

## **Policy for Governors' visits**

### **The purpose of this policy**

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school, and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting our School, governors can get to know it better. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor will visit the School as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole School community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their School visits.

### **The organisation of the governor visits at Cuddington and Dinton C of E School**

#### **Visit programme**

The programme of visits will be organised as follows.

Yearly:

- An open day for Governors to visit both sites to look at a specific aspect of T&L which is decided by the Head, Deputy and the SLT or as an identified need by the Governing body. This will happen in the Spring term
- Governor training will be attended by all Governors on a T&L theme. Governors from the Haddenham Schools will be invited to attend. This will be organised by the Development Governor and will happen in the Summer term
- In addition Governors will be invited to attend Governor training at our neighbouring Haddenham schools and dates will be circulated by the Development Governor.
- The Diversity Governor will meet with the Head to discuss the extent to which the pupils needs are being met.

Termly

- The Chair of Governors will visit the school, in school hours, to look at T&L
- The Vice Chairs will visit the school, in school hours, to look at T&L
- The Literacy, Numeracy, RE and Gifted and Talented Governors will meet with the subject leaders and undertake a learning walk, with the curriculum leader, looking at specific areas of their designated curriculum area. This will be agreed with the curriculum leader
- The SEN Governor will meet with the SENCO to discuss provision and progress for the SEN pupils. A learning walk to will not take place as identification of these pupils would be inappropriate
- Curriculum leaders will present to the Teaching and Learning Committee on their aspect of the curriculum

In addition:

- The Safe-guarding Governor will meet with the Headteacher and review Pupil safety on a learning walk

- The Health and Safety Governors will meet termly with the Caretaker and Kst Leaders to review Health and Safety. A report will be produced and presented to the Finance Committee.

Half Termly

- The Chair and Vice Chair will meet the Headteacher to discuss ongoing issues

Weekly

- The Headteacher will meet with the ~~Vice~~ Chair to discuss issues

### **Content of visits**

Visits to the School are valuable in enabling governors to carry out their monitoring and evaluating role, and their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the School. Governors will not be making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, as most are not trained to do so. Visits are an excellent way for governors to understand how teaching and learning takes place in the School and to deepen their knowledge of the School and the curriculum. Individual governors do not have the automatic right to enter the School whenever they wish - they are the School's invited guests.

Governors should make contact with the Curriculum leader and head to organise the visit.

The visit will followed an agreed format based on Teaching and Learning linked to the school development plan. (see appendix for further suggestions)

Governors will be able to visit the class where their child may be, however, they need to make sure that their presence isn't disruptive to the activities taking place in the classroom.

If a Governor sees something or hears something they are unsure about or is of a highly sensitive nature they must discuss this with the member of staff accompanying them or the Headteacher.

### **Procedure for carrying out visits at Cuddington and Dinton C of E School**

Our governor visits will be organised as follows:

#### **Before the visit**

- Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Headteacher/class teacher or head of department. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the School calendar
- Clarify the purpose of the visit (see suggestions in Appendix 3) and agree this with the Headteacher and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.
- Agree how you will be introduced to the children and young people and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson
- Agree a convenient time to discuss your lesson observation with the class or subject teacher. This will also be your opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.

- Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents
- Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the governor visits at your School and abide by them.

### **During the visit**

- Remember this is a visit, not an inspection. Governors are visiting to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform decision making by the governing body. It is not the governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Headteacher.
- Remember that you are an invited guest.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Be punctual, sign in and wear a name badge.
- Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the School by monopolising the teacher's time.
- Smile and listen. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.
- Remember that you are representing the governing body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies, but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing body.
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the governing body.
- Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as governor

### **After the visit**

- If you have seen something that worries you, you would normally discuss this first with the teacher.
- Discuss your visit with the Headteacher and agree a draft of any written report with the Headteacher, and with staff, as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to governors and the clerk.
- Send a note to thank the relevant staff.
- Reflect upon your visit. Your views will inform the review of the policy and procedures

### **Reporting on your visit**

The Governor will then complete a visit form ( appendix 1) and send this to the Headteacher to check. A copy of this will be given to the curriculum leader. The Governor will then send a copy to the Development Governor, Chair and Vice Chairs. These reports will then be made available to all Governors and a copy kept in school.

The visit reports will also be placed on the school website.

At each full Governing body the Development Governor will summarize the visits for that term.

### **Evaluating the visit**

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the School and/or the governing body? E.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy**

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at termly governing body/committee meetings. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Chair, Vice Chair and Headteacher. The views of the staff will be sought. The governing body will consider if governor visits are contributing to the information that the governing body has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Development Plan.

