



Addison Gardens
Blythe Road
London W14 0DT

Addison Primary School



Governor Handbook

Approved
Spring 2024



Welcome

The purpose of this guide is to help you learn the ropes as quickly as possible. If you have any questions at all (however small), please don't hesitate to ask the Chair, another governor or the Head Teacher.

"School governors are a large, usually unsung, army of volunteers whose contribution to the life of our schools has been too little appreciated. There is much to celebrate about the contribution made by school governors. They represent a unique form of local democracy and accountability in one of our most important public services, bringing together as they do representatives of the consumers (parents), producers (teachers and staff) and community representatives (LEA or foundation governors). Effective governing bodies bring benefits to the schools they serve, not only in terms of community involvement, but also in terms of overall school improvement."

Useful numbers and e-mail addresses:

Chair of Governors:

Fehmina Ahmed
chair@addison.lbhf.sch.uk

Head Teacher

Damien Mc Garrigle
head@addison.lbhf.sch.uk

School office:

Pinkey Premji
020 7603 5333
admin@addison.lbhf.sch.uk

Hammersmith & Fulham Town Hall: 020 8748 3020

National Association of School Governors: www.nga.org.uk

Governor Hub: <https://governorhub.com/>

What is the purpose of the Governing Body?

'Schools need independent governors for several reasons. They provide a breadth of experience that no senior management team (especially in a small school) can have. They provide an overview on strategy or policy that does not become obscured in the details of day-to-day operational matters. They ensure detachment and objectivity that could not otherwise be achieved in the small community that is the environment of most primary schools. They provide additional resources to staff and ensure that the management of the school is representative, responsive and accountable to the parents and children.'

The formal, legal position is clear, and is set out in the *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*. The law places governing bodies under a duty to, "*conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement*".

The role of a governor has been effectively defined as that of the, 'critical friend'. Our role is to support, question, and if necessary, constructively challenge the team that manage the school. That team is made up of the Head Teacher and the Senior Management Team.

The Governing Body as a 'Critical Friend':

- Recognises and celebrates the achievements of the school
- Knows where the school is not achieving as well as it could
- Provides support and encouragement when strategies to bring about improvement are being explored
- Strikes an appropriate balance between support and challenge
- Challenge is not about telling or suggesting how the Head Teacher might run the school but about asking the right questions

What are the responsibilities of governors?

Setting Aims and Objectives

The Governing Body sets out its annual aims and objectives for the school in the School Development Plan (SDP). This document then serves to inform every aspect of planning and reviewing that takes place during the school year. Governors must adopt policies and set annual attainment targets with the intent of achieving the aims and objectives that they have agreed in the SDP. Throughout the year, governors must monitor and evaluate progress made regarding the SDP. They do this by receiving reports from the Head and his staff into committee and full meetings, by making learning visits, by being up to date with new initiatives and by attending governor training. The governors are ultimately accountable to HMI and OFSTED for progress made on the SDP.

Ensuring that the National Curriculum is delivered

Governors receive regular reports at full meetings from the Head Teacher concerning the delivery of the curriculum. Throughout the year, governors should make formal learning visits into the school to gather information which they then share with colleagues. Curriculum co-ordinators may make presentations to committees, or to the full governing body, to inform governors of curriculum developments, innovations and extra requirements. Comprehensive data is published by local authorities for all schools across the country. Hammersmith & Fulham also provide support in interpreting this data. These statistics provide year-on-year results for Addison Primary School, as well as comparisons with other primary schools in the borough. The Head Teacher will inform governors of any staff training which improves the delivery of the curriculum. Crucially though, it is by carefully and rigorously monitoring the SDP that governors are able to most effectively measure the school's progress and performance.

Ensuring good value for money

The budget is closely monitored and priority for spending is determined by the SDP. The Finance committee meets regularly to review expenditure and income. The budget is agreed by the full governing body at the beginning of the financial year and it is the governing body's responsibility to ensure that the school's budget balances at the end of every financial year. Advice, accounts and reports are provided by the School Management & Finance Support team within H&F. The Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the budget; governors provide strategic input regarding the allocation of funds.

Reporting on assessment and examination results

Schools are required to publish details of the school's performance in the national Standardised Attainment Tests, for example:

- Good Level of Development (GLD)
- Phonics
- Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)
- Key Stage 2 SATs

Appointing the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head

It is the governing body's duty, in liaison with the local authority, to appoint the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head. All other staff at the school may be selected and appointed by the Head Teacher, although he/she may ask for governors' help with this.

