



## Being a Governor at Lavington Park Federation

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### About us

Lavington Park Federation is a Federation of Graffham CE Infant School and Duncton CE Junior School. Our thriving village schools are three miles apart and teach 4-7 years at Graffham and 7-11 years at Duncton. The schools work in conjunction with each other, with the same Headteacher and the same Governing Body.

Being a small school brings many positives, including the wonderful nurturing environment we are able to provide our children and families; but it also brings challenges. We are very much a school community, and as part of that we need and value the support of our Governing Body to help ensure we are always striving to improve and be the best.

### What makes our school special

We are a small school filled with curious minds, big hearts, and happy voices. This [film](#) is an introduction to our wonderful rural schools, nestled in the foot of the beautiful South Downs where our children spend a considerable amount of time learning outside, either as part of their normal lessons, or through our child led learning approach, Forest School.

Our ethos is to ensure that every child has a creative and exciting learning experience, which engages them and focuses on high quality outcomes.

Our Learning values and Christian Values underpin all of our actions within the schools.

Our Learning Values, the “7 Cs”, are taken from the research of Professor Bill Lucas and his book ‘Educating Ruby’ – Confidence, Craftsmanship, Creativity, Collaboration, Curiosity, Communication and Commitment. These underpin our approach to every aspect of school life, and help us not only ensure our children’s academic skills, but also their social, practical and mental development. Our Christian Values are kindness, respect, hope, responsibility and friendship.

### Our Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body is to:

1. Ensure and support the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the schools
2. Hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the Federation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
3. Oversee the financial performance of the Federation and make sure money is well spent

We have 14 Governors in total:

- 2 Parent Governors, 1 from each school – they must have a child who attends the school and are elected by other parents at the school.

- 1 Head teacher Governor – we have one head that manages both schools.
- 1 Staff Governor – a member of staff who is elected by other staff.
- 1 Local Authority Governor – all maintained schools must have an LA Governor. They do not have to work for the LA but their appointment is approved by them.
- 3 Foundation Governors – they are appointed by the Chichester Diocese on the recommendation of the Parochial Church Councils of both Graffham and Duncton.
- 6 Co-opted Governors – individuals from the community who have relevant skills and experience.

Our Governing Body can also appoint Associate members for their expertise and experience. They are not governors but can be given full voting rights, attend meetings and sit on committees.

### **What sort of person do we need on our Governing Body?**

To help us fulfill our duties effectively, our Governing Body needs a balance and diversity of skills, experiences, characters, backgrounds, perspectives, attributes and abilities.

We're looking for local people who are keen to make a difference to the children at our schools and are motivated to do something for their community.

By far, the most important quality is enthusiasm, with a passion and commitment to support our school.

We're looking for people with one or more of the following skills, experience or competencies:

- Financial Management / Accountancy
- Human Resources
- Property and Estates Management
- Marketing and Public Relations
- Teaching and Learning
- Health and Safety
- Change Management
- Project and Risk Management

In line with our own School values, we are looking for new Governors with the following attributes:

#### **Commitment**

- Devoting the required time and energy to the role and aiming to achieve the best outcomes for our pupils
- Self reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to help you play an active role

#### **Confidence and Challenge**

- Having an independent mind, expressing opinions and being able to lead and contribute
- Providing appropriate challenge and asking questions
- Not taking information or data at face value and always seeking to improve

#### **Curiosity**

- Possessing an enquiring mind and analytical approach

- Understanding the value of meaningful questioning

#### Collaboration

- Listening to, and working in partnership with others
- Building strong working relationships with other Governors, staff, parents, pupils and the wider local community.

#### Creativity

- Challenging conventional ideas and being open minded to new approaches
- Recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to the School's development and success

### **What's in it for me?**

Being a Governor at our school is challenging, worthwhile and hugely rewarding. Not only can you make a positive difference to others and give something back to your community, but you also develop your own professional skills.

