



ASSET
Education



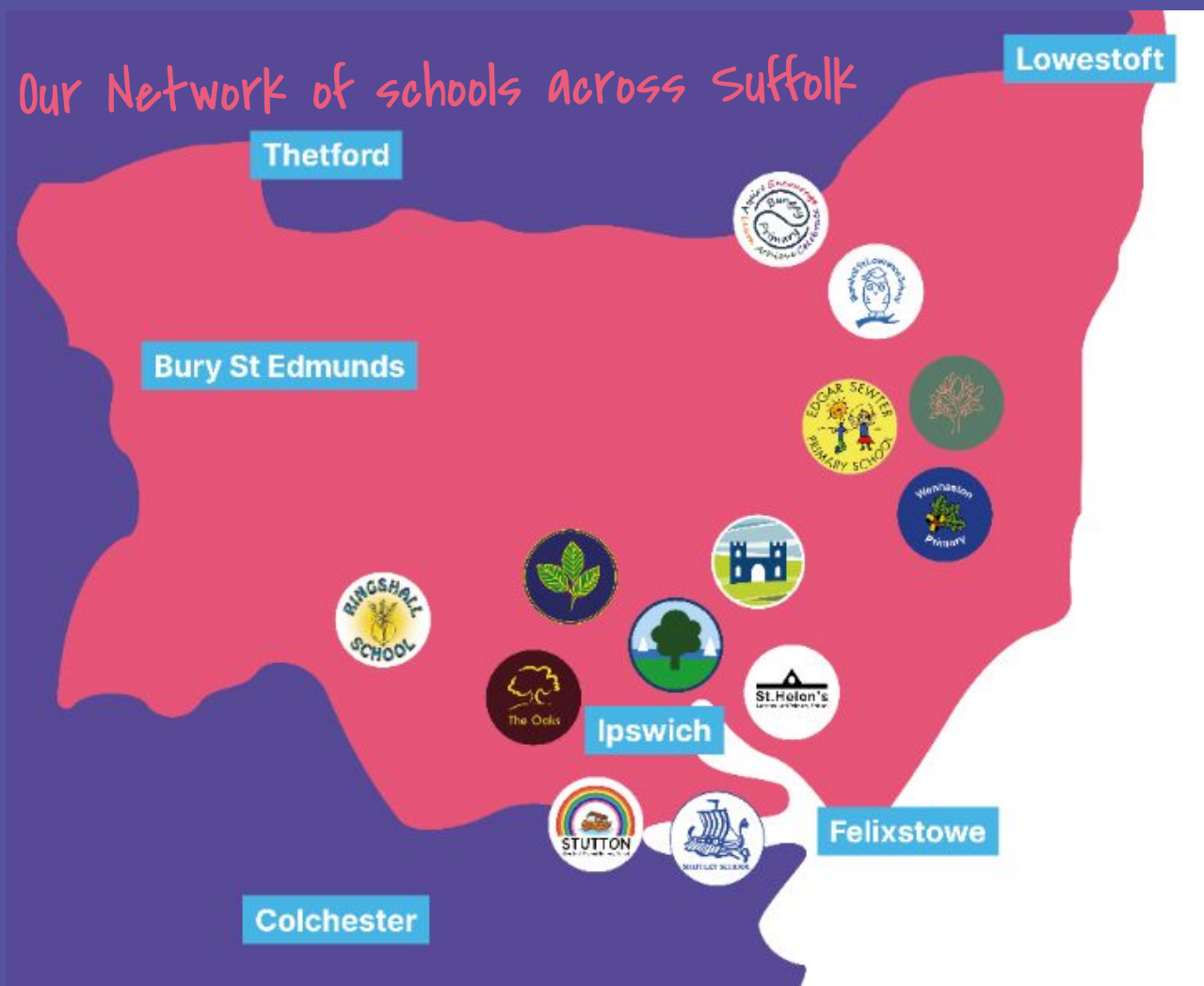
Governance Handbook

For Local Governing Bodies
updated September 2024

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Our Family of Schools

Initially centred in Ipswich, we are a group of Suffolk schools aiming to make a real difference to education in our local area. Bringing together our skills and expertise, as well as learning from the best practice nationwide, our vision is to create a hub of outstanding practice in teaching and learning and real opportunities for the children in Suffolk to achieve the best possible outcomes. We formed our education trust in March 2015 with our three original schools: **St Helen's, The Oaks and Whitton (now The Beeches)**. The Trust expanded in May 2017 when five schools in north-east Suffolk joined: **Bungay, Edgar Sewter (Halesworth), Holton St Peter, Ilketshall St Lawrence and Wenhamston**. In June 2018 the Trust sponsored **Stutton Church of England Primary** and in September 2018 the Trust sponsored **Shotley Community Primary School**. In March 2019 **Castle Hill Infants and Juniors and Cliff Lane Primary Schools** joined from another Trust. In October 2019 **Ringshall School** joined and in October 2024, **Hollesley and Waldringfield schools** brought us up to a total of 16 schools.



