

The Role of a School Governor at Overstone Primary School

Anyone who is eighteen or over, a legal resident of the UK and not disqualified under the School Governance Constitution (England) Regulations 2003 is eligible for the role. You do not need to be a parent (unless you are applying for a parent governor role) or have any particular qualifications to become a governor, enthusiasm and a desire to make a difference are the most important qualities a volunteer can have.

Governors perform the most important voluntary role in education and a full and diverse governing body can be a source of enormous strength to schools. Volunteering as a governor is a great way to contribute to your local community, meet new people and improve the lives of local children. You will develop transferable skills and learn more about the education system, whilst putting existing skills and experience to good use.

Governing bodies are responsible for the strategic management of a school and will make decisions about a wide range of issues. The core responsibilities involved are:

- Ensuring accountability
- Acting as a 'critical friend' to the Head Teacher
- Monitoring and evaluating the school's progress
- Budgetary allocation and control
- Planning for the long term future of the school
- Setting the school's aims and values
- Appointing senior members of staff including the Head Teacher

The governing body is usually split in to a small number of committees, each responsible for one area, such as finance, curriculum or health and safety. These committees meet separately from the main governing body to discuss relevant issues in more detail. Discussion is then fed back at full governing body meetings.

There are several different groups responsible for appointing governors, although once appointed all governors essentially perform the same role.

- Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body itself and come from the wider community served by the school. They are particularly valued and recruited for the skills and expertise that they bring to the governing body.
- Authority governors are appointed by the Local Authority of the school. Depending on the area, appointment of authority governors may be made on a political basis.
- Parent governors usually have children at the school and have been elected to join the governing body by the parent body. If it is not possible to fill a parent vacancy this way the governing body may appoint parents of children at other schools.
- Staff governors are elected on to the governing body by staff at the school.
- Associate members are appointed in an advisory capacity by the governing body, but have no formal voting power.

Governors spend approximately 6-8 hours per month on the role. Allowing for participation in a sub-committee of the governing body, this will include 2-4 meetings per term and some preparatory reading. Governing body meetings are held in term time only.

All new governors are recommended to attend the governor induction programme, which helps with understanding their position and the function of the governing body. Overstone Primary School operates a buddy-governor system to help new governors settle into their role. The LA also provides a range of further training opportunities to enable governors to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills.