

Thinking about becoming a School Governor?



Information and Advice

Date Approved: June 2014

Becoming a School Governor at Ben Jonson Primary School

Being a school governor is a demanding but rewarding way of putting something into your local community, but you need to know a little more about the role to assist you in deciding whether this is something that you could enjoy and commit yourself to

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE BECOME SCHOOL GOVERNORS?

People who:

- Want to contribute to their local community.
- Have a willingness to give up some time.
- Care about improving children's educational achievement.
- Are open to ideas and willing to learn.
- Accept that they might need training.
- Want to work as part of a team and can value the contribution made by different people.

you do not need any experience.

WHAT CAN I OFFER?

- Your own enthusiasm, time and commitment.
- If you are a parent, your own understanding of a parent's view (but you don't need to be a parent to be a good school governor).
- Whether you are a parent or not, as a member of the school's community your local knowledge will be valuable.
- If you happen to have business or other skills, schools might find these particularly helpful.

WHAT DOES A GOVERNING BODY DO?

Every school has to have a Governing Body which is made up of parents and other members of the school's community.

School governing bodies are responsible for working strategically with the school in ensuring a good quality education. Together with the Headteacher, who is responsible for day-to-day management, they set the school's aims and policies as well as carrying out a number of other important duties.

Governing Bodies have three main roles:

- To provide strategic direction for the school
- To act as a listening ear/support/guidance role to the Headteacher and the school team
- To ensure accountability

In effect, Governing Bodies are like the Executive Board of a company with the Headteacher having the role of the Managing Director, responsible for the day to day management of the school. Each governor brings their own individual strengths and skills to the Governing Body.

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In practice this means that the Governing Body:

- Will be expected to attend the Induction course and other training sessions.
- Promotes high standards of educational attainment.
- Sets and monitors targets for pupil achievement.
- Takes general responsibility for the conduct of the school.
- Manages the school budget.
- Ensures that the school curriculum (i.e. what is taught to the pupils) is balanced and broadly based.
- Participates in the appointment and appraisal of senior staff and the Headteacher.
- Draws up an Action Plan after an inspection by the Office for Standards in Education.(OFSTED)

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE ?

Governors act as a team and, as such, the amount of time each individual can offer will vary.

Most Governing Bodies manage their business through a series of full Governing Body meetings and committees which look after specialist areas such as **Finance, Personnel** and the **Curriculum**.

Full Governing Body meetings must, by law, be held at least once a term and all governors attend these meetings. You will also be asked to serve on one or more Committees which again will probably meet at least once a term.

As a minimum you must;

- Be willing to prepare for meetings- there may be on occasion, be lots of papers to read.
- Be able to attend meetings –Half Termly Full Governor Meetings are usually held between 5.00pm and 7.00pm. Termly Sub-Committee Meetings are usually held between 4.00-7.00pm
- Join in, participate and contribute. Your views will be sought, welcomed and challenged!

It will also add greatly to your understanding of the school and how it works if you are able to visit over the academic year during the school day. There is an expectation that Governors will visit school once per term, making three visits over the school year. You are also likely to be invited to the important events in the school's life – seasonal festivals, special assemblies, sports and theme days.

You will normally be appointed for a period of four years

THE EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL GOVERNORS IS THAT THEY WILL...

- Enhance the work of the governing body.
- Demonstrate their commitment by getting to know the school and becoming involved in school life and activities.
- Prepare for meetings, so that they are well informed, having at minimum read all the papers sent out with the agenda.
- Attend meetings (governing body / committees / working group) and play an active part.
- Support the school with parents in the community.
- Recognise the corporate status of the governing body and the concept of collective responsibility.
- **Respect confidentiality** and the need to act with circumspection.
- Accept responsibility for their own training and development.

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I WORK FULL –TIME - WILL I HAVE TIME TO BE A SCHOOL GOVERNOR?

Many school governors are in full time work. But governing body meetings can take place during the working day but more usually do so in the evenings. Check carefully the number of meetings you would be expected to attend and when they usually take place. Also bear in mind that you might want to spend time getting to know the school in other ways and joining in with its activities.

WHAT IF MY EMPLOYER WILL NOT GIVE ME THE TIME OFF?

Employment law gives people the right to responsible unpaid time off and some employers give paid leave for school governor duties. Many employers actually encourage their staff to become school governors. They realise that the skills gained through being a school governor are transferable to the workplace.

WHAT HELP WILL I GET?

Governor Services is the department within the Local Authority responsible for supporting school governors. As a governor in Tower Hamlets you will have access to;

Free information, guidance and advice on all aspects of being a governor, including the legal requirements, points of procedure and interpretation of information.

Regular newsletters offering all the latest information you need to know.

All governors are invited to termly Governor Briefings where they have the opportunity to be briefed on current issues and - more importantly - meet other governors.

WHAT WILL I GET OUT OF BEING A SCHOOL GOVERNOR?

- A chance to make a difference / significant contribution to the community.
- The knowledge that you have played a part in improving children's education and supported the school's staff.
- A chance to develop new skills and to practice existing ones, such as chairing meetings, speaking in groups, asking questions, making suggestions and appointing staff.
- A chance to help other members of the team who, perhaps because they are new, are not used to committee work or need help in learning about the school and about school governance.

HOW DO I BECOME A GOVERNOR?

You can become a school governor by:

- Being elected as a parent governor, if your child attends the school.
- Being elected by the staff, if you work at the school in any capacity.
- Being appointed by the Local Authority (LA).
- Being co-opted (that is, appointed) by other governors to represent the local community.

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I would like to be considered as a School Governor if/when a position becomes vacant.

I understand that this voluntary role requires a considerable time commitment.

I agree to:

- Attend the appropriate meetings on a regular basis.
- Attend the appropriate training.
- Make termly visits to the school.
- Keep up to date with all relevant reading matter.

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____