



BURGH BY SANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Governor

On behalf of the governing board, I would like to welcome you to your new role as a school governor and thank you for giving your time and commitment to the school and its community.

The role is both challenging and rewarding. There are many demands, and frequently new governors find themselves attending their first meeting before they have had the opportunity to attend an induction session. With this in mind, this pack for new governors will help and guide you through the start of your office as a school governor.

Governors bring everyday experience and expertise to the decision-making process of a school. This means working in partnership with the headteacher and staff. Governors make a major contribution towards and have involvement in, the direction, policymaking, and priorities of the school.

The aim of governors is to help to improve the quality of education and standards of pupil achievement. To do this they need to be involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This does not mean inspecting individual teachers, as governors are not inspectors. Nor does it mean governors becoming involved in the day-to-day management of the school. Governors have a collective responsibility to ensure that the vision, aims and objectives that they as a governing board wish to see implemented in school, happens. Governors are also there to ensure accountability.

Being a governor is stimulating, exciting and requires commitment. As well as attending meetings and social functions, an effective governor will develop a broad understanding of education in order to be able to make judgements on a wide range of issues.

Together the governing board will help to work with you to enable you to be effective in your role.

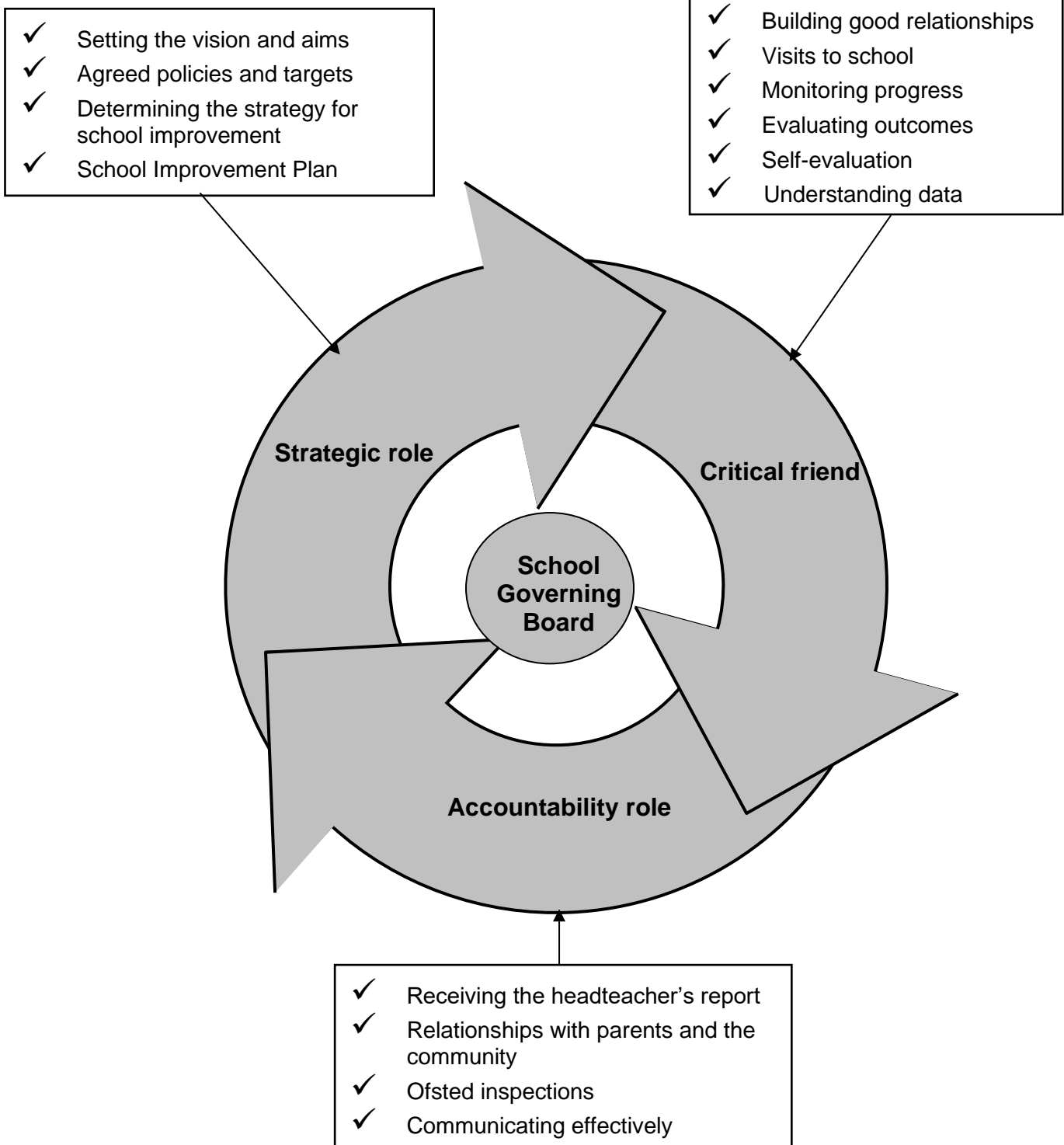
Yours sincerely,

Sue Glendinning

Sue Glendinning
Governance Professional to the governing board

The main roles of the governing board

AIM: Focus on raising standards and promoting effective teaching and learning through self-evaluation



