School governors make a difference

School governors are very important in helping to run local schools. They're the largest volunteer group in the country. In Cumbria we have over 4000 governors working in our 332 schools. That's a lot of people working as school governors doing something positive to make a difference to education in their communities.

Would you like to join them?

All About Governors

What do governors actually do?

A governing board "governs" the school in partnership with the headteacher. They ensure that all children and young people receive an education that helps them to achieve their full potential.

Governors work with heads and school staff to improve and develop their school. The day-to-day management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher. Governors give strategic direction and focus through agreeing plans and aims, setting budgets, deciding priorities, appointing staff, supporting the work of the school and challenging it to improve.

No special skills are required. The only essential is a keen interest and commitment to the school and the community it serves. Governors work as a team, to ensure that the school provides a good quality education. Individual governors have no power or responsibility. It is only the full governing board that has legal duties and powers and all governors share in that corporate responsibility.

Who can be a governor?

You can if you have a keen and active interest in education and school improvement. Contrary to popular misconception it's not essential for volunteers to be parents. Anyone from any background who is aged 18 or over is welcome to apply. Governors are ordinary people drawn from all areas of society. Our most effective governing board are those that have a mix of experiences from different cultures and age groups. The most important things which any volunteer can bring to the role of governor are time, commitment and enthusiasm.

Do governors get any support?

Being a school governor can be a mutually beneficial role – not only does it benefit the education of children and young people but it also **gives governors the opportunity to develop new and existing skills.**

Training and support is available for governors in Cumbria at school level, through training courses and work with schools organised by the Governor Support Team and through links with national support networks. Our Governor Support Team also produces a range of supportive guidance and reference materials.

Some Cumbrian employers are willing to allow employees time away from work to carry out governor business or training.

What type of Governors are there?

Every Local Authority school (including nursery schools) has a governing board that is made up of:

- Parents, elected by other parents/carers of registered children at the school
- Teachers and other staff, elected by the staff
- People nominated by the Local Authority
- People co-opted by the governing board from the local community
- People appointed as foundation governors either by the church or appropriate foundation body.

How can I be involved?

If you would like to register your interest in becoming a school governor then please visit the School Governors one-stop Shop (SGOSS) website. SGOSS offers free services to volunteers, schools and employers.

Visit and register your interest with SGOSS for comprehensive guidance and information on school governor recruitment. Alternatively contact your local school directly to ask if they need a new governor.

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