

Effective governance

The governing board is a corporate board and remains accountable at board level in law and to Ofsted for the performance of all its duties and functions. Committees and individuals must report back to the full board on any activities they have carried out on its behalf.

Effective governance is based on six key features:

- Strategic leadership – setting and championing vision, ethos and strategy
- Accountability – driving up educational standards and financial performance
- People – with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
- Structure – that reinforces clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Compliance – with statutory and contractual requirements
- Evaluation – to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

Evidence indicates that effective governance is demonstrated by governors:

- Understanding their strategic role – building a productive and supportive relationship with the Headteacher while holding them to account for school performance and taking hard strategic decisions in the light of objective data.
- Ensuring they have the necessary skills and commitment, to ensure improvement and holding school leaders to account for the educational performance of children.
- Regularly evaluating their performance in the light of Ofsted expectations and other good practice, making changes as necessary to ensure their effectiveness.

Protocol

The overall purpose and responsibility of the Full Governing Board of Falcon Junior School is to:

- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school
- hold executive leaders to account for the education performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective performance management of staff
- oversee the financial performance of the school and ensure its money is well spent
- ensure the voices of stakeholders are heard

We have responsibility for:

- determining the aims and values of the school
- monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates
- ensuring local accountability
- insisting that the best interests of all pupils are paramount in decision-making

General

- We recognise that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum.
- We recognise and value the different perspectives of governors. We accept that all governors have equal status and are representatives, not delegates, of different interest groups. These groups have a shared concern: the welfare and education of all the pupils in the school.
- With the exception of the Chair when urgent action is required, we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing board has given delegated authority to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil the expectations of a good employer.
- We recognise that we are accountable and will encourage open government and effective communication.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect other schools.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, attend regularly and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.

- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development.

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the local community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe confidentiality when required to do so by the governing board, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.
- We recognise that some information we receive as governors is not confidential but may be sensitive. We will abide by the proper means of disseminating this information to the school community.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the governing board.

Conduct

- We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but we will accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak out against majority decisions in public or private outside the governing board.
- We will only speak on behalf of the governing board if we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- Our visits to school will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the Headteacher.
- In discharging our duties, we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school.

Terms of Reference of the Full Governing Board

- To agree constitutional matters, including procedures where the Governing Board has discretion
- To seek to fill vacancies as they arise and to appoint new governors where it is possible for the Governing Board to do this, e.g. co-opted governors
- To hold at least five Governing Board meetings a year
- To appoint or remove the Chair and Vice Chair
- To appoint or remove a Clerk to the Governing Board
- To establish the committees or groups of the Governing Board (if needed) and formulate terms of reference for their work
- To suspend or remove a governor
- To decide which functions of the Governing Board will be delegated to committees, groups and individuals, and review these annually
- To appoint Committee Chairs and any dedicated individual roles (including as a minimum governor leads for safeguarding, for SEND and for attendance)
- To work effectively for succession planning for the Governing Board
- To allow for governors to meet or to attend via video conferencing software or by speakerphone to enable effective and timely decision making
- To receive reports from committees, groups or individual governors to whom a decision has been delegated, and to consider whether any further action by the Governing Board is necessary
- To approve the first formal budget plan of the financial year
- To keep school policies and practice under review and to make revisions where appropriate, unless delegated to a committee, group or individual
- To maintain a current register of governors' business and pecuniary interests
- To provide induction, support and training for all governors
- To ensure that governors fulfil their monitoring responsibility to enable the board to hold leaders to account
- To ensure at least two governors are appointed to undertake the Headteacher's performance management and that these governors have been suitably trained
- To ensure that governors fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, including accessing relevant training
- To monitor incidents of racism, disability discrimination and safeguarding
- To annually agree the Pupil Admission Number (PAN)
- To ensure the school complies with all statutory duties

Quorum for Full Governing Board meetings and decision-making

- At least 50% of the number of governors in post, rounded up to the nearest whole number of the membership of the Governing Board, not including vacant positions.

Core responsibilities

- To ensure that all responsibilities delegated to committees, groups and individuals are undertaken and reported back through minutes and/or clear monitoring reports, and are followed up where necessary through delegated action
- To review as necessary all policies/documents according to the agreed schedule
- To make decisions that have not been otherwise delegated to a committee, group or individual
- To abide by the governor protocols concerning conduct and visits to the school

School improvement and development

- To ensure the school's self-evaluation (SEF) is accurate and up to date, and to develop sections relevant to the need for focused governor monitoring in conjunction with senior leaders
- To respond as a Full Governing Board on matters relating to the preparation for, or action following, an OFSTED inspection
- To agree the school's improvement and development plan (SIDP) and to monitor its implementation
- To receive and where necessary, recommend action on reports of:
 - behaviour of pupils both in lessons and around the school, including bullying.
 - views of staff, pupils and parents

Performance (pupil progress and achievement)

- To monitor and evaluate the impact of quality of teaching on rates of pupil progress and standards of achievement
- To monitor and evaluate rates of progress and standards of achievement by pupils, including any underachieving groups
- To oversee reporting to parents according to statutory requirements
- To set priorities for improvement, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of improvement plans which relate to the committee's area of operation
- To monitor and evaluate provision for all groups of vulnerable children (e.g. looked after children) and ensure all their needs have been identified and addressed, and to evaluate their progress and achievement
- To consider recommendations from external reviews of the school (e.g. Ofsted or local school improvement advisers), agree actions as a result of reviews, and evaluate the implementation of any improvement plans

Safeguarding

- To monitor and review all safeguarding requirements to ensure that the Full Governing Board complies with its duties under legislation as set out in Part Two of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)
- To ensure the Safeguarding Compliance Checklist for Governors and Proprietors produced by Norfolk County Council's Education Safeguarding Team (revised September 2022) is considered on a termly basis and any areas of non-compliance are identified and addressed; this checklist includes sections on: policy and procedures, induction and training, safer recruitment and single central record, record keeping, pupil voice and governance and leadership

As set out in Norfolk County Council's model safeguarding policy (July 2023), the Full Governing Board will ensure that:

- The safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed annually, is available publicly via our school website and has been written in line with Local Authority guidance and the requirements of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures.
- The school contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).
- A senior member of staff from leadership team is designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that there is at least one deputy DSL(s) who is appropriately trained member to deal with any issues in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There will always be cover for this role. The role will be evidenced explicitly in the role holder's job description.
- All staff receive a safeguarding induction and are provided with a copy of the safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the behaviour policy and the school's safeguarding response for those pupils who go missing from education as detailed section 6 of this policy.
- All staff undertake appropriate child protection training that is updated annually and online safety training.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with statutory guidance.
- Safer recruitment practices are followed in accordance with the requirements of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE (2023).
- They remedy without delay any weakness in regard to the school's safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention.

Note: The above responsibilities are full governing board responsibilities and cannot be delegated to either a committee or individual. However, a governor can be nominated to lead on the monitoring of safeguarding.

These terms were agreed by the Full Governing Board on 14 September 2023.

Alex McNulty, Chair of Governors

Next review: September 2024