Governing boards achieve these roles by:

- attending full governing board meetings
- attending committee meetings
- reading pre-meeting papers
- attending school functions
- knowing the school and how it works
- participating in a governor development programme
- reading items of educational interest

The following is a list of information that will help in your role, most of which can be found on the school website:

- ❖ a list of all the school staff together with their responsibilities
- ❖ a list of governors, their category (e.g. parent, authority) and any special jobs they have as governors (e.g. Special Educational Needs [SEN] governor;)
- ❖ names and contact details of the chair and clerk of governors
- ❖ the number of children in each year group
- ❖ an up-to-date list of available policies and how to access them
- ❖ the last Ofsted inspection report on the school
- ❖ the long-term school improvement plan and its related action (annual) plan
- ❖ the last two or three sets of minutes from governing board meetings and any related papers
- ❖ a list of governing board committees, their membership and terms of reference
- ❖ a plan of the building

Protocols for visiting school

Visiting school as a governor is both rewarding and a learning experience, which equips you for your role. However, not all governors can visit as often as others can, and being a governor is about maximising the skills and talents you are able to offer for the benefit of the school.

Governors as individuals do not have an automatic right to visit school; therefore, it is best to check with either the chair of governors or the headteacher first to arrange a visit. Prepare for the visit by thinking about what you want to ask in advance and bear in mind that visits take up staff time and can distract the attention of staff from their prime task of teaching pupils. As an individual governor, it is not within your role to pass judgement on teaching and learning. **Power and rights lie with the full governing board.**

Your first visit can only give you a flavour of the school, but you will be able to see what happens inside and outside the classroom and ask about anything you do not understand.

In the governing board meetings, you are all making decisions about the school that closely affect the lives of those working and learning there. Knowing what happens day to day in the school will give you the essential background to your decision-making. Ofsted inspectors will expect governors to be familiar with their schools as part of the leadership role of the governing board.

Getting time off work can create problems; therefore, it is best to inform your employer that you have become a governor. The Department for Education (DfE) encourages employers to give "reasonable time off work" and to recognise the valuable skills that are developed by school governors. It may help you to know that you have a statutory right to time off work for your public duties, although there is no statutory right to paid leave for this (see Employment Act 1996.)

The Governors Handbook page 23 Constitution of the Governing Board, part 3 "Time off from work" section 20, 21)

Always make an appointment to visit school. When you arrange your visit, it would be useful to:

- report first to the school office
- spend some time with the headteacher
- ask for any documentation that is relevant to your visit
- be approachable - become involved if invited to do so
- be sensitive, your presence may affect the lesson
- thank staff when you leave
- avoid taking notes in the classroom as it may feel like an inspection
- spend some time in debriefing your visit with the headteacher
- give some feedback to the governing board at your next meeting

Other visits to school may include:

- ❖ concerts
- ❖ sports day
- ❖ special assemblies
- ❖ staff/governor development sessions

- ❖ staff meeting invitations
- ❖ school trips

The key areas of concerns for governors include:

- ❖ school improvement and target setting
- ❖ self-evaluation and inspection
- ❖ curriculum
- ❖ conduct of the school
- ❖ health and safety
- ❖ discipline
- ❖ reports and meetings
- ❖ financial control
- ❖ appointments and dismissals
- ❖ complaints

The governing board is concerned with the whole ethos of the school. Some of the aspects that come together to give school 'that special feeling' include:

- ❖ the school's aims and values
- ❖ the school's general appearance
- ❖ the school's reputation and character
- ❖ standards of achievement
- ❖ agreed principles, policies and plans
- ❖ levels of parental support
- ❖ the school's level of involvement within the community
- ❖ the school's interaction with other schools
- ❖ the relationships between governors, staff and pupils
- ❖ the school's attitude to parents
- ❖ its style of communication to parents and others
- ❖ the quality of information sent out by the school

Collectively governors need to be involved in various areas of the school. These areas are covered in the sections found on page 8 onwards.

Governors must ensure that the National Curriculum is in place and that its associated testing arrangements are implemented. In addition, for nursery, infant, and primary schools, the appropriate early year's curriculum should be provided. Having arrangements in place for the foundation stage profile of early years' pupils is again the responsibility of the governing board.

The governing board is responsible for agreeing a Special Educational Needs policy, which ensures the necessary provision for pupils with special needs. There is a nominated Special Needs Governor who liaises with the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and keeps governors informed of special needs issues.

Governors are involved in the formulation of the aims and values of the school and are responsible for the School Improvement Plan, as well as the policies, and procedures to support the maintenance and the raising of standards. These plans include the school's targets for improvement.

Governors have to ensure that religious education is provided in accordance with an agreed syllabus: and the governing board is responsible for ensuring that a daily act of collective worship is provided for pupils up to the age of 18 unless their parents have notified the school of their wish to withdraw them.

In primary schools, governors need to ensure that sex and relationship education to pupils in Years 5 and 6 pupils is delivered. The governing board must have a written statement of the policy they adopt on sex education and make it available for parents.

