



WELLSPRING

We Make A Difference

# Make a difference to our schools

**School Governors help schools to make good decisions. Schools are operated with public money. It is important that the money is spent wisely and transparently. Governance in schools is an important public service in which you really can make a difference.**

Being a school governor is an extremely rewarding role. It enshrines the voice of people in the community in decision-making, allows you to contribute to the school experience of children & young people and affords the opportunity to give something back.

Schools are multi-million pound businesses with multi-million pound estates. They are complex operations that require eyes-on everywhere and expertise at all levels to help guide them always in the right direction. Year-on-year-on-year, each school will spend many millions of tax-payer pounds.

It is important that decisions made are strategic; for the long-term, are clearly costed, thought-through and sustainable. Your skills and experience can help us to achieve our objective; every school a great school for children to learn and thrive,

every school a well-managed, well-governed and successful school...

**There is no requirement to have an understanding of the education system, just the passion and time to contribute to improving life chances.**

The Wellspring Trust is a successful and growing values-driven charity that operates schools and other complementary concerns that aim to impact positively on the world and on social equity.

Our Governing Bodies play an extremely valuable voluntary role, working alongside Academy Leaders in the interests of our children and young people.

**If the sound of any of this appeals to you, we would welcome a conversation with you.**

### Why is Governance Important?

Over the course of a governors' term of office, a school will have spent somewhere in the order of £4m-£40m of public funds (dependent upon annual budget). The sector as a whole spends 4.4% of the total national taxable income (£104bn per year). It is crucial that there is real public oversight of that spend.

Schools exist in the here-and-now while equally being our country's most important investment in the future. Both factors require healthy dialogue and debate in order to make them maximally effective. Schools, like every other sector, largely think according to sector-norms. Different experiences, viewpoints and perspectives are crucial to growth.

**Your role as a governor is critical to our ongoing effectiveness.**

### What power do I have?

**Governance is a shared responsibility rather than a power.** There are (typically) twelve governors, a Headteacher and the Trust. The Trust is the legally responsible party. The Headteacher is the salaried Lead Professional. The Governing Body shares a status in that triangle with the other two. It holds to account and is held to account. It advises, challenges and supports as it is advised, challenged and supported. All three parts of the triangle are focused on the school performing optimally and on its duty to the future.

**The real power is in that triumvirate working harmoniously together.**

### What can I actually contribute?

**Your unique perspective.** Your experience and expertise. Your counsel. Your viewpoint. A Headteacher is best-equipped to be at their best if they have strong and trusted additional capacity around them.

### What's the benefit to me?

You can be certain that your duty as a Governor directly impacts upon provision for young people in school both now and into the future. You will see tangible outputs from the time you invest. You will meet new people from different backgrounds and will encounter new and novel challenges. You will gain a deeper insight into the world of education and the operation of a Board. Personally you will develop new skills in strategic leadership and planning, data analysis, critical thinking and problem-solving which will enhance your professional career in numerous fields. You will grow your network.

**You will make a real and lasting contribution to your community.**

### Isn't governance just box ticking?

It shouldn't be. Governance, done well, brings healthy debate, different and helpful perspectives and experienced extra capacity to a school. Headteachers are experienced, effective senior salaried Lead Professionals who know what they are doing. They chose to do what they do because they believe in public service. Public service brings with it the accountability duty that they welcome from a Governing Body.

**No great endeavour was ever achieved just through box ticking nor through simply being told what to do.**

**Greatness is the result of difference, debate, dialogue, desire and determination. We take it as an entitlement to our communities that their schools are great.**

### **The Challenges Ahead**

**The challenges ahead are many, are complex and are ever-evolving.**

Publicly-funded schools consistently face funding challenges. It would always be desirable to have more, yet that is never the issue. The issue is always; how do we provide the optimum we can with what we have available to us? What we have available to us is almost inevitably the output of where we've been and that is not necessarily the same place as where we need to go. This is the crux of the ever-evolving landscape within which schools operate.

The percentage and complexity of need of children/ young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) increases year-on-year. The funding system and support infrastructure designed to support them is not fit for purpose. **Despite this, those children/young people require and are entitled to our support and care pursuant to the furtherance of their education and skills development for life.**

**We require our schools for today and for tomorrow. Maintaining appropriate investment in buildings and estate cannot simply be ignored or deferred onto Someone Else's Watch.**



We are currently seeing time limited windows into what our weather will be like consistently in the years to come. We have to respond now to higher temperatures and increased rainfall intensity because waiting until it happens all the time will be too late.

Developing curricula, experiences and learning programmes that will enable all our children/ young people - with all of their differences and capabilities - to prosper in an uncertain tomorrow is the greatest challenge of all. Children are the future of society. Necessarily, their education should look forward. We have to make discerning choices.

And we cannot ignore the ideological challenge. There are many versions of what a good and effective education looks like. It is not a consensus. Positions can be polarised. **We have to be clear in our vision, principles and values and have the character to stand our ground for the type of education that we believe in.**

Contact Melanie Gibbons if you would like a conversation -

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