**This policy was approved by the governing body of Cuddington and Dinton C of E School School on**

## Appendix 1 Governor Visit report

<b>Cuddington and Dinton C of E School Governing Body Visit Report</b>
<b>Name:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Purpose of visit:</b>
<b>Link with School Improvement/Development Plan</b>
<b>Account of governor visit</b>
<b>Any strategic issues arising for the governing body</b>
<b>Action following governing body meeting</b>

## Appendix 2 Suggestions for the focus of a governor visit

One or more of the following will provide a focus for a visit, with the agreement of the relevant staff:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy
- Progress in an aspect of the School Improvement Plan
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted or SIAS inspection
- Provision for identified groups e.g. Free School Meals
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Provision for Gifted and Talented pupils
- How the ECM outcomes are promoted
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas e.g. Literacy and Numeracy & ICT
- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting
- Impact of the religious character (in Church Schools)
- Deployment of staff,
- The impact on the school of any key changes e.g. impact of increased staffing in Support roles
- Educational Visits – provision and impact
- Collective Worship

In addition to any special focus to a visit, governors may learn more about some of the following areas:

- The variety of teaching and learning styles
- Availability, deployment and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Relationships
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How the pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for with differentiated tasks
- Examples of children and young people's work, written and oral
- Displays in open areas and classrooms e.g. learning walls, reflection of community in images round the school.
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor
- Facilities for outdoor play and learning outside the classroom.
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources and associated storage

### **Appendix 3 Governor visits - suggestions for staff**

Visits to the School are valuable in enabling governors to carry out their monitoring and evaluating role, and their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the School. Governors will not be making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, as most are not trained to do so. Visits are an excellent way for governors to understand how teaching and learning takes place in the School and to deepen their knowledge of the School and the curriculum. Individual governors do not have the automatic right to enter the School whenever they wish - they are the School's invited guests.

The most effective visits will be well planned.

- The date of a visit should be mutually agreed, and have an explicit focus and purpose agreed in advance by all concerned
- Agree a convenient time to talk to the governor about what they have seen and to answer any questions that they may have. You have an important part to play in raising the governors' awareness of what happens in our School and why.
- Feel free to say that it is not convenient for a governor to come into your classroom at a particular time
- Do raise any concerns about the visits with your line manager or the Headteacher
- Prepare your class for the visit of a governor and agree how you will introduce them
- Be aware that a visit can be stressful for governors and staff alike
- Inform the governor if you wish them to be involved in the lesson, and what it would be helpful for them to do
- Don't leave a governor alone with the class, even if they are willing for you to do so

## **Appendix 4 Possible questions for subject-linked governors**

The full governing body retains the responsibility for raising standards. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in a curriculum area or areas can help to ensure that this issue remains high profile on the governing body's agenda. The following questions will help you as you find out about teaching and learning across the school. Use them as a guide in a meeting or on school visits – it is not intended you work systematically through the list.

Discuss with your Headteacher how best to use these questions to help you gradually build up a picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your role, in partnership with the Headteacher, is to provide a link between your governing body, its committees and the staff of your school.

### **Achievements and attitudes**

*For the core subjects:*

What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in English and maths

- compared to similar schools?
- in relation to the national rates of increase?
- in relation to the national picture in terms of gender?

How do children's results in English/maths/science compare?

How do they compare with other subjects?

*For all subjects*

Where have we improved? Do we know why?

Are there differences between the achievement of different groups, and if so, why?  
What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?

Are there significant differences in the performance of:

- girls and boys?
- looked after children?
- child carers?
- pupils with special educational needs?
- gifted & talented pupils?
- pupils with English as an additional language?
- the majority and any other minority ethnic groups, such as travellers?

In meetings with the subject co-ordinator can you tell how much progress pupils are making? For e.g. you could look at:

- Key Stage test results and teacher assessments
- the work of a range of pupils – average, below average and above average
- other evidence

**Special Needs**

How are pupils with SEN integrated into lessons?

How have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) been adapted to support children in their lessons?

**Management of the subject**

How is the role of the co-ordinator developing?

Does the School Improvement Plan address the identified needs?

What is the allocation of funding to the subject for this financial year?

How has it or will it be spent?

Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?

What further training to teachers and support staff need?

How much additional support does each class have?

How is the support used and what impact does it have?

(Literacy only) Does the school offer a range of reading books catering for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes, especially boys? Are pupils using the library? What links does the school have with the local library?

How does the school use all its resources (ICT, books, materials and displays) to promote reading and writing or Numeracy?

**Communication**

How are parents kept informed about pupils' progress?

What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children's learning?

How are governors kept informed about standards and the progress of pupils?

How do governors celebrate the schools achievements and successes?

## **Appendix 5 Governor Roles**

### **Development Governor**

The Governor Support Team recommend that each governing body has a Development Governor, whose role is to promote training and development within the governing body and to induct new governors.

The Development Governor acts as a channel between individual members of the governing body, the Governor Support team and Development Governors from other governing bodies on these matters. Given the nature of the role – particularly in supporting the induction of new governors – the Development Governor should have at least one year's experience as a governor.

It is widely recognised that the effectiveness of the governing body has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the school as a whole. Each governing body should ensure that training and development needs, for both individuals and the corporate body, are identified and addressed. A good Development Governor will play a key role in helping the governing body to take advantage of appropriate training and development opportunities in order to improve its effectiveness.

