

# New Governor Induction Pack

## MUGGINTON CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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HT	
CoG	
Future Review	<i>T6 2020</i>

# Mugginton CofE Primary School

## New Governor Induction Pack

This policy has been written in accordance with the Christian ethos of our school, our recognition of British values, an awareness of our position in the Global community and taking account of all current Safeguarding and Child Protection guidance.

This Induction Pack is drawn up by Derbyshire LA and is not always specific to Mugginton CofE Primary School. It provides an overview of the functions and responsibilities of Governors generally but does contain some useful exercises designed to get new Governors to focus on the specific situation at Mugginton. It does contain some specific references to Mugginton CofE Primary School information.

### References to other information sources

Since references to other sources of information change frequently there are no direct links to other sources of information in this document.

- The **Department for Education** (currently DfE) changes its name from time-to-time and the material on the web site changes.
- The links to the **Local Authority (LA)** web site change from time-to-time as does the content.
- The type and source of **outside data** changes.
- All Mugginton Governors are members of the **National Governors Association (NGA)**. This membership gives Governors access to the weekly newsletter and other resources offered by the NGA.

However, the above sources of information will continue to be available in some shape or form. Governors should request the latest access details from the school to use these sources.

# Mugginton CofE Primary School

## New Governor Induction Pack

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## **A. GETTING TO KNOW YOUR GOVERNING BODY**

### **1. Categories of school**

Schools use various descriptors, e.g. infants, junior, primary, secondary, but the governing body's powers are more affected by the school's category.

There are three categories of LA maintained schools – Community, Foundation and Voluntary. Voluntary schools may be Aided or Controlled. There are many similarities between the responsibilities of the Governing Bodies in different categories of school; for example are eligible to receive a delegated budget. The main differences are set out below.

Since 2014 the number of schools categorised as Academies has increased significantly. Difference rules of Governance apply to Academies and to Multi-Academy-Trusts (MATs). Some schools are part of a Federation. Governor responsibilities relating to Academies and Federations are not covered in this document

#### **a) Community Schools**

LAs own the land and buildings and retain legal responsibility for staffing. In practice Governing Bodies exercise those functions under delegation.

#### **b) Foundation Schools**

Own their land and buildings and are the direct employers of staff.

#### **c) Voluntary Controlled Schools**

VC schools are established by a voluntary body, usually the Church. Collective worship in these schools is in accordance with the Trust Deed. In appointing a Headteacher, the Governors may appoint someone who is able to preserve and develop the religious character of the school.

#### **d) Voluntary Aided Schools**

Established by a voluntary body, usually the church, and consequently generally have a religious character. The Governing Body is responsible for the religious education and worship policy, and foundation Governors are in a majority. Trustees own the land and buildings, and the Governing Body is the legal employer of staff. It is also responsible for 10% of the cost of capital and external maintenance works, and for the admissions policy.

### **2. Number of pupils**

Check how many pupils there on roll at your school and the standard annual intake as well as the number of classes and teachers. Use the table in Section A -6 to help you make sense of ages, years and key stages.

### **3. Size and Composition of Governing Body**

The Instrument of Government is determined by the Governing Body and may vary in size from 9 to 20 Governors. (Regulations for Instruments of Government approved after 2012 are slightly different.)

Every new Governor should receive a copy of their school's Instrument of Government, which states the current size and composition of their Governing Body.

You will notice that there are different types of Governor representing different groups of people or are co-opted by the rest of the Governors as Co-opted Governors.

#### **a) Types of Governor**

The composition of a Governing Body should reflect a wide range of groups from the community.

- **Parent Governors** are elected to be representative of the parent body. They should keep in touch with those who elected them but make up their own minds on how to

vote on any specific issue. No one who works in the school for more than 500 hours in any 12 month period commencing 1 August and finishing 31 July is eligible for appointment or election as a parent Governor. Similarly, elected members of the Local Authority are disqualified.

- **Staff Governors** include the Headteacher (who must be counted in the staff Governor category whether or not he/she has resigned his/her Governorship), teaching and non-teaching staff. With the exception of the Headteacher, staff Governors are elected and should communicate with those who elected them. All staff Governors should make up their own minds on how to vote on any specific issue.
  - **Local Authority Governors** are appointed by the Local Authority that maintains the school. Positions can be filled to reflect the local political balance, but this is not obligatory. As with all other Governors they should be appointed with a view to their commitment to raising standards. They should keep in touch with those who appoint them but should vote according to the best interests of the school. No one who is eligible to be a staff Governor can be appointed as an LA Governor.
  - **Foundation Governors** are normally appointed by either the Diocese or the local church, or by some other foundation body.
  - **Co-opted Governors** appointed on the basis of the skills that they can offer the Governing body. Governing Bodies are expected to carry out a skills audit to determine skills shortages and then to recruit suitably qualified people to fill the skills gap(s).
  - **Partnership Governors.** In the case of a foundation school which has no foundation or equivalent body, the foundation Governors are replaced by partnership Governors. The Governing Body appoints them after seeking nominations from parents and others in the community it considers appropriate. These could include members of staff, community associations and other local bodies. No one who is a parent of a pupil at the school, or is a registered pupil is eligible for appointment. Anyone eligible to be a staff Governor, elected members of the Local Authority and anyone employed by the LA in connection with education services is also disqualified.
  - One or two **Sponsor Governors** can be appointed by the Governing Body in recognition of their provision of substantial financial assistance or services to the school.
  - **Associate members** can be appointed by the Governing Body to serve on one or more Governing Body committees and attend full Governing Body meetings. They are not Governors but the Governing Body may assign some voting rights in the committees to which they are appointed. The range of issues on which they can vote is defined in Regulations.
- b) **Clerk to Governors.** The Governing Body appoints the Clerk to Governors. The Clerk is not a Governor. The person appointed is paid for the work they do, plus expenses for postage etc. The Clerk should be able to advise the Governing Body on constitutional and procedural matters, powers and duties as well as:
- noting the decisions made at Governing Body meetings;
  - receiving correspondence and bringing it to the attention of Governors;
  - issuing correspondence on behalf of Governors;
  - circulating notice of meetings and other information to Governors;
  - preparing and sending out papers before and after Governing Body meetings and committee meetings, in consultation with the Chair.

