



Being a Governor in a Catholic school

Governing bodies help schools and academies to fulfil their mission. The Governing Body has three key roles:

- to set the vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school in accordance with the teachings and norms of the Catholic Church and in keeping with the vision of the Diocesan Bishop
- acting as a 'critical friend', holding the Headteacher and senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- ensuring accountability in the work of the school

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 plan for the school
- giving governors accurate information in order that they can ask the challenging questions necessary to hold the school to account and ensure high quality provision for all
- reporting on progress at (least once every school year) regular intervals

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- setting the strategic aims for the school; ensuring it is true to its mission
- Determining how to spend the budget allocated to the school
- Religious Education – ensuring high quality provision in keeping with Diocesan Education Service requirements
- Collective Worship – ensuring that a daily Act of Worship takes place and that key celebrations marking the liturgical year are planned for
- Admissions – to set the admissions policy for the school following Diocesan Education Service guidelines and ensuring its procedures are followed
- Premises – to have stewardship of the building/land on behalf of the Trustees of the Diocese
- Appointment and employment of staff – in accordance with Diocesan Education Service advice
- Standards – ensuring a strategic and systematic approach to promoting high standards of educational achievement
- Targets – setting appropriate targets for pupil achievement
- Curriculum – ensuring that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based and taking account of any statutory requirements
- Reporting results – reporting on assessments and examination results
Inspection follow-up – approval of an action plan and monitoring progress



The Strategic View of the Governing Body:

- Ensuring that the school fulfils its mission
- Deciding what they want the school to achieve (the vision), and making plans to get there
- Ensuring that all those who have an interest in the success of the school contribute when the values and aims are being agreed
- Helping to set and keep under review the policies that provide a broad framework within which the Headteacher and staff should manage the school
- Focusing on ensuring good standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning so that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve their potential
- Ensuring that systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are in place
- Using that evidence to review overall progress against targets, to see whether policies and practice are effectively implemented, and to check on the school's achievements and progress over time in comparison with similar schools
- **Respecting the advice of the Headteacher as lead professional advisor to the Governing Body**

The Governing Body as a Critical Friend:

- Recognising and celebrating the achievements of the school
- Knowing where the school is not achieving as well as it could
- Providing support and encouragement when strategies to bring about improvement are being explored
- Acting robustly and implementing strategies for improvement
- Striking an appropriate balance between support and challenge
- Seeking external advice, especially that of the NRCDES
- **To do this requires both a good knowledge of the school and a sound working relationship with the Headteacher and senior leaders**

The Governing Body's Role in Ensuring Accountability:

- Producing an annual report to parents that fulfils all the statutory requirements
- Ensuring that there is annual reporting to parents about their child's progress and an opportunity to discuss this report with the teaching staff
- Monitoring progress against post Ofsted and Diocesan inspection action plans (and reporting to parents on progress)
- Ensuring that procedures are in place to deal with complaints



Governors make a difference when:

- The Governing Body and all its committees have clear terms of reference and an inter-related programme of meetings
- There is a clear school plan, understood by all, which focuses on improving the school
- They are clear about the aims of the school and the values they wish to promote
- Governors bring a range of expertise and experience and attend meetings regularly
- The chair of governors gives a clear lead
- Meetings are chaired well and clerked efficiently
- Relationships between the governors and the staff are open and honest
- Governors' training is linked to the school's priorities and the needs of individual governors
- Individual governors are clear about their role and take an active part
- The school's documentation is systematically reviewed
- Governors have rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work

Expectations of governors:

In order to fulfil their role Governors are expected to:

- Attend meetings of the Governing Body (these normally occur at least once per term)
- Become members of Committees of the Governing Body and attend meetings of those Committees
- Be members of governor appeal panels as required
- Commit to relevant training as provided through the school
- Read documents in advance of meetings
- Maintain confidentiality