New governors can easily be overwhelmed as they become acquainted with the role and responsibilities of the governing body as a whole and their contribution within that; and as they assimilate the associated educational language and acronyms that initially appear so confusing. The Development Governor provides a vital support to new governors during the initial period, offering explanation and guidance to allow the new governor to become confident in their role.

### **What interests and skills are needed to be a Development Governor?**

A Development Governor should have an interest in training and development and an understanding of the role of the governing body. In order to promote governor development, the Development Governor should be enthusiastic about the available opportunities and be able to influence other governors to undertake training.

The Development Governor should feel confident in meeting new governors and be willing to report back verbally at meetings or to provide a brief written report.

### **What support is available from the Chairman?**

It is important that the governing body both understands the role of the Development Governor and supports the governor in carrying out the role.

The Chairman should:

- ask the governing body to determine whether the responsibilities outlined in this framework meet the needs of their governing body, and revise if necessary, in discussion with the Development Governor

- support the Development Governor in undertaking the role
- ensure that there is liaison in respect of both development/training and induction matters, to prevent duplication of effort
- provide an opportunity for the Development Governor to present a termly report to the governing body.

### **What support is available?**

#### Development Governor Meetings

The Governor Support Team holds a Development Programme launch event in the Autumn term, enabling Development Governors to gain an insight into forthcoming training courses. This is a valuable opportunity for Development Governors to share ideas and good practice and to offer mutual support. At the meetings, Development Governors can provide feedback about their governors' experience of training and contribute ideas about future development of the governor support programme.

New Development Governors are invited to attend a session in the Spring Term to discuss the role of the Development Governor. Experienced Development Governors are invited to these sessions to further explore the role and to share ideas and good practice.

#### Termly Newsletter

Development Governors will receive a termly Newsletter, together with a termly record of the training that their governors have undertaken. The newsletter will highlight new courses; any changes to the Development programme and let them know about any recommended action. This may be helpful in preparing your termly report to the Governing Body. Development Governors are encouraged to contribute ideas, and to feedback on the programme. The Newsletter is also available on Governor Zone.

#### Advice and Support

Advice and support is always available from the Governor Helpline (telephone 01296 383180 or email [govhelp@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:govhelp@buckscc.gov.uk)).

#### What does the role of Development Governor involve?

On appointment, the Development Governor will receive a welcome pack to support their new role. The information below briefly outlines the responsibilities.

### **Supporting the development of the governing body by:**

- alerting governors to the range and suitability of individual courses (and circulating relevant information)

- alerting governors to the range of governance information available on the Governor Zone website
- encouraging attendance at courses, particularly new governors or when a governor undertakes a new role i.e. SEN governor
- arrange whole governing body training sessions, as required
- support governors in sharing the benefits of any training undertaken with the whole governing body
- present a verbal or written report to the governing body each term
- keep a record of training to meet the requirements of SFVS, etc
- Feedback from the Development Governors' meetings
- Feedback from other governors on training they have attended
- Information from the report on training undertaken by each governor (provided to the Development Governor by the Governor Support Team).
- Outlining any unresolved training issues/needs for the governing body to consider.
- encourage the governing body to identify and include governor training needs within the School Development Plan.

The governing body should have an induction plan (a model framework is available from the Governor Support Team for each governing body to personalise) and the Development Governor should encourage the governing body to complete and occasionally review their induction plan. The Development Governor will receive notification of new governor appointments, including contact information from Governor Services.

The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) recommends maintaining a log of training undertaken by governors and encouraging all new members of the finance committee to attend the governor financial management training course so they can meet the required financial skills.

### **Supporting the induction of new governors**

Before the first meeting the Development Governor should:

- make contact with the new governor and offer guidance and support. Find out the interests, skills and preferences of the new governor, so that she/he can be quickly placed on a committee.
- arrange a visit to the school, for the new governor to meet the Headteacher and the Development Governor.
- give the new governor an introduction pack of essential school information. (This will have been previously agreed with the whole governing body within the induction plan.)

The pack could include:

- access information to the Governor Zone website. Make new governor aware of the information available within this site.
- the most recent Headteacher's report to the governing body.
- a list of dates for governors' meetings.
- a list of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- the policy on governors' visits to the school (if you have one).
- the policy on governors' allowances.
- a plan of the school.
- see model induction plan for further advice.
- make it clear that the governor is expected to attend meetings/training as part of their role.
- if the school has bought back into the Governor Development Programme, the new governor will be pre-booked on to a series of induction courses by the Governor Support Service and a copy of the pre-booking letter will be sent to the new governor and the Development Governor.

At the new governor's first meeting the Development Governor should ensure:

- the new governor is given a warm welcome.
- that everyone is properly introduced (perhaps wearing name badges for the first new meetings).
- the new governor is encouraged to ask when something is not understood, and that a suitable explanation is provided.

