflects our approach, our way of working, indeed the ethos of how we operate. It is a name that is deliberately neutral and without association of a specific school. In our Trust, we know it is important to treat every school as individual and unique and feel strongly that a name shouldn't be connected to a single institution.

One of our core values is that of being inclusive and so we wanted our name to encapsulate all sorts of schools, whatever their type or phase. Our logo circles give a pictorial sense of inclusivity which can naturally expand, with the overlapping circles depicting our desire to collaborate.

The Circle Trust was created by a secondary and a primary school through the crucible and strong foundations of two schools, across the full educational phase with top-rate Governing Bodies!

We began the work with the view that if we were not utterly convinced that it would improve the educational experience and provision for children and young people for whom we were responsible then we would not continue. The material advantages of creating and being part of a Trust were clear, thus we began with not the what but critically the how and why.





Governance and leadership took a very considerable period to diligently curate the fundamental beliefs and values of the Trust before seeking approval and incorporation.

This time was not wasted. Far from it. It meant in the very early years of operation we worked with aplomb and could build quickly from this strong foundation.

Currently, there are eleven schools operating in the Trust: two Secondary, four Primary, two Junior and three Infants.

During this reporting period Owlsmoor Primary School was awarded their academy orders and has now legally joined the Trust.

Hampshire County Council and the Department of Education awarded The Circle Trust the presumption to open and run a brand-new school, "Hartland Village Primary School", the planning permission for this school has been awarded and building has commenced. This school will open in September 2027.

# Our Vision, Values and Ethos

The Circle Trust is an educational charity, and it exists to do one thing and that is to advance education for the public benefit.

This is our sole purpose.

**Our Trust's vision is**

**All children and young people deserve to have an excellent well-rounded education and to flourish in first rate schools with the best teaching, the best facilities and the most up to date resources made available to them.**

The phrase "to flourish" captures our unlimited ambition for children, young people and adults in this Trust.

# Our Values

Our values are our cultural north star; they drive our behaviour and decision making.



The highest educational outcomes for every learner is paramount.



Preserving the unique identity and ethos of all our schools is essential.



To be anything but utterly inclusive is non-negotiable.



Being self-reflective is essential in encouraging innovation, our Trust is always driven to improve further.



What we say is what we do. We recognise talent, foster expertise and believe well-being for all is fundamental.



Our Trust promotes collaborating with others and being outward looking.



# Our Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities are curated for a five-year period and set out our direction. Priorities are grouped under the pillar descriptors of high-quality trusts which are: high quality and inclusive education; school improvement; people; finance and operations and governance and leadership. The Trust Improvement Plan (TIP) is agreed annually to deliver these strategic priorities.

**The strategic priorities for the period 2024 – 2029:**



## High quality and inclusive education

We will be The Circle Trust in everything we do. We will continue to work with absolute authenticity (what we say is what we do) as a distinct and compelling organisation so that those inside and outside the organisation can recognise who we are, what we aspire to and how and why we do it.

We will seek greater equity through education for all pupils by promoting a stronger education system that creates social mobility, justice and prioritises those presently disadvantaged.

We will embrace diversity and inclusion, not just because it is the correct thing to do; we pursue it and chase it down because it is inherently better.

## School improvement

Everything we do is aimed at supporting pupils to flourish, enhancing their life chances.

We will bring cohesion to what we want pupils to know, do and experience because as a trust we have capacity at scale and can gather the best expertise to codify what works across many schools.



## People

We will be an employer where everyone feels a genuine part of a thriving and successful organisation, where employees have their talents and expertise fostered and where staff well-being is a fundamental priority.

We will seek to innovate and reimagine working in schools by transforming our practices, using artificial intelligence's rapidly evolving opportunities alongside our human wisdom to improve learning and achievement and reduce workload meaningfully for all.



## Finance and Operations

We will ensure every penny is spent on education, using income and utilising reserves to make the greatest possible impact so that every pupil can achieve their potential.

We will maintain, improve and invest in the trust estate so that it is a safe, sustainable and inspiring learning environment.

We will never ignore our duties in respect to the climate; we will not be passive in this work and will always think and act in a way that goes quite beyond our own tenure in this Trust.



## Governance and Leadership

We will be outward looking and engage with other civic actors for the wider good. Our civic contribution will be to support the conditions for system leaders to address complex issues affecting children and young people that require different actors to work together.

We will attract, keep, and train high quality governance to avoid exposing schools and the Trust to undue risk.

