



School governors are people like YOU!

Could you volunteer to become a school governor and make a difference by using your skills to make a positive contribution to your local community?

Plymouth CAST is a Catholic multi-academy trust (MAT) consisting of 1 nursery, 32 primary schools and 2 secondary schools that span the counties of Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset. Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy, and stimulating environments, leaving with the knowledge, skills, personal qualities and aspirations to make the world a better place.

The MAT is run by a Board of Directors with support from Local Governing Boards (LGBs). Each LGB is made up of local people that are best placed to know their school such as parents, members of the community and the local parish priest.

The role of LGB member is an interesting and varied one; to not only provide support to the Headteacher but also challenge and to drive school improvement. The LGB focuses on seven areas; RE and Catholic Life, Curriculum and Standards, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Safeguarding, Statutory Grants such as PE Funding, Health and Safety, and Parents and the Community.

All Governors receive an induction and ongoing training to fulfil their role with supporting paperwork provided by Plymouth CAST. You would need to be able to attend, on average, six meetings per year and to carry out visits to the school.

We are looking for enthusiastic and committed people to carry out this rewarding role and to see first-hand the impact you can make in improving education for children in your community.

Please read on for some further information from Ann Harris, our Board of Directors Governance Lead.

Recruitment of Governors is a country wide issue, not limited to our Trust. Local Governing Body (LGB) positivity and confidence seem to be the characteristic that attracts new members – not always easy in the hurly burly of life!

What is the role of the Local Governing Body?

LGBs are committees of the Trust Board and provide an important layer of governance in the Trust. Based in the community of the school their role is to promote the school in the locality and support and challenge senior leaders to check that the best possible provision is being made for the children- spiritually, academically, and practically. This requires a certain level of activity. A Governor who just turns up at meetings is not fulfilling an essential part of the brief. Ofsted will ask for evidence of Governance and Chairs

are asked to keep a file of all Notes of Visit and make sure inspectors look at it. Weak Governance can limit the judgement on Leadership.

The Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA) defines roles and responsibilities at every level in the organisation. All the responsibilities of the LGB are reproduced in the Schedule of Accountability to make it easier for governors to follow. Each governor is expected to take on a role, undertake the actions and write up a Note of Visit to show that the task has been completed. This does not have to be an essay- it can be short such as "Checked the Single Central Record, all up to date." The Checklists provide examples of the questions that governors could ask of school leaders.

How much time would I need to commit?

In terms of time commitment, I would say a maximum of 2 hours a term, in addition to the LGB meetings, should be sufficient to be an effective governor. Some of the tasks take 5 minutes, others longer!

Responsibilities can be carried out by telephone, zoom or in person. It's a matter of agreeing how best to carry out a given task with the Headteacher. Arrangements are either made at the end of an LGB meeting or by email. In some schools the Headteacher prefers to be the point of contact, in others it may be the Deputy Head or a member of the office staff.

What training would I receive?

Training is provided by the Trust. All new Governors are asked to attend a training session of about 1 hour just to make sure they understand the role. We also recommend that each new Governor has a buddy in the LGB to help them through the first term or so. Further training is optional, but we encourage Governors to attend sessions whenever possible, it increases understanding and supports effective governance.

What other support do you offer?

The Trust is doing everything it can to support Governors. Below is a list of the documents created to help Governors. It is important that all LGBs operate in a similar way and this guidance aims to secure a one family, one way of working.

We are very grateful for the many volunteers who give so much to our schools, never considering it a burden but always working to make things better for the children- which is the only reason any of us do it!

Documents to support Governors:

- Schedule of Accountability+ Record Sheets
- Checklists to Support Governors
- Code of Conduct
- Governors Handbook
- Induction Policy
- Visits Policy
- LGB Review- CES Skills Audit, Self-Review of Governors, 360 review of Chair, Annual Audit of RE and Catholic Life of the School.
- Termly 'Governing News' which provides dates of future training and Trust updates

All these documents are held by the Clerk.

If you think you could make a valuable contribution to our school please contact the school office today!