ASSET continues to develop as a group of high performing schools in the primary phase serving communities across Suffolk. As we have expanded, we have developed a wide range of trust-wide services, and associated key positions, to support schools within the trust. These have been developed around a strategic model for resourcing of the trust as a whole, authentic shared leadership principles, and led by a small central core team of senior leaders. We now have a strong financial base and capacity to invest in our people and schools in order to support our ambition to provide first class educational opportunities and services to the young people and families we serve across our communities.

Our Vision and Purpose

We seek to equip and empower the next generation of children to create a more compassionate, equitable and sustainable world where they personally and collectively thrive.

As a group of schools working in collaboration as one entity, we focus on achieving high standards and excellent practice across all schools, so that every individual has the skills, knowledge, behaviours, values and support they need in order to be the best they can be and to make their contribution to the benefit of all.

This means that, together we...

- aim for excellence in all areas of school life by envisioning, sharing, researching, developing and innovating together
- build on the strengths of our people, growing their confidence and developing their expertise
- take collective responsibility, develop partnerships and collaborate at all levels with positivity and resilience
- always look out for and champion the individual and particularly the vulnerable
- Seek to make a positive difference to our communities and promote social justice
- set no limits on what we can achieve, are relentless in always striving to improve
- have high aspirations and ambition for the future of education and what can be achieved

Our young people will say...

I am well prepared for the next stage of my education, with a good understanding of literacy and good maths skills

I have a positive attitude to life, skills and learning

I am responsible, able to take constructive feedback, respectful and open to new ideas from other pupils and adults

I am confident and brave enough to be able to take new risks

I am a good team player because I listen to others and share ideas, also I am able to work positively when asked to work independently

I have good thinking, questioning, improving work, and learning skills

I believe in myself and I am not afraid to take decisions which involve my learning

I am confident to be able to talk in front of my class/schoolmates without fear of failure

I want to achieve well and I will try my best at all times

I am keen to accept opportunities which will help me in my future life, whether it is at school, college, university or in a place of work

Written by ASSET Pupil Parliament

Our Values

Whilst all of our schools develop and promote their own values and ethos, we expect to see the trust values lived out in decision making at all levels.



Excellence

We strive for excellence in every aspect of school life and achievement, tackling disadvantage and inequality with determination and a desire for success. We relentlessly pursue improvement keeping the highest expectations of all and for all. We work with professionalism and efficiency and are self-disciplined, resilient and innovative in order to achieve our aims.



Empowerment

With a shared commitment to our vision and aspirations we empower individuals to be the best they can be. We balance ownership with accountability and build on strengths providing opportunities with positivity and optimism. We encourage trust by delegation and develop energetic, enthusiastic and committed leadership for improvement at all levels.

Engagement

Seeking out partnerships with others we value collaboration, cooperation and inclusion for the benefit of all. We take responsibility, acting with commitment, care and respect. We balance support with challenge to seek out the best. We commit to share, innovate and celebrate and require reflection and optimism.



Equity

Recognising that starting points and barriers to learning are individual and unique to every learner we seek to provide whatever support, guidance and intervention we can in order to tackle disadvantage and discrimination wherever it exists. We strive to do everything within our capacity to remove the barriers to social mobility, working towards social justice.



Governance and Leadership in ASSET



Layers of Governance

Founding Members

People who represent different aspects of the communities that we serve

ASSET Board

Trustees selected for their skills, experience and expertise covering all areas of the trust's work

Board Committees

Audit & Risk, Education, Finance, Operations and Remuneration - formed of trustees (majority), specialist local governors, school leaders, external consultants with specific expertise to contribute

Area Governance Committees

Trustee led, formed of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors from every ASSET school

Individual school Local Governing Bodies

Local governors with expertise to bring, clearly defined roles, focused on the school experience for pupils and parents, the unique local offer and strategic vision for the school, creating and maintaining the highest standards and outcomes for pupils in the school. Governors have high involvement and good level of knowledge and understanding of the school

Our People

Members - Clare Gartland, Brendan Keaney, Bruce Leeke, Nick Pavitt and Pere Ayling

Trustees - Ryan Bedwell-Woods, Hamil Clarke, Eddie Casey, Simon Evans-Evans (Chair), Clare Flintoff, Barry Gostling, Gareth Stephens, Phaniel Mutumburi, Elizabeth Whitehead, Sally Wilkinson (Vice Chair) and Emily Yule.