The skills that you volunteer help our Governing Board to be more effective, which leads to school improvement, and in turn produces improved outcomes for our pupils, extending the opportunities available to them.

You get an opportunity to apply your existing skills and experiences in an educational setting and engage in professional training and development to learn new skills and knowledge. Many employers actively encourage their employees to volunteer in a Governing role as it provides an opportunity for your own continuing professional development and to gain Board level experience.

### **Can I be a Governor?**

Yes! Anyone over 18 can be a School Governor. You do not need to be a parent and you do not need any formal qualifications, either academic or otherwise.

Although not a statutory requirement, we will ask for a DBS check to be carried out before you take up your position.

The one essential requirement is an interest in, and commitment to, the education of our children. Governors are ordinary people, drawn from many areas of society.

### **What's expected of me?**

Governors serve a four-year term of office, can stand again as many times as they like, and can resign at any time.

Governors need to attend three full Governors meetings during the year (one every term), which are usually held at around 5pm on a Thursday, lasting two hours.

Depending on their skills set, Governors will join either the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Finance and Premises Committee, or support the leadership team as and when required with HR matters.

The Committees meet once every half term, six times a year and meetings are usually during the school day, lasting an hour.

Within your committee, you may be assigned an area to monitor such as Pupil Premium funding, Special Educational Needs or a subject like English. This gives you the chance to take ownership of an area, and build relationships with staff in the school.

We encourage all Governors to attend school events, and send them our weekly newsletter update so they understand what goes on at school.

## **Time and Training**

People often perceive time as their biggest barrier to volunteering. An Inspiring Governance volunteer survey found that on average, Governors spend around 7 hours a month on governing duties.

It's common to think that experience in, or an understanding of, education is required to be a Governor. This is not the case, and what is needed is someone with the right skills, attitude and time to contribute.

Training and support is provided through our Service Level Agreement with West Sussex County Council. West Sussex Services for Schools is our single central portal for access to information, training and support services to enable our Governors to learn more about their role. This includes a two-part induction course for new Governors. There is also an option to complete the Certificate of Governance, which recognizes participation on seven courses from the Governor Services central training programme.

## **What our Governors say**

"I love the schools and am deeply committed to them. I was first elected as a Parent Governor but when my term ended, I decided to stay on while my son is still at the school. Parent Governors do an important job of representing parent's views, but it's really important to have people external to the schools because they bring fresh perspectives. With no personal connection to the school, they can ask different questions, be objective and take a new look at what we are doing."

**Jane Landstrom, Governor since 2016**

"I've been a Co-opted Governor for a few years now. My family moved to the area in the 1950s and has deep roots here. It's vital to keep rural communities alive and thriving and I see the schools at Graffham and Duncton as a vital part of this and really value their Forest Schools ethos and my opportunity to help. It's a privilege to be a Governor of these wonderful schools in the most beautiful place in the world – our home."

**Sebastian Anstruther – Governor since 2011**

"I have been a governor for three terms of office and can only confirm that it is a challenging, rewarding and stimulating experience. Being part of the Lavington Park School community has given me friendships, skills and many, many happy memories."

**Marie Bracey – Governor since 2009**

"I've been a Governor at Graffham & Duncton Schools for seven years, and in that time have loved seeing the schools grow under brilliant leadership, who are utterly passionate about giving every child the best possible experience, and who continually draw on the latest ideas

and research to do that. This is no sleepy little village school! The ethos is very caring, but behind that is the utmost rigor and a determination to make these the best schools they can be. I have found that being a Governor has drawn on many aspects of my professional experience, often all in one meeting! I have learnt a lot from the brilliant team of Governors I have worked with, too, and will miss the camaraderie of a group of people who are from extremely diverse backgrounds, all drawn together by a common goal. It has been a great experience for me, personally”

**Sonja Smithers – Governor since 2015**

### **Chat to someone and find out more**

If you're keen to become a Governor or want to find out more, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!

**Helen Martin, Head Teacher**  
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