

School Governors - What do they do?

Firstly I would like to introduce myself as the Chair of Governors at Higham Primary School.

Recently after the Parent Consultation meetings you were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding your child's/children's school experience as well as some general questions about the school. Thank you for completing the questionnaire which has been shared with the Governing Body at a Full Governing Body on 3rd December.

One of the findings from the survey was that some parents were unaware of the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body.

There will soon be a communication from the school notifying all parents that there is one vacancy for a Parent Governor and so there will be a Parent Governor Election in Term 3. Therefore I thought it was an ideal moment to outline the important role of Higham Primary School's Governing Body.

A Governing Body provides strategic leadership to the School and holds the School to account for its performance. The 3 Core functions are:

- 1) Ensuring the School has a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- 2) Holding the Headteacher to account for educational performance and staff management;
- 3) Overseeing the financial performance of the School and to ensure that money is well spent in the correct areas.

A Governing Body in association with the Senior Leaders of the School:

- Will develop a long term plan to ensure improvement year on year, which it will monitor through educational performance,
- Will set the vision, aims and values, through its policies,
- Will monitor the School's budget and make decisions regarding how the money is spent effectively including the staffing structure,
- Will ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the legal requirements as directed by the Department for Education.

Governors at Higham Primary School

Our Governing Body is made up of 11 Governors:

- 1 Local Authority Governor appointed by the Local Education Authority
- 2 Parent Governors elected by parents of children at Higham Primary School
- 1 Staff Governor appointed by the Staff at Higham Primary School
- 7 Co Opted Governors appointed by the Governing Body for the skills that they possess, for example education expertise, financial expertise, community expertise or legal expertise regarding matters like HR or Health & Safety.

In addition to the 11 Governors, the Headteacher, Mrs Grattan attends every Governors Meeting. We also have a Governance Professional, Mrs Haruna, who attends every meeting to ensure that the Governing Body operates correctly within its legal responsibilities, our Terms of Reference and our Code of Conduct.

We can also appoint Associate Members to join the Governing Body in view of their expertise required by the Governing Body.

The Governors of the school undertake their role voluntarily and do not receive any remuneration for their Governor role.

Parent Governors

As stated, our Governing Body constitution has 2 Parent Governor positions. When a vacancy occurs, as is the case now, an election will take place to select a new Parent Governor. The rules regarding this election are quite specific and will be sent out to all parents shortly along with the important dates that need to be adhered to for self nomination and voting.

If only one parent puts themselves forward for election they would be the successful candidate, if more than one parent puts themselves forward for election a vote will follow and the candidate who receives the most votes from parents will be the successful candidate.

Any successful candidate would need to satisfy identity and safeguarding checks, in view of their role in a school, before they can be officially appointed following the election.

Why be a Parent Governor ? What is the Commitment?

Being a Parent Governor is so important to any school because they represent **all** parents with a voice on the Governing Body. They can give feedback on how decisions made by the school have been implemented and they help to shape the future of the school.

You do not need to have previous Governor or education experience as all new Governors will receive induction training and be allocated a mentor to help them initially.

You do need to be the parent or carer of a child that attends Higham Primary School at the time of the Parent Governor election.

The term of election of a Governor is 4 years.

Every academic year there will be 3 Full Governing Body Meetings, an annual Administration Meeting and an annual Budget Meeting.

You would also be required to join one of our two committees. Each committee meets 3 times within a school year.

- Resources Committee - that discusses the financial position of the school, the premises, school resources and safety issues.

- Curriculum & Standards Committee - that discuss the quality of teaching and the curriculum being taught to ensure it complies with its legal responsibility.

The key feature of a Parent Governor is being enthusiastic and committed to improving the day to day operation and long term aims of Higham Primary School.

Next Steps?

Please keep an eye out for the Parent Governor election announcement.

The School website has a Governors page that will give you some information about our current Governors and why they became a Governor at Higham Primary School. Feel free to have a browse.

If anyone would like to meet with me informally to discuss the role and expectations of a Governor please notify the Office and they will arrange a mutually convenient time for a brief chat at the school to answer your questions.

Thank you for your time.

Brian Maynard
Chair of Governors
Higham Primary School