Our Members and Trustees bring expertise from a wide range of backgrounds to the pursuit of excellence in educational practice including...

- educational expertise in setting our strategic vision for excellence in pupil achievement, developing leadership and learning from the best whilst keeping the focus on classroom improvement, teaching and learning.
- business expertise in guiding our business unit to oversee the efficient running of the finances, buildings and administration of our schools freeing up school leaders to focus on what they came into education to achieve.

Clerk to the Trustees - Nicol Parker

CEO and Accounting Officer: Clare Flintoff

Deputy CEO (schools, strategy and operations): Jackie Bircham

Deputy CEO (school improvement): Phil Palmer

Chief Financial Officer: Chris Heath

Key principles for governance at all levels in ASSET Education:

- Adherence to and compliance with The Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership
- Transparent, open governance with clear communication with all stakeholders
- The Trust's values of excellence, empowerment and engagement evident at all levels
- Flow of information from and to trustees and committees from the base.
- Clear separation of governance and executive responsibilities with accountability to the board.
- Appointments at all levels based on appropriate and balanced skills mix and commitment to the trust's vision and values.
- Flexibility in order to meet the needs of schools and our collective vision.

For details about the delegation of responsibility and accountability please refer to the Trust Scheme of Delegation (under key documents on the website). This document also details the Terms of Reference for the Trust Board and each Committee.

ASSET Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

Main purpose of the LGB:

ASSET trust places great importance on the role of the Local Governing Body (LGB) in realising our aims and ambition for our children, schools and staff. LGBs are technically and legally committees of the trust board with limited delegated functions, detailed in the ASSET Governance Handbook and the Scheme of Delegation, and carried out in partnership with trust executive leaders.

We believe that there should be an excellent school at the heart of every local community. Local governors help to make this expectation a reality by holding the school and the trust accountable for achieving this aim. The Local Governing Body is largely an advisory body with responsibility to provide support, scrutiny and challenge both to the trust and school leaders in order to ensure good practice in all aspects of the operation and development of their individual school.

The LGB will monitor risks and report concerns to the AGC or CEO. Individual governors are expected to abide by the Governor Role Description and Code of Conduct for Governors.

Size of the Governing Body

The LGB consists of a small group of people (no more than 10) who are committed to the trust's values, mission and vision. As LGBs are largely advisory bodies there is no quorum for meetings and it is recommended that meetings are open to other staff attending as required. LGBs consist of the following roles:

Trust appointed governors from the local school community

Parent governors - two in every school (these should be parents of children at the school on appointment)

Foundation governors - in church schools only, representing 25% of the total number of governors

The Headteacher or lead senior teacher responsible for reporting to the LGB

If, on joining the Trust, a school finds that it has surplus governors, a fair and transparent process should be used to define the skills it requires and conduct a skills audit of its members. Where negotiations and the result of a skills audit do not result in sufficient resignations the Chair of Governors should hold a meeting with the AGC Chair to make the final decision which should be based on skills, expertise and track record.

Intervention

The trust board will intervene to appoint an Interim Executive Body when this is considered necessary in order to stabilise the school or protect the interests of the trust. It also reserves the right to review, vary or remove any responsibility which it has delegated.

Responsibilities of the LGB:

1. Hold clerked meetings at least three times a year
2. Ensure LGB can fulfil its role by recruiting governors to fill gaps identified through a skills audit process
3. Select a vice-chair and chair
4. Identify knowledge gaps on the LGB and organise training as necessary
5. Approve the school development plan in line with the school's strategic plan and trust priorities
6. Monitor the success of school actions on pupil achievement, curriculum provision and teaching
7. Receive verbal or written feedback on governor visits to the school
8. Provide appropriate scrutiny to the school level risk register and ensure that risks are reported to the trust
9. Receive and familiarise themselves with reports from trust executive, internal checks, benchmarking reports and reviews
10. Provide scrutiny to school budgets to ensure most effective use of resources in line with school priorities
11. Check statutory policies are in place and published on the website
12. Engage with parents to ascertain satisfaction with school and agree school response
13. Open the school for the benefit of the local community and its inhabitants in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving life conditions especially for those most in need
14. Ensure compliance with equalities legislation in any communications from the school to parents
15. Appoint a SEND link governor to check compliance with SEND Code of Practice
16. Appoint a Safeguarding link governor to check compliance with safeguarding policy
17. Appoint a marketing link governor where the school is under capacity
18. Ensure that the school appoints a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC)
19. Monitor pupil attendance and exclusions
20. Support Exclusions Panels and Appeals Panels as required
21. Approve the local school behaviour policy in line with trust guidance

Appointment of local governors

The trust board appoints local governors, at least two of whom will be parents of children at the school. The majority of governors will be representative of the local school community and the organisations that serve that community. In Church of England schools, 25% of governors will be appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education and will sign an undertaking to uphold the designated religious character of the school.

