

Moorside Infant School
and
Moorside Junior School



Governor Handbook
2018 - 2019

Introduction

A very warm welcome to the academic year 2018-19

This handbook is designed to support both new and established members of our Governing Boards.

The better and more positive the relationships are between staff, children, parents and Governors, the better the performance of everyone in our school.

NB

Each School has its own Governing Board: all Governors are a Governor on each board and have the same responsibilities / links on both boards.

You are all greatly valued and very important to us

MOORSIDE INFANT and JUNIOR SCHOOLS VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



Our aspirational vision for every child at Moorside:-

- To become confident, lifelong learners, willing to explore, question and engage with challenges.
- To find solutions through collaboration and resilience.
- To demonstrate respect for others, their world and themselves.

Our mission at Moorside is to:

- Provide a flexible, enriching and challenging curriculum.
- Open children's minds through the views, experiences, ideas and beliefs of others.
- Create an environment able to inspire inquiry and promote a breadth of learning experiences.
- Surround children with the best educators and specialists.
- Understand how our children learn and teach each as an individual.

Our values at Moorside:-

1. Be kind
2. Be positive
3. Show respect
4. Take responsibility
5. Take PRIDE in what you do
6. Co-operate

Role of the Governing Board

The Department for Education has produced a large and very thorough document entitled 'Governors Handbook'. An e-copy of this is kept in the Governors electronic files.

The introduction sets out what is expected of Governing Board: In all types of schools, Governing Boards should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. The school is funded by public money and we are accountable for how it is spent.

This amounts to a demanding role for Governing Boards
Evidence suggests that those that deliver it well do so by:

- understanding their strategic role and building a productive and supportive relationship with the head teacher;
- holding the head teacher, and senior leaders, to account for school performance and taking hard strategic decisions in the light of objective data;
- ensuring governors have the necessary skills and commitment to understand the school and school performance data;
- challenging the school to bring about improvement and hold leaders to account for performance;
- appointing an effective chair to lead and manage the governing board;
- appointing a high quality clerk to advise them on the nature of their functions and duties and ensure the governing board operates efficiently and effectively;
- evaluating their own performance regularly in the light of Ofsted expectations and other good practice; and making changes as necessary to improve their effectiveness.

In practical terms, we ask that Governors attend as many Governor meetings as possible. Meeting attendance is published in the Annual Governors Statement.

Governors will have designated area(s) responsibility or 'links' for monitoring. These can include monitoring the School Improvement Plan, ensuring financial probity and monitoring the effectiveness of Staff Performance and ensuring we discharge our Statutory duties. Each Governor is expected to make at least termly school visits and update the Governing Board on their findings. The Chair and Headteacher will compile a yearly Monitoring Schedule which includes Governor Monitoring.

School Improvement Plan

Each year, the school evaluates its progress against the prior years' improvement priorities. This, in addition to an honest and frank appraisal of the school: forms the basis for the following years Improvement Plan. This Plan may also span a number of years with particular foci for one year and this is then broken down to termly priorities. Governors will also be monitoring the Infant School's Statement of Action to ensure that the school is working to improve and come out of Special Measures. The success of this is dependent on Governors and Staff working together with honesty and integrity.

Each term all action plans and monitoring are evaluated and updated by the Head teacher and shared with governors. Emerging priorities are indentified for the coming term. Governors are assigned to monitor the progress of the strategies utilised and the impact they have on children's learning and progress. Governors are assigned to a particular 'part' of the School Improvement Plan to monitor the impact on children's learning / progress of the actions that have been undertaken.

Please refer to this years' School Improvement Plan, and for the Infant School the Statement of Action, for further information.

MSI Governing Board & MJS Governing Board

Both Governing Boards re-constituted in 2015 as required by the Department of Education. The Boards again reviewed their membership in the 2016/17 academic year.

Both Governing Boards are made up of nine Governors:

- Two Parent Governors - who are elected by the parent body
- One Local authority Governor - recommended by our Local Authority and accepted by the Governing Board
- One Staff Governor - elected by the staff of the school
- The Executive Head teacher
- Four Co-opted Governors - a person co-opted by the Board for a particular skill(s)

The Board can also have

- Associate Governors - These Governors cannot vote and:
 - either act in a 'Consultancy' Role to the Governing Board
 - or is a new Governor who has yet to undertake New Governor Training.

A governor's Term of Office generally lasts four years. Governors can seek to take on additional terms if they choose and they can resign the governing board at any time should they need to do so.

The Clerk to Governors produces the minutes of the meetings and ensures the meetings are carried out with due process. They also act as a resource and advisor to the Governing Board. Like Governors, Clerks will have undertaken specialist training to equip them for their role.

Antonia Proud is our Clerk.

What is expected of a Governor?

Individual Governors are expected to:

- enhance the work of the Governing Board to enable a strong focus on raising standards, so that every child achieves their potential
- Demonstrate their commitment by getting to know the school and becoming involved in school life and activities. (In Governance terms getting to know the school involves reviewing data: monitoring impact of teaching on pupil outcomes, understanding the financial status of the school and generally understanding the challenges the school faces internally and externally. Refer to the National Governors Association website for Getting to Know Your School Guidance Notes.
- take personal responsibility for their ongoing training and development
- prepare for meetings so they are well informed, having read all of the papers sent out with the Agenda
- attend meetings (Governing Board/working groups) and play an active part
- support the school with parents and in the Community
- recognise the corporate status of the governing board and the concept of collective responsibility
- respect confidentiality and the need to act with circumspection
- Sign up to the Governors Code of Conduct

Refer to the Governor Role Descriptions for more information.

