

# What Makes an Effective Governing Body

The governing body must work effectively itself to fulfil its demanding role.

What sets out the main features of an effective governing body ?

## 1. Working as a team

Building an effective team requires regular attendance and energetic commitment from all governors. It means making use of what each governor has to offer, sharing the workload, give-and-take on individual issues, respect for colleagues and their differing opinions, and loyalty to final decisions.

## 2. Good Relationship with the headteacher

It is essential to establish a good working relationship between the governing body and the headteacher. Each party must have a clear understanding of their respective roles.

In broad terms, the governing body is responsible for deciding the framework for the conduct and development of the school. But within that framework, the governing body should respect the position of the headteacher as the professional leader of the school and as the person responsible for the day to day management and administration of the school.

## 3. Effective time management and delegation

Governing bodies have a lot to do, and limited time. They should identify the priority issues in which they need to be directly involved - including decisions ***which in law must be taken by the full governing body - and delegate the rest to committees, working groups or individuals.*** It is important to set clear terms of reference for such delegation, so that everyone knows what they are expected to do, and how and when they should report back to the full governing body.

## 4. Effective meetings

To make best use of time at meetings, the governing body will need:

- Carefully planned agendas which focus on the most important items;
- A clerk who can organise meetings and papers efficiently, and ideally provide information and procedural advice;

- Purposeful chairing, bringing out the best in all governors, keeping a brisk pace, and ensuring that decisions are properly taken and clearly understood;
- Clear minutes setting out points for action;
- Participation by appropriate outsiders - to give advice (e.g. an LEA officer or consultant), to make a presentation (e.g. the teacher responsible for an issue), or to act as an observer (e.g. a senior pupil).

## 5. Knowing the school

Governors should get to know their school through visits organised in close co-operation with the headteacher, to talk to pupils and staff and possibly sit in on lessons – **but not to be in the role of Ofsted inspector** .(*refer to the attached monitoring pro-forma for ideas on way of monitoring*). Governors need to discuss, share and evaluate their findings with the school in a purposeful dialogue which helps the school move forward.

## 6. Training and Development

To help their schools most effectively, governing bodies need to take their own development seriously. They should consider their training and support needs carefully, and be prepared to allocate funds for external courses, visits to other schools, or training for the whole governing body.



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