



Thinking about being a Parent Governor at Downs Way Infant School?

WHAT IS A GOVERNING BODY?

The Government requires that each school has a management team, a governing body. This team is made up of the various stakeholders that the school serves i.e. parents, local authority, staff and community. Governors are either elected or appointed:

- ◆ 6 Co-opted Governors (6 appointed subject to application)
- ◆ **3 Parent Governors (elected by the parents);**
- ◆ 1 LA Governor (1 appointed by Surrey County Council (SCC))
- ◆ 2 Staff Governors (1 elected by staff plus Head Teacher as ex officio)

WHAT DOES A GOVERNING BODY DO?

Governing bodies are the strategic leaders of our schools and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. This is reflected in the law, which states that the purpose of maintained school governing bodies is to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school'. In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a) **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- b) **Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;** and
- c) **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

HOW IS THAT ACHIEVED?

The key activities of a Governing body can be found in table 1 on page 3 however there is a general structure for governing body functions and this may help you to gauge the time commitment involved.

Meetings:

For meetings to be effective you need to prepare by reading minutes and papers relevant to the agenda. There will also be policy documents that you need to familiarise yourself with in order to understand the work of the school (and also to make the job more interesting for you). Meetings (held generally in the early evening) include:

- ◆ Full Governing Body – as a full governing body we meet 3-4 times per year.
- ◆ Committees – there are two main committees with delegated powers. A Resources committee with responsibility for the finances, the fabric of the school and the workforce and the Children and Learning committee which is responsible for the standards, progress and welfare of the children. These also meet 3-4 times a year and the expectation is that you will be on one of these.
- ◆ Specialist committees and panels to handle pupil and staff performance where needed.
- ◆ Task and finish groups with specific project remit

Visits:

The school community has a rich and varied life! Opportunities exist to attend special events, such as productions, sports days and special assemblies. Governors are also expected to participate in planned governor visits to different areas of the school focusing on the schools



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priorities. These visits are invaluable as you help develop policy and look to raise standards of achievement.

Specialist governors:

Individual governors have no powers themselves and must always act corporately however to be effective governors do need to share the workload of the governing body and part of this is to appoint 'specialist' governors. Their role is to maintain a link to and knowledge of specific areas of school business, e.g. Safeguarding, Looked after children, Special educational needs, etc.

Training:

In Downs Way we also have a Link Governor who is responsible for training and development of the governing body. You may be able to use your professional abilities to the best advantage however, be open to developing new skills; being a governor is not an extension of your full time occupation and you may discover hidden talents!

As a new governor we will expect you to attend induction training sessions, and, once you have decided upon which committee you will serve, training that will help you to develop your skills and understanding. We also have whole governing body training, usually once per year, for specific issues, such as preparing for an OfSTED Inspection, Self-Evaluation, etc.

HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO SERVE?

As a governor you will be appointed /elected for a term of up to four years. You can, of course, resign during that time or continue beyond the four years. There are governors in Surrey who have served 20+ years!

However, be warned! You will quickly find that it is a fascinating role! It is a privilege to be a part of a child's education, and a tremendous responsibility as you will be a role model in the school community. You will be a member of a team that is constantly looking to raise standards of achievement and you will increasingly enjoy your place alongside your colleagues, the staff and pupils. As a school governor you will contribute towards making a difference in your local community.

