



## Role description and person specification

### For chairs of school governing boards

This model role description is suitable for chairs serving on:

- maintained school governing bodies
- single academy trust boards
- academy committees (local governing bodies) within a multi academy trust

Adapt this role description to meet the needs of your governing board.

**If you serve on an academy committee**, adapt this role description according to your committee's delegated responsibilities as detailed in your scheme of delegation, paying particular attention to points marked (\*).

You may also wish to [refer to our guidance on the role of vice chair](#).

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### Role purpose

To provide leadership to the governing board, ensuring that it fulfils its functions well, and to work closely with the headteacher to support, advise and help shape proposals to be discussed at board meetings, ensuring the focus is strategic.

### Leading governance

- ensure the board and headteacher have a shared vision and sense of purpose
- \*ensure the board sets a clear vision and strategy for the school/trust
- lead the board in monitoring the implementation of the strategy
- set the culture of the board, balancing and valuing the support and challenge responsibilities, the generative and fiduciary modes of operation
- ensure the board acts as a team
- where required, represent the governing board in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the school/trust
- attend school and trust functions (performances/sports days/prize-giving) as appropriate and encourage other governors/trustees to do so

### Leading and developing the team

- ensure the board has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that identified skills gaps are filled
- ensure a diverse team that reflects the communities served with a mix of new and experienced members and a variety of backgrounds
- ensure all members of the board have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and training as required
- encourage the board, and individual board members, to conduct annual self-evaluation (and model this approach to others through a chair's 360 review)

- ensure that board members are involved and feel valued
- carry out a performance review of each board member (or delegate this to the vice chair)
- encourage the development of board members
- model and reinforce the board's agreed code of conduct
- develop a good working relationship with the vice chair, ensuring they are kept fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate
- ensure that there is a plan for succession for the chair, vice chair and any committee chairs

### **Working with the headteacher**

- build a professional relationship with the headteacher that allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings
- meet regularly (normally monthly) with the headteacher
- \*ensure there are transparent and effective processes for the recruitment and induction of the headteacher
- \*ensure appropriate governor/trustee involvement in the recruitment of other executive leaders
- ensure all board members concentrate on their strategic role and hold the headteacher to account
- ensure that school leaders provide information that allows the board to fulfil its function
- \*oversee and participate in the headteacher's appraisal ensuring that appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) is provided (if chairing an academy committee, the headteacher will be line managed by a trust executive, but the chair should still be involved in the appraisal)
- ensure the workload and wellbeing of executive leaders is considered
- ensure the headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the governing board and acts as link between the two
- play a lead role in any decision to suspend the headteacher (the chair of an academy committee will have a reduced role in this)

### **Leading improvement**

- ensure the board is involved at a strategic level in the trust/school's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities
- ensure the board's business is focused on the strategic priorities
- ensure the board has the information it needs to monitor the progress of pupils and consider appropriate actions to improve outcomes
- ensure the board has good knowledge of the school
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff

## Leading governing board business

- ensure the governing board appoints a governance professional capable of advising the board on its functions and relevant procedure and that they are appraised and developed
- collaborate with the governance professional to establish effective working procedures and, where relevant, sound committee structures
- work with the governance professional and the lead executive to plan for board meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the board's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and avoid unnecessary paperwork
- chair meetings effectively, promoting an open culture that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible
- ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the governing board are implemented
- \*ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints made to the governing board under the adopted complaints procedure
- \*ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with employment matters, (for example, grievance, disciplinary, capability) under the adopted procedures of the school/trust

### Person specification

Candidates for the role of chair should be able to demonstrate a good number of the following skills and attributes:

- commitment to the school/trust and its mission
- personal integrity
- good understanding of the environment in which the school/trust is operating
- good understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of the board and its members
- strong relationship-building and communication skills
- negotiation and diplomacy skills with the ability to have courageous conversations
- ability to think strategically and objectively, take the long view and prioritise
- capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data, drawing valid conclusions with a considered approach to risk
- ability to chair meetings well, encouraging debate and facilitating decision-making
- ability to build and get the best out of a team while addressing any skills or experience gaps
- ability and willingness to delegate and trust others