



# **Benton Dene School Governor Handbook September 2018**

**To be reviewed September 2019**

Working together to meet individual needs

Valued

Challenged

Supported

Successful

## Our School

Benton Dene School is an exceptional school in a unique setting. In June 2010 we moved into a brand new, purpose built building. We were joined by Benton Dene Primary School another outstanding school. The two schools share the genuinely inclusive environment the new building provides. Our pupils are supported by a dedicated and innovative staff committed to providing them with the best possible learning environment. They are responsible for the excellent progress our pupils make which was a key element in our Ofsted success. In March 2017 we were judged by Ofsted to be Good for overall effectiveness, with Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare to be Outstanding.

Governors play an important role in all schools and Benton Dene is supported by twelve governors who are committed to moving the school on to even more success. All governors are volunteers who bring a wide range of knowledge, skills and expertise to the school.

The purpose of the Governor Handbook is to assist new and current governors to understand the work of the Governing Body. There is a separate Induction of Governors package to further support new governors within their role.

## Working together to meet individual needs



## Our Values

### At Benton Dene School we will be:

#### Valued

##### *We recognise that every individual is unique*

- We believe that everyone should be valued for their differences and we will promote respect, understanding and sensitivity
- We will foster a sense of self-esteem and self-worth
- We want everyone to be happy, healthy, confident contributors to their community

#### Challenged

##### *We believe that high expectations are the key to success*

- We will set and review challenging targets for individuals, groups and the whole school
- We will challenge everyone to “be the best that they can be”

### **Supported**

#### ***We recognise that a safe, stimulating, happy environment will support learning***

- We will actively support all partners in their contributions to the well-being and learning of our school, local and wider community
- We will encourage everyone to make a positive contribution to work, social and leisure activities
- We will support members of our school community as individuals in achieving their personal aspirations and goals

### **Successful**

#### ***We believe that success is important to every individual***

- We will identify and nurture creativity and communication through a broad range of experiences and challenges
- We will recognise, measure and reward success in many ways across a range of personal, academic and social achievements
- We will recognise every achievement however small the step

## **The Role of the Governing Body**

In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- **Holding the headteacher 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.**

### **Setting Strategic Direction**

Governing bodies are the key strategic decision making body in every school. It is their job to **set the school’s strategic framework** and **ensure that it meets all of its statutory duties**. This includes ensuring the school has a long-term strategic vision. The governing body should **agree the strategic priorities, aims and objectives** for the school and **sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them**. They should **check on progress** and **regularly review their strategic framework** for the school in the light of that progress.

Governing bodies **hold the headteacher to account** and avoid being drawn into direct involvement in operational matters. Effective governing bodies **ask the right questions**. Governing bodies need **good and timely data** to help them see clearly the questions they need to ask and to provide answers to their questions. Governors need to know their school if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. All governors visit the school regularly.

Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the headteacher. If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so.

### **Overseeing the financial performance of the school**

Governing bodies are responsible for making sure their school's money is well spent. They should manage the school budget and ensure accurate accounts are kept. This will involve **considering and approving the annual budget plan** and considering and approving any proposed revisions to the budget plan.

They should ensure they have at least one governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters, and by asking questions such as:

- Are we allocating our resources in line with our strategic priorities?
- Are we making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?
- Are other schools buying things cheaper or getting better results with less spending per pupil?
- How can we get better value for money from our budget?

### **Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)**

Schools are required to complete the SFVS annually. This provides an indication of the quality of management that the Governing Body achieves in regard to the management of the School's finances. The procedure recognises that Governing Bodies have a formal responsibility for the control of their school's finances and is designed to ensure that effective financial management is in place. This ensures the school's Budget Allocation is spent wisely and optimises the use of the school's resources to improve the education and achievement levels of all pupils

### **Access to Objective Data**

Governors must have access to **objective, high quality and timely data** if it is to create robust accountability and know the questions that need to be asked of the school leadership.

