



To read the full 'Focus On...' article entitled 'The Governing Board of a School is Central to the Effectiveness of the School', please use the link in the main newsletter.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT FOR GOVERNORS

In order for governance to have impact, members of the board need a range of skills and knowledge to effectively discharge their three core functions and fulfil their statutory duties.

The development of skills help governors to analyse data and ask the right questions that ensure robust accountability of school leaders. A skills audit is a way of evaluating the breadth and depth of skills, knowledge and behaviour held by the board.

The skills audit can be used to inform the governing boards and individual governors training and development needs.

The [National Governance Association \(NGA\) provide a skills audit](#) that schools can download.

The Governance Handbook is clear about the importance of continuous development of governors:

**'As part of induction and continuous development, effective boards encourage everyone involved in governance, especially those new to their role, to make the most of the resources, guidance and training available to develop their knowledge and skills.'**

Governance Handbook 2020

The Competency Framework guidance provides the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance:

**'All those involved in governance should be... prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.'**

Competency Framework 2017

## THE WEST SUSSEX GOVERNOR SERVICES TRAINING PROGRAMME

The West Sussex Governance Team is committed to providing high quality training courses to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for effective school governance. The programme focuses on the governing board's strategic functions and statutory duties and has been written to reflect both local and national initiatives. Subscription to the Governor Services Service Level Agreement entitles the school's



governing board and clerk free access to courses. Please refer to the current SLA documentation for details of charges for non-subscribing schools. The comprehensive and well-regarded central training programme has been grouped into sections to support your development needs. These include:

- **Induction of new governors:** this includes two introductory sessions on getting started and being effective.
- **Priorities:** As part of the central training programme training for lead governors is now being provided. These courses will focus on the key priorities:
  - Inclusion & Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)
  - Disadvantaged children
  - Curriculum
  - Safeguarding
- **Finance:** there is an introductory session and a further session titled 'Beyond the Basics'.
- **Roles including the chair and the clerk:** a range of roles are supported through training including the chair, the clerk, lead governors and link training governor.
- **Developing good governance practice:** a range of courses are provided to support governors' development. These include courses that explore governor monitoring, governor questioning, the strategic role of governance and self-review.

In addition, a series of short self-directed e-Learning modules can be accessed on a range of governance themes that has been developed by the Governance Team in conjunction with other officers.

### **NGA Learning Link**

The Learning Link has been developed to support governors, clerks, and school leaders to achieve effective school governance that drives school improvement to secure stronger outcomes for children and young people. There are over 50 online learning modules. Access to the Learning Link is currently free of charge to all governors in schools subscribing to the Governor Services SLA. These online courses can be further complemented by attending Governor Services training.

### **Whole governing board training**

Schools subscribing to the Governor Services SLA can access school-based training for their whole governing board. These sessions are available on a range of themes or can be made bespoke to your needs. The sessions provide an opportunity for the governing board to work together on their developmental theme. This allows for new information and learning to be shared and time is given to reflect on current practice. A key element of each session is the identification of next steps to enhance the effectiveness of the board in order to impact ultimately on positive outcomes for all learners.

Further information on all of the above can be found via [WSSfS](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/governor-services).