Over the following few weeks the Development Governor should:

- liaise with relevant governors to ensure that the induction plan is carried out.
- keep in contact with the new governor and offer support, advice and guidance, as needed.
- provide further school information to the new governor (gradually!), such as:
  - The school plan
  - The last Ofsted Inspection Report and Action Plan
  - A list of governing body committees and working groups with names of members and terms of reference
  - Minutes of the last few governing body meetings
  - The most recent targets set by the school
- review the induction plan with the new governor after six months.

## **Equality Governor**

Promoting equality and avoiding discrimination supports the key educational agenda of improving attainment and progression for **all** pupils, opening up opportunities and increasing the chance of a successful life for every child.

The equality governor should:

- Be familiar with legislation and guidance (national and local) and ensure that governors are aware of their legal duties under Equality Legislation;
- Keep up to date with current responsibilities, attend any relevant training and facilitate any training needs of the governing body;
- Take the lead in championing equality, inclusion and community cohesion on the governing body;
- Participate in the monitoring of the schools arrangements for Equality, in liaison with the Headteacher/relevant member of staff.

As the equality governor you will need to ask the “what, how and why” questions in order to understand equality issues in your school, but also to challenge, where appropriate.

## **Background**

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation from 1st October 2010 and streamlines the various legislation into a single requirement which covers all protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The Equality Act introduced a **single public sector equality duty**, which applies to all protected characteristics.

The equality duty requires public authorities to:

- **eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;**
- **advance equality of opportunity;**
- **foster good relations across all characteristics.**

In addition, schools have two specific duties:

- **to publish information to show how they are complying with the Equality Duty by 6 April 2012 and at least annually thereafter;**
- **to set and publish Equality Objectives by 6 April 2012 and to publish objectives at least every four years.**

The governing body in maintained schools and academies is the responsible body and must ensure the school does not breach the Act.

## **Unlawful Behaviour**

The Act defines a number of types of unlawful behaviour:

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- discrimination arising from disability
- discrimination because of association with someone with a protected characteristic
- discrimination because a person is thought to have a protected characteristic
- harassment related to a protected characteristic
- victimisation of someone because they have made, or helped with, a complaint about discrimination.

### **Some Questions for the Equality Governor to Ask**

These questions are offered as a starting point for discussion in your role and should not be seen as an exhaustive list.

- Are governors and staff aware of their legal duties under equality legislation? For example, have governors and staff been trained in the equality duties? Please see the [Governor Development Programme](#) for more details.
- Is there a senior member of staff with special responsibility for equalities matters?
- Have governors agreed and published information to show how they are complying with the Equality Duty and have set at least one objective? e.g. an Equality Scheme and Action Plan. Will parents and the community be able to find and understand this information easily?
- Do governors receive *regular* reports that monitor equality and progress in achieving equality objectives? e.g. reports monitoring:
  1. achievement rates, by ethnicity, gender and disability or other protected characteristics?
  2. which learners' participate, and are successful in, wider educational and social experiences? For example, participation in school trips or extracurricular clubs and activities by disabled pupils?
  3. inclusion such as admissions, attendance, behaviour, disciplinary, sanctions and exclusions, and participation in learner voice activities, by ethnicity, gender and disability or other protected characteristics?
  4. staff recruitment, career progress and retention by protected characteristics?
- Are there well-known and clear school-wide procedures for dealing with, and reporting, issues and incidents of discrimination and victimisation, including
  - Homophobia?
  - Racism?
  - Sexism?
  - Issues and incidents on the grounds of the other protected characteristics of disability, religion or belief, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, or sexual orientation?

- Is equality of opportunity embedded throughout the school's self evaluation and school improvement planning?
- Are **all** pupils, including those who share a protected characteristic, achieving as much as they can and deriving the maximum benefit, according to their individual needs, from what the school provides?,
- Are there individuals or groups of pupils who are not achieving as much as they can? What action has the School taken, or is taking, to address this issue? Are these actions having an impact?
- What actions are being taken to foster good relations across all characteristics? e.g. embedding cultural and religious activities into the curriculum to promote racial harmony and understanding to prepare our pupils for living in a diverse and increasingly inter-dependent society.
- Have policies been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Equality Act? e.g. Admissions, Curriculum, Uniform, Behaviour and Discipline and Exclusion Policies.

## **Useful Links**

### **Equality Act 2010 - Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities**

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/doc/e/equality%20act%20guidance%20december%202011%20word%20version.doc>

### **Governing Body Meeting Appendix Spring 2012 – Reporting on the Equality Duty and Equality Objectives**

[https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/Schools/documents/governors/Appendix\\_2\\_Spring\\_2012.pdf](https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/Schools/documents/governors/Appendix_2_Spring_2012.pdf)

### **Governing Body Meeting Appendix Spring 2011 – Background to the Equality Act 2010**

[https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/documents/governance/App2\\_Equality\\_Act\\_Spring11.pdf](https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/documents/governance/App2_Equality_Act_Spring11.pdf)

### **Buckinghamshire Model School Equalities and Cohesion Scheme 2011**

[https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/documents/governors/policy\\_procedure/Model\\_School\\_Equalities\\_and\\_Cohesion\\_Scheme.pdf](https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/schools/documents/governors/policy_procedure/Model_School_Equalities_and_Cohesion_Scheme.pdf)

### **DfE Website Information on the Equality Act 2010**

<http://tinyurl.com/2vwrms>

### **Stonewall**

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

## **Literacy Governor**

Each primary school governing body is encouraged to appoint a Literacy Governor to take an interest in literacy in the school. The Literacy governor offers the school a source of support and a critical friend. The precise responsibilities of the Literacy Governor need to be determined by the governing body and so will vary from school to school.