Individual Governors are expected to act with selflessness; integrity, objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership*. As public servants they will maintain the highest standards, declare any potential business or conflicts of interest and will abide by the ASSET Governor Role Description and Code of Conduct for Governors. They will be actively involved in the school and will know the school's priorities and challenges including the headline pupil achievement data.

*Seven Principles of Public Life enunciated by the Nolan Committee (The Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2012)

Appointment of the Chair of the LGB

The Chair of the LGB is either appointed directly by Trustees or selected by majority vote of local governors with the approval of Trustees for a term of office of two years with an expected maximum of two terms or until a replacement is appointed. The Chair must be a non-executive Governor. Prior to the meeting at which the Chair is selected, any potential candidates for the position will submit an application in writing expressing their interest and stating what they would bring to the role. Statements will be read and voted on at the meeting by secret ballot counted by the appointed Clerk.

The appointed Chair of the LGB will:

- be a skilled Chair who is aware of their duties as Chair of the LGB and the clear separation between operational leadership and governance oversight
- have a sound knowledge of the education sector and be totally committed to the vision for educational improvement with an ability to engage and motivate others to feel the same.
- be fair, open to ideas, have good social awareness and a “service and helping” motivation.
- To build trust and forge, create and sustain a constructive and effective relationship with the headteacher

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair is responsible for:

1. The leadership of the LGB ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its role in line with its terms of reference in particular the four key priorities identified above including appointing link governors to SEND and Safeguarding and other roles to meet school requirements
2. Building high quality relationships and an effective teamwork approach, ensuring the proper conduct of the LGB and that relationships are constructive, being prepared to confront individuals who inappropriately disrupt a sense of collectivity.
3. Ensuring that communication is effective i.e. participation, the timely provision of appropriate information, and establishing a ‘meeting culture’ where matters can be discussed openly.
4. Running meetings efficiently, preparing for them and managing them well.
5. Motivating and leading the LGB; managing induction and performance, and engaging the LGB in the evaluation and development of its own performance.
6. Making sure the strategic planning process is effective and providing leadership on corporate governance matters following the advice of the clerk.
7. Enlisting and focusing the talent and energy of others towards the ASSET vision and goals.
8. Ensuring public accountability as the public face of the Trust, representing ASSET to the wider community and representing the LGB to the staff who work in ASSET schools.
9. Providing scrutiny in budget management to ensure value for money (or appointing a local governor to take on this role)
10. Attending Area Governance Committee meetings to report back and hear from trustees and updating local governors accordingly
11. Ensuring governors have a high profile in the school and with parents and keeping the governance pages of the school website up to date
12. Making the agenda, minutes and papers for any governor meeting available for public viewing by arrangement with the clerk

Important documents and sources of information for LGBs

Local Governors should be aware of the following documents (copies are available on Governance website):

- Trust's Articles of Association
- Scheme of Delegation
- Funding Agreement
- Academies Financial Handbook
- Governance Handbook
- Competency Framework for Governors

The Articles of Association (16/05/18) set out the internal management, decision-making and running of the academy trust and its liability and are supported by the Scheme of Delegation (v7) which sets out the delegated powers between the different bodies involved in the governance and operation of the Trust and member academies.

The Scheme of Delegation sets out in full the levels of delegation to a LGB within the Trust. It is important to note that the CEO holds the Headteacher to account.

ASSET Governance Portal

The 'ASSET GOV' portal provides essential information to support governance across the trust and can be accessed at www.asseteducation.co.uk using an ASSET email address and password. At the bottom of the home page there is a link to the Governance Portal. Here can be found trust news, meeting dates, meeting paperwork, plus templates, guidance and more. Governors should ensure that they regularly visit the portal to keep up to date with developments at Trust level.

