

# What do Governors do?

(taken from the National Governance Association model role descriptions)

## Governors work together to carry out their core functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

Governors must also ensure that the governing body complies with all legal and statutory requirements. Governors should seek the advice of the clerk to the governing board and other professional advice as appropriate.

## Governing body strategic responsibilities

Governing bodies work closely with headteachers and senior leaders. Headteachers are responsible for day to day management whereas the role of the governing body is strategic. As such, governors are responsible for:

- determining the mission, values and long-term ambitious vision for the school
- deciding the principles that guide school policies and approving key policies
- working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision
- ensuring that parents, pupils, staff and the wider community are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum such that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life
- setting the school's budget and ensuring it is managed effectively together with premises and other resources
- agreeing the school's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy
- ensuring robust risk management procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

## Monitoring and evaluating school performance

Governors must monitor the priorities that have been set to ensure progress is being made by:

- measuring the school's impact and progress towards its strategic objectives
- ensuring the required policies and procedures are in place and the school is operating effectively in line with these policies
- evaluating relevant data and feedback provided by school leaders and external reporting on all aspects of school performance
- asking challenging questions of school leaders in order to hold them to account
- holding the headteacher to account for standards, financial probity and compliance with agreed policies
- visiting the school to monitor implementation of the strategy and reporting back to the board (this could be in a link governor capacity)
- ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively

## **Panels and committees**

When required, governors are expected to serve on panels or committees in order to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders
- appraise the headteacher and make pay recommendations
- hear staff grievances and disciplinary matters
- review decisions to exclude pupils
- deal with formal complaints

## **Contribution to the governing body**

Governors should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the governing body by:

- attending meetings (a minimum of 7 full governing board meetings each year), reading papers and preparing questions for senior leaders in advance
- establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior leaders and colleagues on the board
- getting to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours
- undertaking induction training and developing knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis

## **What does that look like at Peasedown St John Primary School?**

- Local Governing Body (LGB) meetings are held once every term at 6.00pm and usually last no longer than two hours - currently these are via Google Meet.
- There is an expectation that governors will attend all LGB meetings.
- There are additional meetings as the need arises: for example, governors may choose to serve on a governing body working party on a specific issue.
- No specific 'expertise' is required - simply a commitment to the school, a desire to support the schools' leaders to fulfil their responsibilities and a willingness to ask searching questions. Training is provided and all governors, new and established, are expected to undertake this.
- Governors have the opportunity to specialise in certain curriculum areas, visiting the school (this is done remotely at the moment) to work with subject leaders to scrutinise their priorities and how effectively these are being implemented - it gives a real insight into what and how we teach at PSJ.
- Governors also have the opportunity to meet the headteacher termly in a more informal way to look at implementation of school improvement priorities
- Governors are not there to take decisions about the day-to-day operation of the school - theirs is a strategic role, addressing the needs of the school as a whole, not just of their own child.