

# The Role of A Staff Governor

A staff governor plays a pivotal role in shaping the school's strategic direction, ensuring effective governance, and contributing to the school's success. You will bring invaluable insights from your professional experience and daily interactions within the school community. By serving as a staff governor, you can make a significant impact on the school's success and contribute to the well-being and development of the entire school community.

To start strong in your role, meeting the Head Teacher before your first AGB is highly recommended. This discussion can help you align with the school's vision, priorities, and pressing challenges, setting a solid foundation for your contributions as a governor.

## Governing Effectively

Staff governors demonstrate effectiveness by:

- **Providing Insights:** Sharing professional perspectives gained from working within the school to help the governing board better understand operations and dynamics.
- **Committing to Growth:** Actively engaging in meetings and training sessions to ensure continued development as a governor.
- **Maintaining Professional Boundaries:** Directing staff concerns to line managers rather than canvassing opinions or serving as a spokesperson. It is not the role of staff governors to represent staff or act as a spokesperson. The governing boards have systems in place to engage with staff.
- **Acting Impartially:** Making decisions based on the best interests of all pupils, ensuring objectivity free from personal or external influences
- **Ensuring Confidentiality:** Keeping board matters private and refraining from discussing issues outside meetings and with Non-Governors. If you do ever hear something in your governor work that you want to discuss further, please approach the Headteacher to discuss this.
- **Considering Link Roles:** Contributing through roles such as Pupil Premium, Parental Engagement, STEM, Digital, and Careers.
- **Mentoring:** Supporting new governors by providing advice, sharing experiences, and guiding them through their responsibilities. This involves acting as a point of contact, encouraging participation and visits, and fostering their confidence as they settle into their role.

## How to challenge constructively

Challenging constructively is one of the most difficult things for a staff governor to feel confident in doing.

Below are effective ways to achieve this:

1. **Ask Open-Ended Questions** Encourage dialogue by framing questions thoughtfully. For example, instead of asking, "Why did this fail?" say, "Can you explain the factors that contributed to this outcome?"
2. **Use Data and Evidence** Base your concerns on solid facts, such as performance data or inspection reports, to ensure your challenge is objective and credible.

3. **Be Specific and Clear** Clearly articulate your concerns and focus on specific issues. Avoid broad or vague statements to minimize misunderstandings.
4. **Stay Focused on the Issue** Keep discussion's objective by addressing the specific matter without personalizing criticism, ensuring a professional tone throughout.
5. **Provide Constructive Feedback** Offer feedback that includes potential solutions or actionable suggestions. For example, "Our reading scores have dropped. What strategies could we explore to address this?"
6. **Seek Understanding** Strive to understand the context behind decisions by listening to the headteacher's perspective. This ensures balanced and productive discussions.
7. **Offer Support** Show your willingness to collaborate and assist in finding solutions. Position your feedback as a means to help the school improve rather than as criticism.
8. **Reinforce Observations** Share insights based on what you have personally observed to strengthen your input.

#### Example Questions to Challenge School Leaders

1. "Can you walk us through the reasoning behind this decision and the expected outcomes?"
2. "What measures are being put in place to address the recent dip in student performance?"
3. "Can you provide an update on the progress of our school improvement plan and any areas of concern?"
4. "What steps are being taken to address disparities in student achievement across different groups?"
5. "What strategies are in place to engage parents and the wider school community in the school's initiatives?"
6. "How do we measure the impact of new initiatives, and how often are these evaluations conducted?"

#### Training Resources

[The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, what is a Thinking School – Stuart Gardner](#)

Video: Welcome, who we are and what we stand for, what is a thinking school, what impact does a thinking school have.

[The staff governor role | National Governance Association](#)

<https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/governor-training-resource-hub/staff-governor/>

#### Useful Resources and Support

[Questions Ofsted Inspectors Might Ask Governors](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion in Schools](#)

[DFE: Governance of the Trust](#)

[TSAT Scheme of Delegation](#)

## [Support and Monitor Headteachers' Wellbeing](#)

If you would like independent advice on how to effectively raise an issue in a meeting or navigate the responsibilities of a staff governor, you are encouraged to contact the Governance team:

- South- Jen Coates [Jennifer.Coates@tsatrust.org.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Coates@tsatrust.org.uk)
- South East- Kirsty Hughes [Kirsty.Hughes@tsatrust.org.uk](mailto:Kirsty.Hughes@tsatrust.org.uk)
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*This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Governors Handbook](#) for comprehensive support in your role.*