**Write the names of the other Governors on your Governing Body under the appropriate category heading. Write the name of the Clerk and any useful contact information below:**

Parent Governors	Local Authority Governors	Staff Governors
Foundation Governors	Co-opted Governors	Associate members
Sponsor Governors	Clerk to Governors	Contact information

**c) Headteacher**

Headteacher's name	
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**The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- the internal organisation, management and control of the school;
- formulating aims and objectives, policies and targets for the Governing Body to consider adopting;
- advising on and implementing the Governing Body's strategic framework;
- giving Governors the information they need to help the school raise its standards.

**d) Chair of Governors**

**The Chair of Governors has a key role on the Governing Body. It is the Chair's responsibility to:**

- ensure the business of the Governing Body is conducted properly, in accordance with legal requirements;
- ensure meetings are run effectively, focussing on priorities and making best use of time available, and ensuring that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in discussion and decision-making;
- establish and foster an effective relationship with the Headteacher based on trust and mutual respect for each other's roles. The Chair has an important role in ensuring that the Governing Body acts as a sounding board to the Headteacher and provides strategic direction.

The Governing Body must elect a Chair and a Vice Chair. There are no regulations prescribing the election process as Governing Bodies are best placed to decide how to organise this but those standing for election should withdraw from the meeting when a vote is taken.

The Chair's name	
The Vice-Chair's name	

#### e) Meetings of Governing Body

The law says that the full Governing Body must meet at least three times a year. It is up to the Governing Body to decide how often they meet beyond this.

If an issue of serious concern arises, three Governors may call for an extra meeting to take place. They must give written notice to the Clerk that summarises the business to be conducted. The Clerk has to arrange the meeting. **There must always be at least seven days' notice of a meeting unless the Chair decides there is an urgent need to call a meeting at short notice.**

A meeting schedule for all meetings of the Governing Body is published before the beginning of the school year. Although there may be some changes to meeting dates, every attempt is made to keep changes to a minimum.

#### f) Committees of Governing Body

The Governing Body can delegate some of its decision-making powers to committees. These committees take decisions on relevant matters and report back to the Governing Body what they have done. The Governing Body must decide the remit of each committee and this must be stated in the committee's terms of reference.

The Committee structure at Mugginton is set out in:

#### **MPS Committee Structure and Responsibility Table (MPSGovCom&ResponsTable)**

while the individual Governor responsibilities are set out in:

#### **MPS Specific Governor responsibilities (MPSGovResponsibilities)**



## B. GETTING TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL

### 1. The Teaching Staff and their Responsibilities

If you have a clear idea of who is responsible for different parts of the curriculum and other management tasks in the school it will make it easier when you and other Governors have to form committees and working parties in which Governors and staff work together on tasks.

Usually you can often find this information in the **School Prospectus or web site**.

At Mugginton CofE Primary School the Prospectus is being phased out in preference to the web site.

How many staff members are there at your school?	
How many are part-time?	
How many are temporary?	
Are there any vacancies?	

Usually there is a staff list for your school, which shows which teachers hold posts of responsibility and what those responsibilities are.

#### **Have you seen this document? (Web site)**

If NO, ask your Headteacher for a copy of it.

*As a new Governor you may find it useful to visit the school as part of your induction. Please refer to Section B - 12 for further information.*

### 2. Salary Structures and Management Issues

Governors are responsible for determining the number of teaching staff at the school and levels of pay. Issues relating to individuals' salary scales should be treated as confidential information.

Governors appoint the Headteacher, Deputy and Assistant Headteacher to the leadership group and determine how other appointments will be made.

### 3. Performance Management in the School Setting

Performance management is a tool for school improvement. It is a key and integral part of school management and improvement. All employees, teachers and support staff, have an entitlement to a professional discussion about their development and progress. All schools have a School Development or School Improvement Plan. Performance Management is the link between them.

If we take the basic principle that a school knows the areas in which it needs or wants to improve and that every teacher and support staff member addresses those areas in their performance objectives the result will be an improved educational provision for our children.

#### **The Process**

There is a statutory requirement for every teacher to have an annual professional development review in which objectives are set. Alongside this, every teacher must be observed while teaching by their Team Leader (Team Leaders are teachers who take responsibility for reviewing the performance of colleagues – Key Stage Co-ordinators, Heads of Department etc.). The results of both of these parts of the process are reviewed again the following year.