### **Why does the Governing Body need a Literacy Governor?**

The governing body is responsible for the strategic direction of the school, including the delivery of the National Curriculum, raising standards and setting targets. Raising standards of literacy is a key part of this responsibility. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in literacy can help to ensure that literacy issues remain high on the school's agenda. He or she can provide an important link between the governing body, its committees and school staff.

### **What skills and qualities are needed?**

- Good communication skills, with a willingness to report back verbally at meetings or to provide a brief written report
- Enthusiasm and energy
- An appreciation of the role of the governing body
- A willingness to share ideas and good practice

### **What does the role of Literacy Governor involve?**

Develop and maintain an understanding of the Literacy Strategy and how Literacy is progressing within the school – to be a critical friend by:-

- Understanding current school policy and practice for teaching and learning of literacy
- Keeping informed about national developments
- Attending school INSET days on literacy
- Planning visits to observe literacy hours and discuss them with staff
- Meeting with the Literacy Leader on a termly basis to discuss progress and issues
- Discussing the outcomes of the school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning with the Headteacher and the Literacy Leader
- Discussing the outcome of school visits with the Literacy Leader and the Headteacher
- Monitoring the school's progress in achieving the agreed targets

Whilst target setting is no longer a statutory requirement for schools, the Schools' White Paper, which provided the basis for Government education policy, stated that the DfE "supports the idea that good schools set themselves targets, identify the strengths and weaknesses that might either help or hinder them to achieve those targets, and come up with a plan for succeeding." Ofsted will expect to see schools' targets when they inspect, and schools will need to be able to evidence how they have set these targets and why these were selected. This is particularly important now that target indicators are no longer prescribed by the DfE.

- Supporting the school in encouraging and valuing reading and writing for pleasure

- take an active role in helping the Literacy Leader to organise events such as book weeks, visiting authors, competitions, celebrations of pupils' achievements.

### **Setting the strategic framework - champion the literacy strategy within the governing body**

- Work with the Headteacher and Literacy Leader in order to understand and support the whole school policy for the teaching and learning of literacy, for monitoring progress and for staff development.
- With the Headteacher and the Literacy Leader, to evaluate the implementation of the whole school policy and the working of the School's Literacy Strategy each year
- Take an informed view of literacy target setting and support the school in setting challenging but realistic targets
- Agree with the governing body and the Headteacher the indicators which should be reported on by the school to the governing body to say whether the policy is effective, and the timescale for that reporting
- Ensure that the school's literacy action plan is linked to the School Improvement Plan and the budget setting process by working with the appropriate committees
- Discuss the budget allocated to English with the finance committee; ensure that funds are
- allocated each year within the school budget specifically to support the Strategy, monitor and evaluate the use of these funds and other resources

### **Sharing information - Accountability**

- With the Headteacher and the Literacy Leader, report regularly to the governing body on the implementation of the Strategy
- Support and promote the involvement of parents in the School's literacy strategy and work with staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed
- Provide support and encouragement for staff with their literacy responsibilities
- Exchange good practice with other Literacy Governors

### **How can the Literacy Governor make the most of school visits?**

Always remember that you are not acting as a teacher, nor as an inspector, but as a source of support and a critical friend to the school. If you are visiting a lesson, don't forget the possible apprehension some teachers may feel if someone watches their lesson. Some of the key questions for the Literacy Governor to explore during school visits and discussions with staff will include:

- What are the school's strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning literacy?
- Are lessons stimulating, interesting and accessible to all the children?
- How positive are the attitudes, behaviour and motivation of the children?
- How good are standards, in relation to national data, previous results and other subjects?
- What pressures are teachers experiencing?
- How are learning support assistants used to support literacy?
- Is the Literacy Leader allocated non-contact time for monitoring literacy?
- What staff training is planned?

- Do all classes have sufficient books to deliver the strategy?
- How well is the library used?
- Is there a range of books catering for all abilities, cultural background and tastes, especially boys?
- What links does the school have with the local library?
- How is ICT used to support literacy?

#### **Needs of different pupils**

- How do boys progress in literacy compared to girls?
- What steps are taken to raise boys' achievement?
- How do pupils with English as an additional language progress in literacy?
- Are there any books in school in dual languages?
- How is the school addressing the needs of SEN pupils during Literacy?
- Are the literacy needs of SEN pupils included in their Individual Education Plans?
- What literacy catch-up programmes does the school implement?

