

Guide to being a school governor

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is governed by its Board of Trustees, which is responsible for the operation and performance of all schools in the Trust.

Each school in the Trust has its own governing body – formally called a ‘local governing body’, and legally a committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Trustees have delegated the management and oversight of each school to its headteacher and senior leadership team and its governing body.

The governing body is responsible for the strategic leadership of the school, for the school’s financial and academic performance, and for holding the headteacher to account. The governing body reports to the Board of Trustees.

Governors act collectively with other governors in the governing body and take equal responsibility for the decisions it takes. They exercise their powers in a primarily strategic leadership role, and should not get involved in the day-to-day running of the school. They must put the interests of the whole school first, regardless of the route by which they became a governor.

The Department for Education (DfE) identifies three core strategic functions for the governing body:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are maintained. Governors should act at all times with honesty and integrity, in accordance with the Nolan principles of public life and the Trust Code of Conduct. They must respect confidentiality and recognise potential conflicts of interest and be ready to explain their actions and decisions to staff, pupils, parents and anyone with a legitimate interest in the school.

Governors must act in accordance with, and ensure that the school is managed in accordance with, the Articles of Association and the Funding Agreement of the Greenshaw Learning Trust, the Trust and governing body Procedures and any other rules and policies determined by the Board of Trustees, and with all relevant legislation and regulations.

All governors are under a duty to act in the interests of the school, to protect the assets, property and good name of the school and the Trust, and to ensure that their resources are used solely for the achievement or promotion of the Object of the Greenshaw Learning Trust; that is ‘to advance education for the public benefit, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum’.

All governors except the headteacher serve for a term of office of four years, but can be reappointed. A governor may resign before their term of office ends.

Governors do not need to have any specific qualifications, and support and training is provided.