We will simplify and reduce the workload of governance at all layers and succession plan for key roles.





## Our Values in Action

Our fundamental view remains that preserving the unique identity and ethos for all schools is essential, but we are far more than a collection of individual schools working nicely together.

We together are The Circle Trust, the Trust is the schools, the schools are the Trust.

As a single legal entity, we share the responsibility of all children and young people across the Trust - we have the ability and privilege to improve education for all pupils.

By working together in this way, we become more than the sum of our parts and a great deal more than any one school could achieve alone.

Improving the quality of education is always our wildly important goal. The Circle Trust is a specialist organisation – we exist to do one thing – to run and improve schools to advance education for the public benefit.

In our view the foundations of strong schools are: high quality teaching, well regarded pastoral care, a well-designed curriculum, vibrant opportunities to enrich students' experience with consistently strong progress and attainment above the national average.

**In short, schools where adults want to work and where parents want their child to attend.**

The Circle Trust has a strong theorised model of improvement; we set the conditions to support the quality of education systematically.

As a Trust we can scale improvement, reduce professionals' workload, and improve the quality of provision. We work neither in an utterly autonomous nor in a totally aligned way; instead, our work benefits from both styles bringing efficiency and effectiveness to our endeavours. No two schools are alike (even identical twins have different fingerprints!).

Every school differs in context – finding a one size fits all approach to improving schools therefore is folly. Whilst the improvement of schools is a field of practice there are core essentials, guided by evidence, which set the conditions for improving the quality of education.

## **Our strategic focus as a Trust therefore rests on these central tenets:**

### **Improving the Quality of Education**

We hold a matured conceptual understanding of school improvement. Our work as a Trust crucially includes every aspect and detail of a school's strategic and operational work. As a result, we see school improvement as a complex web of levers which involves every facet, however minor, of running a school.



### **Headteachers**

The centrality of the Headteacher for school improvement is indisputable. Headteachers are the lead professional, their leadership capacity to inspire, pace set, strengthen standards, drive improvement, endurance and professional competency is critical to securing and sustaining improvement. Schools thrive when Headteachers with governance set a strong and positive culture, have the agency and accountability of decision making and use the laser sharp knowledge of their school's cohort and community to inform and drive improvement. The core duty of our Trust is consequently to set the conditions so that Headteachers and other school leaders have the knowledge, capacity, resource, encouragement, expertise, and strength to lead.

### **Staff**

There is no improvement for pupils without improvement in teaching, and no improvement in teaching without the best professional development for staff. Evidence tells us that “the virtuous circle” of professional development is the most impactful tool to improve the quality of teaching and improving learning. No matter how good the design of the curriculum it is wholly reliant on its implementation by teachers supported by all staff. We curate conditions to improve workload, promote career development opportunities, give professional support and make staff well-being a fundamental priority.

As a Trust we are Talent Seekers, Makers, Attractors and Keepers.

# Governance

The Circle Trust will always hold governance in the highest esteem. As a Trust, we will always act in the best interests of our children and young people. As a single legal entity, our Trust is hardwired for collaboration and shared accountability; all schools are crucially connected, and we learn from each other.

Trustees take the ultimate legal responsibility and accountability for our Trust; they act equally for all and depend on the insight and high ambition from the wider governance circles. All governance shares in the drive to improve the quality of education for all children and young people across the Trust.



## Moral duty

Education remains the best tool to social inequality and discrimination and build towards a truly inclusive society – we can change minds and challenge prejudice. There will always be work to be done to improve diversity within Trust leadership and governance – it is vital for positive role models from a wide range of backgrounds and ethnicities to help break down stereotypes and prejudice and encourage all to broaden horizons and ambitions. Bringing diversity to the curriculum, staff bodies, governance and practice is a marathon which ought to be done at the pace of a sprint!

We will never ignore our duties in respect to the climate, we will not be passive in this work and will always think in a way that goes quite beyond our own tenure in this Trust.

Finally, we always act in line with the Nolan Principles of public service which are selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership.



## Civic contributor

We welcome our civic duty. Our primary focus is to improve the quality of education in our schools, but this is not enough. Education has wider purposes in intellectual, social and cultural development, the formation of character and helping pupils understand they play a role and contribute to society to support the common good. We are committed to creating the conditions for pupils to flourish as adults.