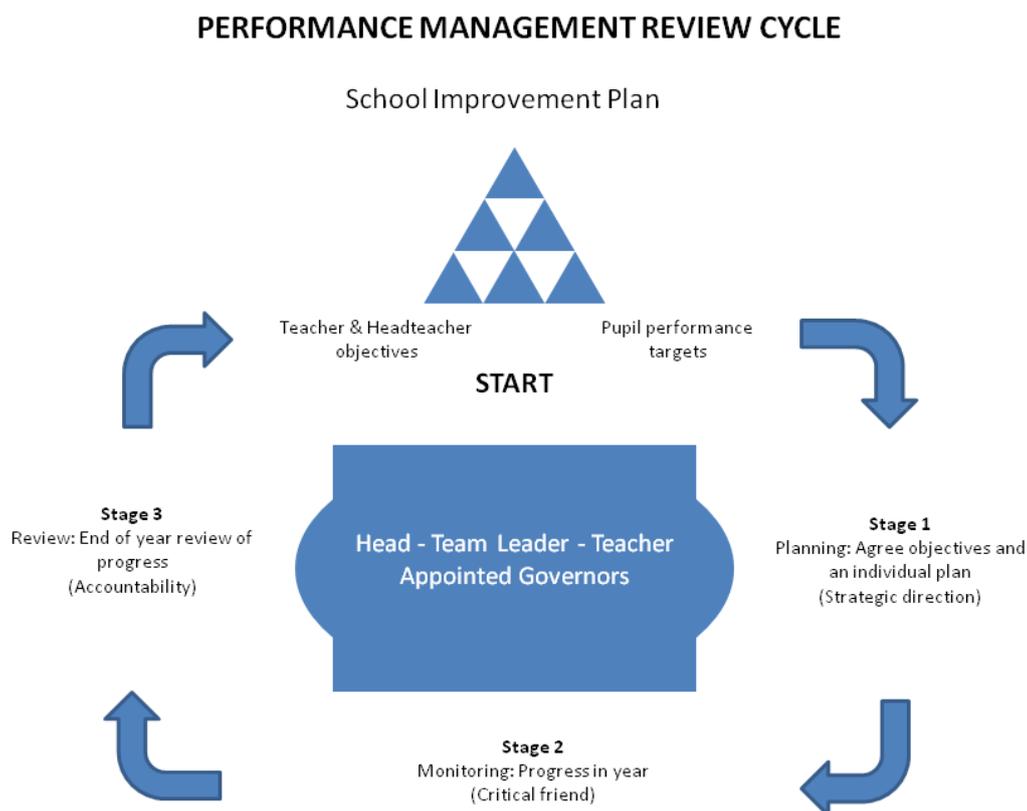
The above applies to all teachers. In addition, when a teacher reaches Point M6 on the main pay scale, they may apply to "cross the Threshold" in the next academic year. This requires them to complete an application form and detail evidence to support their application to show that they meet the Threshold standards. Distance verification takes place in the majority of schools and there are visits to around 20% of schools nationally. This will include all schools

where the Headteacher is new to the Threshold process and any school where the process is unclear or weak. Once across the Threshold, teachers move to the Upper Pay Spine, Point U1. From this point they may, in future years, progress further up the Upper Pay Spine; usually after 2 years and as long as they have been taking part in the Performance Management process. In addition, the Governing Body has a responsibility to agree and monitor objectives for any Advanced Skills Teachers the school may have.

Currently, there is no statutory requirement to hold formal performance reviews and set objectives for support staff. However, it is good practice and many schools are including support staff procedures in their revised Performance Management Policy. Several LAs have prepared performance management pro-formas, including lesson observations, to help schools develop systems for support staff.

What follows is a representation of the review cycle. It is worth looking at this in light of the three main roles of the Governor:

- The strategic view – a role in which the Governing Body looks at the long-term aims and strategies for school improvement.
- The critical friend – a supportive but challenging critique of a colleague’s (the Headteacher’s) work.
- Accountability – the Governing Body is responsible for providing the best possible education for its pupils.



#### 4. Support Staff

A lot of very important work is undertaken by the school and involves support staff. The first people that visitors to the school may meet are often members of support staff.

Note down the names of the support staff at your school in the spaces provided below:

Who is in charge of the school meal arrangements at your school?	
Who manages the midday supervisors?	
Who manages the cleaning staff?	
If there are other services provided to your school by outside contractors find out what they are and who are the contractors?	

## 5. Voluntary Help

Are there any parents who help in the classroom at your school?

What kind of help do they give?

## 6. Making Sense of Ages, Years and Key Stages

The National Curriculum Divided into 3 Key Stages				
Pupil age	School year	Key Stage	Expected level of achievement	Tests/GCSE
4–5	Reception	Foundation	GLD Goals for Learning & Development	Early Years Foundation stage profile
5–6 6–7	Year 1 Year 2	Key Stage 1	New Assessment	National Curriculum Tests
7–8 8–9 9–10 10–11	Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6	Key Stage 2	New Assessment	National Curriculum
11–12 12–13 13–14	Year 7 Year 8 Year 9	Key Stage 3	New Assessment	National Curriculum
14–15 15–16	Year 10 Year 11	Key Stage 4	Numerical Grades	GCSE (GNVQ)

The Foundation Stage covers 3-5 year olds. Children of this age can be in a variety of settings: reception class in a school, nursery classes attached to a school, nursery schools or private nurseries.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is a teacher-observation-based assessment of children at the end of the Foundation Stage when most children are five or rising five. It has to be carried out in all government-funded early years' settings.

