

### **Why We Have Link Governors:**

Governors should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the governing board. The role of a link governor is to ensure specific oversight of a particular area. Link governors are:

- a source of support and encouragement to the staff lead
- a critical friend, therefore to ask open question
- taking an interest in the subject(s) or aspect of the school so that
- as a result, they are better informed to keep the governing board up to speed about any important developments relating to the school improvement plan.

Link governors are aligned to aspects of the school's current priorities which are to be found in the school improvement Plan. This is good practice. Link governors should be aware of the sections of the plan that are relevant to their area. These should then be used as a basis for both preparing for and then exploring during the visit.

### **What A Link Governor SHOULD do:**

- visit the school and establish and maintain professional relationships with the relevant subject or aspect lead teacher. Consider, for example, how the strategic objectives are being embedded, how money is being spent and are there any particular issues affecting delivery
- arrange to meet one-to-one with your subject/aspect lead teacher at an appropriate frequency for that area of school activity at least once in the school year
- look at the school policy for your link area(s) and compare it with others (use the internet). Does it reflect the ethos of the school; does it comply with any national strategies in that subject?
- Carry out a termly monitoring visit
- be prepared to summarise your visit on the template and then report back to the board at the next meeting.

### **What a Link Governor COULD do:**

- Attend a staff in-service training session related to your subject or area
- attend a daytime or evening event related to your role
- be part of an interview process
- find out about extended school activities that relate to your subject(s)
- undertake relevant external training and develop knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis.

Note: the function of these roles is intended to hold the school to account. Governors should always remain strategic (focus on the 'big picture') and *not* on the operational (the professional detail, specific children or staff).

St. Michael's Junior School  
Holding the Headteacher to Account  
Link Governor Descriptor

Governors **are not** inspectors and **are not** present to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. That remains a task for the headteacher, other senior leaders or other external education professionals. It would be **inappropriate** for governors to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching
- Report on the progress of individual children
- Pursue personal agendas
- Monopolize teachers' time
- Arrive with inflexible or preconceived ideas.

Instead, link governors should:

- aim to explore an aspect of the school in some detail, increasing their confidence and knowledge and generating evidence to help the governing board evaluate the school's performance and fulfil its role to support and hold senior leaders to account
- observe policies and plans being implemented as their findings should help the whole governing board and its committees make well-informed, independent judgments about their relevance and impact
- Understand the monitoring visits may take a range of formats. The format of each visit will be agreed in advance with those involved. The school will support the governors to carry out this important aspect of their role.

**Suggested questions (this is by no means an exhaustive list!):**

- what are the school's strengths in this area – how do we know this (e.g. data on students' progress/target setting) and what makes us different from other schools?
- are there any perceived areas of weakness – how are these being addressed i.e. is there an action plan?
- are there sufficient resources (e.g. equipment, media etc) and professional development opportunities to develop staff skills and confidence? [This information is relevant to budget setting]
- how is information technology used to support this subject?
- how is the effectiveness of subject planning, target setting, staff development monitored for this subject?
- how often is the curriculum and any associated policies reviewed?
- are there particular issues in this subject for supporting children with SEND or stretching children?
- What is the knowledge and skills that you want children to learn in [SUBJECT];
- What are the end points for [SUBJECT] by end of [YEAR] or [KEY STAGE]
- how does our curriculum in this subject support individual aspirations?