Schools hold a unique position in society; they are anchors of communities and communities in themselves. Our Trust has reputational authenticity; in other words, what we say is what we do.

We never seek to harm schools to the left or the right of us. We will communicate well with and listen to stakeholders. Parents and carers have the right to understand the role and benefit of the school their child attends being part of our Trust.

## Commercial benefit

By working together as a single legal entity, we become more than the sum of our parts and a great deal more than any one school could achieve alone. As a result, we can seize economies of scale advantages to save money, securing best value for money decisions. Finances allocated to The Circle Trust are prioritised to realising our vision. We work with absolute integrity. Our stewardship of public funds and resources will always be open to scrutiny and above reproach.

The Circle Trust is not a passive administrative entity but an active organisation adding value to this family of schools.

As a Trust our ambition is clear; to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people.

# Our Trust's Governance

Governance arrangements in The Circle Trust are crafted to ensure all aspects of performance of the Trust are rigorously held to account. Members, Trustees and indeed all governance circles work within the seven principles of public life (Nolan).

All those involved in governance comply with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and the law. They always act in the best interests of children and young people and manage all resources responsibly and with integrity. Our Trust's [Scheme of Delegation](#) sets out how our Trust is governed.

## Our Members

Members ensure that the vision and values of the Trust are upheld. They are tasked with assessing if the Trustees are performing well by ensuring that the purpose of the Trust is being met, and its charitable objects are being fulfilled. That said there are some critical decisions that sit with Members and even more so if a Trust is failing. A Member may not be an employee of the Trust.



Robin Scurlock



Aileen Feeney



Paul Jeffery



Yun Tay



Geoffrey Beedham

# Our Trustees



Andrew Beckett  
(Chair of Trustees)



Arnab Mukherjee



Barbara Wojna



Chris Rothwell



David Walker



Katherine Baker



Kevin Addington



Kevin Magee



Molli Cleaver



Sara Attra



Stuart Riley



Tariro Madzingira



Trustees are responsible for the strategic leadership of The Circle Trust. The role comes with specific legal responsibilities, which include:

- Ensuring the organisation remains solvent and spends money in accordance with its charitable objectives
- Ensuring the schools in the Trust provide a good standard of education

Trustees are responsible for adhering to the [Funding Agreement](#) the Trust has with the Department for Education.

All Members and Trustees are appointed by the use of a governance skill matrix. This means that both governance groups have the right level of expertise in areas of Finance, Business, Legal, HR and Education.

## Nomination Committee

A Nomination Committee has been established to support the ongoing selection and appointment by Members of Trustees for our Trust. The committee is chaired by a Member and consists of representatives from the Trustees, other governance Circles, CEO and our Director of Governance. The Committee uses a skills-based analysis to determine the strength and depth of expertise throughout the Trustee board and its committees in order to identify how to strengthen our work in the future.

## The Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation is reviewed by Trustees annually and reflects organisational realities and statutory updates and continues to deliver effective, efficient operation and governance of the Trust.

# The Circle Trust's Growth

Expanding the Circle



Our Schools	Type	No. Students 1.12.25	No Staff (FTE)	Date joined the Trust
St Crispin's	Secondary	1551	123.24	Feb 2018
Nine Mile Ride	Primary	376	32.19	Feb 2018
Shinfield	Infant and Nursery	305	29.4	April 2020
Westende	Junior	116	13.5	July 2020
Wescott	Infant	242	26.09	July 2020
Emmbrook	Secondary	1352	113.55	April 2021
Emmbrook	Infant	182	24.57	June 2023
Emmbrook	Junior	260	22.22	June 2023
Badgemore	Primary	126	14.99	May 2024
Hawthorns	Primary	424	34.18	Feb 2025
Owlsmoor	Primary	502	56.17	July 2025
Hartland	Primary			To open September 2027 tbc

Numbers on Roll  
December 2025

**5436**



## The Circle Trust's Stewardship

Our stewardship of public funds and resources remains open to scrutiny and above reproach.

The Circle Trust's 2024-25 annual accounts were submitted in accordance with all statutory deadlines and are published on the [Trust's website](#).

In accordance with our master Funding Agreement, all money is spent to improve educational outcomes and in a fair and consistent approach to all schools. Trustees adhere fully to the yearly updated [Academy Trust Handbook](#).