## 7. Training, Support and Development for Staff and Governors

### a) Training

Every year schools will identify curriculum and staff development issues as part of the school's development planning. This should lay out in detail the ways in which the school will meet the development needs of all staff and Governors. Many schools now call it the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Have you seen a copy of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)? (Web site)

If **NO**, ask for a copy from the Headteacher.

What are the school's strengths?	
What are its areas for development?	

Governors have a role to play in ensuring that the resources the school has for staff development are being used effectively. These resources also include an element for Governor training and support.

Do Governors' training needs feature on the School Improvement Plan?	
How much has your Governing Body set aside for Governor training?	
Who do Governors approach to access this money?	

### b) Cluster Training

All schools are part of a Local School Improvement Cluster. Many of the cluster groups identify the Governor training needs they have in common and arrange a training session to be delivered at a time and venue of their own choice.

Has your Governing Body undertaken Governor training as part of a cluster?

## 8. The School Buildings

Generally speaking, Governors are responsible for the maintenance of the buildings including most structural matters. Derbyshire Education Authority's Local Management of Schools (LMS) scheme will detail who is responsible for which aspects of property maintenance.

As part of your induction as a new Governor you have the opportunity to tour the school premises. As a new Governor you will see the school with fresh eyes, so as you proceed around the school note the state of school environment. Your first impressions can provide useful information for the Governing Body when it reviews the state and use of the premises.

Your school will have an Asset Management Plan. What are the priorities within the plan?

## 9. The School Timetable

Most schools divide up the week into sessions with a particular theme, topic or subject. Every school is different in the way it divides up the school day. Primary schools have a different approach from secondary schools.

When does the school day start and end for?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the staff</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the pupils/students</li></ul>	
How many teaching sessions does the school have?	
When are break times?	
What are the arrangements for lunchtime?	

## 10. Documentation

Schools consider very carefully the documentation they wish to share with you and at what stage, so that your aren't deluged.

However over a period of time it may be useful for you to look at the following:

- List of staff and their responsibilities
- Plan of the school
- List of Governors and the committees to which they belong
- Committee structure and terms of reference
- Minutes of two most recent Governors' meetings
- Dates of future meetings and location details
- The School Improvement Plan
- The latest OfSTED report
- External Data
- Recent reports written by the Headteacher for Governors

## 11. The School Calendar

Most Derbyshire schools have a calendar of yearly events. This calendar includes things like parents' consultation meetings, special events, trips out of school, sporting events, holidays, school closure days, school plays and concerts etc. The calendar should also include Governing Body meetings.

Have you got a copy of your school's annual calendar? If not ask how school events are recorded and communicated

## 12. Visiting the School

Many Derbyshire schools have arrangements to allow Governors to visit the school during the working day. A general visit may be part of your induction as a new Governor. It is important that Governors have a realistic impression of what happens during a typical school day. Visiting the school will allow you to get a quick impression of the life of the school, but remember this will only be a snapshot picture.

Talk to the Headteacher and find out what these arrangements are. Most Governing Bodies have a Governor visit purpose and reporting protocol. (MPS Policy on Governor Visits.) Find out how you should go about making a visit and what you could be doing while visiting.

## 13. Planning for your first visit as a Governor

Many Governors worry about making visits to school and particularly about visiting a

classroom. Before you visit the school make sure you have an opportunity to see some of the documentation outlined above.

***Remember your role is never that of an inspector, your role is to get to know how the school works, to monitor progress and encourage development.***

### **The Actual Visit**

You need to decide what the purpose of your visit will be. It is not very satisfactory simply to go into the school and wander around and it can also be very unsettling for those working in the school, including the children.

Talk to the Headteacher about what you could look at when you visit the school and what you could report back to other Governors having made your visit

Many Governing Bodies have already received training in this area and we encourage you to do the same before you undertake further visits.

## **14. Policies and Other Documents.**

Policies provide a framework for the Headteacher and staff to use when making decisions about the daily management of the school. They are key to ensuring that school 'lives' its values.

Governing bodies and Headteachers should work together in partnership to develop key policies. The purpose of each policy should be clear, roles should be explicit and it should be clear how and when implementation and impact will be monitored and evaluated.

Many Local Authorities, Diocesan Boards and the national church bodies provide procedures and model policies for schools to adopt/modify. These will reflect national legislation - Employment Law, Race Relations Act and so on, and will have been developed in consultation with unions.

**A schedule of all the policies maintained by the school can be found on the school web site.**



## C. WHAT YOU BRING TO BEING A GOVERNOR

### 1. Your skills and Abilities

As a 'volunteer' Governor you have taken on many important responsibilities.

What are the main reasons that helped you decide you wanted to be a school Governor? Try and sort your reasons by noting them down under the following headings:

Things you have some knowledge about:	
Issues you really care about in education:	
The amount of time you think you can give:	
Things you have organised, developed or managed:	

### 2. What You Think You Can Offer

Having completed the list above, go through what you have written and ask yourself what you can offer your school. Highlight the things you think you could usefully offer your school as a Governor.