These governors should make sure that the board has a correct understanding of the school's performance and finances. They should identify from the data the issues that need to be discussed and addressed as a priority. Other governors should learn from them and undertake any available training opportunities to improve their confidence and skills in looking at data, including training delivered by Governor Services. While boards may decide to establish a committee to look in detail at performance data, all governors should be able to engage fully with discussions about data in relation to the educational and financial performance of their school. If they cannot, they should undertake appropriate training or development to enable them to do so.

It is the headteacher's job to provide their board with the information it needs to do its job well. This means they should help the board access the data published by the department and Ofsted. They should also provide whatever management information the board requires to monitor different aspects of life in the school throughout the year. In particular, a board will need to see information relating to the priorities it has identified for improvement. This might include data on:

- pupil learning and progress;
- pupil applications, admissions, attendance and exclusions;
- staff deployment, absence, recruitment, retention, morale and performance; and
- the quality of teaching.

### **Accountability of governing bodies**

Although school governors are volunteers they must be held account for their effectiveness. Benton Dene governors regularly evaluate their own effectiveness. Governors are able to provide informal feedback to the Chair at any time and formal self-evaluation of the governing body and the Chair occurs annually.

### **Personal liability**

Maintained school governing bodies are corporate bodies that are legally responsible for the conduct of the school. Because of this, individual governors are generally protected from personal liability because of the governing body's decisions and actions. Provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, any liability will fall on the governing body even if it exceeds its powers, rather than on individual members