#### **Promoting Literacy**

- How does the school support reading for pleasure?
- How does the school utilise all its resources (books, materials and displays as well as electronic media) to promote reading and writing?
- Do parents attend reading and writing events or celebrations?

#### **Home/School Liaison**

- How does the school encourage parents to help their children's language development, including reading and writing, at home?
- What is the homework policy?
- How does the school communicate with parents about their child's literacy targets and progress?
- Does the school encourage and support parents as reading volunteers in school?
- Does the school support family literacy programmes?

#### **How can the Governing Body support the Literacy Governor?**

It is important that the governing body both understands the role of the Literacy Governor and supports the Literacy Governor in carrying out that role.

The governing body will need to:

- Take an informed interest in literacy issues
- Establish a strategic plan which sets challenging but realistic targets for improving standards in literacy
- Ensure that any School literacy action plan is taken into account in the School Improvement Plan and in the budget setting process
- Determine the arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the policy
- Consider the impact of any literacy initiatives on the whole curriculum
- Ensure that school policies take account of the literacy strategy
- Provide an opportunity for an outgoing Literacy Governor to pass on information and relevant paperwork

### **What support is available from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust?**

Advice and support is available from:

The Governor Helpline (01296 383180) or email [govhelp@learningtrust.net](mailto:govhelp@learningtrust.net)

The Governor Development Programme [www.learningtrust.net/governors](http://www.learningtrust.net/governors)

#### **Useful Websites**

DfE <http://www.education.gov.uk/a0056644/specific-roles-within-the-governing-body>

National Literacy Trust <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk>

National Association for the Teaching of English [www.nate.org.uk](http://www.nate.org.uk)

## **Numeracy Governor**

Each primary school governing body is *encouraged* to appoint a Numeracy Governor to take an interest in numeracy the school. The Numeracy Governor offers the school a source of support and a critical friend. The precise responsibilities of the Numeracy Governor need to be determined by the governing body and so will vary from school to school.

## **Why does the Governing Body need a Numeracy Governor?**

The governing body is responsible for the strategic direction of the school, including the delivery of the National Curriculum, raising standards and setting targets. Raising standards of mathematics, especially numeracy skills is a key part of this responsibility. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in the National Numeracy Strategy can help to ensure that numeracy issues remain high on the school's agenda. He or she can provide an important link between the governing body, its committees and school staff.

## **What skills and qualities are needed?**

- Good communication skills, with a willingness to report back verbally at meetings or to provide a brief written report
- Enthusiasm and energy
- An appreciation of the role of the governing body
- A willingness to share ideas and good practice

## **What does the role of Numeracy Governor involve?**

Essentially to develop and maintain an understanding of the Numeracy Strategy and how numeracy is progressing within the school. To be a critical friend by: -

- Understanding current school policy and practice for teaching and learning of mathematics.
- Keeping informed about national developments
- Attending school INSET days, Staff meetings and Parent sessions on numeracy
- Planning visits to observe the daily mathematics lesson and discuss them with staff

Whilst target setting is no longer a statutory requirement for schools, the Schools' White Paper, which provided the basis for Government education policy, stated that the DfE "supports the idea that good schools set themselves targets, identify the strengths and weaknesses that might either help or hinder them to achieve those targets, and come up with a plan for succeeding."

Ofsted will expect to see schools' targets when they inspect, and schools will need to be able to evidence how they have set these targets and why these were selected. This is particularly important now that target indicators are no longer prescribed by the DfE.

- Meeting with the Numeracy Leader to discuss progress and issues
- Discussing the outcomes of the school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning with the Headteacher and the Numeracy Leader
- Discussing the outcome of school visits with the Numeracy Leader and the Headteacher.

- Taking an active role in helping the Numeracy Leader to organise events such as maths weeks, competitions, and celebrations of pupils' achievements.
- Monitoring the school's progress in achieving the agreed mathematics targets

### **Setting the strategic framework – being a champion for Numeracy within the governing body by: -**

- Working with the Headteacher and the Numeracy Leader to evaluate the implementation of the whole school policy for mathematics and the implications for staff development
- Taking an informed view of mathematics target setting and supporting the school in setting challenging but achievable targets
- Agreeing with the governing body and the Headteacher the indicators which should be reported on by the school to the governing body and the timescale for that reporting
- Ensure that the school's numeracy action plan is linked to the School Improvement Plan and the budget setting process by working with the appropriate committees
- Discuss the budget allocated to mathematics with the finance committee; ensure that funds are allocated each year within the school budget specifically to support the strategy.

