

## **What is a school governor?**

School governors are volunteers who, as part of the Governing Body, work with the Headteacher to manage the school. Every school must have a governing body, whose main role is to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold the Headteacher and other leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent

Governors are there to take a strategic overview rather than be involved in the day-to-day running of the school.

## **Who can be a school governor?**

Anyone over 18 who lives in the UK can be a school governor.

All governors are required to follow the seven Nolan principles of public life:

[Selflessness](#); [Integrity](#); [Objectivity](#); [Accountability](#); [Openness](#); [Honesty](#); [Leadership](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

The Governing Body should have a combination of particular skills and experience such as education, strategic planning, building maintenance and management, financial expertise and personnel management.

Not every governor needs to have experience in schools or being a member of a board. Training is available and the governing body has a Chair and a Clerk who are both able to help new governors understand their role and support them in meetings.

## **How are governors appointed?**

Parent governors are elected by parents through a vote.

Staff governors are elected by staff through a vote.

Local Authority governors are appointed by the Local Authority (RBKC for Oxford Gardens).

Co-opted governors are appointed by the Governing Body for their particular skills and experience.

It is important that the governing body as a whole can meet the level of skill, knowledge and personal traits required to underpin effective governance. When appointing co-opted governors, the governing body will look at the areas where they would benefit from additional knowledge and expertise to strengthen the board.

The competency framework is outlined here:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/583733/Competency\\_framework\\_for\\_governance\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance_.pdf)

### **What does the role involve?**

At Oxford Gardens Primary School governors attend a Full Governing Body meeting approximately 4 times a year. All governors are expected to join one or two sub-committees – these cover different areas like the curriculum, personnel, pay, finance and buildings – which meet at least once a term. You'll need to be able to work well in a team, as you'll be making joint decisions on policy.

A Full Governing Body meeting usually lasts around 3 hours and takes place during school hours. Committee meetings may be a little shorter, depending on the agenda.

As part of a meeting, governors may visit the classroom or receive a presentation on a key area. The Headteacher will usually give a presentation on the actions from the School Improvement Plan.

Governors are also allocated additional responsibilities linked to the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and will be required to spend time on this, keeping up to date on the requirements and meeting key staff to ensure that the school is on target.

It is important that governors are able to attend all meetings, in order for the governing body to function properly.

Governors will need to prepare for the meeting beforehand by reading minutes of previous meetings, as well as any other papers distributed, checking the agenda and contacting the Clerk or Chair or Headteacher if they have any questions beforehand or do not understand any particular area. Governors may also need to feedback on any relevant meetings they have had, training they have attended, or issues that should be brought to the attention of the governing body.

The governing body does not discuss the daily issues of the school or the detail of how the school leaders are managing them, but look at particular areas, such as attendance, and may ask the Headteacher to prioritise these if they are not already being addressed.

### **What is the structure of the governing body?**

The governing body has a Chair who leads the governing body. There is also a deputy Chair who will stand in for the Chair when needed.

The governing body has a professional Clerk, who advises the governing body, as well as taking minutes, organising and keeping records of meetings and ensuring that relevant legal documents and other paperwork and information is up-to-date.

The Chair and Clerk will support new governors, helping them to understand key terminology or specific areas, if required.

### **Do governors need specialist training?**

You do not need any particular qualifications or training to become a governor, but it is important that all governors understand the role and keep up to date with current requirements, including attending training.

There is a variety of training available on-line and in the classroom for governors, including an introduction to being a school governor and particular areas that governors need to be up-to-date on, such as safeguarding.

RBKC provides free training for governors and issues a newsletter with news that is relevant to governors, such as changes in education law.

### **How do I become a school governor?**

Being a governor can be a very rewarding role. If you are interested in becoming a school governor, contact the Chair of Governors through the school. The Chair will be able to inform you of whether there is a vacancy for a co-opted governor and will be able to talk to you about whether your skills and experience match the vacancy.

If there is a vacancy for a parent governor, all parents will be informed.

Before you put yourself forward, talk to your employer. Many employers recognise the role of school governor as useful work experience and may offer paid leave for governor duties.

### **The Oxford Gardens Governing Body**

The Oxford Gardens Governing Body consists of:

- 9 x co-opted governors
- 3 x parent governors
- 2 x staff governors, plus the Head Teacher
- 1 x Local Authority governor

For more information visit :

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/children-and-education/schools/governance/school-governors>

<https://www.sgoss.org.uk/home/>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school\\_governor/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/school_governor/)

<https://www.gov.uk/become-school-college-governor>

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>