Acting as a link between the local community and the school

Governors are required to represent the interests, expectations and aspirations of those who have a stake or an interest in the school. These people are the staff, parents, children and other members of the local community in which the school is situated. Governors are therefore drawn from across the school and local community. This means in essence that the governing body has a duty at all times to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational

achievement. Governors are accountable to these same people for the progress and conduct of the school.

Drawing up an action plan after an OFSTED inspection and monitoring how the plan is put into practice.

All schools are inspected – all are given points for improvement by the OFSTED team. It is the governing body's duty to address these points for action, draw up a sensible and timed plan to deal with them, explain the plan to the parents, monitor progress on the plan and report the outcomes to the OFSTED inspectors when they return for their follow-up visit.

Self-Review & Evaluation

Every school should maintain a self-evaluation form. This is a summary of the findings of self-evaluation undertaken by the school. The information in the SEF is used by inspectors during an Ofsted inspection. Although it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to complete and update the form, Governors are expected to be aware of its content and contribute to it as appropriate. The Head Teacher updates the form regularly and presents it to Governors at meetings. The governing body is in law a corporate body and, as such, individual governors have no power.

Induction

At Addison Primary School, the Governing Body and Head Teacher believe it is essential that all new governors receive a comprehensive induction package covering a broad range of issues and topics. We are committed to ensure that the new governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. We see this as an investment, leading to more effective governance and retention of governors.

We want to make new governors feel welcome to their governing body. New governors will:

- Be welcomed to the governing body by the chair
- Be invited by the Head Teacher or Chair to visit the school to experience its atmosphere and understand its ethos, including:
 - A discussion about principles, vision and values
 - The opportunity to tour the school and meet staff and children
 - An understanding of the partnership between the head teacher, school and governing body
 - Development and improvement priorities
 - Be encouraged to ask questions about their role and/or the school
 - Be encouraged to access training including Induction training for governors.

New governors will receive and be encouraged to read:

- Key information about the school published on the school's web-site,
<http://www.addisonprimary.org> :

• OFSTED report • School holiday dates • Newsletter • Names of governors	• An overview of the governor's role • How the full governing body and committee meetings are conducted • How to propose agenda items
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governor training |
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Information provided to governors: Organisation Booklet; List of staff and governor responsibilities; and, Dates of forthcoming meetings

The Department for Education and Skill's "Guide to the Law for Governors" Areas that the mentor will cover include:

What is the membership of The Governing Body?

The membership of the Addison Primary School governing body is divided into a range of categories according to the school's Instrument of Government.

The governing body consists of: 1 Local Authority governor, 3 staff governors (of which the Head Teacher is one); 2 parent governors; and, 6 community governors including co-opted members.

The Head Teacher is automatically a governor and two staff governors who are elected by and from among the teaching and support staff at the school. They may not continue to be governors if they leave the school.

Parent governors are elected by and from among the parents of registered pupils at the school. They are parents of pupils currently at the school at the time of their election.

Local Authority governors are appointed by the local authority. It is open to the local authority to fill these posts to reflect the local political balance, but they are not obliged to do so.

Community governors are appointed from the local community by the governing body and need not be parents at the school.

Associate governors are recruited according to the needs of the school. They enable the governing body to add specific areas of expertise to the team. They are appointed to serve on a Committee.

There are a total of 12 governors on the board. Meetings are also attended by the Clerk to Governors and on some occasions the school's external adviser(s), or members of the teaching staff.

What does the clerk do?

The clerk is appointed by the governing body and is an employee of the local authority.

The duties of the clerk are to convene meetings of the governing body, take accurate minutes of the meetings and record the attendance of governors. S/he prepares and circulates the agenda with appropriate documents to all governors about two weeks before a meeting.

During a meeting s/he will often advise on procedure. S/he maintains up-to-date records of the membership of the governing body and arranges the election of the chair and vice-chair at the



first meeting of the academic year. The clerk may attend disciplinary hearings and appeals as agreed with the governing body.

Committees, working parties & Lead governors

The key differences between Governors' Committees and their Working Parties are as follows:

Standing Committees are used to carry out functions of the governing body and to take decisions on its behalf. Committees generally meet once a term and they must have a quorum of at least three governors in order for decisions to be made. The Head Teacher is present at all committee meetings. The meetings are chaired and minuted. Records of attendance are kept. Addison committees include: Community, Curriculum & Achievement (CCA); Finance, Premises & Resources (FPR); and, Pay.

Working Parties are set up to develop policy and may make recommendations to the full governing body. They meet as and when policies need to be reviewed. They do not necessarily require a quorum of governors as no substantive decisions are made. The Head Teacher may wish to attend.