### 3. What You Think the School Does Well

All of us have our own values and standards. We all know what we think is good quality, what is efficient and effective. Our attitudes to these things are as valid as everyone else's and as a Governor you should not be afraid to venture an opinion. The important thing is to be sure that your opinion has a factual basis. It is equally important to listen to the opinions of other Governors.

The MPS Governing Body conducts an annual Self-Evaluation. Governors are encouraged to complete this Self-evaluation questionnaire and then collate the results to make an overall judgement.

Your Governing Body may use a checklist of its own to consult with parents, children or members of the community how they view the school issues.

## **D. WHAT ARE GOVERNORS SUPPOSED TO DO?**

### **1. Be a Representative not a Delegate**

Governors are elected or appointed by particular groups of people (see Section A). However, this does not mean that Governors have to vote in a particular way because they have been pressed to do so by members of that group, for example:

#### **a) Example 1**

Parent Governors will listen to the views of parents. They will talk to various parents about important decisions that have to be made, but when it comes to making those decisions the Parent Governors must act in the best interest of the school. They should, however, make the views of those parents known to the whole Governing Body.

#### **b) Example 2**

Staff Governors do not have to vote in a particular way simply because a group of teachers feel strongly about an issue although they should make the views known to the whole Governing Body.

Governors are there to ensure that different stakeholders have a voice on the Governing Body. Common sense and sensitivity to the range of views people have will ensure that decisions will have a wide base of acceptance.

### **2. Collective Not Individual**

Governors operate as a team, and they should tackle problems together. If everyone is prepared to get involved, the workload can be shared out evenly. When decisions have to be made and action taken, make sure that your Governing Body has clarified each Governor's individual role.

### **3. Accountability**

An important part of a Governing Body's role is to ensure that the school is providing quality education for all children. The best way Governors can fulfil this role is to ask the right questions on issues that concern the life of the school. Governors should always concern themselves with the welfare of the school. Above all, you want to be a supporter and critical friend of the school, helping it to achieve the best for the children.

The Headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school, but will look to the Governors for support and challenge. It is the duty of the Governors, working with the Headteacher, to keep under review the way the school is developing.

### **4. The Purpose and Roles of Governing Bodies**

#### **a) To help schools to provide the best possible education for their pupils by:**

- setting the school's values, vision and strategic aims, agreeing plans and policies, and making creative use of resources;
- monitoring and evaluating performance, acting as a critical friend to the Headteacher to support and challenge them in managing the school;
- ensuring that the school is accountable to the children and parents it serves, to its local community, to those who fund and maintain it, as well as to the staff it employs.

#### **b) Governing bodies working strategically:**

- focus on raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning, so that pupils achieve to their potential;
- decide what they want the school to achieve (the vision), and make plans to get there;
- ensure that all those who have an interest in the success of the school contribute when the values, vision and aims are being agreed;

- help to set and keep under review the policies that provide a broad framework within which the Headteacher and staff should run the school;
- support the school in implementing its self-evaluation strategy and ensure that weaknesses identified are addressed in the school improvement plan;
- ensure the effective and efficient use of all resources to achieve the school's priorities and secure value for money;
- ensure that there are systems in place to check that progress is being made towards targets and that evidence is gathered;
- use that evidence to review overall progress against targets, to see whether policies and practice are effective, and to check on their school's achievements and progress over time and in comparison with similar schools;
- manage their workload so that their agenda/work schedule is consistent with the school's;
- take advice on all of this from the Headteacher before making their own decisions.

One of the challenges in all of this is keeping up to date with the national and local agenda. A key influence is the *Every Child Matters* agenda, flowing from the Children Act.

Schools and local authorities will be judged on how well they achieve the five intended outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

In many circumstances the Headteacher will bring issues to the Governing Body which have solutions that everyone accepts. The Governing Body collectively endorses the way in which such an issue is to be tackled. The place for debate about contentious issues is in the Governing Body or committee **before** any decision is taken. Once a decision is taken Governors have a collective responsibility to try to ensure, as far as possible, that the decision is acted upon. If something really is very contentious and you cannot agree with it, you can ask for your dissent to be minuted. While Governors should always be prepared to explain their decisions and keep them under review, it is unhelpful and often very destructive when an issue has been decided upon, to re-open debate outside the Governing Body.

## 5. Confidentiality

Discussions that the Governing Body has regarding particular members of staff, their individual pay and conditions and any personal issues they have brought to the attention of Governors are strictly confidential. Matters relating to the circumstances of a particular child are also confidential. It may be tempting to talk to other Governors about such issues outside the formal Governing Body meetings but this should be avoided.

## 6. Controversy

There are occasions when Governors have to discuss matters that are difficult to resolve. The fact that an issue is controversial and difficult to resolve is not sufficient reason for the matter to be deemed a confidential item, as this could stifle discussion. When controversial decisions have to be made it is important that people see them being dealt with in a manner that is open and fair and that Governors are consistent in their practice. In many Governing Bodies, issues are generally resolved by discussion, which leads to general agreement and formal votes are rarely taken.

At your next Governing Body meeting note down, for each issue discussed, how a decision was made (e.g. committee recommendation, vote, general agreement etc.).

## 7. Supporter of the School

Every Governor is there to lend their support in ensuring that the school is doing its best for all children. There are many ways in which Governors can offer their support, so:

### Work as a team!

Be supportive of the Headteacher and staff by:

- offering your skills;
- giving time to the school;
- making purposeful visits;
- delegating tasks sensibly;
- preparing to volunteer.