The governing board is responsible for managing the school budget, which is delegated by the local authority. Governors must:

- ❖ agree expenditure for the coming year
- ❖ monitor expenditure and adjust spending as necessary
- ❖ provide a statement of actual expenditure at the end of each year

Governing boards also make contracts with suppliers of services. In some cases, this is required by law. In other cases, a governing board may choose to take on the additional responsibility.

In community and controlled schools, the local authority (LA) is responsible for admission arrangements and making arrangements for appeals to be considered by an independent appeals committee. The governing board determines which pupils will be admitted under LA established criteria. Pupils can only be refused admission if the school is full, that is, if the published admission number (PAN) has been reached in that age group. In voluntary aided and foundation schools, the governing board is responsible for determining the admission arrangements and for arranging for appeals to be heard by an independent appeals committee.

Only the headteacher can exclude a pupil for a fixed period or permanently. The governing board has to make formal arrangements for considering exclusion but the headteacher may also withdraw an exclusion that has not been reviewed by the governing board. The governing board can direct the headteacher to reinstate a pupil who has been permanently excluded or confirm the exclusion. The governing board must also inform parents of their right of independent appeal.

Governors have a responsibility to support the headteacher in developing and sustaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. The day-to-day responsibilities lie with the headteacher, but the governing board has overall responsibility for directing the conduct of the school. Governors should have a written statement on the general principles for a school behaviour policy, which must be prepared in consultation with the headteacher and parents. The headteacher remains responsible for developing the details and putting them into practice.

The governing board has a wide range of responsibilities for staffing matters. These include the number of staff that the school should employ, the staffing structure of the school and the pay of staff. In these areas the governing board works very closely with the headteacher.

In determining pay, the governing board must have a pay policy for teachers and is recommended to have one for all staff. Decisions on pay are normally taken by a committee of the governing board. Teachers and support staff are paid in accordance with national pay scales. Governing boards also have an appraisal policy for teachers, which is reviewed annually. The governing board also sets performance objectives for the headteacher. School performance is reviewed against these objectives at the end of the year. The governing board keep their staffing responsibilities under regular review.

The local authority acts as the employer in community and controlled schools. The governing board decides the number of staff and the headteacher decides how members of staff should be deployed. The governing board has responsibility for selecting and dismissing staff although they may have delegated some aspects of this responsibility to the headteacher.

The full governing board has to approve the appointment of a headteacher or deputy headteacher. In selecting other members of staff, the governing board decides, as part of its recruitment policy, on the extent it wishes to be involved.

There are times when the governing board has to act in a formal procedural way to address specific staffing matters. These include the disciplining of staff, grievance, dismissal, and redundancy. The governing board has agreed formal procedures for dealing with these matters, which are usually dealt with by the headteacher, the chair of governors or committees of the governing board; precisely who deals with which matters will be determined in the agreed procedures. To safeguard all interests these are not matters dealt with by the whole governing board.

Governors must ensure that the school premises are safe for staff, pupils, and visitors and that the school has adopted or adapted the local authority's recommended Health and Safety Policy.

In community and controlled schools, the buildings and site belong to the local authority. The governing board is responsible for repairs and maintenance of the main fabric of the building, including cleaning. The security of the building lies with the governing board, as does the policy on lettings outside school hours.

The governing board is responsible for providing a range of information to parents, the local authority, the DfE and various other parties. Each year governors have a statutory responsibility to update the school website with information for parents and the wider community. This information demonstrates how the governing board and school has put into practice its policies and sets out its plans for the coming year. The statutory policies that governors have to publish will also be on the website.

Inspection provides an external evaluation of the quality and standards of the school, and reports on the quality of education at the school and whether pupils achieve as much as they can.

Ofsted inspects the school looking at:

- ❖ overall effectiveness
- ❖ effectiveness of leadership and management
- ❖ quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- ❖ personal development, behaviour and welfare
- ❖ outcomes for pupils

Inspectors also consider:

- ❖ the spiritual, moral and social and cultural development of pupils at the school
- ❖ the extent to which the education provided by the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school and in particular the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs

The governing board's role in the inspection process is to:

- ❖ inform parents that an inspection will take place
- ❖ distribute the summary inspection report to parents and others who request it
- ❖ include the action points from inspection in the School Improvement Plan

In preparation for an inspection Governing boards must ensure that they can demonstrate that:

- ❖ they have been actively involved in strategic and development planning
- ❖ they have set criteria for reviewing achievement towards the implementation of the development and action plans
- ❖ they have agreed policies in relation to school and community issues;
- ❖ they have operated effectively as a governing board
- ❖ they have effectively managed the school's budget
- ❖ there are effective relationships with the wider community/parents/industry
- ❖ they have accurately evaluated the work of their school

IT IS VITAL TO REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY.

Categories of schools

There are six categories of schools in England: Community, Community Special Schools, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled, Academies, and Independent Schools.

