

Why become a School Governor?

An effective governing body is vital to a school's success

School governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the UK. They provide schools with strategic leadership and accountability for educational and financial performance.

The three core functions of a school governing board are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and make sure money is well spent

How can I become a governor?

At St Mary's, there are 3 main routes to becoming a governor:

- 2 parent governors are elected by the parent body. All parents and guardians with children at the school are eligible to stand. Notice of a parent governor election is sent to all parents/carers via Parentmail;
- 8 foundation governors promote the Christian ethos of the school and are nominated by the Church (principally by the Parish Council or the trustees);
- 2 governors are appointed by the governing body or the local authority to fill particular skills gaps and to ensure the governing body is equipped to carry out its oversight responsibilities.

Do I need qualifications to be a school governor?

No! Schools need volunteers with experience of life, but some governors may have particular qualifications or professional skills.

What makes a good school governor?

- A belief that education is important
- An interest in the work of the school
- A willingness to learn
- Being prepared to give time to the school (a very valuable resource to the school)
- Tolerance of others and the ability to work in a team
- The ability to listen
- Effective time management and delegation
- A logical mind and understanding of the school
- The desire to ask questions

What can I offer?

- Enthusiasm and commitment.
- Knowledge of the local community and a feel for what is important to people.

- If you happen to have business or other skills, schools might find these particularly helpful.

What do school governors do?

- School governors:
 - Develop the school's vision and strategy
 - Set a culture of high educational standards, which promotes staff and pupil wellbeing
 - Set the school's strategic aims and objectives
 - Ensure the school follows the National Curriculum, and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can access the curriculum
 - Monitor provision for pupils with SEND
 - Monitor the school's educational performance, using a range of data sources
 - Ensure stakeholders (parents, pupils, staff, the local community) are informed and consulted as appropriate
 - Approve the school budget
 - Monitor and evaluate the school's financial performance
 - Approve and review school policies, and hold staff to account for their implementation
 - Carry out the appointment and performance management of the headteacher
 - Be a source of challenge and support to the headteacher

How does a governing body work?

- A governing body:
 - works closely with the head teacher;
 - makes decisions collectively as a team;
 - often delegates decision making to committees or to individuals, for example, to the head teacher; and
 - conducts most of its business through meetings, making use of relevant papers and guidance, and advice from the head teacher and the Local Authority.

How much time does it take?

- Governors act as a team and, as such, the amount of time that each of them can give to the role will vary. Some people will be able and willing to give a lot throughout their time as a governor. Others will find that the amount of time they can give increases or reduces during that period. But if you are serious about helping your school to help children, then you do need to:
 - be willing to prepare for meetings: there can be a lot of papers to read;
 - attend meetings: the governing body meets at least once a term, but you will also be asked to serve on at least one committee. How often this meets will vary, but usually committees meet once a term;
 - be able to get to meetings which, quite often, will be before school or in the evening.
 - participate. If you cannot prepare for, and attend, meetings you will not be able to help the school effectively.

What will I get out of being a school governor?

- The knowledge that you have played a part in improving children's education and supported the school's staff.
- A chance to develop new skills and to practise existing ones, such as chairing meetings, speaking in groups, asking questions and making suggestions.
- A chance to help other members of the team, perhaps because they are new, are not used to committee work or need help in learning about the school and about school governance.