Be well informed by:

- reading school, LA and DfE documents as identified;
- attending Governor training;
- visiting the school;
- listening to others;
- observing how things are done.

Develop good relationships by:

- talking to teachers, parents and pupils;
- maintaining contacts with your community;
- talking about the school and its success;
- attending school events and bring others along;
- being a good ambassador for the school;
- being a critical friend to the school.

Look at one of the Development/Improvement targets in the School Improvement Plan and go through the above checklist. Pick which things you think you could offer realistic support with that target, and note it down below.

## 8. Being a 'Critical Friend'

The Governing Body provides the Head and staff with support, advice and information, drawing on its members' knowledge and experience. In these ways the Governing Body acts as a critical friend to the school; critical in the sense of its responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness, asking challenging questions and pressing for improvement; a **friend** because it exists to promote the interests of the school and its pupils.

By being a 'critical friend' to the school this is an ideal way in which the Governing Body can help the school to work towards its goals and implement its strategic plan.

This involves:

- Monitoring progress.
- Valuing and praising achievements.
- Challenging low performance and poor achievement.

Examples of challenging questions having received a report from the Headteacher or co-ordinator:

- How did you arrive at the conclusions contained within this report?
- Who have you consulted?
- What improvements are evident?
- How do you know?

- Has progress been as intended?
- What are the main areas for further development?
- Who is responsible for further developments?
- What impact is intended and how will we know how well things are going?

For most Governors this process will take place in Governing Body meetings where progress reports are received and questions asked. The skills of active listening and straight talking are essential in this process. If the role of 'critical friend' is to develop there has to be a relationship of trust based on shared goals and mutual respect.

For Governors with specific responsibilities, i.e. the Special Needs Governor, Literacy Governor or Curriculum Governor, the 'critical friend' role may take place when working with members of staff or in committees.

It is not the responsibility of Governors to understand the professional issues involved in teaching. Governors will monitor performance by looking at the results; the goals achieved, the confidence of pupils and ethos of the school. Opportunities to 'value' and 'praise' achievement offer effective means of encouraging and motivating staff.



## **E. WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DO GOVERNORS HAVE?**

### **1. Responsibility for Effective School Improvement Planning**

#### **a) Effective School Improvement Planning:**

- states the agreed values, aims and objectives for the school and focuses on raising standards of educational achievement;
- reflects local and national trends and initiatives that might impact on the school e.g. rising/falling rolls and the priorities in the LA's Education Development Plan (EDP) /Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP);
- is derived from rigorous self-evaluation (N.B SES);
- is shared and understood by all concerned;
- has SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited);
- has named people responsible for action;
- has explicit links to the school budget;
- identifies training and support needs;
- states the evidence that will demonstrate success;
- makes clear how, when and by whom progress will be monitored and evaluated;
- drives the agendas for Governing Body meetings and the Headteacher's objectives.

#### **So what does Improvement planning involve?**

Firstly, you need to review the current position by asking:

- Where is the school now?
- How are things going currently?
- What is going well?
- What are the areas for development?
- Are there any urgent needs?

It is now possible to identify exactly what needs to be done by Governors asking:

- Where do we want the school to be in X months (or X years) time?
- What are we hoping to achieve?
- By when?
- Which are the most important things our school needs to do now?

Plans need action. It is important to work out how each priority set for the school will be achieved, so Governors will ask questions like:

- Who will be involved in this process?
- Is there enough staff time?
- Are there any existing resources that could be used?
- Can resources be re-directed to this priority?
- Is there a direct financial cost?
- What are the potential knock-on effects?
- Will this prevent something else from being done?
- Who will do what, by when and with whom?
- Who is monitoring and evaluating this part of the plan?
- What are the anticipated benefits?
- How will we know we have achieved what we set out to do?

All these issues need sorting out before the Governing Body decides whether to proceed with this priority or not. With all this information about each activity you will be able to discuss the relative merits of each one so that you can give an order of priority to each potential development.

Having established an order of priority for each activity it is necessary to see if the budget will permit some or all of them to take place, bearing in mind that:

- With these decisions made the budget can be set for the coming financial year.
- Some priorities may have to be deferred to another financial year because of budgetary constraints.

It is very important to decide now (i.e. before any action is taken) how you will measure success for each priority, in other words:

- How will we know we have done it?
- What information will have to be collected as we proceed?
- What will be reported back to the Governing Body?
- Have the benefits identified been achieved?

As the Action Plan is implemented for a particular priority it may be necessary to modify particular elements or even recast priorities. At the end of the financial year there needs to be a review of what has happened and where things need to go from there.

## b) The Five-Stage Cycle for School Improvement



## 2. Responsibility for Finance

LAs fund their schools through the Fair Funding System, approved by the Secretary of State. Money delegated to schools comes from Central Government Grants and Local Government taxation.

School budgets are largely based on the number and age of their pupils (AWPU – Age Weighted Pupil Units). Governing Bodies need to anticipate and plan for the effects of fluctuations in pupil numbers.

Schools receive grants from the Standards Fund to target specific, national initiatives. Further money may be generated through the school's own efforts.