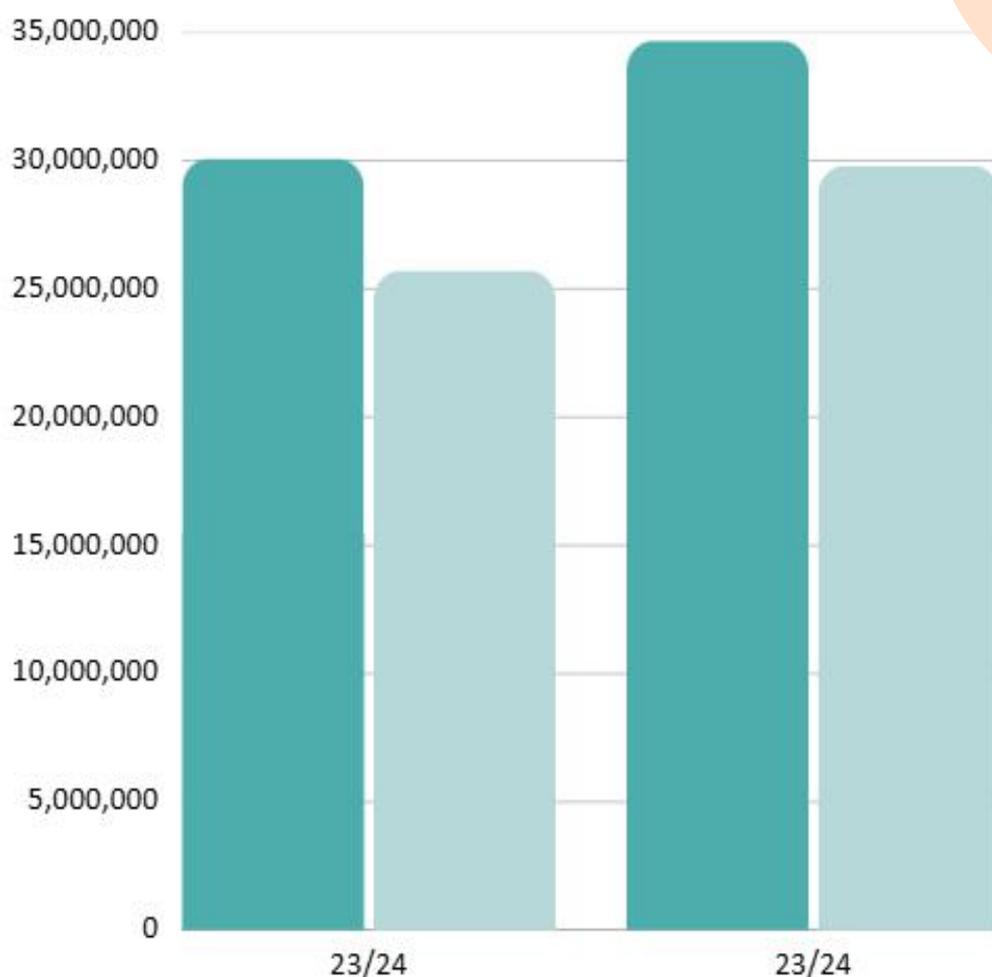
The Chief Finance Officer fulfils the role of consolidating all school and the Trust budgets to ensure that planned expenditure is in line with our Funding Agreement, particularly in respect of achieving value for money, regularity and propriety.

Trustees hold the legal financial responsibility and as such they continue to approve formally every school's budget, which forms part of our Trust's budget. It is not acceptable to set a Trust deficit budget and the Trust has never done so.

# Expenditure across the Trust

Staff costs	75.5%
Curriculum & Pupil Related Costs	9.4%
Premises Costs	6.9%
School Improvement	4.2%
Other Costs	4.0%

Year-end  
Reserves  
**£4,001,061**



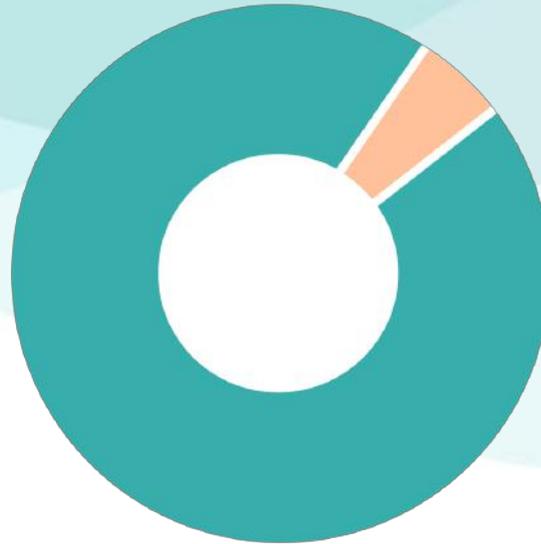
● **Total income**  
23/24 £30,082,648  
25/26 £34,674,431

