

The Governing Body and its role

School governors are drawn from different parts of the parish and can be parents and staff and the Local Authority. This helps ensure the governing body has sufficient diversity of skills, views and experience.

Governors are the strategic leaders of our schools and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education.

In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- 2. Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;**
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

When a school is inspected by Ofsted, its governing body will be required to show evidence that governors conform with their three core functions

In the work that they do, a governors' essential focus is on:

- **Setting vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- **Holding the Head Teacher and school management to account**
- **Asking the right questions**
- **Being aware of the importance of objective data and their sources**
- **Overseeing financial performance**
- **Support the Head Teacher in setting policies, targets and priorities for achieving those objectives**
- **Monitoring performance and progress towards those objectives**
- **Reviewing achievements against the set aims and objectives**
- **Enabling better governance through training, review and planning**

Another aspect of the governors role has traditionally been referred to as being a '**critical friend**' of the school whereby in addition to the duties laid out above governors can and should also:

- **Offer support**
- **Provide constructive advice**
- **Act as a sounding board** - for the Head Teacher's ideas
- **Give a second opinion on proposals** - which includes asking questions and challenging assumptions
- **Help in arriving at the best solution** - to further the best interests of the school

The list below (which of course is not exhaustive) is a further example of the role of the governor and which shows that the role focuses *not* on the operational aspects of

how the school is run day-to-day – that is the Head Teacher’s responsibility – but on the strategic direction of the school.

Governing bodies do:	Governing bodies don't:
Set the overall budget for the school	Inspect the school
Decide on the level of pay for the school’s teachers	After visiting the school, report back on the quality of teaching
Decide on the number of staff	Authorise all expenditure
Help to decide the priorities for improving the school when the school improvement plan is being drawn up	Decide on how pupils are taught different subjects
Ensure the National Curriculum is taught to all pupils	Have the right to exclude a pupil
Compare the performance of their school to similar schools	Write the school’s policies on their own
Receive information about the quality of teaching in the school	‘Rubber stamp’ recommendations from the Head Teacher
Have a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns	
Ensure health and safety issues are addressed	
Set the times of school sessions	