

Long Wittenham Primary School – Governor Fact Sheet

The Governing body is made up of 13 governors, comprising of members of school staff, members of the community, members appointed by the Local Authority, parents and members of the Diocese.

Governing bodies' core functions

There are high expectations of governing bodies. They are the strategic leaders of our school and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. The purpose of the school governing body is to "conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school".

The Governing Body has a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

A critical friend is often thought to be a good term to describe the role of a governor.

Governing bodies are the key strategic decision-making body of every school. The role of governors is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role. It is their role to set the school's strategic framework and to ensure all statutory duties are met. They work to support and strengthen the leadership of the headteacher, and hold them to account for the day-to-day running of the school, including the performance management of teachers. Governors must maintain a strategic view, and not get involved in the day-to-day management and operational responsibilities within school. The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and the implementation of the strategic framework established by the governing board.

Governing bodies are responsible for making sure their school's money is well spent. They do this by ensuring they have at least one governor with specific, relevant skills and experience of financial matters. This position is currently held by Peter Jones, a Co-Opted Governor with 25 years' experience of being a Financial Governor.

As part of the governing body team, a governor is expected to:-

- Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body meetings which determine:
 - the vision and ethos of the school;
 - clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
 - that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
 - the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
 - the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
 - the principles to be used by school leaders to set school policies.
- Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:
 - agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
 - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
 - asking challenging questions of school leaders;
 - ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
 - ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
 - acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing body on the progress on the relevant school priority;

- listening to and communicating with the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.
- Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and Continuing Professional Development, and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

Governing bodies have a challenging job to do. High quality induction and continual professional development is vital to equip governors with the skills they need. There is an expectation that new governors attend the Governor Induction training course and attend, on average, one training course a year to keep the governing body up to date with developments.

Practicalities

There are six Full Governing Body meetings each year, one every half term. There are 2 committees; Teaching, Learning & Pastoral Care and Finance & HR. Each committee meets three times a year, once every long term. Each governor is expected to be on one of the committees. At the beginning of each academic year there is a meeting of governors and staff to set the School Development Plan. The meetings usually take place on Tuesday evenings from 6.30 to 8.30pm.

This gives a total of 10 meetings to attend during the year.

There are also 2 governor monitoring visits per year, normally on a Friday morning where governors visit the school to look at a particular aspect of the School Development Plan. Not all governors attend these monitoring visits.

Each governor should attend one training course (normally one evening) a year.

There is an expectation that governors come prepared for each meeting by reading the meeting papers and being ready to ask relevant questions. There is normally no requirement to prepare any paperwork themselves.

Personal liability

Maintained school governing bodies are corporate bodies that are legally responsible for the conduct of the school. Because of this, individual governors are generally protected from personal liability because of the governing body's decisions and actions. Provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, any liability will fall on the governing body even if it exceeds its powers, rather than on individual members.

Eligibility: WHO CAN BE A GOVERNOR?

A governor must:

- Be 18 years old or older at the time of election or appointment
- Not hold more than one governorship at one school
- Not be liable to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- Not be bankrupt or disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or an order made under section 429(2) of the Insolvency Act 1986
- Not have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement or under section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990 from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- Not have been included in the list of teachers or workers prohibited or restricted from working with children or young persons (currently named List 99)
- Not be disqualified from working with children
- Not be disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee in any school by an Independent Schools Tribunal or the Secretary of State
- Not have been sentenced to three or more months in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- Not have received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the twenty years before becoming a governor
- Not at any time have received a prison sentence of five years or more
- Not have been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- Not refuse an application being made to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate
- Not also be a clerk to a governing body at which s/he is a governor.