Lead Governors are people who have expressed an interest in a particular area of the curriculum. They work closely with the head teacher and staff in order to have a greater understanding of 'the nuts and bolts' of the educational process. They are regularly invited to give brief reports concerning their area of interest at full governing body meetings. Lead governors make focused visits into the school, attend specific training courses provided through the LA and are expected to be up to date concerning new legislation or policy.

Why is it useful to set up committees?

The simple answer is that it enables the governing body to manage the workload more easily. By delegating some of the decision-making to smaller groups the volume of work is shared. Also, in an ideal world, it means that every governor feels involved and takes his or her fair share of the responsibility. It enables the governing body to use its meetings to plan strategically without becoming bogged down in paperwork and overlong discussion. It speeds up the decision-making process and is an effective way to encourage staff and governors to work together. Some of the decisions taken by committees are very important for the school and the real work of an effective governing body should take place at these meetings.

Terms of reference for the committees

Attached to the bundle of papers relating to the first full governors meeting of the school year is a set that contains details of the responsibilities of each standing committee, and what decisions members of those committees may take on behalf of the whole governing body. It is worth taking the time to read and understand what it is that each committee is there to do as it becomes easier to understand exactly how the workload is shared out.

Whenever a committee meets to discuss and agree business it must have at least three governors present. When decisions are being made in the FPR Committee then governors employed by the school must be outnumbered by governors who are not employed at the school.



What committees do we have?

The Finance, Premises & Resources Committee

The Resources plans and monitors the school budget and makes sure that the educational priorities set down in the School Development Plan are being supported adequately. Professional advice, reports and interim accounts are provided through the local authority for governors to keep track of income and expenditure. Sometimes the committee will delegate responsibility for particular areas of expenditure to the Head Teacher. The Resources Committee reports to the governing body at every full meeting.

Governors on the FPR Committee take on responsibility for ensuring that the school's Performance Management Policy and Pay Policy are properly implemented and that the school complies with financial standards. This committee decides, with the Head Teacher, the number and type of staff required to run the school. Members of the committee help recruit and appoint senior staff and ensure that all members of teaching and non-teaching staff have job descriptions which are reviewed annually.

Governors deal with any grievances or disciplinary matters relating to staff. Staffing issues are delegated to the Head Teacher, such as the appointment of NQTs, teachers and classroom support assistants etc...

The governors also consider all aspects of health and safety of pupils and staff at the school. They consider insurance needs and oversee the use of school premises and lettings by the local community. The state of the buildings, both inside and out, is considered and recommendations for maintenance are made. Security arrangements are an important part of this committee's work.

The Community, Curriculum & Achievement Committee

The principle task of this committee is to make sure that the National Curriculum is being fully delivered to all the pupils in the school and to monitor and challenge achievement of pupils overall. The School Action Plan forms the centre-piece for this and governors rely on reports from the Head Teacher and her Senior Management Team for information.

The committee is responsible for drafting and recommending a variety of important policies which the full governing body must adopt associated with children and their families.

Parent governors are particularly valuable in this group as they form an important communication link between home and school.

Meetings

Full governing body meetings are held once a term. Very occasionally an extraordinary meeting is called to deal with a specific issue. Committee meetings are planned so that they take place well



before the main meetings in order that full and accurate reports can be prepared and in this way all governors are kept up to date with progress within the school.

Paperwork

It is very important that governors take the time to read all the relevant paperwork before a meeting. If you have any queries or do not understand something it is worth asking another governor to run through it with you before the meeting. There is normally a good deal of business to get through and therefore it is crucial that valuable time is not lost.

If you find that governors are discussing an area about which you feel uninformed, make a note of it and let the Chair know. There are numerous training courses run by the local authority.

Please do ask questions of the Head Teacher, other governors or the clerk. Please feel free to comment and join the discussion. Everyone's voice is important and everyone's contribution is valued.

However, it is important to note that at the full Governing Body meeting there is a lot of business to get through and detailed matters should be left to be discussed at Committees, where the appropriate amount of time can be spent discussing these issues in detail.