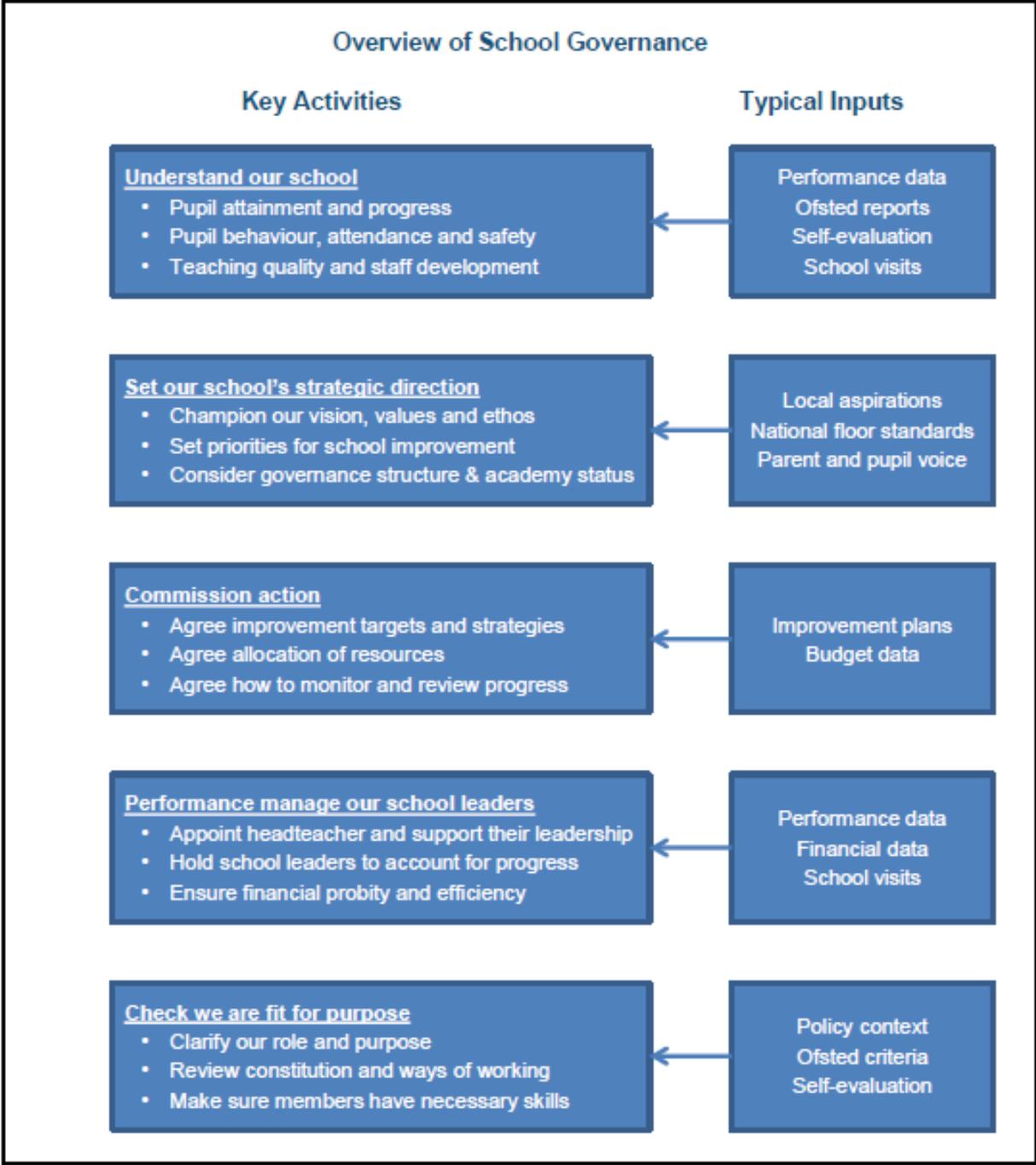


Figure 1 – Governing body key activities

## How does the Governing Body judge its own effectiveness?

Benton Dene School governors complete a skills audit when they join the governing body and this is repeated annually to ensure the collective governing body has the skills it needs.

Self-evaluation of the governing body and a 360° review of the chair is conducted annually. The evaluation process makes use of relevant documents from the National Governance Association and the Local Authority.

The National Governors' Association's document **A Framework for Governance** identifies eight features of an effective Governing Body. These are:

1. Ensuring the right people are round the table
2. Understanding the role and responsibilities of the governing board
3. Good chairing
4. Professional clerking
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community
7. Being committed to asking challenging questions
8. Being confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people.

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/Workings-Of-The-Governing-Body/Governance-Tools/Framework-for-Governance.aspx>

## **Twenty key questions for a school governing body to ask itself**

### ***Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the governing body?***

- 1. Have we completed a skills audit of our governing body?*
- 2. Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?*

### ***Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?***

- 3. Do we understand our roles and responsibilities?*
- 4. Do we have a professional clerk and run meetings efficiently?*
- 5. What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?*
- 6. Do we know about good practice from across the country?*
- 7. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working?*
- 8. Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the governing body's performance?*

### ***Strategy: Does the school have a clear vision?***

- 9. Have we developed long-term aims for the school with clear priorities in an ambitious school development plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed?*
- 10. Does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing body's activities and agenda setting?*

### ***Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?***

- 11. Do we understand the school's performance data well enough to properly hold school leaders to account?*
- 12. How effective is our performance management of the headteacher?*
- 13. Are our financial management systems robust and do we ensure best value for money?*

### ***Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?***

- 14. How do we listen to and understand our pupils, parents and staff?*
- 15. How do we report to our parents and local community regularly?*
- 16. What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?*

### ***Role of chair: Does our chair show strong and effective leadership?***

- 17. Do we carry out a regular 360 review of the chair's performance?*
- 18. Do we engage in good succession planning?*
- 19. Are the chair and committee chairs re-elected each year?*

### ***Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?***

- 20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing body's contribution been to this*

# Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards

## 2018 Version

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors, trustees and academy committee members in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school/s and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the particular school. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' includes academies, and it applies to all levels of school governance.

This code can also be tailored to reflect your specific governing board and school structure, whether that is as a maintained school or academy, either as a single school or group of schools. Where multiple options are given, i.e. senior executive leader/headteacher and governor/trustee/academy committee member, please amend to leave the option relevant to your governing board.

Once approved by the governing board, the Code will apply to all governors/trustees/academy committee members.

**This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law and for academies, their articles of association and agreed scheme of delegation. It should be adapted as appropriate depending on the governance setting and level of delegation.**

### The governing board has the following strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

## As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the executive leaders.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

### Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee/academy committee member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.

