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The Role of a School Governor

School governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the UK. They provide schools with strategic leadership and accountability for educational and financial performance.

The three core functions of a school governing board are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - This means that you need to make sure your school has a clear idea of what it wants to achieve, and a plan for how to achieve it
 - Your role is to help set and embed your school's vision, ethos and strategy, and use these to monitor how the school is doing
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
 - This means you need to make sure that school leaders are using their professional judgement properly and managing the performance of staff and pupils effectively
 - You also need to make sure that the information you get from your school leaders is accurate
- Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent
 - Your role here is to monitor your school's finances and make sure the school is achieving value for money
 - Ultimately, you need to be sure that public money is spent correctly in the best interests of your pupils

Responsibilities

- Develop the school's vision and strategy
- Set a culture of high educational standards, which promotes staff and pupil wellbeing
- Set the school's strategic aims and objectives
- Ensure the school follows the National Curriculum, and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can access the curriculum
- Monitor provision for pupils with SEND

- Monitor the school's educational performance, using a range of data sources
- Make sure stakeholders (parents, pupils, staff, the local community) are informed and consulted as appropriate
- Approve the school budget
- Monitor and evaluate the school's financial performance
- Approve and review school policies, and hold staff to account for their implementation
- Make sure the school is compliant with legal requirements, including that all statutory policies and documents are in place
- Carry out the appointment and performance management of the headteacher
- Be a source of challenge and support to the headteacher
- Monitor and evaluate the school's staffing structure(s)
- Monitor health and safety in the school
- Work in co-operation with the local authority, having regard to any guidance it issues

Skills and Experience

NB: No single governor is expected to have all the skills required – which is why governors operate as a Full Governing Body.

Once appointed, governors develop their understanding and skills around the role through governor training and experience over time.

Essential:

- Critical listening and ability to ask effective questions
- Strategic thinking
- Excellent communication
- Problem-solving and analysis

Beneficial but not essential:

- Understanding of data
- Finance and/or accounting knowledge
- HR experience
- Knowledge of education
- Leadership and management skills
- Risk management skills
- Legal expertise
- Marketing and communications skills

Benefits to you

New skills you can gain:

- Strategic planning
- Experience on a board
- Holding senior leaders to account and ability to provide challenge
- Finance, and maintaining oversight of large budgets
- Analysing data
- Human resources and performance management
- Project management
- Marketing
- Communication and teamwork
- Decision making
- Problem solving

Time commitment

The time commitment for school governors will vary. However, all governors must attend at least 3 meetings of the full board per year. The term of office is 4 years.

Usually governors sit on a committee focused on an area they have knowledge of, or are particularly interested in.

At Blanche Nevile we have 3 different committees:

- Curriculum Committee
- Finance and Resources Committee
- Safeguarding Committee

Each committee generally meets up to 4 times a year.

Preparation for meetings includes reading papers and preparing questions for senior leaders.

You will also be expected to undertake any training required to enable you to discharge your role effectively.

Governors are also expected to visit the school while it is open to pupils to see progress in action.

If you would like to know more about becoming a school governor, you can get in touch with the Chair of Governors:

Ruth Griffiths

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