THE ROLE OF THE AGC

The Trust is one family seeking to fulfil its vision of:

'***Working together for each child to realise their God-given potential to flourish.'***

However, each of the academies is, unique and, was established as a church school in the local community serving that community. **The key role of local governors in the Trust is preserving, building, and developing this relationship, and in particular with the church, in line with the school's vision and values.**

Another crucial aspect of a local governors' role relates to functions which have been specifically delegated to them by the Board e.g., administering admissions for the academy.

Details of the responsibilities that have been delegated to AGCs can be found in the Scheme of Delegation *(see Governor Hub for document)* and are also set out below under the heading 'What are governors' specific areas of responsibility?'

AGCs are formally committees of the Board and local governors also have a vital role in being the 'eyes and ears' of the Trust, playing a key part in monitoring as well as supporting the activities of their local academy, helping the Trust to gain assurance that each academy is not only meeting statutory obligations but also local expectations, and looking out for the well-being of all of the academy community.

Key elements of the governors' role are, **monitoring, supporting, developing and reporting.**

Monitoring involves:

- **observing**
- **asking appropriate questions; and**
- **listening**

It does not involve holding to account - that is the role of the Central Executive and Board. Following any monitoring, governors should feedback their findings and make any recommendations (but not make any judgements) to the Headteacher. They should then prepare a report to share with other governors at the next AGC meeting.

In order to effectively monitor and support (including dealing with questions raised by parents), governors need contextual information to help them understand the academy's current position, things to celebrate and any issues the academy is facing. This is provided by the Headteacher in their report –known as the 'Academy on a Sheet' (which is section 1 of the Academy Improvement record (AIR)). This is shared with governors at each AGC meeting (i.e., 6 times per year). The format for the Academy on a Sheet can be found in the AGC Handbook.

When monitoring any aspect of academy life governors should check which policies are applicable and familiarise themselves with those policies.

Overarching role

> # Vision and Values
>
> ### To monitor and support the academy in:
>
> - pursuance of the Trust's vision of *'working together for each child to realise their God given potential to flourish'*.
> - setting an academy specific vision and values, aligned with the Trust's and Church of England's vision; and
> - 'living out' its specific vision and values.

Summary of Responsibilities
Vision and values
AGC's are responsible for their academy's Vision and also the Values that are promoted in the life of the academy. These should be periodically reviewed and revised and reinforced at every opportunity. In fulfilling their duties governors must always have in mind the advancement of the Vision and the promotion of the Values. Their role is therefore also to monitor to see that these are being **'lived out'** in all aspects of the life of the academy and the community; supporting the academy in doing so. This is best done by having in mind the Vision and Values when monitoring any aspect of the academy's operation.

Within this overarching role are specific areas for which the AGC has responsibility as delegated by the Trust Board these are grouped under three headings:
 	
      ▪ **Compliance**
      ▪ **Church:** and
      ▪ **Community.**
 	
In these specific areas, governors carry out their duties to monitor, support, develop and report.
 	
All monitoring conducted by governors is to result in a report presented to the AGC.

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Compliance

In this respect the AGC aims to secure assurance that the academy is compliant with / meeting its statutory obligations and to give support towards achieving this assurance. The role is a combination of **monitoring** and specific obligations as set out below. The specific obligations are shown in **green text.**

	Appropriate training / resources
Policies **Approving Trust Tailored Policies and Academy Level Policies**. **Trust Tailored Policies are those policies where the academy is required to complete the appendix, which contains academy specific context and information.** **Academy Level Policies are academy specific policies and the governors' role is to agree and sign off the appendix, or policy, as appropriate.** **Monitoring** application of all policies This involves the 3 aspects of monitoring referred to above i.e**., observing, asking appropriate questions, and listening,** but it is also crucial for governors to familiarise themselves with the policy in question before being able to effectively undertake this role.	*For all Trust policies – see Governor Hub* *For all Trust Tailored Policies and Academy Level Policies – see academy's website.*
SEND **Monitoring** the academy's provision for pupils with SEND and staff with disabilities**.** Governors need to **observe, ask appropriate questions,** and **listen**, to understand the experience of the following at their academy: • pupils with SEND and their parents / carers; • staff with disabilities and long-term conditions • the Senco and other staff supporting those with SEND Natalie Packer, the Trust's SEND expert, has put together 2 webinars for governors to assist in this role. One is an overview of SEND and the other more specifically tailored to the role of the governor with responsibility for monitoring SEND. These can be found on Governor Hub.	*Webinars on Governor Hub: Overview of SEND Role of SEND governor*