- We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the senior executive leader/headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor/trustee/academy committee member.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

## **Relationships**

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors/trustees/academy committee members, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

## **Confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

## Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/academy committee member leaves office

## Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

## The seven principles of public life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

**Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty** – Holders of public office should be truthful

**Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Structure and Membership

Nicola Anderson - **Clerk**

Alison McAllister-Williams – **Head teacher**

Marianne Allan – Parent (**Chair**)

Mark Beverley – Foundation (**Vice Chair**)

Christine Jack – Local Authority

Daley Barber-Allen – Co-opted

Tracy Bell – Co-opted

Christine Taylor – Co-opted

John Thompson – Co-opted

Eleanor Dobson – Parent

Susanne Wood – Foundation

Kerry Clegg – Co-opted

Paddy Gray – Staff governor

Moira Banks – Observer

Helen Milburn – Observer

Helen Richardson – Associate Member

Sue Wilson – Associate Member

*5 x Co-opted Governors  
2 x Staff Governors  
2 x Parent Governors  
2 x Foundation Governors  
1 x Local Authority Governor*

*Total No. of Governors 12.*

Staff governors are elected by the school staff.

Parent governors are elected by parents of children in the school.

LA governors are appointed by the Local Authority.

Foundation governors are appointed by the North Tyneside Learning Trust.

Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body.

All governors serve a 4 year term of office, with an agreed 2 year term of office for Associate Governors.

A governor is disqualified from office if he / she fails to attend, without the consent of the Governing Body, all meetings for a continuous period of six months from the date of the first meeting that he / she misses.

A governor who resigns must inform the Clerk to the Governing Body in writing.

### **Sub committees**

Benton Dene has a number of sub-committees. All governors attend at least one sub-committee.

- **Finance and Staffing**
- **Teaching, Learning and Achievement**
- **Pupils, Family and Community**

### **Joint Governing Body with Benton Dene Primary School**

The governing bodies of Benton Dene School and Benton Dene Primary School have agreed to work together as a soft governance federation. A Joint collaborative committee has been set up under jointly agreed terms of reference which are reviewed annually by both governing bodies.

The Joint Governing body looks at a range of issues including: joint policies, joint staffing and finance issues, premises issues, health and safety, collaborative activity, marketing and PR, inclusion.

Unless delegated or written into the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, any decisions taken by the Joint Committee must be presented to the next full governing body meeting of each of the collaborating schools.

## Policy and Procedure for Visiting School

Governors have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. This is to enable fulfilment of their roles of challenging and supporting the school, providing a strategic view and ensuring accountability. Governors, therefore, should visit the school regularly, to demonstrate to the staff that they take their responsibilities seriously and are genuinely interested in the life of the school. All governors are encouraged to undertake a governor link visit at least once a year during the working day, in addition to participating in additional areas of school life – eg. attending staff training or school celebration events. All new governors will be offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment to the governing body as part of their induction programme.?

### Aims

Visits will focus on aspects of the School Improvement Plan, areas about which governors wish to inform themselves and on carrying out the work of the governing body such as Health and Safety, Numeracy, Literacy and ICT Governor roles.

### School visits will help governors to:

- Fulfil their statutory duties to monitor performance.
- Observe and learn in order that they can better serve the school.
- Support and encourage the staff.
- Help build good working relationships between governors, staff, parents and children.
- Familiarise themselves with day-to-day practices and the ethos of the school.
- Increase their understanding of their curriculum area.
- Celebrate successes with staff.

### Procedures and Protocols for Governor Link Visits to School

All governors should observe the following simple guidelines for visits:

- Always contact the Headteacher at least a week before your visit.
- Clarify the nature of your visit.
- Sign in at Reception.
- Participate as agreed if appropriate.
- Remember to thank the class teacher/subject manager etc.
- Sign out at Reception.
- Be prepared to feed back to the Governing Body or appropriate committee.
- Fill in a Governor Visit form.