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE ASSET GOVERNANCE PORTAL](#)

Governor Induction

Safeguarding and Prevent training is provided for all new governors. An Induction programme is carried out by the school. New governors need to read and sign the Code of Conduct, the IT and Acceptable Use Policy and complete their pecuniary interest forms. These forms are updated annually. The Trust runs regular governor training sessions and offers tours to all schools for governors to attend. It is recommended that all new governors are provided with a mentor who would be an experienced governor either from the school or another trust LGB.

Training for Governors

ASSET Education has a subscription with the National Governors' Association (NGA) Learning Link, which offers flexible e-learning to help governors, trustees, chairs and clerks develop their governance skills and knowledge. More details can be found on the Governance Portal of the website. We also run termly training sessions for governors and "Learning in Action" tours of schools. Details of forthcoming training is advertised on the Trust website. Governors are expected to attend induction training on roles, responsibilities and governor visits in the first year of becoming a governor. Records of training completed are available to the public on the school's website.

Local Governing Body Recruitment

Local Governors are recruited primarily for the strengths and expertise they will bring to the efficient working of the Governing Body.

Although they are not appointed to represent particular interest groups eg staff, community, trust, etc, the LGB must ensure that at least two parent governors are elected by parents of children at the school. Other governors can be appointed from any of the above interest groups, or the local business community, but must be appointed to meet skills gaps as identified in annual audits undertaken by the LGB.

The length of term of office is 3 years. When a vacancy exists governors should assess their skills (audit available) and make every effort to recruit from the local community. The trust may be able to assist with recruitment (please contact governoradmin@asseteducation.co.uk) Vacancies should be advertised to the groups mentioned above and appointments made following an interview with the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher and completion of recruitment checks.

The LGB should use skills based recruitment criteria to ensure that every local governor has:

- a strong commitment to the role and to improving outcomes for children
- the inquisitiveness to question and analyse
- the willingness to learn
- good interpersonal skills
- appropriate levels of literacy in English (unless a LGB is prepared to make special arrangements)
- sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data

Effective LGBs should seek to secure or develop, within their membership as a whole, expertise and experience in analysing performance data, in budgeting and driving financial efficiency, and in performance management and employment issues, including forming panel members for disciplinary or complaints hearings. They should seek to recruit and/or develop people with the skills to work constructively, chair meetings and to lead the LGB bearing in mind succession planning to key roles.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and we take no risks in this area. Full safeguarding checks (including an enhanced DBS) will be made and two satisfactory written references must be received. Prior to approval, suitability to hold public office and adhere to the [The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK](#) (known as the Nolan Principles) must be considered. Within six weeks of appointment governors must undertake safeguarding training or their appointment may need to be withdrawn.

The election of parent governors

Parent governors will be appointed following an election. Parents elected must be looking after a child who is attending the school at the time of the election (see DfE Governance Handbook for more information if this cannot be achieved).

On the ballot paper candidates must make a statement detailing their reasons for wanting to be appointed and stating what they will bring to the role. The school can make a statement about the skills gaps to be filled on the LGB and what they are looking for. Once elected, all appointments must be approved by the Trust Board. In the case of an election of parent governors, suitability checks should be carried out prior to details being sent to parents. For more information about how to hold elections see [DfE Governance Handbook](#), page 33. The trust provides a template letter to be sent to parents and supports schools with holding an election.

The role of the Area Governance Committee (AGC)

The AGC is primarily responsible for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of governance at school level within trust and in providing support, scrutiny and challenge to each Local Governing Body (LGB). Chairs and Vice Chairs of LGBs for each of the schools are represented and the committee is the appropriate forum for LGBs to have direct access to Trustees. The Committee meets at least twice a year. The Trust Board appoints the Chair.

The Committee may organise:

- Skills audits
- Governor training
- Shared governance arrangements
- Benchmarking reports from all schools
- Support, advice and challenge for Chairs of Governors

It is possible for the AGC to act as a Joint Governing Body in some or all aspects of local governance on behalf of schools. Shared governance of this kind would need to be approved by the Board.

The AGC ensures that there is a transparent flow of information from and to the Board through:

- Reports from Chairs of Governors to AGC
- Reports from Board through the Trustee Chair to Local Governing Bodies

There are two ways that the LGB, or an individual governor, can air concerns about the school's performance (including Headteacher performance). In the first instance they should make concerns known to the CEO. If the concerns persist they can be raised through the Area Governance Committee (AGC) to the Board. For example, if the Finance Governor is concerned that money is not being well spent, they should raise this concern to the CEO, the AGC, or the Chair of the AGC. Never hesitate to raise a concern.