Meeting Etiquette

As a Governing Body, we agree to and expect the following:

Confidentiality

There are two parts to every meeting. Part One is 'open' and non-governors may attend and

I expect:	Others can expect me:
A clear agenda and relevant documents and these to reach me before the meeting;	To have read the agenda, minutes and other papers, and noted the items I want to say something about;
A clear understanding of the purpose(s) of the meeting;	To have the papers and my notes at the meeting;
People to be punctual	To be punctual
A chair who is focused, keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions, keeps discussion to the point;	To make relevant contributions and to keep to the point under discussion I will pay attention to others. I will make sure my mobile phone and any other devices are switched off before the start of the meeting and not switched on again until after the meeting.
People to pay attention when I am speaking, to respect my contribution enough not to be distracted or to distract me, by moving around, eating, using mobile phones or having unrelated conversations.	I will not move around during the meeting, or distract others.
People to tolerate a variety of views and opinions	To listen to and consider what others say.
My contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion	To accept my share of the collective responsibility.

observe if they wish, although they may not contribute unless invited to do so and they may not vote. All reports to the governing body, or its committees, are public papers after the meeting has considered them. These reports together with the minutes must be made available at the school to anyone wishing to inspect them. Governors may decide to treat specific items as confidential and in this case they are considered in Part Two of the meeting. This is held 'in camera'. Non-governors are asked to leave unless they are given special permission to stay. Governors with a conflicting interest in the matter may also be asked to leave the meeting.

It is vital that all governors understand the importance of confidentiality.

Any business concerning named individuals, parents, teachers, pupils or candidates for admission, must always be considered in the confidential part of the meeting (Part Two). Each governor must

respect the confidentiality of these items of business and must not disclose what individual governors have said or what decisions have been taken.

Parents with complaints or problems should be advised of the procedure that is in place. Their first port of call should always be their child's class teacher or the Head Teacher. Individual governors should not champion a parent's cause and promise to bring it to the attention of the board without following the very clear complaints procedure laid down by the school, and which is available to all parents at the school.

Parent governors should consider how to deal with other parents in the playground situation. It is good practice to invite them to meet you to discuss their ideas or problems away from the school gates. Decide a time and a place (the conference room is often vacant and quiet) and deal objectively with the meeting. Take notes if you wish. Inform the Chair of your meeting and take the advice of the clerk. Above all, don't become personally involved in arguments with parents or their grievances concerning the school. And never discuss these issues with other parents or your own children.

It cannot be stressed enough that following the correct procedure serves and protects everyone concerned in the event of a complaint being made against the school.

Failure to attend meetings

It is very important that governors do not miss full governing body meetings if at all possible. The dates are set at the beginning of the academic year and every effort is made to accommodate governors' existing commitments.

The 1999 Education Regulations contain very specific guidelines concerning governor attendance at full meetings. It is inevitable that on occasion unforeseen circumstances mean that a governor has to miss a meeting, but if a governor misses two consecutive full governing body meetings during any six-month period and permission has not been granted then that governor is disqualified from office for a period of not less than six months.

It is in the interests of the governing body not to grant permission for absence unless there are very compelling reasons which the governor has put in writing to the Chair. Harsh though this may sound it prevents a situation where a governor persistently sends apologies for full meetings whilst remaining in place on the Governing Body. This trap is easily fallen into if the governing body grants permission for absence each time. It is vital that all governors are committed to attending full meetings in order to be as informed and up to date as possible regarding the school's progress.

Training and information

As lay people in a professional world governors are actively encouraged to take advantage of the many training opportunities provided for them. Hammersmith & Fulham offers a comprehensive



programme of training courses, some of which are specifically aimed at the new governor. Most of the governor training sessions are free of charge.

Governor Visits to School

As the governing body of Addison Primary School, we have a statutory duty to promote high standards of educational achievement, and in order to do that we must monitor the school's performance against the school development plan. One important way in which we, as governors, can acquire and update our knowledge is to make periodic visits to the school. A formal visit is a significant act, which affects the governing body's relationship with staff and pupils.

Addison Primary School has a Governor's visit policy to ensure consistency across the school in terms of Governor Visits to ensure that visits enhance children's learning through:

- Providing a sense of direction to the school
- Supporting the school as a critical friend
- Holding the school to account for the standards and quality of education it achieves

Allowances & Expenses

A separate policy covering Governors' Allowances & Expenses is available and is reviewed annually.

Brief Glossary

CP	Child Protection
DfE	Department for Education
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
EAL	English as an Additional Language
H&F	Hammersmith & Fulham
INSET	In-Service Training
ECT	Early Career Teacher
LA	Local Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
SATs	Standardised Assessment Tests
SENDCO	Special Educational & Disabilities Needs Co-ordinator
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SDP	School Development Plan (a.k.a. School Improvement Plan)
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSFA	School Standards and Framework Act
TA	Teaching Assistant
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant

There is so much abbreviation and short-hand spoken in the ever-changing world of education these days that everyone gets confused from time to time.



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Please never hesitate to ask what something means. There is a strong chance that there will be others in the room who will be glad that you did!

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