### Please remember Governor visits are NOT about:

- Making judgements about the quality of teaching.
- Checking on the progress of your own children.
- Pursuing a personal vendetta.
- Arriving with inflexible preconceived ideas.
- Interrupting, giving ideas or suggestions during teaching time.
- Monopolising teachers' time

## Written records

It is extremely important to have a brief written record of your visit since this is evidence to Ofsted that governors are actively and appropriately involved in the life of the school.

Please use the attached form and hand it to the Headteacher.

Please note that any concerns you may have following a visit should be raised with the Headteacher.



Produced by Benton Dene School - September 2018

<http://www.bentondeneschools.org.uk>

# **Benton Dene School**

## **Induction of New Governors Booklet**



**Reviewed: September 2018**

**To next be reviewed: September 2019**

**Aim:**

At Benton Dene School we aim to give our new governors a school based induction package and access to North Tyneside Governor Training to help them become more understanding of the work required as a school governor.

**Objectives:**

- To enable new and experienced governors to work together
- Support the learning of a new governor with the help of the governor with responsibility for induction of new governors – Marianne Allan
- To build and to develop their understanding of the governing body

**Implementation:**

After a new governor accepts the governorship of the school they will be issued with the following documentation and a school based induction will be arranged.

- To attend the North Tyneside induction course for new governors.
- List of documentation for new governors:
  - Access to a copy of “Governors Guide to the Law”
  - Up to date minutes for the current school year
  - School Prospectus
  - Copy of the diary dates in school
  - School Improvement Plan
  - List of training courses
  - Checklist - Getting to Know Our School
- The Governing Body Handbook which contains:
  - Organisation of the Governing Body
  - List of Committee Membership and Named Governors
  - Governors’ roles and responsibilities
  - Governors’ Decision Planner
  - List of Committees with Terms of Reference for each committee
  - List of abbreviations used in Governor meetings
  - Linking the budget to our School Improvement Plan
  - Annual cycle of tasks and responsibilities
  - Governor Visits Protocol and Visit Report Form
  - Sources of useful information (including web sites)

- Schedule of full governor and committee meetings
- Financial Management roles and responsibilities

### **Getting to know our school**

Things you will get to know over an extended period of time, you are not expected to get to know all of these over the induction period.

#### **A Size of the school I Know**

- Is the school full?
- How many registered pupils are there at present?
- Are numbers rising or falling?
- What is the school's Published Admission Number (PAN)?

#### **B Curriculum I Know**

- What is the Governing Body's statement of aims of the curriculum?
- How is the National Curriculum covered?
- What proportion of time is spent on the various subjects?
- How far does the curriculum extend beyond the National Curriculum?
- What are the arrangements for personal or social education?
- What is the Governing Body's policy on sex education?
- What does its statement on this say?
- How does the school provide for Special Educational Needs?
- What are the arrangements for assemblies?
- What is done by way of trips and visits during school hours?
- How many pupils learn a musical instrument?
- What are the results of the National Curriculum Assessment?
- What is the school's approach towards teaching pupils of different aptitudes and abilities?
- What does the school do to secure equal opportunities?
- What are the arrangements for assemblies?

#### **C Extra-curricular activities I Know**

- What happens during the midday break?
- How are pupils supervised?
- What are the catering and eating arrangements?
- What clubs and similar voluntary activities are there at midday and after school?
- How are they organised?
- What sports activities are there outside of school hours?
- How are they organised?
- What trips are there outside of school hours?

- How are they organised?
- Are there school plays/concerts/gym and dance displays etc.?
- How long is the school day and how is it made up?

#### **D Resources I Know**

- How does the Governing Body determine the allocation of the school budget – or those parts for which it is responsible?
- How does the Governing Body assure itself that the school's resources are used efficiently?
- In what, if any, respects are resources inadequate?
- What is the Governor's charging policy?
- What is the Governing Body's policy on supplementing the resources available from the LEA, Secretary of State or funding authority e.g. by obtaining income from letting or fundraising?