The Area Governance Committee holds the LGB responsible for providing good support, scrutiny and challenge to the school. Trust Excellence Statements for Governance are used to support the governance self-evaluation process. Any concerns about the strength of the LGB in providing the necessary support and challenge for the school will be reported to the Trust Board. The Trust Board may appoint governors to strengthen the LGB for a period of time. This is also likely when a school is not deemed to be 'good' in Ofsted terms. An Executive Board would consist of the Trust's senior executive, identified governors from other LGBs or Trustees.

Early Termination of Governor Appointments

Any concerns about the performance or conduct of individual governors should be reported to the CEO who will make sure that the Chair of the AGC is aware. Governors are expected to add value to the school and work constructively at all times with school staff. Any conflicts will be dealt with by the trust executive who will keep the best interests of children and staff in the school at the centre of any decision making. All governor appointments are ultimately approved by the board and trustees have the right to intervene and remove governors. The Trust Board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Annual Checklist for Governors

On induction and then each following year, governors are required to confirm their pecuniary and business interests, and agree they have read and are up to date with ICT acceptable use, the governor code of conduct, GDPR guidelines and privacy notice and latest safeguarding legislation. They also confirm their safeguarding training is up to date. These are important regulatory checks that we need to do.

Meetings of the Local Governing Body

The Trust suggests that full clerked meetings take place towards the end of a term (or in the first week of a new term) so that they tie in with reporting to the Board. This will ensure that information is up to date and that extra work is not created for the Headteacher in producing more than one set of reports. Please see the governor’s annual cycle for more information about what needs to be covered at LGB meetings. There is no quorate requirement for LGBs.

Recommended cycle of LGB meetings:

Type of meeting	People attending	Purpose of meeting	Frequency/timing	Type of meeting
Steering Group	Chair of Governors Vice Chair Headteacher Business Manager	Organise and schedule all meetings for the term ahead Review LGB membership	Once at beginning of term	Steering Group
Finance Meeting	Headteacher Business Manager Finance Governor(s)	Budget review	Monthly	Finance Meeting
Governors Workshop	All governors Senior/middle leaders	Subject specific eg: Review of SDP Strategy planning (cycle provided)	Just before each half term holiday	Governors Workshop
Full Local Governing Body (LGB) meeting	All governors Senior/middle leaders	Standard agenda (template provided)	In last 2 weeks of term, or 1st week of new term	Full Local Governing Body (LGB) meeting

LGB Reports

A standard agenda template is provided by the Trust for the LGB Chair and Headteacher to adapt to meet the school’s needs. Meeting papers and reports should be available in the meeting folder for at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. The trust produces a regular update for governors and standard report templates are used by all headteachers to report to governors on the following information:

- Pupil outcomes
- Quality of Education
- Attendance
- Special Educational Needs
- Safeguarding
- Pupil behaviour

The Clerk to the LGB

The Clerk is provided and trained by the trust and can provide useful information and support to the LGB. The clerk meets with the CEO at least termly to review the LGB agenda and information from the trust. They can act as a messenger for the LGB in communicating with the CEO or the AGC. Minutes are all taken electronically and can be made available to the public upon request to the school.

Sample Local Governing Body Meeting AGENDA

Present:		
Item No:	Agenda item:	Lead person:
1	Welcome and apologies	CoG
2	Declaration of pecuniary/business interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To complete the annual checklist and governor's pecuniary interest form To declare any potential conflict of interest arising from the agenda of the meeting 	CoG
3	Changes to LGB membership (inform Trust)	CoG
4	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	CoG
5	Headteacher verbal update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New academic year Covid response and risk assessment Staffing and Performance Management (HT targets, teacher targets) School-led tutoring arrangements Important information not covered elsewhere on agenda 	HT
6	Pupil Outcomes update (standard template) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key risks and actions Use of Pupil Premium and Recovery Premium 	HT/Assessment Lead
7	Quality of Education update (standard template) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key risks and actions 	HT
8	School Development Plan (RAG rated)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve final version of plan and review key improvements since September Plan governor monitoring (against blue text questions) for next term 	HT/CoG
9	Pupil Information Reports* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance (standard template) Safeguarding and Behaviour (standard template) SEND (standard template) Governor questions (tabled before meeting) 	HT/school leads
10	Business update: (Business Manager or responsible Governor) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget/Premises/HR risks to note Benchmark our school with others Plan visits/meetings for next term 	SBM/Gov
11	Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated school risk register Have we identified the key school risks and reported them to the trust? As a result of this meeting, are there additional risks that we need to consider? 	HT
12	Policy/Plan updates this term Bold = must be completed and published by school <i>Italics</i> = can be viewed in trust policy folder	HT
13	Effective Local Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other reports from governor visits/monitoring this term Governance Action Plan - are we taking any action to improve the effectiveness of our local governance this year? (please note that a new SEF will be issued in spring 2022) 	CoG
14	Trust Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items from the Trust Trust update to LGBs* Items to refer to the Trust 	HT/CoG
15	Any other business	CoG
16	Date of next meeting	CoG

Local Governor - Role Description

This role description applies to any person sitting on a Local Governing Board (LGB) of a school in the Trust. It seeks to clarify the role, the level of responsibility and the time commitment involved.

