



## **The Governing Body**

The Government has high expectations of governing bodies. They are the strategic leaders of schools and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. For schools like Long Mountain this is reflected in the law, which states that the purpose of maintained school governing bodies is to ‘conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school’.

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 – including for the type of school that will offer them most opportunities. In the light of this 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 review regularly their strategic framework for the school in the light of that progress.

Foundation governors, such as those appointed by a church or diocese, have a specific role in preserving and developing the ethos of the school, including any religious character. They must also ensure the school is conducted in accordance with the foundations’ governing documents, including any trust deed relating to the school.

## **Educational performance of the school and its pupils**

Effective governing bodies hold their Headteacher and other senior school leaders to account for improving school performance by asking the right questions. This might include asking:

Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing, and why? Do you have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress? How will we know that things are improving?

Which year groups or subjects get the best and worst results and why? How does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school? What is your strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?

How are you going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving? How will we know if your approach is working?

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? If appropriate, is it compliant with the most up to date version of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document?

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? What are you doing to address any current issues, and how we will know if it is working?

How good is our wider offer to pupils? Is the school 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?

Asking 'the right questions' should not be seen as a negative role for the governing body. 'Holding to account' involves asking questions and engaging in discussion to fully understand why decisions are made. Through knowledge governing bodies can ask further questions of data, decisions etc to ensure both governing bodies and leaders are in agreement about the path being followed and why the direction is the correct one for the school and pupils.

## **Overseeing Financial Performance**

Governing bodies are responsible for making sure their school's money is well spent. They should do this by making sure 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?