

## What is a Governor?

When a school becomes an Academy the Secretary of State for Education issues an academy order and a trust is then set up which in effect has a contract to run the academy for the government. An academy trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

Academy trusts have almost complete flexibility to shape their governance arrangements and design the constitution of their governing bodies as they see fit. All academy trusts have two layers of governance:

**The Members**, who set up the academy trust and the contract with the government. Members have a limited financial liability to the trust in the event it is wound up and have the power to appoint and remove trustees;

**The Trustees**, who are responsible for the three core strategic governance functions outlined below. The trustees are also the directors of the charitable company. They are responsible for ensuring the charitable company achieves its objectives, as well as compliance with charity and company law and the academy trust's funding agreement.

As Priorslee is a single school academy converter, the members and the trustees are all directors and form the Governing Body – they are referred to as Governors. All Governors on the Main Governing Body have an equal voting right.

Their three core strategic governance functions are:

**Strategic Role** - to provide a strategic view of the school by establishing a vision and setting the purpose and aims of the school within an agreed policy framework. To appoint and appraise all staff. To agree the School Development Plan which includes setting targets with supporting budgets and staffing structures.

**Critical Friend** – holding the Senior Leadership Team to account by monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, the effectiveness of the policy framework, progress towards targets, and the effectiveness of the Academy Improvement Plan. This includes; offering support, constructive advice, a sounding board for ideas, a second opinion on proposals and help where needed.

**Accountability** – Overseeing the financial performance of the academy and making sure its money is well spent. Being accountable for its decisions to; each other for agreed actions, Pupils, Parents, Members, Staff, Community, the Secretary of State, Ofsted, and to the Local Authority in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged young people.

***The main role for governors is to support the Senior Leadership Team and staff – the phrase often used to describe this role is 'a critical friend' – helping them to set and reach targets and to strive for excellence across the whole spectrum of academy life. The two key documents used for this are the School Development Plan (SDP) and the Summary Self Evaluation Form (SEF). The SDP sets out our strategic plan for the school, with targets that everyone works towards and the SEF sets out how well the school is doing and where we aim to make improvements.***

Governors also fulfil a range of legal duties including:

- setting strategic direction, policies and objectives

- approving the budget
- monitoring the progress and impact of the SDP
- appointing, challenging and supporting the Principal
- safeguarding duty
- performance review

The full Governing Body meets once every term. At this meeting, the Principal and other Leaders report to all governors about learning, progress, staffing, financial and premises matters.