

What Do Governors Do?



The governing body works with the Senior Leadership Team and the staff at the school to make sure the school provides good quality education for all its pupils and constantly strives to improve. There is a good balance of skills on our governing body, including some specialist skills, the ability to listen, think through new ideas, and decide what's best for the school as part of a team. They also bring their own expertise gained through their life and career experience. Individual governors may not act independently of the rest of the governing body. School governors have legal duties, powers and responsibilities. They can only act together and decisions are the joint responsibility of the governing body.

They need to set high expectations and ask challenging questions, but are not expected to make day to day decisions about how the school is run. That's the job of the Headteacher and senior staff.

The 3 key roles of a governing body are to:

- provide strategic direction for the school
- be a source of challenge and support to the Head Teacher (a critical friend)
- ensure accountability.

How much time does it take?

The term of office for a school governor is normally four years.

Governors need to be able to give some time to go to meetings, read the paperwork and carry out their link governor role. St Joseph's RC Primary School has a full Governing Body meeting at least once a term (about 2 hours). Governors also sit on smaller committees. Safeguarding and Curriculum and Standards Committees meet termly and Finance twice per year. Other committees meet as and when they need to.

Individual Governors also link with a particular aspect of school life, e.g. Special Educational Needs, and are strongly encouraged to visit the school to help them get to know and understand how the school works and to monitor school improvement in their area. There is an open invitation to all governors to attend special occasions such as assemblies, liturgies, sports days, plays, music concerts and other special events.

Governors listen to the advice of the Headteacher and Deputy Head on educational matters because this is their expertise. They constantly work with the Headteacher towards improving the school and making sure **all** the pupils at St Joseph's RC Primary School are making as much progress as they possibly can and achieve the best they can.

Questions governors might ask include:

- How is teaching improving over time?
- What is the school doing to develop teachers and support staff?
- Are the children making progress and is it enough progress?
- How are vulnerable groups of children doing in terms of their progress?
- How is the budget being spent?
- What are the key priorities?
- Are all children safe and healthy at school so they can learn really well?
- Is the staffing structure helping our pupils achieve?

This sounds like a lot of discussion and decision-making and it is; but governors have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the school, to help it develop, and to promote it within the community. Our governors embrace the ethos and nurturing nature of our school, and work to ensure that everyone feels a part of it.

The Governing Body at St Joseph's is made up of Foundation Governors (who are appointed by the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and who must preserve and develop the Catholic ethos of the school); a Local Authority Governor (selected by the local council); the Headteacher, one Staff Governor and two Parent Governors.

Parent governors speak and act as individuals. They should not be thought of as delegates or the voice of the parents; they do not vote for all parents in general. They have equal status in the work of the Governing Body and have voting rights as individuals.



The Chair of Governors can be contacted at the following address:

Chair of Governors

St. Joseph's RC Primary School

C/o St. Joseph's RC Primary School

Rutland Street, Millfield

Sunderland, SR4 6HY