Structure of both Governing Boards

Refer to Governing Board Context Chart (on the school website and in Governors electronic files)

The Governing Boards elect a Chair and a Vice Chair annually from its members. This academic year, Mary Kelly is chair of both Governing Boards. Chris Lea is Vice Chair of both Governing Boards.

Governors are accountable to the Vice Chair and to the Chair.

Both Governing Boards have decided not to have any Committees. All Governors will attend all Governing Board Meetings. These will be joint meetings of both schools Governing Boards. The meetings dates are set around 'key dates' especially those regarding school data and finance / budget requirements.

Please refer to the Agenda Cycle Schedule and the Governors Yearly Planner for more information regarding the content of each meeting. The Yearly Governors Planner sets out the Governor activities for the academic year.

Extra meetings and working parties are set up as required

Governors have responsibility for monitoring the School Improvement Plan and have 'link's for a particular area of the schools business.

Governors have the same links / responsibilities in both schools

| Area | Link / Monitoring Governor |
|---|----------------------------|
| HT Performance, Pay Performance Panel, Finance | Mary Kelly* |
| Finance, Benchmarking, HT Performance Pay Performance Panel, Data | Chris Lea* |
| Pupil Premium, HT Performance, Staff Performance, Impact of Staff CPD, Data | Peter Fleming* |
| *These are the 'Resource' Governors | |
| Governor Induction, Education & Training | Claire Rowett |
| Early Years Foundation Stage & Safeguarding | Shirley Burley |
| Literacy, School Improvement Plan Monitoring | Michelle Gee |
| Health & Safety and Premises, SEND, Safeguarding & Data | Johnathon Heap |

Meetings

Wherever possible, all governor meetings are held on an evening in school, starting at 5.00pm. We will aim to finish by 7.15pm and certainly no later than 7.30pm. Working parties may hold also meetings during the day.

Governors are expected to make a positive contribution to meetings:

- Prepare by reading any documents which have been circulated before the meeting
- If you are unable to attend, ensure you have given your apologies in advance to the Chair or the Clerk.
- Arrive promptly
- Be mindful that meetings are a professional dialogue – we do not necessarily have to agree, but we should be respectful of others opinions.
- Once a decision has been reached / vote taken that is the decision of the Board and must be honoured
- Make your comments brief and stick to the point
- Support the person chairing the meeting and recognise their role
- If you have any items for the agenda, forward them to the Chair / Clerk
- To reduce unnecessary paperwork: Meetings documents are displayed electronically with one full hard copy set being filed for our records. If you require a hard copy please inform the Clerk

Asking questions

Effective governing boards hold their head teacher and other senior school leaders to account for improving school performance by asking the right questions.

In relation to the performance of pupils, governing boards might ask:

- Which year groups, subjects and groups of pupils get the best and worst results and why, and how does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school?
- What is your strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?
- How will we know if your approach is working?

In relation to the quality of teaching, governing boards might ask:

- Have we got the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements?
- What is the school's approach to implementation of pay reform and performance related pay? and how do we (the Governors) monitor this?

In relation to the wellbeing of pupils, governing boards might ask:

- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
- What is our track record on attendance, behaviour and bullying?
- Are safeguarding procedures securely in place?
- How good is our wider offer to pupils – are we offering a good range of sports, arts and voluntary activities?
- Is school food healthy and popular?
- Do we listen to what pupils and parents are telling us?
- What are you doing to address any current issues, and how we will know if it is working?

A wealth of information is available on this subject. Please refer to Department of Education and NGA and Modern Governor websites.

School visits

Refer to relevant policies

Governors need to know their school.

Many Governors find that visiting, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out about the school. Some visits may be carried outside of the school day.

Visits can also be an important part of robust school accountability.

Through pre-arranged visits, Governors can check that the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans they have signed-off and see for themselves how their vision and plans for the school are working in practice.

Visits also provide an opportunity to arrange meetings with pupils, staff and parents about what they think of the school and how it is changing.

While it may be helpful to see classes at work, Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching. Governors are not school managers and should not interfere in the day-to-day (ie operational) running of the school. Both are the role of the head teacher.

It is vital that you are clear about the focus for your visit and if it is a Monitoring Visit or an Informal one. Please speak with either the Vice Chair or the Chair for more information.

Some Monitoring visits will be directly linked to the Schools Improvement plan and some will be linked to other statutory duties i.e. Budget / Finance Monitoring.

A record of the visit must be recorded in writing and discussed at a Governing Board Meeting. (Refer to appropriate policy)

Support for Governors

Support for governing boards is available from:

- **NYCC** – Website and Governance team
- **National Governors Association (NGA)**, Independent Organisation for School Governors.
Our School is a Gold member of this organisation. You will be given a “Log in” password by the Chair.
We are entitled to free advice on any Governance issues: including legal. Contact them via the Gold hotline 01212373782 or email gold@nga.org.uk
You can subscribe to their weekly email updates which are very informative.
- **Modern Governor**.
We subscribe to this on-line education resource: www.moderngovernor.com
When you complete a Module please inform us at the next Governing Board Meeting and complete an Education / Training Evaluation form for our CPD Folder. MG also provides a free App with a glossary of education terminology abbreviations and their meanings. The MG on-line Blog is very informative
- **SGOSS** – the Governor recruitment charity to help Governing Boards recruit highly-skilled new governors.
<https://www.sgoss.org.uk>
- **Inspiring Governance** – is the national online matchmaking service which connects skilled volunteers interested in serving as Governors.
inspiringgovernance.org

Where can I find?

All the School Governor Policies and information referred to in this handbook can be found in:

- the Governors section on the School website
and
- The Governors e-files accessed via the Governors email address.

Thank you to Sally Valentine. Chair of Governors at Sowerby Community Primary School for kindly giving permission for Moorside Infant School to adapt their Handbook for our usage.