The Trust Board is accountable to the Secretary of State for the performance of schools within the Trust. The Board appoints the CEO to work with the Local Governing Board to provide additional support, scrutiny and challenge to school leaders on the performance of each school.

On behalf of the trust board, and working in partnership with senior trust leaders, governors ...

1. provide additional support, scrutiny and challenge to school leaders
2. talk knowledgeably about the school to Ofsted inspectors

On behalf of the local school community (including the church community in CoE schools), governors...

3. act as an ambassador for the school in the wider community
4. seek to actively bring the school and community together to enhance the school experience for children

The Local Governor will

- Recognise the importance of the role and understand their responsibilities in supporting the school to provide an excellent education for every pupil to enable them to be successful in life and make their own contribution to the community.
- Support the school for a sufficient time period (at least 3 or 4 years) in order to develop an understanding of the school context and make an effective contribution.
- Attend meetings and visit the school. The expected time commitment is:
 - o *One full LGB meeting per term (6 hours pa)*
 - o *One planning/workshop meeting with senior leaders per term (6 hours pa)*
 - o *Two/three half day visits to the school per year (6-9 hours pa)*
 - o *Attendance at Trust training sessions and school tours once a term (6 hours pa)*
 - o *Attending school evening events two or three times in a supportive role*
- Act as an advocate for the school and the Trust in the wider community, particularly with local businesses and other organisations
- Maintain high expectations of pupils, staff, leaders and governors
- Work collaboratively as part of the LGB team and with the CEO to support, encourage and challenge the School Leadership Team (SLT), whilst maintaining a healthy scepticism about progress to ensure that school improvement and student progress are on track and properly Quality Assured.
- Bring their own expertise to the role, bringing to the school useful contacts or experience which will better enable the school to meet its goals.
- Undertake, and keep up to date, with required safeguarding training.
- Sign up to and abide by the Trust's Code of Conduct for governors.
- Develop an interest and knowledge about the school in at least one specialist area gaining a good knowledge of the school in order to support it to move forward against identified actions and priorities as well as contributing to the strategic vision and drive in this area.
- Be prepared to contribute to the wider Trust by bringing expertise and knowledge about an area of school life to a Trust Committee working with governors from other schools, the Executive and other Trustees to take responsibility as decided and delegated by the Trust Board (when agreed separately)
- Have opportunities to develop, learn and be supported in their roles

Local Governor Visits to the School

Successful visits enable governors to:

- See the school at work
- Get to know the staff, work in partnership with them and show commitment to the school
- Listen, give active support and ask challenging questions
- See the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- See the resources and discuss further requirements with staff
- Gain first hand information to help offer further support and challenge

Where possible governor visits will be planned at the previous LGB meeting or by the Steering Committee who will ensure that a broad mix of areas of the SDP are covered. The focus of the visit should align with the governor's interest or role within the LGB.

The headteacher will organise a member of staff to host each visit, and ensure that this person understands their responsibility to demonstrate specific progress, interventions, methods etc. in relation to an appropriate SDP aspect/milestone. Demonstration will normally involve sharing information staff are using in their own day-to-day assessment of progress, not additional material produced solely for governors.

Where appropriate, governors should see classes in operation and have the opportunity to talk to a small number of pupils about their learning. They may be asked to take part in Learning Impact Discussions (LIDs) where they can hear first-hand the knowledge that pupils can recall.

Visits should be planned, where possible, to coincide with points where staff/SLT will be carrying out line management assessment of progress, so that additional effort is minimised and effectiveness is maximised.

Type of Visit	People involved	Purpose of Visit	Frequency/timing
School Development Plan (SDP) monitoring	Named governor on SDP Named teacher/leader on SDP	To check progress on SDP priorities To improve own understanding of school To provide 'support, scrutiny and challenge' To report back to LGB on 'Governor Monitoring Questions' in SDP	Termly/as necessary
Link Governor Visits	Governors with specific roles and/or expertise	To check progress in specific areas To improve own understanding To report back to LGB To raise any concerns to the trust	Could be monthly ie finance, half or termly.

steps discussed (a template is available). This report should be agreed with the hosting member of staff, a copy lodged with the named contact, and used by the governor to report back to the next LGB meeting.

