Frequently Asked Questions - Governors

What is the role of a governor?

To contribute to the work of the governing body in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

• Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;

• Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and

• Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

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

1. 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 other school policies.

2. 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; and

• listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders : pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.

3. 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 CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:

• appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders;

• appraise the headteacher;

• set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff;

• hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters;

• hear appeals about pupil exclusions.

Why become a governor at our school?

Becoming a governor is rewarding and gives you an opportunity to use your skills and contribute something back to our school community. It is a role that establishes links with the wider community, is strategic, thought provoking, and may be of benefit to your future professional development.

Our current Headteacher after 7 fantastic years is moving to an Advisory post within WSCC Virtual School and we are currently involved in planning recruitment for the next substantive Headteacher. It is a busy and exciting time for the school as we plan the next steps in our journey and are looking for a forward-thinking governor who is able to support us at a strategic level, to continue to help support and develop our thriving, popular school.

What time commitment is required?

At Thakeham this is a minimum of 3 Full Governing Body meetings and 3 committee meetings a year. Sometimes other meetings may be held in addition to these. Meetings last for around 2 hours and may take place both during the day and evening. Governors are required to make School Visits as linked to an area of school improvement (set out in the School Strategic Development Plan). On average there are around 3 School Visits across the year and each visit is an hour or less. Governors are invited to various events across the year (though attendance is not statutory, but helps understand the ethos of our school).

How many governors does a governing body have?

This may depend on the size of the school and its circumstances. At Thakeham Primary School our Instrument of Governance has been agreed as 10 members:

- one headteacher
- one staff governor
- one local authority governor
- two parent governors
- five co-opted governors

What training is required?

Governors are expected to attend, training and support that is offered by the local authority, central government, or by the school in meeting its commitments. Alongside full induction we request that governors participate in the following ways:

- undertake annual safeguarding training
- ensure they keep up to date with changes in safeguarding by reading papers and undertaking online safeguarding training
- attend ‘Getting Started, training what you need to know as a new governor (2 hour course held on various dates and times (morning/evening)
- attend ‘Being Effective’ training – how to be effective as a new governor (2 hour course held on various dates and times (afternoon/evening)

Various other training opportunities are available as related to your role.

What is the term of office?

Typically this is 4 years. Governors may stand for re-election.