



SCHOOL GOVERNORS PROGRAMME

Enhancing local schools leadership

At the University we understand our great potential and responsibility to create positive change in society. We have a clear strategic commitment to widening participation and to positively contribute to making Leeds the great City it is. As part of our commitment, we are working in collaboration with the charity Governors for Schools to increase the number of staff and alumni serving as School Governors in schools across Leeds and West Yorkshire.

Our programme has been developed to provide support to both existing and prospective school governors. This includes helping alumni and staff interested in school governance to find vacancies, as well as providing training and networking opportunities to everyone involved in our programme.

IF YOU...

Have an interest in influencing and making a difference to children's education and give children the best possible opportunities in life.

Have the ability to work collaboratively to meet a school's aims and objectives.

Want to put your skills and experience to good use and offering schools on outsider's perspective.

Have an interest in gaining new insights into the education system.

Would like to develop new skills and experience to enhance your own professional development.

Would like to act as an ambassador for the University's work with local schools.

School governance is a great opportunity for you!



THE SCHOOL GOVERNOR ROLE

The School Governor Role is one of the most important voluntary roles in education. Schools are in need of people to provide them with an outside perspective to work alongside the school's senior leadership team to set targets, formulate school policy and plan for future development. School Governors play a key role in raising school standards, monitoring performance and make important decisions covering issues such as policy making, site management, the school's budget and the curriculum. Anyone can become a governor; the only requirement is that you have the enthusiasm and desire to make a difference!

Governors do not manage the day to day running of a school but they do set the framework which should ensure the school is running effectively. Ultimately, governor responsibilities can be split into three core roles.

SET STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The governing body must ensure that the school has a clear strategy for the future, including ambitious yet realistic targets for improvement, as well as measurable success criteria.

CREATING ROBUST ACCOUNTING

The governing body is responsible for ensuring the school's leadership is successful in implementing the agreed strategy, and in meeting its targets by offering an effective balance of support and challenge.

ENSURING SOUND FINANCIAL PRACTICE

The governing body must make sure the school's finances are used to achieve its vision in the most cost effective way and to maximise outcomes for pupils.

BENEFITS OF BEING INVOLVED

As a governor, you will gain new insights into the education system and develop skills which will benefit you in your personal and professional life. It's also an ideal opportunity to give back to your community and make a positive impact on the education of young people. You can expect to develop skills in budget control, project management, leadership and negotiation. It is also a chance for you to gain experience in staff recruitment and performance management.

Staff and alumni who become school governors will be supported by the University through induction workshops, training and networking opportunities. Networking opportunities include a Jiscmail group email and networking events through the year to facilitate the exchange of experiences, share best practice and provide support to staff governors. Support is provided by Sustainability, Educational Engagement and Students in to School's teams.

Our partners, Governors for Schools, have also developed a suite of [eLearning modules](#) to support new school governors. These modules have been designed to ensure new governors have the knowledge and understanding they need to make a positive impact on educational outcomes from their first day. The modules cover key contextual knowledge along with guidance on how to provide effective support and challenge to school leadership teams.

WHAT EXISTING STAFF SCHOOL GOVERNORS SAY

Lindsey Strachan, Governor at Carlton Primary School

I first became interested in governance for a couple of reasons – firstly through my career in Higher Education and secondly because my son is a pupil at Carlton Primary School and I was interested in being more actively involved in shaping the direction of his school. I am a passionate advocate for the value of education in changing lives. The pupils at Carlton are a delight to work with– they constantly surprise me with their ability to soak up information and their zest for learning. It is such a rewarding role – I have enjoyed every minute.

Whatever you give to it in terms of your own time, experience and resource you gain back tenfold. There can be challenging moments, but those are all part of the richness of the experience and always come about because of the passion those involved have for the education of the children at the school. Ultimately you will have the chance to change the lives of young people for the better – there is nothing more rewarding than that.

Paul Sharp, Governor at Bankside Primary School

My background is in teaching and worked for many years in the School of Education, University of Leeds. I have been a governor at Bankside Primary, a very large inner city primary school in Harehills, for 10 years.

It has kept me in touch with schools and education which have been my life's work. It was a chance to give something back. The fact that the school was in a disadvantaged part of Leeds was further motivation, as I am committed to trying to help more children from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed and to progress.

There is a considerable need for governors in Leeds particularly in the inner city. Your work input is appreciated by school staff. You have the chance to meet pupils and talk with them. This opportunity is likely to extend your knowledge and experience of the community in which you live and work. Don't hesitate to get involved.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Many of the duties involved in being a governor take place outside of working hours and do not therefore require time off work. Speak with your line manager to agree your involvement before registering to be a School Governor.

The University, as well as many other employers, recognise the role of school governor as a positive experience and will provide reasonable amounts of paid time off during normal working hours (in addition to annual leave) where necessary. University staff can take up to 18 days in any period of 12 months to carry out the duties of School Governor. For more information see the University's [policy on leave for public service](#). See our FAQ for more details.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are now recruiting new school governors from across the University and our Alumni Community. Staff and alumni interested in becoming School Governors can register with our partners Governors for Schools at <https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/volunteers/> [1] Someone from the charity will get in touch about next steps with being matched with a school. Existing School Governors can register their interest and benefit from our programme of training and support by getting in touch with Amanda Jackson at a.m.jackson@leeds.ac.uk or 0113 3435073.

[1] Please note, that Governors for Schools is a registered charity and operates independently from the University of Leeds. Your progress and any school placement details will be collected and monitored by the University.

FAQ

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF GOVERNOR?

Governing bodies include representatives from the school's staff, local authority, parents and members of the community. All governors have exactly the same role.

HOW LONG IS THE TERM OF OFFICE?

Four years. However, should your circumstances change, you can step down from your role at any time.

DO I GET TIME OFF?

Many of the duties involved in being a Governor take place outside of working hours. However, the University and most employers will provide reasonable amounts of paid time off during normal working hours where necessary.

WHAT SCHOOLS DO WE WORK WITH?

Placements are offered in state funded schools. The most common types include: academies, community, foundation and grammar schools.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL POSITION?

Responsibility for actions and decisions lies with the governing body as a whole and never with individual members. The governing body is required by law to be covered by an insurance policy.

WHAT ARE THE TIME COMMITMENTS?

The average time commitment is 10-15 hours per term. This includes meetings, background reading and school visits.

IS THERE TRAINING AVAILABLE?

Training is available for new and existing governors. We recommend all governors attend the programme induction workshop and complete the eLearning modules.

WHERE ARE THE VACANCIES?

We are offering placements across Leeds and West Yorkshire in the first instance, but we can offer a role elsewhere in region if it is more convenient for individuals.

WHO CAN GET INVOLVED?

The School Governor Programme is open to all University Staff and Alumni including PHD researchers. This includes existing and prospective School Governors.