● **Total Income of which Department of Education**  
23/24 £25,715,689  
23/24 £29,801,897

## Income across the Trust

94%

Charitable Activities:  
GAG, 6th Form, Pupil  
Premium, UIFSM,  
PE Grant



6%

Trading activities,  
Other Income  
Donations, Grants

I am pleased to report that this year's audit was again completed without issue and presented to a joint Audit and Risk and Finance Trustees Committee meeting for scrutiny with Members in attendance.

Our Trust is first and foremost a charity and a public sector organisation and as such "cannot be risk averse and still be successful". Risk is inherent in everything we do.

During this reporting period the Trust operationally used a cloud-based platform for managing risk - Insight4GRC. The platform allows the Audit and Risk Committee to effectively and efficiently oversee the risk register as well as determine a broader risk appetite for the Trust which is set at "Mindful". The Trust also uses GDPRis to manage our duties in respect of data management and control.





# The Circle Trust's approach to improving the quality of education

Our Trust will always have a relentless focus on improving the quality of education.

Schools improve when leaders and teachers do the right things that improve the quality of the school experience for children and the adults working in them. Exam outcomes and inspection grades of course provide the evidence of the impact of these actions.



As a Trust we wholly subscribe to this definition of what constitutes the features of a great school.

## **Sir David Carter former National Schools Commissioner says:**

“True evidence of school improvement is when a school serves its community with all the anchors of a strong school which are: great teaching, great enrichment and strong pastoral care. In short, a strong school is one where adults want to work and parents want their child to attend. It is important to think about school improvement in this way because parents think of it like that. They do definitely care about exam results and inspections grades but mostly they want to know that their child is safe and that they will be taken care of – they want their child to be happy and enjoy school and know that if something that happens upsets their child an adult in the school will notice and check up on them. They want to know that the school will seek out the talent that their child has and find a way to nurture it. They want to know that the quality of the learning experience will secure a pathway to the next stage of their child’s development. The signals of a good school is one working in a consistent way day in and day out to deliver a great learning experience in a culture of safety and high expectations.”

Our Trust creates the conditions for teachers and leaders to work together in deep and purposeful collaboration to advance education as a public good. Trusts are now knowledge building structures and as such vehicles for significant and meaningful school improvement. The very structure of a trust creates the conditions for improving the quality of education by focusing on the things that matter most - strong curricula and assessment, high standards of behaviour and secure knowledge of improving schools.

The Circle Trust has built and fosters Trust-wide learning communities, focusing on the sharing of good practice alongside strong professional expertise of leaders with the capacity to support and challenge.

There is increasingly a strong sense of collective responsibility with all stakeholders recognising their contribution to improving educational outcomes for all children and young people across the Trust.

## These are the things that matter.

School	Date joined the Trust	OFSTED Inspection legacy framework	OFSTED Inspection revised framework from November 2025
St Crispin's Secondary School	Feb 2018	Good May 2022	Awaiting
Nine Mile Ride Primary School	Feb 2018	Good June 2022	Awaiting
Shinfield Infant and Nursery School	April 2020	Good Feb 2025	Awaiting
Wescott Infant School	July 2020	Good with Outstanding November 2023	Awaiting
Westende Junior School	July 2020	Good with Outstanding April 2025	Awaiting
The Emmbrook Secondary School	April 2021	Good October 2023	Awaiting
Emmbrook Infant School	June 2023	Outstanding January 2025	Awaiting
Emmbrook Junior School	June 2023	Good April 2022	Awaiting
Badgemore Primary School	May 2024	Good June 2019	Awaiting
Hawthorns Primary School	Feb 2025	Good June 2022	Awaiting
Owlsmoor Primary School	July 2025	Good March 2023	Awaiting



## OFSTED inspection framework:

OFSTED published a renewed inspection framework during this reporting period.

No longer are schools given a one-word judgement but are now graded across a number of themes. In order for a school to achieve an “expected” grade they must securely fit these wide ranging criteria!