There are three categories of maintained schools – Community, Foundation, and Voluntary; these may be either aided or controlled. The main differences are set out below:

Community schools	The local authority owns the land and buildings and retains legal responsibility for staffing. In practice, Governing boards exercise those functions under delegation
Foundation schools	Own their own land and are the direct employers of staff.
Voluntary Controlled schools	Established by a voluntary body, usually the church Collective worship is in accordance with the trust deed.
Voluntary Aided schools	Established by a voluntary body, usually the church, these schools generally have a religious character. The governing board is responsible for the religious education and collective worship policy. Foundation governors are in the majority. Trustees own the land and buildings and the governing board is the legal employer of staff. It is also responsible for 10% of the cost of capital and external maintenance works and for the admissions policy.
Academies	Own their own land and the governors are the employers of staff The local authority have no influence in the school, however, have a duty to inform Her Majesty's Chief inspector of Schools if they have grounds for concern over the educational standards in the school.
Independent	Totally autonomous

Corporate responsibility

- All governors are of equal status, irrespective of the stakeholder group they represent
- Authority rests with the whole governing board
- All governors must remain loyal to the corporate decisions of the governing board
- How individuals vote is confidential
- The individual contributions of governors to discussions in meetings should be regarded as confidential
- A governor has individual power only when given it by the governing board and is then accountable to the governing board for all actions and decisions

As an elected governor, are you a representative or a delegate?

- Teacher, staff and parent governors do not have to try to represent the views of all teachers, staff and parents
- They should communicate with them about issues that arise, but only in so far as is reasonable
- When decisions have to be made by the governing board, each teacher, staff member and parent governor is free to vote in accordance with his/her own views
- They are **representative** teacher/support staff/parents rather than representatives of teachers/support staff/parents

The curriculum

The Curriculum refers to all the **informal learning** - social behaviour, widening horizons, and the **formal learning** - which takes place in school

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (ages 3-5)

Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children in seven areas, as follows

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Age	5 – 7	7 – 11	11 – 14	14 – 16
Year groups	1 – 2	3 – 6	7 – 9	10 – 11
Core subjects				
English	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation subjects				
Art and design	✓	✓	✓	
Citizenship			✓	✓
Computing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Design and technology	✓	✓	✓	
Languages		✓	✓	
Geography	✓	✓	✓	
History	✓	✓	✓	
Music	✓	✓	✓	
Physical education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Religious education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sex and relationships education			✓	✓

School organisation and assessment

Pupil age	School year	Key Stage	Assessment
3-5	Nursery/Reception	Foundation	
5-6	Year 1	Key Stage 1	
6-7	Year 2		
7-8	Year 3		
8-9	Year 4	Key Stage 2	Teacher assessment
9-10	Year 5		
10-11	Year 6		
11-12	Year 7	Key Stage 3	
12-13	Year 8		Assessment Pupil Progress (APP) linked to Teacher Assessments
13-14	Year 9		
14-15	Year 10	Key Stage 4	GCSE
15-16	Year 11		
16-17	Year 12	Key Stage 5	
17-18	Year 13		A level

The Foundation Stage

The statutory Foundation Stage Profile is a single national scheme based on teachers' observations. It enables teachers to sum up the achievements of children against the Early Learning Goals within the Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance when they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. For the majority of children, this will be at the end of their reception year.

Inspection

Schools know and understand the reason behind external inspection, and usually welcome the opportunity to be assessed. Schools need to know their strengths are and have policies and plans in place to bring about any improvements that are required, following their own internal assessment self-evaluation process. Regular monitoring should be commonplace. The Ofsted inspection should mirror the school's own judgements.

How frequent are inspections?

Inspections are proportional to need. The most effective schools will have the longest interval between inspections up to 3 years. Schools are informed the day before the inspection.

What is inspected?

In judging the quality of the school, inspectors will make **four key judgements**:

- quality of education
 - intent
 - implementation
 - impact
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management

In judging the school's overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of the four key judgements, as well as how the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development

You can copy or download information from the Ofsted website - www.ofsted.gov.uk

The key question will be: "Is your school an effective school and how do you know?"

The Governing board

Governing board organisation

- Governing boards are constituted with anywhere from 7 members upwards; the total number is determined by the governing board itself following an audit of the skills required
- By law, there must be a minimum of 3 meetings per year
- To take decisions, the quorum figure is one half of the current membership
- Many decisions can be delegated to committees
- Most Governing boards have a committee structure to take care of much of its business
- A governing board must have a clerk, who is not a governor
- A governing board must have a chair of governors
- All committees with delegated powers must have a clerk
- Notification of meetings and relevant papers must be distributed 7 days in advance

Committees

Committees carry out most of the work of the governing board

Examples of possible committee structures
Finance/resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Premises • Equipment • Health and safety • Public Relations and Marketing • Fundraising
Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare curriculum policies and plans for governing board approval • Monitor curriculum provision and development • Monitor provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)
Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with staffing issues • Implement staff appraisal policies • Involvement in appointments

Categories of governors

The number of governors in each school is set out in the school's Instrument of Government.

The composition of a governing board should reflect a wide range of groups from the community.