Approval/monitoring of the budget can be delegated to a committee but not to an individual. The budget must be spent and managed to ensure that the National Curriculum and Religious Education are taught and to meet other legal requirements, e.g. Personnel, Health and Safety.

Governors need to ensure that they achieve value for money in the use of resources. Value for money is about achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils in the cost efficient way and at reasonable cost.

Governing Bodies need to demonstrate that they are applying the four principles of best value in their management and allocation of resources. This means considering the 4 C's:

- **Compare** – how a school's performance compares with that of other schools
- **Challenge** – whether the school's performance is high enough, and why and how a service is being provided
- **Compete** – how the school secures economic, efficient and effective services
- **Consult** – seeking the views of stakeholders about the services provided

The Government has issued a standard framework of income and expenditure items for schools known as Consistent Financial Reporting. This will enable all schools to benchmark and compare spending with similar schools. Data will be collected from maintained schools in England at the end of each financial year and placed on a benchmarking website that will allow school managers, Governors, parents and Local Education Authority staff to benchmark. The site will also hold guidance on ways to benchmark and on sharing best practice.

Once the Governing Body has decided how to allocate the budget, the day-to-day management of that is passed to the Headteacher and staff. However, Governors need to satisfy themselves that everything is in order, so you need to check that:

- Clear guidelines are in place that Governors have agreed to.
- Clear lines of responsibility exist for financial matters.
- Spending limits and other financial controls have been agreed.
- Regular reports are made to Governors to update them on the budgetary situation.
- Areas of concern are fully discussed.

Most Governing Bodies have Finance Committees to manage this area of Governance. At some stage it would be useful to ask for the Terms of Reference and minutes of the Finance Committee meetings in order to understand how Governors can usefully monitor that all is in order.

### **3. Governing Bodies and Staffing**

The LA is the principal employer of staff in Community schools and Voluntary Controlled schools. In Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools the Governing Body is the legal employer of staff.

Governors of Church Schools have varying safeguards to appoint teachers and senior staff who will support the religious ethos, depending on the category of school. Voluntary Aided church schools have most autonomy, and Governors of these schools may advertise for teachers (including Headteacher and Deputy) who are practising members of the relevant faith.

The Governing Body decides the number of staff (both teaching and non-teaching).

The Governing Body and Headteacher have separate and particular responsibilities for selecting and managing staff. In every school with a delegated budget, the Governing Body

has extensive powers over staffing, and is accountable under employment law for these responsibilities.

Decisions about staffing are both important and complex, and Governing Bodies will want to make sure that they make full use of the advice available to them. Such guidance is available from LAs, dioceses and the 'Guide to the Law for School Governors'.

#### **4. Appointing the Headteacher**

The appointment of the Headteacher is the most important decision a Governing Body makes. The Governing Body should set up a selection panel for the appointment of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and the process to be followed is clearly defined. Many LAs and dioceses provide training to ensure that it is managed correctly. In addition, Governing Bodies have a duty to consider advice from the LA before making a decision. This advisory role of the LA applies automatically in all maintained schools except Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools where it should be agreed by the Governing Body. Beyond this, the LA has a separate entitlement to make representations about any unsuitable Headteacher candidates. This applies to all maintained schools.

#### **5. Appointing Deputy Heads**

The Governing Body decide how many, and if any, Deputy Headteachers the school should have. All such posts must be advertised throughout England and Wales. The appointment process for Deputy Headteachers is almost identical to that followed for the Headteacher, with the exception that the LA has no right to make representations about unsuitable candidates. The Headteacher has the right to attend Governing Body meetings to discuss the appointment and to offer advice. The LA also has that right, either automatically or, where appropriate, with the Governing Body's agreement.

#### **6. Appointing other Staff**

The Governing Body will lead on appointments within the leadership group and the Headteacher will lead on the rest of the staff. The Headteacher may involve other Governors in considering those matters but should remain in the lead.

#### **7. Performance Management**

Performance management of the Headteacher and teaching staff is a key process designed to raise standards in schools. It involves the setting of objectives for individual teachers by team leaders, the monitoring of progress, provision of relevant training and development, and a formal review of progress at the end of each cycle. The Governing Body has two key tasks:

- to ensure that the performance management policy is being implemented and is having a positive effect. Many schools have decided to apply the policy to all staff.
- to appoint two or three Governors to agree performance management objectives with the Headteacher; to monitor progress and to formally review the overall performance of the Headteacher; to make recommendations to the Governors dealing with decisions on the Headteacher's salary.

From September 2005, Headteachers and school Governing Bodies will be able to use a "light touch validation" checklist to ensure that the school's performance management arrangements comply with the current regulations; make the link between performance management and pay decisions; and are robust, transparent and fair.

#### **8. Dismissal of Staff**

A Governing Body can ultimately decide that someone working at the school should be dismissed, though, from September 2003, the Headteacher would be expected to make the initial decision. In schools with a religious character, such as Voluntary Aided schools, this would involve a Foundation Governor acting with the Headteacher. The Governing Body would have to establish a committee to hear any appeals against dismissals.

A committee of the Governing Body would make the decision in the case of a Headteacher and would establish a separate committee to hear any appeal.

