

Becoming a Governor

Thank you for your interest in becoming a governor at the Blue Kite Academy Trust in Swindon.

There are currently 13 schools within the trust – Abbey Meads Primary, Brook Field Primary, Badbury Park Primary, Catherine Wayte Primary, Colebrook Infants, Covingham Park Primary School, Ferndale Primary, Greenmeadow Primary, Lethbridge Primary, Oaktree Nursery and Primary School, Robert Le Kyng Primary, Ruskin Junior and William Morris Primary.

Governors are collectively responsible for the strategic management of a school and therefore crucial in ensuring progression and planning for the school's future. Meeting 6 times a year, the local governing body provides challenge and support to the headteacher, oversees the budget and ensures the curriculum is broad and balance. It's an exciting and varied role, with substantial benefits for the volunteer.

Governance is a good opportunity for personal development - volunteers can be certain of developing new skills and gaining a broad knowledge of areas such as HR, finance and of course, the education system. The Blue Kite Academy Trust also provides a comprehensive training package to governors, so there is plenty of opportunity to make the most of the role.

More than this though, school governance is a chance to make a substantial difference to the lives of local children

A role description is available (below) to give a broader understanding of what is required and you do need to be aware of the disqualifications (also below) that will prohibit you from becoming a governor.

Please note that should you wish to become a governor you will be required to complete a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Scheme) in order to check that you do not have a criminal record.

If you are still interested in becoming a governor then please email Anna Richardson, Head of Governance to arrange an informal meeting to discuss further and ask any questions.

arichardson@bluekitetrust.org

Role of the Governor

A governor is expected to:

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing board meetings which determine:
 - the vision and ethos of the school
 - clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school
 - that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation
 - the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies
 - the principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies

2. Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes
 - agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
 - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
 - asking challenging questions of school leaders
 - ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits
 - ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies
 - acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting
 - to the governing board on the progress on the relevant school priority
 - listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers

3. Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (continuing professional development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders
- appraise the headteacher
- set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff
- hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters
- hear appeals about pupil exclusions

5. The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does NOT:

- write school policies
- undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health and safety – even if the governor has the relevant professional experience
- spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other valuable voluntary roles within the school
- fundraise – this is the role of the PTA, the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- undertake classroom observations to make judgments on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources
- do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing board needs to consider and rectify this

6. In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events
- attend meetings and read all the papers before the meeting
- act in the best interests of all the pupils of the school
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence

Disqualifications from serving as a governor as per Articles of Association (article 69)

No person shall be qualified to be a governor unless he is aged 18 or over at the date of his election or appointment. No current pupil of any of the Academies shall be a governor.

A governor shall cease to hold office if he becomes incapable by reason of illness or injury of managing or administering his own affairs.

A governor shall cease to hold office if he is absent without the permission of the LGB from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Trustees resolve that his office be vacated.

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if

- a. he has been declared bankrupt and/or his estate has been seized from his possession for the benefit of his creditors and the declaration or seizure has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
- b. he is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order.

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor at any time when he is subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).

A governor shall cease to hold office if he ceases to be a governor by virtue of any provision in the Companies Act 2006, is disqualified from acting as a trustee by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if he has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which he was responsible or to which he was privy, or which he by his conduct contributed to or facilitated.

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor where he has, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence except where a person has been convicted of any offence which falls under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011.

After the first Academy has opened, a person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if he has not provided to the chair of the LGB a criminal records certificate at an enhanced disclosure level under section 113B of the Police Act 1997. In the event that the certificate discloses any information which would in the opinion of either the chair or the Chief Executive Officer confirm their unsuitability to work with children that person shall be disqualified. If a dispute arises as to whether a person shall be disqualified, a referral shall be made to the Secretary of State to determine the matter. The determination of the Secretary of State shall be final.

Where, by virtue of these Articles a person becomes disqualified from holding, or continuing to hold office as a governor; and he is, or is proposed, to become such a governor, he shall upon becoming so disqualified give written notice of that fact to the Governance Professional.