

HOLY TRINITY PEWLEY DOWN SCHOOL

Thinking about becoming a school governor?

We're really pleased you're exploring the role of a governor at Holy Trinity Pewley Down. The governing body is a collaborative and committed group of people who work hard, with the Headteacher and senior leaders, to champion the school and its pupils so that everyone flourishes. We enjoy the work we do together and love our school community.

What does a school governing body do?

1. This short video from the NGA for Schools and Trusts https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRqJ_bFipHk provides a useful introduction to the role of the governing body. The DfE's Maintained Schools Governance Guide (March 2024) sets out the responsibilities of governing bodies in full <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools>.
2. Day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher and the senior leadership team. The core functions of the governing body are strategic and include ensuring:
 - that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined
 - that the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school
 - the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resourcesTo do its work well, the governing body works closely with the school and its leadership team to provide both support and challenge – the role of the governing body is often described as that of a 'critical friend'. As both Pewley Down and Holy Trinity are voluntary aided Church of England schools, the governing body also promotes the school's Christian ethos, acts as the employer of staff and as its own admissions authority.

Categories of governor

3. The federated governing body of Holy Trinity Pewley Down has 18 governors in various categories:
 - Parent Governors (2) - one for each school, are elected by the parent body.
 - Staff Governors (2) - Headteacher (ex-officio) + one other elected by members of staff.
 - Local Authority Governor (1) nominated by the Local Authority and appointed by the governing body.
 - Co-opted governors (3) appointed by the governing body.
 - Foundation governors (10) are appointed by the Diocese or the Parochial Church Council of Holy Trinity and St Mary's Church.Governors are elected/appointed for a four-year term.

What makes a good school governor?

4. You will want to make a difference to the lives and education of all our children across both schools, to support the school's ethos and values and to work with the schools, and fellow governors, to ensure that all our children have great educational experiences, make good progress and achieve well in a safe environment which prioritises their wellbeing. Governing bodies work collaboratively and decision-making is collective so you'll need to be an effective team player. You'll need to have time and energy to commit to the role and be prepared to take on what has become a significant collective responsibility. We welcome the external perspective which parent, foundation, local authority and co-opted governors bring to the school and use our skills audit to identify the experience and skills which would complement those skills we already have on the governing body.

How much time is involved in being a governor?

5. This varies widely depending on your role and how much time you have available. As a minimum, you would attend 3 meetings a term including the full governing body and any committees you were on. The full governing body is held in the evening; many sub committees now meet during the day. If you chair a committee or take on a specific responsibility, you'd need to offer more time. In addition, we recommend that all governors undertake relevant training, which might take another half day a year. The school subscribes to an online governor information service, Governor Hub, and you might find it useful to keep abreast of wider educational developments through their online articles.

What training do governors receive?

6. All governors receive an induction pack with more information about the schools, their role and wider educational issues. An experienced governor is nominated as mentor to support new governors through the induction process. We strongly encourage you to attend induction training offered either by the Diocese of Guildford or Strictly Education who provide education services on behalf of Surrey County Council and/or undertake online training through Governor Hub. Governors are also encouraged to attend other, more specialist training in line with their interests or responsibilities and we run whole governing body training sessions as well from time to time. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all governors and all governors must have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

How does the governing body carry out its responsibilities?

7. The governing body exercises its responsibilities in different ways:
- **Through termly meetings of the governing body** – where major issues are discussed and decisions taken. Examples include ratifying the annual budget, discussing priorities for the annual School Development Plan and hearing from staff about particular school development priorities.
 - **Through meetings of committees of the governing body** – these include Learning, Every Child Matters, Finance and Premises, Staffing and Admissions and all governors belong to at least one committee. Issues are discussed and reviewed in much more detail and School Development Plan priorities are monitored. Governors also monitor data – on pupils' attendance, achievements and progress, for example, which is compared with school targets, local and national benchmarks - and also financial information.
 - **Through support from individual governors** – for example, those governors who have particular responsibilities eg for special educational needs or who offer their professional skills (although they do not act in their professional capacity).
 - **Through regular visits to the school** – to meet staff or children, monitor the impact of school development priorities and enjoy school events

How do governors keep in touch with the school?

8. In many different ways including:
- **Committee membership** - which means you can get involved in a particular aspect of school life which interests you.
 - **A particular role** – which might be for special educational needs or safeguarding.
 - **Receiving the weekly parents' newsletter from the Headteacher.**
 - **Governor visits** – usually linked to the monitoring of a particular school development plan priority. These are arranged in advance and can include time in class and discussion with school leaders. Governors are encouraged to feed back the results to the governing body.
 - **School events** – governors are warmly welcomed to all school and FOPS/HTSC events including assemblies, school plays, special visitors and school fairs.
 - **Email communication** within the Governing Body.

To whom is the governing body accountable?

9. The governing body is accountable to the children, parents and carers of the schools, as well as to the Local Authority, the Diocese of Guildford and the local community, for providing high quality education for all its pupils and discharging its statutory responsibilities. The work of the governing body is also scrutinised during OFSTED and SIAMS (denominational) inspections. The school office holds copies of the minutes of all meetings of the governing body and its committees which are available to read with the exception of confidential annexes.

More information

10. If you'd like to know more about becoming a governor at HTPD, please contact Vicky Ellis, Headteacher, or one of the Co-Chairs of Governors: Deborah Pepper (dpepper@htpd.surrey.sch.uk) or Helen Murray (hmurray@htpd.surrey.sch.uk). For more information about the governors in our school, please check out the HTPD website at :[Holy Trinity Pewley Down School - Our Governing Body \(htpd.surrey.sch.uk\)](http://www.htpd.surrey.sch.uk)