#### **E Staffing I Know**

- What is the current complement of teaching and non-teaching staff, full time and part time?
- Are there vacancies?
- What is the age structure, gender balance, ethnic composition and length of service pattern of the staff?
- How high is staff turnover?
- What is the salary structure?
- How does the governing body use its discretion on pay?
- What are the Governing Body's staffing responsibilities?
- What are the arrangements for discharging them, particularly on staff promotion, selection, pay, discipline, grievance and dismissal?
- What is the school's management structure?
- How is supply cover managed?
- What are the INSET arrangements?
- Which member of staff does what?
- What services are provided by outside contractors?

#### **F Strategic/Improvement Plan I Know**

- Is there a School Improvement Plan?
- How is the plan prepared and revised?
- How does the Plan feed into the Governing Body's work?

#### **G Premises I Know**

- Are the premises adequate for the purposes of the school?
- Is there too little space in any respect or more than is strictly needed?
- Is the layout functional?
- Would it be practicable to improve it?

- Is the condition of the buildings, services, PE facilities and the playground acceptable?
- What about the standard of decoration, vandalism, graffiti?
- Is the building visitor friendly?
- Is it adequately signposted?
- What use of the premises is made otherwise than for school purposes?
- Under what arrangements?
- Are the cleaning arrangements satisfactory?
- Does the school have and carry out an energy efficiency policy?
- Are the premises accessible to the disabled?

### **H Welfare and Discipline I Know**

- What is the pupil attendance record?
- What are the arrangements for securing good pupil attendance?
- What are the pupil welfare arrangements, generally and for pupils with special educational needs?
- How many pupil exclusions are there annually and for what periods?
- How many pupils are entitled to, and how many receive, free school meals?
- Is there a written policy or code on pupil behaviour and discipline?
- How effectively are good standards of behaviour secured e.g. in relation to disruption, bullying, and racial and sexual harassment?
- What are the arrangements if child abuse is suspected?
- How is compliance with the law on health and safety of staff and pupils ensured?

### **J Admissions I Know**

- What are the school's admission arrangements?
- Is the school ever over or under subscribed?
- Where do pupils live?
- Most locally?
- What is the broad ethnic composition of the pupils?
- What are the arrangements for liaison with receiving/feeder schools?
- How are pupils familiarised with the school?
- What are the arrangements for showing the school to the parents of prospective pupils?
- Is there a school uniform?
- Was it agreed with the Governing Body, the staff and the parents?
- Is it proving practical to enforce?

### **K Parents I Know**

- How does the school communicate with parents?
- In what languages?

- Is there a parents' newsletter?
- How often is it published?
- What are the arrangements for reporting on pupil progress?
- Is there a parent/teacher association (PTA)?
- What does it do?
- Who attends its meetings?
- Are there informal parents' evenings or similar events?
- How do parents get to see the Headteacher or class teacher?
- On what basis are parents allowed into school during school hours?
- May they, and do they take part in school activities?
- What is the scheme of access to pupil records approved by the governors?

#### **L Links with the community I Know**

- What links are there with local firms?
- What community or charitable work do the pupils do/
- What are the relations with the local police?
- How does the school conduct its relations with the media?

#### **M The School's Performance I Know**

- When was the school last inspected and by whom?
- What were the Inspectors main findings?
- What action was taken in response?
- When is the school next due/likely to be inspected under the national inspection scheme?

#### **N Primary Schools I Know**

- Is there a nursery class?
- How large is it?
- How large are the classes?
- How far do the teachers specialise?
- Which teachers are responsible for the various subjects of the National Curriculum?
- How much time do teachers have for non-teaching duties during school hours?
- How many children go to which Secondary school?