Parents	Elections must be held to elect a parent governor. A parent, who works at the school for more than 500 hours per year, cannot be a parent governor
Staff	The headteacher, teachers, and support staff, all come into this category. The headteacher can choose to be a governor or not but automatically has a place reserved. Elections are held for other staff
Authority	Nominated by elected members of the County Council Anyone who is eligible to be a staff governor cannot be a governor in this category
Co-opted	Appointed by the governing board. These governors should be members of the wider community served by the school. Anyone eligible to be a staff governor is disqualified from being a co-opted governor, as are pupils and elected members of the Local Authority
Foundation	Appointed by the diocese or the local church or by some other foundation bodies
Partnership	In a foundation school that has no foundation or equivalent body, partnership governors replace the foundation governors. The governing board appoints the partnership governors seeking nominations from parents and others in the community
Sponsorship	Nominated by a sponsoring organisation, which supports the school financially or otherwise
Associate member	Not recorded on the Instrument of Government, but may have limited voting rights on the committees to which they are appointed

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The internal organisation, management and control of the school
- Formulating aims and objectives, policies and targets for the governing board to consider adopting
- Advising on and implementing the governing board's strategic framework
- Giving governors the information that they need to help the school raise its standards
- Reporting on progress at least once every school year

The governing board is responsible for:

- **Standards** – ensuring a strategic and systematic approach to promoting high standards of educational achievement
- **Curriculum** – ensuring that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based, and that the National Curriculum and religious education are taught
- **Reporting results** – reporting on assessments and examination results
- **Policies** – deciding how, in broad strategic terms the school should be run
- **Finance** – determining how to spend the budget allocated to the school
- **Staffing** – deciding the number of staff, the pay policy and making decisions on staff pay
- **Appointments** – appointing the headteacher and deputy headteacher; other staff are appointed in line with school policy
- **Discipline** – agreeing procedures for staff conduct and discipline
- **Inspection follow-up** – ensuring actions identified by the inspection are incorporated in the School Improvement Plan

The effective governing board

An effective team

Effective teamwork requires regular attendance and energetic commitment from all governors, making full use of what each has to offer, spreading the workload, give-and-take on individual issues, respect for colleagues and their differing opinions, and loyalty to final decisions.

Effective management

Certain functions and most final decisions require the participation or approval of the full governing board, putting tremendous pressure on its agenda. It needs to delegate much of its work to smaller groups or individuals. These can be useful in undertaking preparatory work.

Effective meetings

In conducting meetings, the governing board will need:

- Carefully planned agendas with the most important issues discussed at the beginning
- Purposeful chairing, bringing out the best in all governors and encouraging clearly understood decisions
- Good minutes setting out points for action
- Involvement, where appropriate, of outsiders to give advice, make a presentation, or to act as an observer

Ways in which individual governors can help make meetings more effective

Prepare, Participate, Reflect, Follow-up

Knowing the school well

Governors should get to know the school through focused visits, especially to talk to pupils and observe them learning and to meet teachers, and through examining documents, understanding the curriculum. Some Governing boards use individual governors to establish links with a particular part of the school. Governors should visit to observe and learn, but not to inspect.

Training and improvement

Although new governors have particular needs of induction, Governing boards, like schools, should have a culture of continuous improvement. The governing board should not shy away from allocating funds for both external courses for governors and training for the whole governing board. It is recommended that the governing board have a plan for its own improvement.

Evaluating own effectiveness

An important task of the governing board is to check how well it is functioning itself. It may wish to consult staff, parents, and other interested parties, for their views.

The Strategic Role

The governing board shall establish a strategic framework for the school by:

- a. Setting aims and objectives for the school
- b. Setting policies for achieving those aims and objective
- c. Setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives

The governing board has limited time and resources, so it should focus on helping to decide the school's strategy for improvement by:

- being involved in improvement planning and policy making
- keeping under review the broad framework within which the headteacher and staff run the school
- focusing on the key issues of raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning
- monitor and evaluate progress towards the achievement of aims

Governing boards working strategically:

- will focus on **raising standards** of achievement, establishing **high expectations**, and **promoting effective teaching and learning**, so that pupils achieve their potential
- decide what they want the school to achieve, **the vision**, and make plans to get there
- **ensure** that **all** those who have an interest in the success of the school **contribute** when the values and aims are being agreed
- help to set and keep under **review the policies** that provide a broad framework within which the headteacher and staff should run the school
- use that evidence to **review overall progress**, to see whether policies and practice are effective, and to **check on their school's achievements** and progress over time and in comparison, with similar schools

School improvement planning

The governing board is responsible for making sure that every child receives a high-quality education that is continuously improving and ensuring their welfare is protected, whilst also meeting the demands of changing circumstances. In order to achieve this, governors must think about:

Vision

In establishing a vision for the school, everyone involved with the school needs to think about where they want the school to be in the future; and how the school intends to get to that position. Schools have a vision statement that sums up what they want to achieve, and some may describe the situation when it has been achieved.

Aims

A set of aims expands on general vision; they should represent a statement of intent. They should be clear, understood by all, and should underpin all decisions made. All school policies and plans should show how the aims of the school are to be achieved.

Governors should regularly review the aims for their school to make sure they are still relevant and are being applied.

Policies

Provide a framework for the headteacher and staff to use when making decisions about the daily management of the school. Governing boards and headteachers should work together in partnership to develop key policies. They should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that they are effective and still relevant.

Plans

Plans are essential, as they should link together all the developments in school in a coordinated way that supports the overall vision and aims of the school.

The School Improvement Plan

The most visible way in which governors exercise their strategic role is through their contribution to the School Improvement Plan, which should record the agreed strategic direction of the school for the next three years.