Supporting the academy in producing and publishing the SEN Information Report – this is the role of the nominated governor for SEND (if there is one, or the whole AGC if not). *SEND suite of policies* – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	
Disadvantaged (including PP and PP Plus (LAC/previously LAC)) **Monitoring** the academy's provision for disadvantaged pupils. This involves monitoring to ascertain whether such things as the academy's statement in relation to equalities, vision and ethos is reflected in the provision for these children. Monitoring the actual experience for these children at the academy is covered under the Academy Community section below. The AGC also monitor in relation to Looked After and previously Looked After children as part of their safeguarding role (*see section on safeguarding below*).	
Safeguarding **Monitoring** safeguarding This is a very important role and, to assist, a Trust form has been prepared for governors to use for monitoring. It will be noted that any actions arising from the academy's annual - self-evaluation are covered on this form. The Trust's whole approach to safeguarding is now outlined in one document, which governors should read for information and to understand how their role fits into the overall offering – this can be found on Governor Hub. **Reading part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 and the Trust's Safeguarding Policy – all governors must do this.** **Undertaking safeguarding training on, at least, an annual basis – all governors should do this and Headteachers will provide links to appropriate training on the Key.** *Safeguarding suite of policies* – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	*Governor monitoring form on Governor Hub* *Document on PDET's approach to Safeguarding – see Governor Hub* *KCSIE 2020 – on Governor Hub* *Safeguarding training on the Key – see guidance for access on Governor Hub*

Admissions and appeals	*Webinar on admissions on Governor Hub*
Admission arrangements	
Monitoring the application of the academy's admission arrangements – ensuring they are applied correctly and fairly	
Proposing, and undertaking consultation on, any proposed changes to the academy's admission arrangements e.g., increase in PAN, change in oversubscription criteria etc.	*Model admission policy on Governor Hub*
Monitoring compliance with the statutory requirement to publish admission arrangements.	
Determining admissions	
Ranking applicants for places at the academy in February each year. Throughout the remainder of the year, making in-year admission decisions.	*Advice and support on admissions and appeals is provided by the Central Team – call Elizabeth McLaverty or Helen Buckley*
Considering applications and making decisions if an academy receives a request from a parent / carer to defer applying for a place for their child.	*Template documents for requests to defer entry can be found on Governor Hub*
Appeals – making arrangements for dealing with appeals.	
Data Protection - GDPR	*Governor monitoring form template on Governor Hub*
Monitoring the implementation of any GDPR action plans that academies have.	
There are webinars that the Trust have produced to assist governors in their understanding of GDPR in relation to academies and these can be found on Governor Hub.	*Webinar on GDPR on Governor Hub*
Data Protection suite of policies – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	
Health & Safety	
Monitoring Health & Safety	
Governors are responsible for monitoring the health and safety and security of the academy site on behalf of the Board. This includes supporting the academy in ensuring that the premises are maintained in good repair and any actions from site condition surveys are being implemented. It should be noted that, governors are only responsible for monitoring; not stating what needs to be specifically done in terms of addressing the issue, (so as to avoid inadvertently assuming liability), nor doing	

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any of these things. For example, if on a walkabout a governor noticed that there was a lose wire their role is solely to point it out. **Monitoring** actions from health & safety audits - Plumsun have undertaken health & safety audits of all academies and governors are responsible for monitoring these. ***Health and Safety Policy and Accessibility Policy*** – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	*Academy to provide Plumsun Health & Safety audit*
Equalities **Monitoring application of the academy's equalities statement** – the same comments as above in relation to monitoring the application of policies apply. **Monitoring compliance with Equality duty / law –** again, this is a case of being aware of what these duties are and then **observing, asking appropriate questions,** and **listening.**	*For academy's Equality Statement – see academy website*
Sports premium **Monitoring the academy's use of the sports premium** Governors monitor how much is received, how it is spent (including seeking assurance that it is spent on what it should be) and, very importantly, what the impact is on the pupils' breadth of educational experiences. Academies must provide Sports premium information on their website	
Risk assurance **Monitoring that appropriate risk assessments are being / have been carried out and actions implemented.** AGC's have a part to play in the Trust-wide Risk Management system (currently under development). Currently academies have been supplied by the Trust with template risk assessments for Covid and for Lateral Flow Tests (LFT) but it is their job to make them academy specific and keep these up to date in line with guidance issued by the Trust (which is based on DfE guidance). Governors need to read and monitor these risk assessments to ensure that they are regularly reviewed, amended / adjusted, as appropriate, and actions undertaken. Whilst governors cannot	*Schools to provide covid, LFT and remote education risk assessments.* *See Governor Hub – coronavirus folder for risk*

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currently visit academies, monitoring should be by way of questions and discussions with staff and pupils and, if possible, with parents / carers. There are also risk assessments academies have to undertake in respect of delivery of remote education from a safeguarding and GDPR perspective and these, along with any other risk assessments, should be monitored in the same way.	*templates, guidance, and a wealth of information in this respect*
Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) **Monitoring** **the administration of SATs***.*	*See Governor Hub for a guidance document on monitoring SATs.*

Church - preserving and developing the church school ethos and local church relationship In agreeing the vision and values of the academy and seeing that they are 'lived out' governors are upholding the reason why the academy was established as a church school and fulfilling their role of preserving and developing the church school ethos. Governors not only monitor and support these aspects of academy life but also aim to develop the relationship between the academy and local church. (Specific obligations are shown in **green text.**)