### Inclusion

**Inclusion meets the ‘expected standard’ when all the following apply:**

Leaders have high expectations for these pupils. Typically, the support they provide (following specialist advice if needed) reduces barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

Leaders take a graduated approach which means pupils’ needs are generally met. Staff receive suitable training and support to implement this approach.

Leaders have a secure understanding of these pupils’ needs and the progress they make. They use appropriate evidence to inform their

pupil premium strategy, including when selecting approaches to take. The strategy and approaches are generally understood and implemented by staff.

The qualified SENCo has sufficient authority within the leadership structure to make a positive difference for pupils with SEND.

Leaders are committed to, and understand, their role in the local area partnership’s strategy to improve the experiences of, and outcomes for, pupils with SEND. Where

appropriate, they ensure that local partnership strategies have a positive impact on pupils at the school.

Leaders support pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, including looked-after and previously looked after children, well. Staff work effectively, including with the virtual school, so that pupils' personal education plans generally improve their learning opportunities and experiences. Alternative provision is commissioned appropriately and is used in pupils' best interests.

Leaders take responsibility for the education and welfare of pupils who are placed in it.



# Curriculum and Teaching

**Curriculum and teaching meet the 'expected standard' when all the following apply:**

Leaders have an accurate and informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They draw on this when deciding how to deploy staff and allocate resources, and to identify when timely action is needed to bring about improvement.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is suitable and well planned for each subject and year group. It identifies clear end points and is appropriately sequenced to build on what has already been taught and learned.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is generally taught well. Teachers draw on their knowledge of pupils' needs and starting points and an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.

Leaders make sure that teachers have, or gain, the expertise they need for the subjects and phases they teach.



Leaders ensure that all pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are taught to do so through systematic synthetic phonics.

Leaders and staff are particularly aware of pupils who have not yet secured the necessary foundations in communication and language, reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. They take appropriate action to secure this foundational knowledge.

Leaders and staff generally use assessment well to check understanding and make changes to teaching and/or the curriculum, as necessary.

Leaders and staff are clear about the importance of high-quality teaching, supplemented with targeted academic support. Any reasonable adjustments or adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for particular pupils are generally considered and implemented carefully. EHC plans are properly considered when designing and delivering the curriculum.



# Achievement

**Achievement meets the ‘expected standard’ when all the following apply:**

On the whole, pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They generally have appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum, as reflected in the quality of their responses and the work they produce.

Pupils develop the foundational knowledge and skills they need, including language and communication skills. Pupils who are at the start of their education (and older pupils, where necessary) largely secure the necessary accuracy and fluency in word reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts. Any gaps in pupils’ foundational knowledge or skills are closing quickly.

On the whole, pupils achieve well. Typically, this will be reflected in their attainment and progress in national tests and examinations, which are broadly in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing generally make suitable progress from their starting points. They develop appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to progress to the next stage. Any gaps in their knowledge or skills are closing quickly.



# Attendance and Behaviour

Attendance and behaviour meet the 'expected standard' when all the following apply:

Leaders and staff have an informed and accurate understanding of matters related to attendance, behaviour and attitudes. They establish effective strategies to tackle any issues.

Leaders establish high expectations for all pupils about behaviour, built on positive relationships, and on rules and routines that staff and pupils generally understand.

Leaders ensure that staff maintain and reinforce the same high expectations, acting as role models and teaching positive behaviour. Leaders and staff generally apply agreed rules and sanctions effectively. Suspension and permanent exclusion are used appropriately.

Leaders and staff usually ensure that incidents of bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation,

physical and/or sexual violence and derogatory language are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils generally behave well, follow the agreed school routines and show positive attitudes to their learning. This contributes to a safe and calm environment.

Leaders analyse attendance information closely, at whole-school level and for different groups to identify patterns and trends. They use this analysis well to identify the causes of poor attendance, intervene early and remove barriers.

Overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages or shows an improving trend over time.

Attendance is improving, including the attendance of pupils who are persistently or severely absent and individuals or groups that leaders have focused on.

Any reasonable adjustments or adaptations to attendance and/or behaviour strategies are timely and appropriate, including for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who face barriers to their learning and/or well-being, such as young carers. Any interventions are timely, well chosen and targeted.





## Personal Development and Well-being

**Personal development and well-being meet the ‘expected standard’ when all the following apply:**

A coherent and appropriate programme of personal development extends across the taught curriculum and wider opportunities and experiences. It makes a positive difference to pupils and enables them to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

The personal development programme includes a suitable and well taught RHE(Relationship Health Education)/RSHE (Relationship, Sex and Health Education) programme, which develops pupils’ knowledge.