### **Sharing information ensuring the school is accountable by: -**

- Supporting and promoting the involvement of parents in the strategy and work with staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed
- Support and promote the involvement of parents in the School's numeracy strategy and work with staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed
- Providing support and encouragement for staff with their numeracy responsibilities
- Exchanging good practice with other Numeracy Governors

### **How can the Numeracy Governor make the most of school visits?**

Always remember that you are not acting as a teacher, nor as an inspector, but as a source of support and a critical friend to the school. If you are visiting a lesson, don't forget the possible apprehension some teachers may feel if someone watches their lesson. Some of the key questions for the Numeracy Governor to explore during school visits and discussions with staff will include:

#### **Teaching and Learning**

- What are the school's strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning mathematics? Does the daily mathematics lesson work better in some classes than others? Why?
- Are lessons stimulating, interesting and accessible to all the children?
- How positive are the attitudes, behaviour and motivation of the children?
- How good are standards, in relation to national data, previous results and other subjects?
- What pressures are teachers experiencing?
- How are learning support assistants used to support numeracy?
- Is the Numeracy Leader allocated non-contact time for monitoring numeracy?
- What staff training is planned?

### **Availability and use of resources**

- Do all classes have sufficient resources with respect to targeted achievement in numeracy?
- What use is made of any family numeracy initiatives?
- How is ICT used to support numeracy?

### **Needs of different pupils**

- How do boys progress in numeracy compared to girls?
- What steps are taken to raise achievement?
- How do pupils with English as an additional language progress in numeracy?
- How is the school addressing the needs of SEN pupils during the daily mathematics lesson?
- Are the numeracy needs of SEN pupils included in their Individual Education Plans?

### **Promoting Numeracy**

- How does the school support oral and mental mathematics?
- How does the school utilise all its resources (books, materials and displays as well as electronic media) to promote numeracy?
- Do parents attend mathematics events or celebrations?

### **Home/School Liaison**

- How does the school encourage parents to help their children's mental maths at home?
- What is the homework policy?
- How does the school communicate with parents about their child's mathematics targets and progress?
- Does the school support family numeracy programmes?

### **How can the Governing Body support the Numeracy Governor?**

It is important that the governing body both understands the role of the Numeracy Governor and supports the Numeracy Governor in carrying out that role.

The governing body will need to:

- Take an informed interest in numeracy issues
- Establish a strategic plan which sets challenging but realistic targets for improving standards in numeracy
- Ensure that the numeracy action plan is taken into account in the School Improvement Plan and in the budget setting process
- Determine the arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the policy
- Consider the impact of any numeracy initiatives on the whole curriculum
- Ensure that school policies take account of the Numeracy Strategy
- Provide an opportunity for an outgoing Numeracy Governor to pass on information and relevant paperwork

### **What support is available from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust?**

Advice and support from:

The Governor Helpline (01296 383180) or email [govhelp@learningtrust.net](mailto:govhelp@learningtrust.net)

The Governor Development Programme [www.learningtrust.net/governors](http://www.learningtrust.net/governors)

### **Useful Websites**

Numeracy in Schools <http://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk>

DfE <http://www.education.gov.uk/a0056644/specific-roles-within-the-governing-body>

## **SEN Governors**

An annual SEN Forum is held at 2 venues across the county which support the continued development of SEN Governors; provide an opportunity for sharing good practice and mutual support and provide a forum for communication between the LA and governors about new developments in the area of SEN.

## **What are Special Educational Needs?**

The [1996 Education Act \(Section 312\(2\)\)](#) says that a child has a special educational need if she or he has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or a disability which makes it difficult to take advantage of normal school facilities.

It has been estimated that, nationally, some 20% of all children will have special educational needs at some time in their school life. Special educational needs can be catered for in many different ways. Depending on the individual child's needs, this can mean differentiation within the child's normal classroom work, it can mean extra help for the child taught in a mainstream class, or it can involve teaching the child separately in a special department attached to a mainstream school. About 1% of all children need more help than mainstream schools can normally provide.

In Buckinghamshire, the LA is committed to providing all pupils with the greatest possible access to mainstream educational settings to meet their needs effectively, with some pupils having access to well resourced special schools, where appropriate.

## **Who's Who in Special Needs?**

**Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)** The SENCO is a designated teacher responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy. He or she will co-ordinate provision for pupils with SEN, maintain the SEN register and liaise with parents, staff and external agencies.

**The 'Responsible Person'** The 'responsible person' has day to day management responsibility for special needs within the school. Given the sensitive and confidential nature of some of the information accessed by the "responsible person", this role is generally fulfilled by the Headteacher but may also be the Chairman of Governors. The 'responsible person' should not be confused with the SEN Governor.

**The SEN Governor** The governing body of every mainstream school is encouraged to have a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Governor to champion the issue of special educational needs within the work of the governing body and to have specific oversight of the school's arrangements and provision for meeting special educational needs. The precise responsibilities of the SEN Governor need to be determined by the governing body and so will vary from school to school.

## **Why does the Governing Body need an SEN Governor?**

The Governing Body has some key responsibilities towards pupils with special

educational needs. Governing bodies should, with the Headteacher, decide the school's general policy and approach to meeting pupils' special educational needs. They must set up appropriate staffing and funding arrangements and oversee the school's work.