Church School: SIAMS **Monitoring** **the impact of the academy's Vision on pupils and adults and its effectiveness in enabling pupils and adults to flourish, as per the SIAMS Schedule.** All church schools have a SIAMS Inspection which focuses on the impact of the church school's Christian vision on pupils and adults. This involves looking at: • the school's Christian vision • the provision the school makes because of this vision; and • how effective this provision is in enabling all pupils to flourish. Church schools employ a variety of strategies appropriate to, and reflective of, their particular context in order to be distinctively and effectively Christian in their character and ethos. SIAMS inspectors therefore do not look for a set template of what a church school should be like, but rather take the particular context of the school into account and base their evaluation on the outcomes rather than the process.	*See Cof E website for information on SIAMS*

A cord of three strands is not easily broken

The Evaluation Schedule has one inspection question*:*	
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
This is explored through seven strands:	
• Vision and Leadership • Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills • Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy • Community and Living Well Together • Dignity and Respect • The impact of collective worship • The effectiveness of religious education •	
The Diocese offers specific training for governors for monitoring in relation to SIAMS.	*Diocesan training – see Peterborough Diocese website*
Church school ethos	
Preserving and developing the Church school ethos	
Local church	
Establishing, developing, and maintaining a relationship with the local church.	
The relationship between local church and church school is not just an historic heritage but should be a living reality. Nurturing and developing this relationship is of mutual benefit to the academy and church and often a pathway to wider community engagement.	
The Diocese is supportive in this respect.	
RE Policy - see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	
Collective Worship Policy- see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	

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Community - developing and monitoring the academy's engagement with the whole academy community and with the local community, always embracing inclusivity. (Specific obligations are shown in green text.)	
Academy community **Monitoring that the academy's vision and values are being worked out, especially in the experience of pupils and their parents/carers.** In particular, in relation to the following groups: • SEND • Disadvantaged (including PP, PP plus, looked after and previously looked after children • Pupils with medical needs The academy's vision is aligned to the Trust's vision – *'Working together for every child to realise their God given potential to flourish'* and the Church of England vision *of 'life in all its fullness'.* The governors' role is to monitor the experience of the academy community (not just educationally) to see whether, and how, the vision enriches the lives of those in this community. A very important element of this is obtaining pupil, parent/carer (*see* below) and staff voice. Whilst surveys can have a role to play, spending time talking to people, listening and getting to know them can produce a far more accurate reflection of the situation. Following the experience of an individual or group of children as they journey through the academy can be a good way of achieving this. **Monitoring the school's process for pupil and staff feedback and reviewing the reports.** *Parent/Carer engagement* **Encouraging and supporting the academy in its engagement with parents/carers, including the surveying of parental opinion.** The governors have a role to play ensuring the academy communicates effectively with the parent body.	
Local community **Developing engagement** **Exploring ways of strengthening links e.g., participating in local community projects and initiatives, possibly making the**	

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academy premises available for community use, engaging pupils in local community initiatives e.g. litter picking, visiting the elderly etc. and taking social action and being courageous advocates for change nationally and globally (this links to the above SIAMS strands).	
Promoting the academy **Finding ways to attract pupils to the academy to ensure future sustainability of the academy in the community.**	
Behaviour **Monitoring** **Governors are responsible for monitoring the following aspects of behaviour:** • how the academy opens up horizons of hope and aspiration and guides the pupils into ways of fulfilling them; • how the academy respects the value of each person (including a focus on SEND and disadvantaged); • relationships within the academy and with the wider community (including the rest of the Trust); • behavior generally. **I**n order to do this, once again, it is about **observing, asking appropriate questions** and **listening:** **Supporting the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team in securing consistently positive behavior from both pupils and staff.** **Behaviour policies** – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	
Attendance and Exclusions **Monitoring** **attendance, absences and exclusions.** **Providing the necessary panel in the event of an exclusion.** **Attendance and exclusion policies** – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	

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Complaints	
Supporting the academy by undertaking investigations and providing appeal panels and supporting the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team in reconciliation, where appropriate.	
Complaints policy – see above under 'monitoring application of all policies'.	
Staff support	
Supporting the staff. The Chair has a particular role in supporting the Headteacher; being a 'sounding board' and 'critical friend' outside of AGC meetings.	
Supporting the academy on interview panels for recruitment of staff at levels below Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, if governors are safer recruitment trained	
Wellbeing	
Monitoring the wellbeing of both staff and pupils	
There is an increasing recognition generally of the importance of wellbeing and good mental health and governors have a role to play in monitoring the wellbeing of both staff and pupils. To assist in this role, governors will find two webinars that the Trust has commissioned on Governor Hub.	*Webinars on monitoring pupil wellbeing and staff wellbeing can be found on Governor Hub*

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