



Manland Primary School  
March 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Parent Governor Vacancies**

On behalf of the Governing Body, I would like to let you know that vacancies for two Parent Governors will shortly be arising, and so we will be inviting nominations soon after the Easter holidays. If there are more than two candidates, an election will be held.

Although it is too early to launch the process in full yet, we wanted to give you some notice so you can be thinking about this opportunity over the holidays, and to allow you to find out more if you are interested.

This is an exciting chance to play a significant and fulfilling role in the life and development of our school. As Manland enters a new chapter with Mrs Wicks as the new Head Teacher, governors will have a particularly important part to play in steering through a time of change and ensuring Manland continues to be the sort of school we want it to be.

We are looking for people who are enthusiastic about making a contribution to the school. The importance of effective governance in schools has risen in recent years, with government policies placing increasing responsibilities and accountability on Governing Bodies. At Manland we are lucky to have an active and skilled group of governors who work well together and are committed to the ethos of the school as a welcoming and inclusive community, while continuously driving to improve standards.

We hope that you are interested in learning more about what is involved in being a Parent Governor at Manland, and we have tried to anticipate some of your questions on the following pages. But the best way to learn more is to have a chat with us – please don't hesitate to e-mail me or contact one of the other governors as indicated at the end of this document.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Turner  
Chair of Governors  
Manland Primary School

[chairgovernors@manland.herts.sch.uk](mailto:chairgovernors@manland.herts.sch.uk)

## **Parent Governor Election – Questions and Answers**

### **What is the role of a Parent Governor?**

The Governing Body as a whole provides strategic leadership to the school and holds the school leaders to account. It is not the Governors' job to get involved in the day-to-day running of the school, but the more closely we know the school, the better able we are to understand the issues, ask the right questions and work with the Head Teacher to identify areas for improvement.

Although Parent Governors are elected from the parents and by the parents, their role is not specifically to represent the interests of the parents, or their own personal interests. Once they are members of the Governing Body their responsibility is to do the right thing for the school as a whole (which, hopefully, is not too different from what parents would want, anyway!).

Governors provide support and challenge to the school in many areas. We keep a close eye on pupil performance (both attainment and progress), monitoring all subjects and looking at how different groups of children are faring. We ensure that the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by curriculum-related trips, outdoor learning, clubs, and sports and art opportunities. We ensure the school meets statutory Safeguarding requirements. We monitor the school budget to ensure that the school is appropriately resourced and that it is achieving good value for money. We manage maintenance and improvement of the school premises to ensure that it provides a safe, comfortable and attractive environment which is conducive to learning.

### **What's the process and timing of the election?**

After Easter, we will invite applications for the parent governor election. On your application form, as well as basic personal details, you will need to provide a brief personal statement setting out why you wish to be a Governor, and the skills, experience and attributes you believe you can bring to the role. You will also need to find another parent to agree to nominate you.

After the application deadline, if there are more nominations than there are vacancies, a ballot will be held, involving publishing the candidates' personal statements to all parents. More details about this part of the process will be provided in due course if necessary.

Before a new governor is appointed, it is now a requirement that they meet with members of the governing body to discuss the role and ensure they understand the nature of the responsibility they are taking on. We would encourage you to contact us at the earliest opportunity to find out more in any case, but if you haven't already had a chat with us by the time you submit your application, we will require an informal meeting before we can include you in a ballot or formalise your appointment. You will also be required to provide two character references (e.g., from a neighbour) and to satisfy the usual Safeguarding checks, DBS check, ID check etc.

### **How long is the term of office?**

The normal term of office for a parent governor is four years. A governor is free to step down from their post at any time, but this is unusual.

### **What sort of person would make a good governor?**

The primary requirement is a desire to contribute to the life and development of the school. It is important that all governors are aligned with the school's ethos of being a supportive, caring and inclusive community, encouraging each other to achieve our potential in everything we do. To contribute effectively to the Governing Body, governors need to be good team players and have strong communication skills.

As well as these general attributes, there are some specific skill-sets which are particularly valuable on Governing Bodies. These include:

- A background in education (teaching or policy-based)
- Experience in the charity sector
- Accounting and finance competence
- Legal expertise
- PR/Communications/marketing experience
- Technology skills
- HR management experience

### **How much time does it take up?**

The time-commitment that governors make varies widely, but at a minimum you should expect the following:

- Four meetings per term, usually lasting about two hours each, some starting at 8am, and some at 7pm. There is usually reading to do in preparation for meetings, and actions to follow-up on afterwards.
- Training: Early in your tenure you will need to complete a day's Induction plus a two-hour Safeguarding training course. Thereafter, you should expect to do further training courses from time to time – perhaps one or two per year – usually for two hours in the evenings.
- School visits: one or two full-day visits to school per year, plus other shorter visits for assemblies, other school events, or to attend meetings on specific topics.
- A certain amount of reading and e-mail-based work which can fit around your other commitments

The government encourages employers to support their communities by accommodating governors' requests for time off work for governor business.

Each of the members of Manland's Governing Body has a link role with a specific class and subject area(s), plus some governors have additional responsibilities such as being Chair of one of our Committees, or overseeing particular areas such as Safeguarding, SEND, or Health and Safety. If you take on any of these additional responsibilities, you might expect this to be in addition to the time commitments above.

### **Why are there two Parent Governor vacancies at the same time?**

The vacancies are actually arising at slightly different times (one in May and one at the end of the summer term), but we thought it would be better to hold a joint election for both vacancies at the same time, rather than holding two separate elections in quick succession. Both vacancies are arising due to existing governors having completed their full terms of office. Once the successful two new candidates are identified, we will agree amongst ourselves whose term will start straight away (filling the May vacancy), and who will take office in September. The September starter will be welcome to sit in on governor meetings in the meantime to help with knowledge transfer and continuity.

It may also be useful for you to know that a third vacancy will be arising in November, again due to an existing governor completing their full term of office.

### **How can I find out more?**

You are encouraged to talk to any Governor to find out more about what's involved. You can contact Clare Turner, Chair of Governors, at [chairgovernors@manland.herts.sch.uk](mailto:chairgovernors@manland.herts.sch.uk). Other parent governors are currently Gareth Antcliff, David Barker, and Libby Montgomery, and you are welcome to contact them via your own networks, via the Chair e-mail address above, or via the school office. You can also find out more about the Manland Governors on our page of the school website: <http://manland.herts.sch.uk/our-school/governors/>

There are many online sources of information about what's involved in being a school governor. Some which you might like to browse are:

Herts County Council 'Becoming a School Governor' page:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-governors/becoming-a-school-governor.aspx>

National Governors' Association website, especially

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Be-a-Governor.aspx>,

or their guidebook for new governors:

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Publications/Welcome-to-Governance-Resources.aspx>

Herts For Learning Governance services website – This shows you the wide range of training and other support services which are available:

<http://www.hertsforlearning.co.uk/team/governance>