Pupils develop their understanding of, and respect for, protected characteristics, fundamental British values and cultural diversity in modern Britain.

Pupils have a range of suitable opportunities that broaden their experiences and enable them to develop their talents and interests

in areas such as the arts, music and sport.

The school’s careers education, where relevant, prepares pupils for future education, employment or training. The school is making steady progress towards the Gatsby benchmarks.

Effective pastoral support meets pupils’ needs. They are confident in accessing it when they need it.

The personal development programme is an entitlement for every pupil. Leaders track participation. They take steps to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, for example young carers, can participate appropriately. Reasonable adjustments or adaptations are made for them.



Wescott So

## Early Years

**Early years in schools meets the ‘expected standard’ when all the following apply:**

Leaders prioritise the early years to give children a successful start to their education and the best chance of later success. They have an accurate understanding of the quality and impact of education and care in this phase, and an effective strategy to bring about improvements.

Leaders know the statutory requirements of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) and make sure they are met. They have a clear vision for providing high-quality education and care for children in the early years and the same high expectations of them as they do for pupils in the rest of the school.

Leaders and staff make sure that education and care practices are suitable for the age and stage of children’s development. Leaders make sure that the curriculum identifies and sequences the key knowledge that children will learn across the EYFS educational programmes.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well taught and that staff engage in high-quality interactions with children.

Staff consider children’s starting points in their curriculum design and approach to teaching so that gaps in children’s knowledge are identified and tackled.

Leaders make sure that early years teachers inform Year 1 teachers about any gaps in children’s knowledge to ensure an effective transition to key stage 1.



There is a sharp focus on making sure that children acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and, in Reception, secure their knowledge of phonics.

Leaders ensure that staff provide effectively for children’s personal, social and emotional development, including making sure that they feel safe, secure, stimulated and happy.

Children are being well prepared to reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Typically, this will be reflected in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development being broadly in line with national averages.

By the end of Reception, children use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing fluency.

Children develop appropriate knowledge and skills across the 7 areas of learning, relevant to their age and stage of development. Children, including disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being typically achieve well from their starting points. This means that they are generally ready for the next stage of learning.



## Sixth Form

Post-16 provision meets the 'expected standard' when all the following apply:

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the 16 to 19 study programme and are addressing any inconsistencies in a timely way. They ensure that students follow a suitable 16-19 study programme that is in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and meets the specific needs of the post-16 cohort.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is appropriately sequenced and well taught overall.

Leaders and staff typically use assessment well to make changes to teaching and/or the curriculum as necessary. Generally, students have age-appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This is reflected in the quality of their responses and the work they produce.

Students generally achieve well. Typically, this will be reflected in their attainment and progress in national tests and examinations being broadly in line with national averages. When published data is not available, including for some students with SEND, leaders can show that students typically make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Students are generally ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They go on to destinations that meet their interests, career goals and aspirations.

Leaders have considered the needs of students in their curriculum design and approach to teaching. Adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for disadvantaged students, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being are appropriate and enable students to achieve well.

## Leadership and Governance

Leadership and governance meet the 'expected standard' when all the following apply:

Leaders understand the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They have a clear rationale for their improvement priorities and largely take appropriate action to drive improvement across all key stages and areas of the school's work. If an aspect of the school's provision falls short of the expected standard, this is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Governors/trustees ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined, take account of context, and make sure that resources, including digital technologies, are used effectively. They typically support and challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to leaders' and staff well-being and workload.

Leaders are role models of high expectations and professionalism. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Leaders take action to ensure that staff and governors feel valued and involved in the strategic direction of the school.

The professional learning and expertise programme is evidence-informed, of high quality and designed to build expertise. It draws on evidence and includes planned opportunities to apply and embed practice to build an effective team of teachers and staff, including ECTs and trainees, where relevant.

Leaders protect time for professional learning. Leaders support staff's well-being and ensure that their workload is manageable.

Leaders have systems to protect staff from bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Leaders and governors develop constructive relationships with all parents and with the wider community, to build trust. They draw on these relationships to support pupils to achieve and feel that they belong.

Leaders work with other schools, organisations and professionals in a culture of mutual support and challenge.

Leaders act in the best interest of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.





