What does a Governor do?

Role of a school governor

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

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its children, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

As part of the Local Governing Board team, a governor is expected to

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing board 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 and sports 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 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 improvement 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 board on the progress on the relevant school priority
- listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: children, 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.

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

- appoint the Head teacher and other senior leaders
- appraise the Head teachers
- set the Head teacher'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

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (e.g. as a chair of a committee). This role description does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice-chair and chairs of committees.

In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and in agreement with the Headteachers, and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- attend induction and training including Safeguarding training and development events
- attend meetings (full governing board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
- act in the best interests of all the children of the school
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence

The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does NOT:

- Write school policies.
- Undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience.
- Spend much time with the children of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other voluntary and valuable roles within the school.
- Fundraise – this is the role of the PTFA – the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- Undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources
- Do the job of the school staff; if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing board need to consider and rectify this