What makes a School Improvement Plan (SIP) effective?

- States the agreed values, aims and objectives for the school and has a clear focus on raising standards of educational achievement
- Is shared and understood by all concerned with the school
- Takes into account local and national trends and initiatives that might impact on the school, such as rising/failing rolls
- Drives the agendas for governing board meetings and the headteacher's objectives
- Has targets which are **SMART** (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited)
- Assigns responsibilities for action to named people
- Has explicit links to the school budget
- Includes training/support needs
- States the evidence that will demonstrate success
- Makes clear how, when and by whom progress will be monitored and evaluated

Technically, a governing board only has to approve the school improvement plan; it would be legal for the headteacher to draw up plans on their own, without consultation. However, it is unlikely that such a plan would be effective if no one else is involved in its production. Governors are encouraged to take an active role in the development and drafting of their school improvement plan. The process of school self-evaluation also helps to identify priorities for school improvement.

Planning for improvement: Questions to ask

- Where are we hoping to go?
- Where are we now?
- How can we get from where we are to where we want to be?
- What are the key priorities?
- Do we have the resources to achieve our goals?
- Who is responsible for doing what, by when?
- How will we know if we have achieved our goals?

The three elements to a school improvement plan are:

- **The strategic plan**– the strategic goals for the school over 3-5 years
- **The development plan** – reflecting the strategic goals priorities over a 1-3-year timescale
- **The school action plan** – the detailed plan covering all areas of improvement in the current year

Self-evaluation

Rigorous school self-evaluation is the starting point for planning, inspection, and relations with the local authority. The schools headteacher and senior management team should take the lead in carrying out self-evaluation, involving the governing board throughout the process.

The school needs to develop its own self-evaluation tool looking at the core aspects of school life, which should be updated at regular intervals following participation in its completion by all the appropriate stakeholders within the school.

In order for governors to ensure that self-evaluation has the maximum impact on standards, the process should be linked to the school improvement plan. In this way, an objective view at what the school has achieved and areas for further development can be identified. This self-evaluation evidence forms the new school priorities for the following year's improvement plan. Self-evaluation should be carried out throughout the year, through a systematic monitoring and evaluation programme, which all stakeholders are involved in.

In order to achieve successful self-evaluation, it is important that everyone involved understands its purpose and is comfortable with the process and its objectives. The ultimate objective should be a desire to improve.

Governor's responsibilities for finance and staffing

School receives its main funding from the following sources

- **The individual school budget** – this is for the day-to-day running of the school, which includes the staffing costs. This is mainly based on the number and age of the pupils (Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)). Schools are given an indicative budget for a 3-year period to allow for forward planning. Governing boards need to anticipate and plan for the effects of fluctuations in pupil numbers
- **The school development grant** – for 'school development' issues
- **School grants** – for specific purposes: i.e. School Sports Funding
- **Devolved formula capital** – provides direct funding to support the capital needs of school buildings and capital equipment
- **Pupil premium** – funding for pupils who receive Free School Meals (FSM), or are children looked after, or are children of service personnel.

Governing boards are responsible for managing the school budget, with advice from the Local Authority.

- They can delegate the management of the budget to a committee of governors (a finance or resources committee) but this committee must account for its work, by reporting back at full governing board meetings
- The School Improvement Plan should determine financial decisions
- The headteacher needs some spending powers from the governing board for the day-to-day running of the school. The headteacher is accountable to the governing board for these spending powers
- No individual governor has any personal financial liability for contracts entered into by the governing board or for decisions about how to use the school's budget, provided they act in good faith
- Governing boards are bound by the rules of best value and the County Council's standing orders

Best value

Governing boards need to demonstrate that they are applying the four principles of best value in their management and allocation of resources.

Compare: How a school's performance compares with other schools

Challenge: Whether the school's performance is high enough and why and how a service is being provided

Compete: How the school secures economic, efficient, and effective services

Consult: Seeks the views of stakeholders about the services provided

Staffing

The bulk of any school budget goes on staffing costs; as such, governors need to make sure they have in place arrangements to consider:

- Pay review and any appeals arising
- Staff dismissal (if not delegated to the headteacher) and appeals regarding staff dismissal
- Grievance
- Staff capability
- Staff absence
- Staff discipline
- Recruitment and selection
- Complaints about annual appraisal reviews
- Reviewing the headteacher's performance through appraisal

The governing board is responsible for:

- deciding upon the number of teaching and support staff; when a member of staff leaves, the governing board will decide whether they will be replaced
- the appointment of teaching and support staff: the governing board can delegate the process of making staff appointments to the headteacher, but they must be kept fully informed as they retain the overall responsibility for staffing. The governing board must be involved in appointments to the leadership group
- ensuring the implementation of the school's staffing structure

- having a pay policy: whereby governors must carry out an annual review of all teachers pay, keeping within the statutory provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document
- dismissals: which the governing board may delegate initial decisions regarding staff dismissal to the headteacher
- redundancies
- ensuring that contractual agreements on workforce reform are being met. Such measures aimed at improving standards and tackling teachers' workload, include; a limit on teachers covering for absent colleagues, greater use of support staff to allow teachers to focus on their teaching duties, time for management duties and ensuring that all teachers have 10% planning, preparation and assessment time

In all schools, the governing board must:

- observe national regulations and agreements
- observe the laws on discrimination
- establish and review a performance management policy

The governing board should ensure that it has adopted procedures for staffing issues and that these are regularly reviewed. Such standard procedures should be readopted annually, usually at the first meeting of the year.

Annual appraisal of the headteacher and staff

- ◆ Annual appraisal provides a real opportunity for the governing board and the whole school workforce to work together in their primary task of striving towards and maintaining high standards of education for all pupils. Governing boards have the overall responsibility for the annual appraisal of teachers, including headteachers
- ◆ Governing boards have a statutory duty to identify and agree the priorities for their school's improvement, establish an appraisal policy for the school, review the performance of the headteacher, and monitor the appraisal policy. Appraisal is a tool, which the governors can utilise to ensure the resources for improvement are directed towards those priorities
- ◆ Appraisal creates a framework, which works towards achieving school improvement and enables staff to be well-trained, well-motivated people who feel valued and who reflect on their own practice and how it can be developed and improved
- ◆ Appraisal provides a fair and transparent basis for evaluating the work of the staff and rewarding them
- ◆ Appraisal enables a governing board to discharge its key roles of:
 - helping to shape the vision and direction of the school
 - ensuring the school fulfils its statutory duties
 - understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - challenging and supporting the senior management team
- ◆ Appraisal affords equal opportunity to ensure fairness and consistency of judgement

The full governing board must not discuss the performance of the headteacher or an individual member of staff as a whole group. Annually the governing board should:

- review the appraisal policy and ensure it is in place and working effectively
- decide which governors will carry out the headteacher's appraisal and contact the external adviser in the autumn term
- appoint the review officer
- ensure the headteacher provides a written report on the staff appraisal process with outcomes to the governors in the autumn term
- ensure the headteachers appraisal meeting takes place before December 31 each year
- set the headteacher's objectives, including monitoring and evaluation procedures
- ensure a review statement is produced and distributed to the headteacher and chair of governors following the headteachers appraisal
- ensure any pay recommendations are made by 31 December
- ensure any training and development needs that are identified are provided
- ensure an interim review of the headteacher's objectives is conducted in the spring term to assess progress

The Critical Friend Role

The governing board provides the headteacher and staff with support, advice, and information using two descriptors to achieve this:

CRITICAL = the governing board is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness, and does this by asking questions, and pressing for improvement

FRIEND = because the governing board exists to promote the interests of the school and its pupils

As a critical friend, a governing board is expected to:

- recognise and celebrate successes
- know where the school is not achieving as well as it could
- provide support and encouragement when strategies to bring about improvement are being explored
- strike an appropriate balance between support and challenge

The governing board is accountable to all stakeholders for its actions; these are

- being required to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement
- having the right to discuss, question and refine proposals, not just to "rubber stamp"
- having respect for the professional roles and management responsibilities of the headteacher and other staff
- being prepared to account for the school's overall performance and to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest

To carry out these roles requires both a good knowledge of the school and a good working relationship with the headteacher and staff.

One way to achieve this is through monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, linked to the objectives in the school improvement plan.

Ofsted states that; **"The school that knows and understands itself, is well on the way to solving any problems it has. Self-evaluation is the key to improvement"**

Governors should be able to answer the question: **Is your school an effective school and how do you know?**

Effective schools know their strengths and have plans to work on areas in need of improvement.

Self-Evaluation: A record of school self-evaluation should be maintained and updated at regular intervals following participation in its completion by all the appropriate stakeholders within the school. Self-evaluation complements inspection and is a constant process of identifying priorities for improvement, monitoring provision and evaluating outcomes.

Monitoring: is the process of gathering information to check on the progress of how the schools agreed policies and plans are being implemented

Evaluation: is part of the decision-making process involving making judgements about whether the aims of agreed policies and plans have been achieved

Why should governors be involved in school self-evaluation?

- Governors are responsible for maintaining and improving the standard of achievement in the school
- Governors need to monitor the progress of school improvement plans
- Monitoring and evaluation provides evidence for future plans
- It helps Governing boards to assess whether the school is providing value for money
- It provides evidence of whether actions have had a positive effect on children's learning

The governors' role in monitoring and evaluation

- At all times governors should focus on their **strategic role**, not on day-to-day management issues
- School should have in place a format, which they use to record their school self-evaluation information. The detail of this process can be shared with the school's local authority General Adviser (GA).
- Along with agreed **policies**, this self-evaluation process provides a strategic framework for the work of the governors. The school improvement plan arises from the school self-evaluation form, and should be

- monitored, evaluated, reviewed and adjusted as part of the ongoing cycle of self-evaluation
- Governors do not need to try to keep track of everything that a school does; they need to decide, which priorities requires monitoring and evaluation
- The **headteacher** is responsible for ensuring the **quality of teaching**. Governors **are not** expected to make professional judgements when they observe lessons. They do need to contribute to the process of evaluation, considering summaries of evidence gathered by the headteacher and the staff
- Responsibilities/specialities linked to the school improvement plan should be identified within the governing board and its committees
 - If governors are able to spend time in school, a **protocol** should be agreed with staff, to ensure that visits are structured, productive, and enjoyable. The emphasis should be on gathering information to inform decision-making by the whole governing board