## Safeguarding

The Circle Trust is committed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The Circle Trust ensures that robust and effective safeguarding practice is followed by:

Ensuring safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people

Raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection to all stakeholders

Equipping children and young people with the skills needed to keep them safe

Implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse

Supporting children and young people who have been abused in accordance with their child protection plan

Establishing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn and develop

**Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone who is part of The Circle Trust.**

# Special Educational Needs

The Circle Trust provides support to ensure that children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities can access an education, which is inclusive and responsive to their individual needs. The Circle Trust follows the [DfE's Special Educational Need and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice: 0 – 25](#). The [Children's and Family Act 2014](#) which sets out schools' responsibilities for pupils with SEN and disabilities and [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#) which set out schools' responsibilities for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and the SEN information report. Finally, this policy also complies with The Circle Trust's Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The Code of Practice has the following definitions which states a child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they :

Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

Have a disability, which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions.

The code describes special educational provision as additional to or different from that made generally available for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, and mainstream post 16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. All children and young people are provided with an education that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and enables them to fulfil their potential.

Our Trust has established an "Encircle" group of SENCOs and those in governance with responsibility for SEND oversight to share good practice. We chose this particular circle pun for this group to give a pictorial sense of "surrounding" children and young people with our support albeit very often with very limited external provision and help. This has led to our Trust investing in specialist training in speech and language in all schools.

The Trust currently has schools with specialist provisions for children. Both Emmbrook Infants and Emmbrook Juniors provide specialist provision called total communication, which is primarily for children with severe hearing loss. The Trust is keen to extend this specialist provision to The Emmbrook Secondary school but awaits confirmation. Owlsmoor Primary School has a specialist resource provision for pupils with complex needs. The Acorns at Westende Junior School which provides specialist support for children with ASD is subject to phased decommissioning.





## Concluding Remarks by Andrew Beckett

Chair of Trustees

After our “Big Listen” initiative that I mentioned in last year’s Circular, Trustees drew upon thinking from our sector body, The Confederation of School Trusts, in their paper “Next-gen Governance”.

We also looked at models used by other trusts and have decided to adopt some approaches used in the sector as well as innovating new ideas that we believe will work well for us in our current stage of growth.

The Circle Trust is now a Trust with a larger, professional, central team who can perform many of the functions that historically governing bodies had to perform because there was nobody else to do them. This means that most of the traditional functions of governing bodies are now handled by the central team, with Trustees being assured by their professional expertise, and Trustees providing the strategic direction and oversight of the Trust.

Our values remain firm with this change, especially: being self-reflective is essential to drive innovation; our Trust is driven to improve further. We remain committed to ensuring that we listen to the voices of our stakeholders – pupils, staff, parents and the

communities that we serve; and we believe our new arrangements will improve the dialogue with these groups and make more effective use of the volunteers that support the Trust.

We decided to disband our Local Advisory Boards, as we felt that there were better ways of capturing stakeholder voice without the risk of duplication of work already handled by Trustees and the central team. Because of this change, we will have two parent-elected Trustees from across the Trust schools. We’ve now had a set of applications for these positions and are getting ready for an election in the summer term.

We have formed a new Resolution Circle, made up of 15-20 appointees, who are drawn upon to serve on panels for pupil suspension/exclusions, HR issues and complaints. Now, each school has a small group of parents and community members that act as the Headteacher’s Round Table. They meet two or three times a year and provide an

opportunity for each school's Headteacher to sound out opinion on how plans for the school will sit with the school community.

Finally, there will be four additional Circles which are cross-Trust groups: The Pupil Circle, The Staff Circle, The Parent Circle and The Community Circle. We are gradually starting to roll out these Circles this academic year. These Circles are key to how our Trust hears from stakeholder voice across our schools and surrounding communities.

It's been an interesting and exciting change as we adapt to the different challenges of operating schools within a trust. We're seeing other trusts taking interest in our approach, and we continue to support others in the sector.

I'd like to thank all of those who were involved in our Local Advisory Boards prior to this change, and those who continue to play a part via our new structure described above. A warm welcome to our two new Trustees Molli Cleaver and Chris Rothwell, and a show of gratitude to David Day who stepped down after 8 years as one of our founding Trustees.

Of course, the success of our Trust is down to the teaching staff, teaching assistants, support staff and central team – as ever, a big thank-you on behalf of Trustees!





The Circle Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (number 11031096) whose registered office is The Oval Offices, C/O St Crispin's School, London Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1SS. Tel: 0118 3381961