In particular, the governing body has a legal duty to:

- Do its best to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs are appropriately catered for
- Appoint a 'responsible person' to oversee the assessment of individual pupils' needs and to make sure that all staff likely to teach pupils with special needs are aware of those needs
- Ensure that all teachers are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for any pupils with special educational needs
- Ensure that pupils with special educational needs have the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life
- Ensure that parents are notified of a decision by the school that their child has special educational needs
- Establish an SEN policy which is publicly available and can be easily understood by parents; and review that policy on a regular basis
- Report on how the school's SEN policy is being implemented and how resources are allocated in the governing body's Annual Report to Parents
- Ensure that the SEN Code of Practice is followed

The Governing body has delegated some of these responsibilities to a named SEN Governor who reports back to the governing body on a regular basis.

### **What skills and qualities are needed?**

- An interest in special educational needs
- Good communication skills, with a willingness to report back verbally at meetings or to provide a brief written report
- Time and availability – in particular to meet regularly with the SENCO, to visit the school and to take advantage of relevant briefing and training opportunities
- Enthusiasm and energy
- A willingness to participate in the development and review of the school's SEN policy

### **What does the role of SEN Governor involve?**

- Developing and maintaining an awareness of special needs provision in the school on behalf of the governing body
- Understand how the responsibilities for SEN provision are shared within the school
- Meet the SENCO on a termly basis to gain information about the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and to monitor the implementation of the SEN policy
- Discuss with school staff the outcomes of the school's monitoring and evaluation of the provision made for pupils with special educational needs

- Observe at first hand what happens in school both inside and outside the classroom to ensure that SEN pupils are actively involved in all aspects of school life
- Take opportunities to meet and talk with parents of SEN children
- Keep informed about developments in the area of special educational needs, nationally, locally and within the school

### **Support the implementation of the school's Special Educational Needs Policy**

- Be familiar with the SEN policy and involved in its review and development
- Agree with the governing body and the Headteacher the indicators which should be reported on by the school to the governing body to say whether the policy is working, and the timescale for that reporting
- Ensure that the SEN policy is linked to the School Improvement Plan and the budget setting process
- Ensure that funds are allocated each year within the school budget specifically to cater for SEN pupils and to support the implementation of the SEN policy; be aware of the various headings under which the schools spends the SEN budget each year (i.e. resources, training, support assistants, SENCO management time, medical time etc)
- Monitor and evaluate the use of these funds and other resources, considering cost effectiveness and best value for money in terms of increased progress for pupils with SEN
- Encourage the governing body to ensure that all school policies are consistent with the aims of the special educational needs policy

### **Sharing Information**

- Provide support and encouragement for staff with SEN responsibilities and champion their role within the school; provide a channel of communication between the SENCO and the governing body
- Discuss the outcome of school visits with the SEN Coordinator and the Headteacher
- Report on a termly basis to the full governing body on the implementation of the school's SEN policy
- Prepare information for inclusion in the governing body's Annual Report to Parents about the effectiveness and implementation of the school's SEN policy, including information about how resources are used
- Encourage effective communication with parents on the school's support for pupils with special needs – make use of newsletters, parents notice board, leaflets, school prospectus, the Annual Meeting, school social functions etc

### **What does the SEN Governor need to know?**

The SEN Governor should aim to meet the SENCO on a termly basis to keep up to date with SEN developments within the school and to review the implementation of the SEN policy on an ongoing basis. A good relationship with the SENCO is key to the effectiveness of the SEN Governor. The sort of issues the SEN Governor might discuss with the SENCO and other school staff will include:

- Current numbers of the SEN register at the different stages (but not their names)
- Identification procedures for pupils with SEN
- Staffing arrangements for pupils with SEN
- Staff training
- Use of resources
- How pupils with SEN are ensured access to the curriculum
- Provision being made for individuals
- Progress on any parts of the School Improvement Plan relating to SEN
- Progress with the implementation of the SEN policy
- Whether statutory reporting requirements are being met
- Liaison with external agencies and support services
- Links with special/mainstream schools
- Communication with parents

Whilst the SEN Governor is not responsible for the day to day management of special needs provision in the school, he or she may on occasion have access to sensitive information about the circumstances of individual children, particularly in smaller schools. It is essential that the SEN Governor respects the confidentiality of such information.

### **How can the governing body support the SEN Governor?**

It is important that the governing body both understands the role of the SEN Governor and supports the SEN Governor in carrying out that role. The governing body will need to:

- Establish the responsibilities the SEN Governor should undertake and provide support for the role
- Take an informed interest in special educational needs issues
- Monitor, evaluate and review the Special Educational Needs policy on a regular basis
- Ensure that the other school policies fully support the principle of inclusion for all pupils
- Provide an opportunity for any outgoing SEN Governor to pass on information and relevant paperwork

### **What support is available from the LA?**

Termly SEN Forums held at 2 venues across the county which:

- Support the continued development of SEN Governors
- Provide an opportunity for sharing good practice and mutual support
- Provide a forum for communication between the LA and governors about new developments in the area of SEN
- Annual training for new SEN Governors on the Role of the SEN Governor
- Access to advice and support, via the Governor Helpline
- Welcome pack of information for newly appointed SEN Governors including a copy of the SEN Code of Practice

