



Lindley Junior School

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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNOR

Introduction

The role of School Governors is absolutely vital. School Governors form the largest voluntary force in the country and the influence they have over the development of children's education is immense. As an Academy, Lindley Junior School's Governors are the employers of all staff and look after the land and buildings. Although this does not increase our Governors' level of liability, it does bring responsibility. All schools rely on the willingness and goodwill of Governors to give of their free time to help schools develop policy and implement developmental ideas at both primary and secondary levels.

Critical Friend

Perhaps the best way of describing the Governor's role is as being the critical friend to the school. 'Friend' in the sense that Governors are strong supporters and advocates of their school and a willing conduit of information between the wider community and the school itself. 'Critical' because it is essential that an impartial body scrutinises the work of the school and brings a parental, business and community perspective to the educational planning process. Schools are expected to be 'critical' of their own practices and self-evaluation is a key part to development. Governing Bodies can help in that process by not only encouraging and supporting, but also challenging schools to explain their reasoning and giving pause for thought as new ideas are floated and strategic decisions made.

Planning

A key part of the work of a Governor is to help with the medium and long term planning process. Schools develop a robust strategic plan and the writing of that plan should be very much a shared responsibility of the Governors and the school community. Every year a School Development Plan is produced which reflects the ambitions of the school.

Governors' Committees

Apart from the full Governing Body, there are also a number of committees, often with quite extensive delegated authority. These committees cover areas such as finance, staffing and building matters. Most Governors will belong to at least one of these committees in addition to the full Governing Body and the majority of schools will set up their working arrangements to ensure that detailed discussion takes place within the committees rather than in the full Governing Body.

Links with Year Groups

It is important for Governors to maintain strong links not only with the Head Teacher and the Clerk to Governors, but also that the teaching and support staff teams feel that they have a voice. To a small extent the teaching and support staff Governors can provide this voice, but Governors are also encouraged to work with year groups, visiting lessons (in an observational capacity), attending training sessions and special events for pupils. This might only be once or twice a year but the contact is appreciated by staff and helps Governors to understand the issues within the school and within the classroom itself.

Finance

One of the most critical duties of the Governing Body is to set the budget on an annual basis. Most schools spend in excess of 80% of their income on staffing and so the need to budget carefully, forward plan and anticipate changes is paramount. This type of work is an example of an activity where the detailed work is undertaken in a committee but the full Governing Body ratifies any final decisions that are made.

Summary

In summary, the work of the Governors in schools is crucial. Every new Governor joining the Governing Body brings a valid perspective. There is no need to have extensive professional or business expertise to be able to offer a point of view because the school community is made up of so many different types of people. It is vital that the Governing Body is broadly representative. At Lindley Junior School, debate in Governing Body meetings and in committees is friendly, open and constructive. The Governing Body work with the school, in support of the school, but also set a high standard of expectation and ambition which helps to drive forward the work of the senior staff and create a bright future for our pupils.