



The Role of a School Governor

in Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust Schools



School Governor

School governors support the improvement of educational standards so that children and young people have the chance to realise their full potential. The key to improving school performance is effective governance. By finding, nurturing and supporting a committed network of governors we will help support continuous change and improvement in our schools.

Our local governing committees are made up of a mix of Foundation Governors, a staff Governor (this can be any member of the schools' staff) and a Parent Governor (this can be a parent/carer of a child in school). Our Trust and our schools are all part of the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Our Foundation governors are appointed by the Bishop and form the majority of the local governing committee of a Catholic school. They have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and to ensure that governance is conducted in accordance with the scheme of delegation. Service as a Foundation governor in a Catholic school is one of the most significant and important ways members of the Catholic Faith community can support the Church's mission.

Why become a school governor?

Being a school governor is a chance to experience leadership at board level at any point in your career. Governors recommend the school's budget, appoint the Headteacher and make strategic decisions. The role provides individuals with the opportunity to develop and hone skills such as negotiation and teamwork.

School governors are volunteers and they need to be dedicated people who care about improving education, but they do not need prior board or education sector knowledge or experience. It is a perfect role for individuals looking to improve their strategic and leadership skills, give back to their community, and improve children's futures.

What does a school governor do?

School Governors are responsible for overseeing the management of a school: strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. They enable schools to run as effectively as possible, working alongside senior leaders and supporting teachers to provide excellent education to children.

Being a school governor is a commitment to attend local governing committee meetings which consider issues such as setting the school vision, mitigating financial risk and scrutinising educational outcomes. School governors are also involved in the school community, acting as critical friends to the Headteacher and senior leaders.

They bring a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives to the governing committee and schools benefit significantly from working with skilled governors, for example anyone with experience of finance, law, premises management or human resources.



Setting the strategic direction

Local governing committees are the key strategic decision makers in every school. Along with the Headteacher, it is the job of a local governing committee to set the school's aims and objectives around how the school will develop and improve. They agree policies and targets to help the school achieve these objectives, as well as regularly reviewing their strategic framework in light of that progress.



Creating robust accountability

The local governing committee is there to support and challenge the school's senior leadership team. They play a crucial role in holding the Headteacher to account for securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. By challenging key decisions and asking pertinent questions about the school's performance data, governors aim to guarantee high standards in education.



Ensuring financial probity

Local governing committees have a strategic role in the financial management of schools. Their key responsibilities include setting financial priorities through the school development plan, three year financial plan and the annual budget. They also oversee how the school's budget should be spent in accordance with the school improvement plan and statutory curriculum requirements.

How do the local governing committee work?

Governors work together to provide independent oversight of the management and operation of a school, with the aim of improving the quality of education provided and raising standards. A school's local governing committee does not run the school on a day-to-day basis; this is the job of the Headteacher and other senior staff.

Local Governing Committee (LGC) meetings

Local governing committee meetings are normally held twice a term, usually in school and last about two hours. While there are many important aspects of the role, the most important is the business that takes place at these meetings.

Meeting papers

Prior to meetings, you will receive an agenda, a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting and any other relevant papers that are to be discussed. It is important that you take time to read and familiarise yourself with these documents prior to the meeting. Make notes of anything you are unsure of so you can ask questions at the meeting as necessary.

School visits

Local governing committees are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a school and its curriculum. School visits will help governors to understand more about their school and the reality of school life. Governor visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection, but serve as a clear monitoring function on the implementation of the school's strategic planning.

Commitment involved



Term of Office

Governor appointments are for a term of four years.



Liability

Governors are not individually liable. Liability is collective and held by the governing body as a whole.



Time per month

Governors are expected to attend six local governing committee meetings and other single item agenda meetings as and when required. Governors would also need to commit time to prepare for the meetings (reading papers and preparing any questions) and to attend training. Other involvement such as ad hoc panels and school visits are not compulsory, but we would strongly recommend you attend as many as possible to maximise your impact as a school governor.



Training

Governors are expected to attend some mandatory training each year including safeguarding. There are also additional optional training opportunities and the Diocese provides training. The Trust provides a bespoke governor Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme. We also work with the National Governance Association and all governors can access their training.

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We're happy we are able to make a difference, we are involved and are valued.”

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Tercy Thomas, Chair of Governors, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Sunderland

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Young people are our greatest asset. As a governor, you actively contribute to shaping the educational experience of the next generation. While being enthused by the energy and excitement of students, in their desire to learn and achieve’.

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Tony McCourt, Chair of Governors, St. Bede's School & Byron Sixth Form, Peterlee



How to apply

To apply to be a governor at one of our Trust schools please visit the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle website: diocesehn.org.uk

If you would like more information about becoming a Governor please contact us:



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