The Headteacher will organise for a named member of the office staff to coordinate visits. This 'named contact' will keep a record of all governor visits and maintain a file of all visit reports. They will support governors in carrying out this role by sending out reminders as appropriate, and assisting in the setting of visit dates. If required by governors, a set of appropriate questions could be developed to assist during visits. Questions for governors are also included in the SDP as a guide (blue text)

Effective Governance - how to add value to your school

Boards and Local Governing Bodies must be ambitious for all children and young people and infused with a passion for education and a commitment to continuous school improvement that enables the best possible outcomes. Governance must be grounded in reality as defined by both high-quality objective data and a full understanding of the views and needs of pupils/students, staff, parents, carers and local communities. It should be driven by inquisitive, independent minds and through conversations focussed on the key strategic issues which are conducted with humility, good judgement, resilience and determination.

Regardless of the scale or nature of the organisation being governed, the features of what makes for effective governance remain the same. They are common across the education sector and share their fundamental principles with governance in the charity and business sectors.

Effective governance is based on six key features:

- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

ASSET schools make use of the following documents to evaluate governance at board level and local level:

DfE Governance Handbook

DfE Governor Competency Framework

CST Trust Assurance Framework for Governance

ASSET Excellence Statements

Excellence Statements for Local Governance support this process enabling LGBs to evaluate their performance in their role and plan for improvement. Chairs of Governors use these with their LGBs on an annual basis.

The following page lists questions that are useful for Local Governors to ask about pupil achievement and finance. However, always remember these key questions to ask on any visit....

- How do you know...
- Where's the evidence...
- What has changed in last x weeks...
- Can you show me the impact of....
- Why do you do it this way....
- Is this a good use of resources...

Useful questions for Governors to ask schools...

Pupil achievement questions to ask:

- Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing, and why?
- Do school leaders have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress? How will we know that things are improving?
- How is the school going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals and those who are more broadly disadvantaged, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving?
- 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 the strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?
- Is the school adequately engaged with the world of work and preparing their pupils for adult life, including knowing where pupils go when they leave?
- How is the school ensuring that it keeps pupils safe from, and building their resilience to, the risks of extremism and radicalisation?
- What arrangements are in place to ensure that staff understand and are implementing the Prevent duty?
- Are senior leaders including the HT and SBM getting appropriate CPD?
- Does the school have the right staff? Is the school planning to ensure it continues to have the right staff?
- Are teachers and support staff being used as effectively and efficiently as possible and in line with evidence and guidance?
- Have decisions been made with reference to external evidence, for example, has the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Toolkit been used to determine pupil premium spending decisions?
- How will governors know if current approaches are working and how will the impact of decisions and interventions be monitored using appropriate tools such as the EEF evaluation guide?
- To what extent is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
- What is the school's record on attendance, behaviour and bullying?
- Are safeguarding procedures securely in place? What is being done to address any current issues, and how will we know if it is working?
- How good is the school's wider offer to pupils? Is the school offering a good range of sports, arts and voluntary activities?
- Is school food healthy and popular?
- Is the school encouraging the development of healthy, active lifestyles by using the PE and sport premium for primary schools to fund additional and sustainable improvements to the provision of PE and sport?
- How effectively does the school listen to the views of pupils and parents?

Finance questions to ask:

- Are resources allocated in line with the organisation's strategic priorities?
- Does the organisation have a clear budget forecast, ideally for the next three years, which identifies spending opportunities and risks and sets how these will be mitigated?
- Does the organisation have sufficient reserves to cover major changes such as restructuring, and any risks identified in the budget forecast?
- Is the organisation making best use of its budget, including in relation to planning and delivery of the curriculum?
- Does the organisation plan its budgets on a bottom up basis driven by curriculum planning (i.e. is the school spending its money in accordance with its priorities) or is the budget set by simply making minor adjustments to last year's budget to ensure there is a surplus?
- Are the organisation's assets and financial resources being used efficiently?
- How can better value for money be achieved from the budget?
- Is the organisation complying with basic procurement rules and ensuring it gets the best deal available when buying goods and services in order to reinvest savings into teaching and learning priorities?
- Is the organisation taking advantages of opportunities to collaborate with other schools to generate efficiencies through pooling funding where permitted, purchasing services jointly and sharing staff, functions, facilities and technology across sites?



Thank you!

We are incredibly grateful to all of our volunteer governors who devote their time so willingly to support our school communities to flourish.

For further information:

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