## Information for New Governors

### GOVERNOR SERVICES WILL PROVIDE:

- **Details of Governor Training, including Induction for New Governors**
- **Privacy Notice**
- **Equality Monitoring Form (to be completed and returned to Governor Services)**
- Copies of any current newsletters (if relevant)

### THE CLERK TO THE GOVERNING BODY WILL PROVIDE:

- **Pre-appointment Check information (to be completed and returned to Governor Services)**
- Pecuniary Interest Form (to be completed and returned to the Clerk to the Governing Body)
- **Code of Conduct for Governors**
- Instrument of Government
- Governing Body membership and standing orders
- Committee membership
- Minutes of last two governing body meetings

### THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM SCHOOL

- School Mission Statement and Values
- School Development Plan
- School's Calendar for the Year
- School Policies
- The Handbook of Financial Procedures and Scheme of Delegation
- Access to any reference material supplied by the LA/DfE direct to the school
- The Home-School Agreement
- List of staff and their responsibilities
- School Visits Policy
- School Newsletters and similar publications sent to parents

### THE FOLLOWING ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE INTERNET

- DfE "Governors' Handbook"
- Latest Ofsted Report – [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) (a paper copy is available from the school on request and is available through the school website)

### VENUES FOR GOVERNOR TRAINING

Please note that governor training is held at the Langdale Centre:

The Langdale Centre  
Langdale Gardens  
Wallsend  
Tyne and Wear  
NE28 0HG

# Induction Checklist for New Governors

## School-based induction:

Have you been welcomed to the Governing Body by the Chair .....

Have you been invited by the Headteacher to visit the school .....

Have you had a tour of the school and met staff and children .....

Have you had an informal briefing on the school from the Head .....

## Immediately on being appointed as a governor, you should receive:

The School Development Plan .....

Details of Governing Body Committees (inc terms of reference) .....

Details of how to contact other Governors and the Clerk .....

Governor Code of Conduct .....

School Self Evaluation .....

School visits policy .....

## Within your first three months you will receive the following information, which is also available to view on the school website:

The overview of the Governors' role & responsibilities .....

The School Ofsted Report & Latest Annual Report .....

Dates of Future Governors' meetings including Committees .....

Calendar of forthcoming School events .....

Weekly School Newsletters .....

**Name:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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*Once completed please retain original and forward a copy to the Chair of Governors*

*Note that you are not expected to complete all sections immediately, please contact the Chair of Governors if you are unsure of anything*

*Useful website links:*

**Department of Education Governors Handbook**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

**North Tyneside Council Governor Training**

<http://www.educationservices.org.uk/Training>

**School Website**

<http://www.bentondeneschools.org.uk>

## **FAQs for Benton Dene Governors**

- (1) If I become a governor what is the time commitment?
  - Governors meetings (half-termly on a Monday evening between 5pm-7pm)
  - Committee meetings (half-termly during the school day, lasting approximately 1 hour)
  - School governor-link visits
  - Additional school activities – eg. assemblies, school trips
  - Half-day annual governor training (this is normally organized on a weekend)
  - Additional training – eg. safeguarding
  - Involvement in staff recruitment/disciplinary meetings
  - Reading and preparation time.
  - Estimates re: governor time commitment for a year range between 39 – 52 hours.
  
- (2) What knowledge/skills will I need to be a school governor?
  - Governing bodies require a mixed skills-set. Annually, governors complete a skills audit.
  - Ability to work as part of a team, as well as working autonomously.
  - Ability to write governors visit reports, using a template provided.
  
- (3) How long does a governor serve?
  - 4 years

(4) Will I need a DBS certificate to be a school governor?

- Yes

(5) I have a police record. Will this stop me becoming a school governor?

- Not necessarily. It will depend on what your DBS says. All cases are dealt with on an individual basis.

(6) Do I get paid to be a school governor? If I incur expenses in my role as school governor, will I be reimbursed?

- You do not get paid to be a school governor.
- There may be some occasions where a governor incurs expenses; it would need the agreement of the governing body for reimbursement to be made.

(7) How old do I need to be to be a school governor?

- 18.

(8) My child attends the school. Will I be able to influence which teacher they get next year?

- No. This is not the role of a school governor.

(9) I do not want to get involved with any fundraising for the school. Will I be expected to do so?

- No. This is not the role of a school governor.

(10) I have a business supplying services/goods to schools. Can I use my role as a school governor to promote my business/network?

- No. All governors must declare any personal interest in governor business at the beginning of each meeting, and are not allowed to promote their business to other governors or to the school.