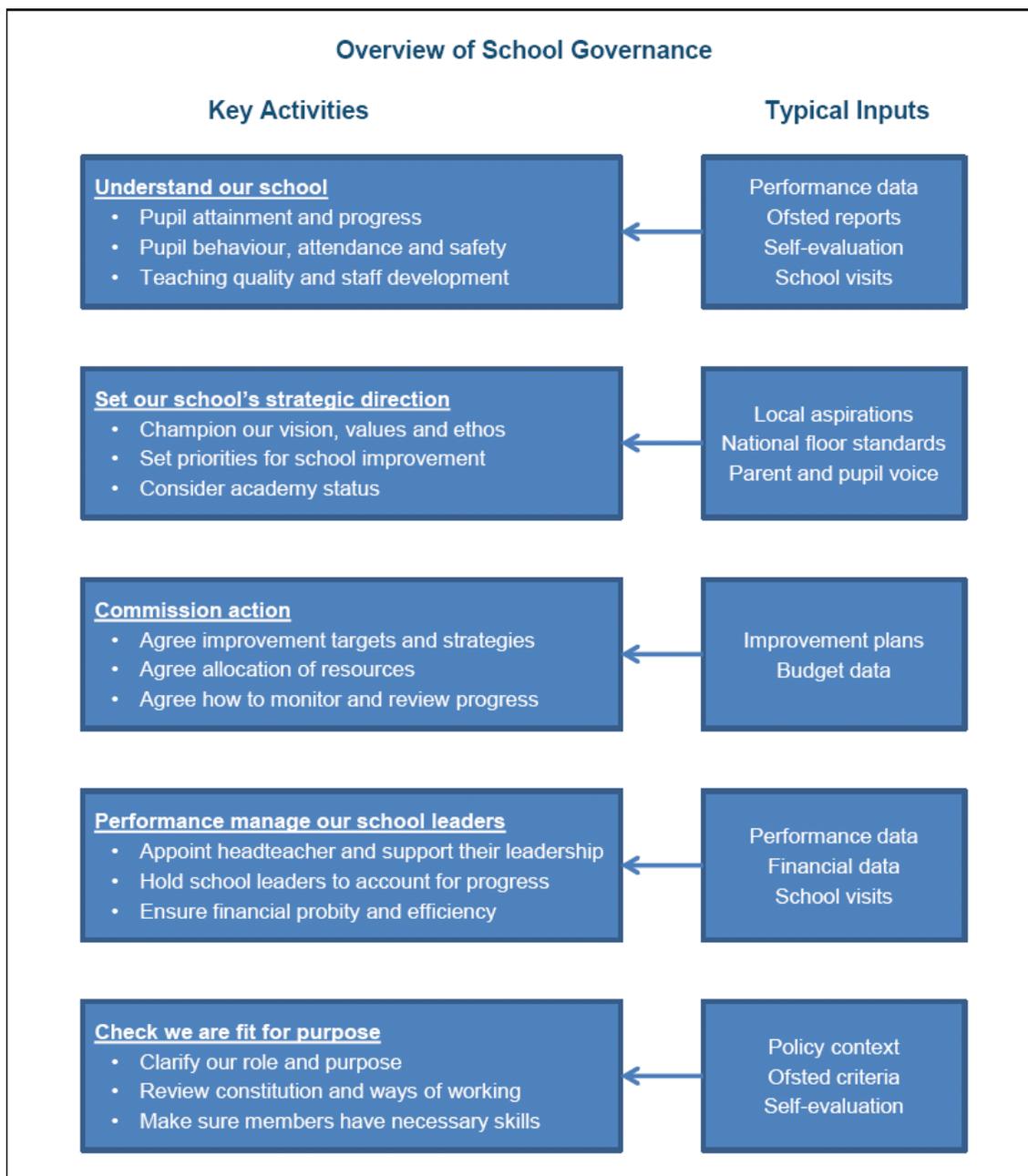
WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED?

All types of people can become school governors, with the exception of anyone disqualified on the basis of child protection requirements, bankruptcy restrictions or recent criminal convictions. No specific qualifications are required, but you must be 18 years of age or over. What is important is that governors have:

- ◆ Enthusiasm for the job and a willingness to learn
- ◆ Commitment to giving children the best possible start in life
- ◆ A desire to raise standards in schools
- ◆ Problem-solving abilities
- ◆ A willingness to challenge
- ◆ Time to actively engage with the school



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Extract from the Governors Handbook (May 2013)

I do hope you will recognise the value of this role and if you believe you have the skills to offer then we would be very pleased to receive your application

Susan Gibbin, Chair of Governors