Governors are not inspectors and do not make judgements on teaching and learning

Documentation to assist governors in their monitoring role:

- ❖ **plans** – School Improvement Plan, Ofsted action points
- ❖ **policies** – curriculum, whole school, health and safety, Special Educational Needs
- ❖ **external agencies** – Ofsted, local authority
- ❖ **pupils' work** – projects, samples of work, displays

Data:

- ❖ **internal** – national curriculum assessment, attendance rates, special educational needs register, free school meals, exclusions, statistics on rewards and sanctions, test/exam results
- ❖ **external** – comparative information from local authority, RAISE online, Fischer Family Trust data

Discussion:

- ❖ **informal** – governors, staff, pupils, parents, external
- ❖ **formal** – meetings: full governing board, committees, staff, school council

Observation:

- ❖ **around school** – reception, premises, displays
- ❖ **classroom** – layout, displays, lessons
- ❖ **events** – assemblies, concerts, sports days, school outings

Feedback:

- ❖ **informal** – comments, praise, complaints
- ❖ **formal** – reports, presentations, interviews, questionnaires

Who can be involved in and/or contribute towards gathering information and checking progress?

Governors, headteacher, teaching staff, support staff, parents, pupils, community, external agencies

Accountability

Corporate and individual accountability

Governors are accountable as a collective corporate body. They are not accountable as individuals providing, they have acted with integrity, objectivity, and honesty in the best interests of the school. However, as individuals they are accountable in the way they conduct themselves at governing board meetings and as representatives of the school.

Some Governing boards adopt a code of practice to ensure members are aware of the boundaries and expectations, particularly around areas of confidentiality.

Schools have responsibility for the education and well-being of many thousands of children, and so have an impact on society as a whole. They also control large amounts of public money, and they have to be seen to be using it wisely. Schools therefore have to be accountable, and this involves a governing board's obligations, which include:

- conducting the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement
- having the right to discuss, question and refine proposals
- respecting the professional roles and management responsibilities of the headteacher and other staff
- being prepared to account for the school's overall performance and to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest

The governing board demonstrates its accountability through:

a) Responding to complaints

Governors should ensure that they have an up-to-date complaints procedure adopted by their school, and that it is reviewed on an annual basis

The complaints process should only involve governors if the headteacher is unable to resolve the issue: or is the subject of the complaint

- Complaints procedures should be communicated to all who need to know
- Complaints should be dealt with promptly and the outcomes communicated to all involved
- Complaints concerning the curriculum are covered by formal procedures
- Procedures for other complaints and concerns should be agreed by the governing board
- Complaints should be dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance and if necessary, the headteacher

b) Working with the local education authority

Schools are appointed a General Adviser (GA), who can work with the school and governing board if required by the school

c) Responding to inspection

Schools have to respond to inspection and should view this as a positive opportunity to demonstrate what they do well to an external source.

Headteachers report to governors

In order for governors to be informed of the work of the school, they need to receive a report from the headteacher, who is in turn accountable to the governing board for their actions in school.

The headteacher is required to report on a range of matters to the governing board during the year, so that the governing board can be assured that it is fulfilling its responsibilities for securing high standards, and the wellbeing of its pupils. Therefore, it is expected that this requirement is fulfilled by the headteacher providing a written report to the governing board at least three times a year.

The report should be sent to members of the governing board together with other relevant documentation at the same time as notices of meetings; its aim is to provide a clear and permanent record of key aspects of the school's work.

Care should be taken that the governing board receives relevant aggregated data, or anonymised information, and not information that contains the names or personal details of specific individuals. It is not the duty of the governing board to discuss named individuals. Indeed, some sensitive or confidential matters must be kept from the full governing board, or this could jeopardise other procedures that the governing board may have to follow.

Headteacher's report: good practice

The following suggestions for the content of a report have been copied from the DfE governors' website (Good Practice Guides on monitoring). It is recommended that while there are core headings for every meeting, what is included under each heading will depend on the schools planning cycle and the time of year. **It is not expected that all reports will cover the full list written here.**

Core headings

School improvement

- The planning process with actions
- Progress towards targets
- Progress with Ofsted action points
- Evaluations of impact
- Progress / comments on vision

Performance and standards

- Assessment weeks
- Outcomes of data analysis
- Comparative data / benchmarking
- Suggestions for governors' monitoring
- Outcomes of monitoring

Achievements

- Celebrate special work or other achievements of pupils or staff, including past members

Current school issues

- Staffing
- Professional development
- Curriculum
- Pupils
- Budgets
- Building and grounds
- Special educational needs
- Health and safety
- Decisions which governors may have to make

Future issues

- New government initiatives
- County initiatives

Annex of key information (contents to vary according to annual cycle)

- Number on Roll (NOR)
- Staffing and responsibility points
- Attendance
- Absence
- Exclusions
- Behaviour
- Fire drill
- Staff meetings and other training
- Liaison
- Leavers' destinations
- Community links and visitors
- Policies – monitoring and review
- Calendar of events