

What is a Governor?

The day to day running of the school is the responsibility of the Head Teacher. They are supported in this by the Senior Leadership Team. Every school has a Governing Board that works with the Head and the Senior Leadership Team in making decisions on issues such as recruitment, premises, curriculum and the finances that underpin those plans.

In the past governors were not so actively involved but now they are expected to be well informed and to hold the school to account on how the curriculum is delivered. Are the children being taught effectively? Is the money being spent appropriately and efficiently? Governors are scrutinised as part of the Ofsted Inspections and are graded just like the rest of the school. If our leadership requires improvement, then that will mean the school does too. We are not only expected to ask the right questions but we are expected to look for proof of the answers and to be able to explain to the Inspectors how we know.

The work of being a governor has become much more complicated and so the Governing Board is now required to take part in a skills audit so we can see whether we have the right skills, knowledge and experience to allow us to do our job properly. For example, we need someone who knows about buildings to oversee the work on the premises, we need specialists in education, recruitment, finances and the law. Not only that, there are regulations as to who can be part of the Governing Board.

The work of the Governing Board starts with the three Full Governors meetings (one a term). Then there are three main sub committees – Resources, Premises / Health & Safety and School Effectiveness. Each committee looks at that aspect of the school's work in detail. In addition, there are a range of ad hoc committees such as the Pay Review Committee which meets annually and others such as Exclusions which very rarely meets but we have to be prepared just in case.

All of the governors are expected to visit the school and take part in activities. We are all linked to specific subject areas and to year groups. We also come to as many of the extracurricular events that we can such as performances and sports days. We also attend training provided by the local authority to help us improve our skills.

All the governors are volunteers. It is possible to be a governor and only give up an hour a week but in reality most do much more than that. We nearly always have a vacancy as governors only hold office for four years. They can be reappointed but it is important that new people join. The work is very much a team effort. The main qualities you need to be a governor are a willingness to give up your time and to keep up to date with what is happening in the school.