## **9. Other relevant parts of Employment Law**

The main requirements for Governing Bodies and LAs are that they:

- must not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability in appointing staff; all staff must be given reasonable opportunities for training and promotion;
- must give the representatives of recognised, independent trade unions any information that would help them in negotiations with the governing body, where this would be following good industrial relations practice; an example would be providing information about the budget;
- must not force a member of staff to join or take part in union activities, or prevent him or her from doing so;
- must respect the rights of staff to return to work after leaving to have children;
- must respect the rights of safety representatives and officials of independent recognised trade unions to take time-off with pay for specified purposes.

## **10. Remodelling the Workforce**

In January 2003, the Government, along with employers and the vast majority of school workforce unions, signed the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload. The National Agreement sets out a number of measures designed to tackle teacher workload including a concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy, a review of support staff roles, and a series of phased changes to teachers' contracts. For example:

- since September 2003, teachers can no longer routinely be required to carry out administrative and clerical tasks and those with leadership and management responsibilities must be given a reasonable allocation of time in which to carry out those duties;
- since September 2004 there has been an annual limit of 38 hours on the time that can be spent covering for absent colleagues;
- and since September 2005 teachers have been guaranteed at least 10% of their timetabled teaching time for planning, preparation and assessment; and they will no longer be required to invigilate external examinations and tests.

## **11. The School Profile**

The School Profile, which replaced the Governor Report to Parents, has now also been scrapped but Governors are still required to communicate this information to parents. The School newsletter and web site are used for this communication at Mugginton.

## **12. Special Educational Needs**

Most governing Bodies appoint a Governor or Committee to have specific oversight of the school's arrangements and provision for meeting special educational needs and disability (SEND). This guidance is intended to assist those Governors who have been appointed to fulfil this role.

### **a) What are the things that the Governing Body must do?**

The Governing Body must:

- Do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has SEND;
- Ensure that, where the "responsible person" (usually the Headteacher) has been informed by the LA that the pupil has SEND, those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach the pupil;

- Ensure that teachers in the school are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for pupils with SEND;
- Consult the LA and Governing Bodies of other schools when it seems to be necessary or desirable in the interests of coordinated special educational provision in the area as a whole;
- Ensure that any pupil with SEND joins in the activities of the school together with pupils who do not have SEND. This is as far as is reasonable, practical and compatible with the pupil receiving the provision;
- Report to parents on the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with SEND;
- Have regard to the SEND Code of Practice when carrying out its duties towards all pupils with SEND;
- Ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the school that SEND provision is being made for their child.

### **That sounds rather a lot for one Governor to take on!**

*All of these responsibilities rest with the full Governing Body, not any single Governor. Having a SEND Governor can help the Governing Body to check that everything necessary is being done. In particular, the SEND Governor should aim to become very well informed about the school's policy and arrangements for SEND and, where appropriate, be able to bring any important matters to the attention of the full Governing Body.*

## **13. The Curriculum**

Responsibility for the curriculum is shared between the Head, the Governing Body, the LA and the Secretary of State.

Responsibility includes making sure that enough lesson time is provided for pupils to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements. The Guide to the Law for School Governors gives the current recommended minimum weekly lesson times. The Governing Body must also make sure that only approved external qualifications and syllabuses are offered to pupils of compulsory school age. This includes off-site provision. .

### **Example Questions to Ask**

- How is the National Curriculum covered? Which subjects are taught?
- What proportion of time is spent on the various subjects?
- What extra-curricular activities are offered?
- Who is responsible for curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation?
- Is there a whole school curriculum policy or statement?
- How was it drawn up?
- When was it last reviewed?
- What is the Governing Body's policy on sex education?
- How does the school provide for children with special educational needs?
- What are the arrangements for Religious Education?
- How are resources allocated between different areas?
- What do parents, pupils and staff think about the curriculum?
- What targets have the Governing Body set for pupil achievement in National Curriculum subjects and in other aspects of their development?
- Are standards of attainment broadly similar or different across all subjects?

## **14. Sex Education**

Governing Bodies of maintained schools providing primary education must decide whether sex education should be included in their school's curriculum and, if so, what it should consist of and how it should be organised. They must keep a written record of their decisions.

All maintained schools providing secondary education must provide sex education (including education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases). All maintained schools should teach human growth and reproduction as set out in the National Curriculum.

All Governing Bodies must have a written statement of whatever policy they adopt on sex education and make it available free to parents. The LA, Governing Body and Headteacher must also make sure that any sex education is provided in a way that encourages pupils to consider morals and the value of family life.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under National Curriculum Science).

Following the report by the Social Exclusion Unit on Teenage Pregnancy, the Department issued new guidance on sex education in schools. Guidance (issued to schools in July 2000), is underpinned by the Learning and Skills Act 2000, which gives Headteachers and Governors a statutory responsibility to have regard to the guidance in ensuring that young people are taught the importance of marriage and that they are protected from inappropriate teaching materials.

Most Derbyshire Governing Bodies have a Teaching and Learning and Community Links Committee. They should be able to provide a new Governor with the following information:

- What are the subjects that have to be taught as part of the National Curriculum?
- Which subjects have to be assessed externally?
- Which subjects have to be tested by teacher assessment?
- Roughly how much time is spent on each subject each week?
- What are the Key Stages that apply to pupils in your school?
- What are Programmes of Study (PoS) level descriptions and Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs)?

It is important to acknowledge that the curriculum is more than what is taught in lesson time. The curriculum covers everything that goes on in school that results in children learning about the world around them and the things that shape and influence their own lives.

