

Questions and Answers About Inkpen School Governors

Why do schools have governors?

The governing body of a school is responsible and accountable for all the major decisions about the school and its future. We have a legal responsibility to make sure the school promotes high standards of educational achievement. We are responsible for appointing and reviewing the performance of the Headteacher, and are usually involved in other staff appointments.

What do the Governors do?

Together with Ms Kanisius we set the future direction for the school, decide how the school's budget should be spent, and monitor & evaluate the school's performance. In doing this we make decisions on things like performance targets, school policies, staffing, and the school's development plan. We provide the Headteacher with support and advice, drawing on our knowledge and experience from outside school. We ask searching questions whilst respecting his position as professional leader of the school - this is often compared to acting as a "critical friend".

Who can be a Governor ?

Anyone over 18 with an interest in education can be a governor. We are all volunteers who spend about 6 hours each month attending meetings and working to further the school's development. Our governing body is drawn from the school's community, and includes parents; school staff; representatives of the Local Education Authority and community governors.

Who are our Governors ?

At Inkpen School our current governors are:

Rev. Rachel Lewis	Co-Opted Governor
Russell Jefferies	Local Authority Governor
Jane Kanisius	Head Teacher
Jane Obin	Staff Governor
Sarah Marston	Co-Opted Governor/Chair
Jeff Hutchinson	Parent Governor
Andrea North	Parent Governor
Mark Taylor	Co-Opted Governors
Maria Tillet	Clerk to the governors

How often do we meet ?

There is a full governors meeting every half term, and various committees meet separately to look at specific areas such as finance, curriculum, and buildings. The minutes of the meetings are available on the schools website. We also visit the school once a term to spend time in the classrooms and talking with the staff. In addition the Chair and Head Teacher will normally meet every three weeks or so.

Are governors paid ?

No, all of our work is voluntary, although we may receive expenses. Across England there are around 350,000 Governors, making us the largest volunteer workforce in the country.

How do you contact the governors ?

Mrs Tillet in the school office will pass on a message and letters, or can give you the contact details. It is also normally possible to book an appointment to talk to the governors at parent's evenings.

When should you contact the Governors rather than the Headteacher ?

Whilst we are always happy to hear from and talk with parents, the headteacher is responsible for the day to day running of the school, so initially most queries and specific issues should be addressed to Ms Kanisius. Because we have a specific responsibility for reviewing complaints and exclusions it is sometimes important that we don't get involved in the first instance.

For example, if you had concerns about a specific behaviour incident at the school then you should discuss it first with the Ms Kanisius. If that failed to resolve the issue, or you were concerned about the general approach to behaviour management, then that would need to be discussed by the governors, and you should contact us.

In most cases the way we want the school to operate is set out in the various policies (such as the behaviour policy, uniform policy, complaints policy, etc) which we review on an annual or bi-annual basis. The current policies are always available in the school office and on the web site.

If you don't think a policy is being followed, or it is unclear, or even simply that it is wrong, then that should be brought to our attention.

If in doubt then please feel free to contact either the governors or Ms Kanisius, and if necessary we will point you in the appropriate direction.

The Governors and Staff are all committed to making Inkpen School the best possible learning and development environment for the children, and are always happy to answer any additional questions you may have.