

Purpose

1. To provide an overview of the key issues relating to recruitment and retention of school governors.

Information

2. Role of School Governors

Every school in England and Wales must have a governing body and in Nottinghamshire there are approximately 4,500 school governors. They are volunteers with powers and duties set within a legislative framework requiring them to undertake the following three interrelated roles: -

- Setting the strategic framework of the school
- Acting as a critical friend to the head teacher and senior leadership team
- Ensuring accountability

3. The Composition of the Governing Body

All governing bodies of maintained schools (community, community special, foundation, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled) can adopt a model for the size and membership of their governing body that suits their school's circumstances. The size of a governing body ranges from a minimum 9 to a maximum 20 people. The places must be reserved for the four compulsory stakeholder groups – parents, staff, local authority, community and there are guiding principles which prescribe the level of representation of each stakeholder group.

4. Parent and staff governors are elected by parents and staff; local authority governors appointed by the County Council and community

governors are appointed by the governing body. All governors whether elected or appointed have a term of office of 4 years.

5. Academies are independently managed schools and are not required to follow the guiding principles on proportionality. Governing bodies in these schools tend to be smaller (maximum 7 people).

6. Governor Recruitment in Nottinghamshire

Most Nottinghamshire governors complete their 4 year term of office. To fill vacancies approximately 325 new governors must be recruited annually. Governor vacancies for the County are below the national average and there are fewer vacancies in the South than the North of the County. The areas of greatest recruitment need are Ashfield and Mansfield.

7. Good Practice in Recruitment and Retention of School Governors

Good practice examples for recruiting and retaining school governors was published by the then Department for Education and Skills (2003) and national service standards for governor recruitment services published in 2004. These include:

- Strategy for monitoring vacancies and promote recruitment taking into account diversity and disability issues
- Strategies for retention and recognition of governors
- Clear and efficient LA governor appointment procedures and practices
- Assisting schools with specific recruitment and retention issues
- Organising recognition events
- Provision of ethnic minority / disabled governors forum

8. Nottinghamshire County Council's Governor Recruitment and Retention Strategy

The strategy for recruitment and retention of governors in Nottinghamshire forms part of the menu of services and support provided by Governing Body Services. Our strategy aims to meet national standards and includes the following:

- Regular monitoring of governor vacancy statistics
- Undertaking targeted recruitment events in areas of greatest need
- Advertising via the local press and the County Council website
- Working in partnership with the One Stop Shop for Governor Recruitment
- Established recruitment and retention group to provide advice and support on how to recruit underrepresented groups
- Recognise long service via article in the Nottinghamshire Governor
- Provide a certificate for long service

- Provide advice and information to schools on good recruitment and retention practices
- Published procedures for appointing LA governors

9. The Legal Framework for Governing Bodies

The duties and powers given to governing bodies by Parliament fall under different Education Acts and these are set out in the *Guide to the Law for School Governors* provided by the Department of Education. The procedure for appointing/electing staff, parent and community governors must be applied the same way in all schools whilst the procedures local authorities should follow for appointing LA governors is a matter for local interpretation.

10. Future Direction for School Governance

National policy is to promote a diversity of governance arrangements with fewer more skilled individuals undertaking the role. To meet future expectations, Nottinghamshire's governor recruitment and retention strategy should take account of the need to attract volunteers with the necessary skills and abilities, including an understanding of partnership working.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that the Education Standing Committee:

Discusses this overview of the range of issues which impact on governor recruitment and retention, and considers which areas members would wish to investigate more fully in the course of the review.

Councillor Liz Yates
Chair of Education Standing Committee

Lead Officer:

Background papers:

Nil