

hackney *answers to the challenge*

Hackney Governors' Conference 2015

## Effective Link Governance

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## Link Governor Role - Purpose

- Why have link governors?

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## Link Governor Role - Purpose

To

- improve governors' knowledge of the school
- monitor progress against particular aspects of the SDP/SIP
- help the GB fulfil its statutory duties
- demonstrate support for the school

It is for each GB to decide whether or not to have link governors & to define their role/remit

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## Link Governor Role - Purpose

- What could link governors do?

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## Link Governor Role

Link governors (for their area of responsibility) could ....

- be the GB 'expert' on their area
  - be informed about relevant legislation, guidance, good practice, documents, Ofsted criteria & local/national issues that impact upon their area
- liaise with the relevant school staff/subject coordinator/post holder

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## Link Governor Role

- attend a school council meeting or assembly
- be the GB 'champion' for that area
  - raise the profile of the relevant area with the GB & parents
  - attend school events in relation to the particular area
  - monitor the effectiveness of actions in the SDP/SIP related to the area

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## Link Governor Role

- validate/confirm that the school fulfils statutory requirements (where applicable)
- liaise with the focus lead prior to any reports to the FGB (or sub-committee) so that the report can help inform governors & pre-empt any questions
- join any relevant staff training
- attend relevant school events
- report back to the FGB (or relevant sub-committee)
- talk to pupils &/or parents about their views

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## Link Governors – How Many?

The role of link governors is not statutory but many schools have:

- Child protection (& safeguarding)
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- SEN

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## Link Governors

- Link Governor:
  - promote/encourage links with other organisations e.g. HLT, HASGA, NGA
  - promote/encourage governor training
  - identify governors' training needs
- SEN
- Safeguarding?
- subjects?
- classes &/or year groups?

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## Protocols – Do We Need Them?

- What should link governors do (& not do)?

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## Link Governors – Protocols?

Be clear i.e. the governing body needs to agree:

- link governor structure (numbers & focus)
- most appropriate governor for each role
- GB expectations of the role
- a code of conduct for visits
- reporting back arrangements
- frequency of link governor structure review

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## Code of Conduct

Remember that:

- a visit will only give a 'snapshot' of the school & not necessarily a full & balanced picture

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## Code of Conduct

Remember that:

- confidentiality issues may arise & need to be respected
- hosting visitors (even governors) can create additional work for school staff & can deflect them from what they would otherwise be doing

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## Code of Conduct

**Do**

- be positive
- communicate any *'concerns'* to the HT

**If visiting lessons, remember:**

- don't take notes
- teachers may be apprehensive or nervous of your presence
- you are there as a critical friend & source of support - not as an inspector or to make judgements

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## Pre-Visit

Before the visit (well before!):

- agree the date & time with the HT
- agree a focus with the HT & request that a *'programme'* for the visit is devised
- agree with the HT if they would like feedback on the visit at the end
- share with any staff being seen, questions or issues you would like to raise

**N.B.** don't cancel or postpone the visit!

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## Pre-Visit – Be Prepared!

- *'revise'* any relevant paperwork for your focus area so that you are well briefed:
  - performance
  - targets
  - staff names
  - SDP/SIP priorities & actions
  - statutory requirements
  - previous link governor reports or reports to the GB
  - school policies for the area

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## Visit

On the day of the visit:

- arrive early!
- report to reception & sign in!
- join in with activities (if invited)
- if previously agreed, feed back to the HT
- at the end, thank the HT (& staff/pupils where appropriate) for hosting the visit
- exit via reception & sign out! (return visitor badge)

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## Questions

**Do:**

- ask what is going well & how do they know
- ask what barriers there are to further improvement
- ask open-ended questions

**Don't:**

- ask questions to which (as a governor), you should know the answer

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## Issues That May Arise

- What problems could you encounter on a link visit?
- And how could you handle them?

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## Issues That May Arise

- confidentiality issues – staff or pupils
- safeguarding issues
- negativity from staff
- Inaccurate data

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## Post-Visit

After the visit:

- send a written thank you to the HT & staff
- complete a visit report form (agreed template?)
- 'clear' the visit report with the HT!
- send a copy to the Chair so that it can be included on the next FGB (or relevant sub-committee) agenda
- report back to the next appropriate meeting

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## Any Questions?

Good luck!

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