



West Lodge Primary School FAQ

What is the role of a Governor?

Responsibility for governance of the school lies with its Governing Board; a group of professional volunteers. Governors transform the lives of children by utilising their professional skills and expertise to make strategic decisions to support the operation of the school and to create an environment in which pupils can learn and achieve their full potential. You don't need prior knowledge or experience of education, or of working with children, to become a Governor - your workplace skills and experience can help our pupils to achieve their full potential.

Why should you join the Governing Board?

Governors make a valuable contribution to children's education, their life opportunities and future. Being a Governor is a challenging but rewarding role and it will give you the chance to make a long-lasting impact on young people's lives, give something back to your local community and to use and develop your skills in a Board-level environment. You will also be joining the largest volunteer force in the country: there are over a quarter of a million volunteers governing schools in England.

Boards like ours need a balance and diversity of knowledge, skills and experience to enable it to be effective. There is no requirement for you to have an understanding of the education system - just relevant skills, character and time to contribute to the continuous improvement of an organisation. You will be provided with training to help you learn about education. As a Governor at West Lodge Primary, you will:

- Use your professional experience to inform conversations.
- Develop and utilise your skills in a Board-level environment.
- Make a valuable contribution to both education and your community.
- Support and challenge the school to continuously improve outcomes for its pupils and staff.
- Bring your unique experiences, perspective and insights into decision-making in the interests of the school community.
- Be committed to the role; confident in giving your opinion; curious with an enquiring

mind; able to challenge the status quo; collaborative, to build strong relationships; critical, to improve your own work and that of the Board; creative in problem solving and innovation.

What are Governors responsible for?

The Board of Governors has the following strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction of the school, by:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, values, and setting objectives for the school.
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy - including its priorities and targets.
- Ensuring that the school complies with its statutory duties.

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing, and performance managing, the Headteacher.
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets.
- Contributing to school self-evaluation.

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Approving the budget.
- Monitoring spending against budget.
- Ensuring money is spent efficiently and in the best interests of the school and its pupils.
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are appropriately mitigated.

Additionally, Governors:

- Represent the voice of other key stakeholders by:
 - Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.
 - Engaging the school's wider community.
 - Using the views of these stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures.

What time commitment will be expected?

You will be required to attend a total of ten meetings per year. Each Governor is elected for a term of office of four years but many Governors choose to serve multiple terms. As a volunteer you may resign before your term is finished, should your circumstances change or you are unable to continue to offer your services. Governance is a voluntary role and, therefore, unpaid. When considering the time commitment, please include time spent on reviewing papers for the board and committee meetings and preparing your thoughts and questions, ready to share these at the meetings. This is especially important as the role of a governor is to take the information given to them and consider any strategic challenges or suggestions. Further, governors are required to complete relevant courses in order to be able to best deliver in their role (see below for further information).

When are meetings usually held?

Meetings are usually held after work (typically at 7.00pm). Committee meetings are held remotely and Full Governing Body meetings are held in person at the school. Typically, the Governing Body and each Committee meets at least once per term. Every governor will also be part of a committee. Board and committee meetings typically last two hours.

What training will I receive?

You will also be expected to attend training during your term. Training is free and we encourage all of our governors to attend Harrow Local Authority training. Governors also have access to NGA Training. The school also provides internal training to support Governors. Courses are often run during the day and evenings. Governors will be given information about the courses available but it is up to them to book themselves on and complete training suited to their role. All governors will be fully supported in choosing appropriate courses to attend.

What are the key responsibilities of my role?

A. Governor responsibilities

The key purpose of the Governing body is to provide the best possible education and opportunities for pupils. Governors do this by making decisions collectively by:

1. Setting the school's values, vision and strategic aims, which involves;
 - a) Agreeing plans and policies which support the school's value, vision and strategic aims.
 - b) Helping to set and monitor the broad framework within which the school should be run to achieve those aims.
2. Monitoring and evaluating staff and school performance by:
 - a) Acting as a critical friend to the Headteacher and leadership team, to support and challenge them in managing the school.
 - b) Asking the school challenging questions as a 'critical friend'.
3. 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.
4. Other duties include:
 - a) Setting and monitoring the overall budget for the school.
 - b) Deciding on the staffing structure to ensure the national curriculum is taught effectively.
 - c) Supporting the school to set targets for pupil achievement and attendance.
 - d) Receiving information about the quality of teaching in the school.
 - e) Having a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns.
 - f) Ensuring health and safety issues are addressed and considering the repair and maintenance of school buildings.
 - g) Developing school policies and procedures.

B. Governor skills and experience:

- a) Governors play a key strategic role and should be able to solve complex problems.

- b) Ability to work within a team or experience of governance in any sector.
- c) Governors should be able to understand high levels of analysis of data and be able to support the school in its evaluation.
- d) Governors should have a sound understanding of finances.
- e) Governors should be able to have a sound understanding how to manage the performance of individuals and the organization.

C. As a Governor you will be committed to:

- a) Raising aspirations, expectations and standards of achievement in the schools. Helping the school provide the best possible education for its pupils;
- b) Regularly attending and contributing to meetings and workings of the Governing board. It is an expectation that Governors will attend all meetings save for unexpected or exceptional circumstances. Should this arise, apologies should be communicated to the Clerk and the Board will consider whether to accept the apology.
- c) Promoting and supporting equal opportunities for all members of the school community.
- d) Serving for a period of up to four years.
- e) Focusing on a key aspect of the school such as the Link Governor role. In the capacity of a Link Governors, meet with the relevant Lead to develop an understanding of how their 'area' works within the school for the benefit of the pupils, and observe the school in action.
- f) Undertaking training to keep themselves up-to- date on educational and governance matters.
- g) Providing objectivity in debate and decision-making.
- h) Holding the reputation of school at forefront of actions and behaving professionally