

Governor Recruitment Pack

Forest Bridge School



ABOUT FOREST BRIDGE SCHOOL

Forest Bridge School is a Special Free School for children and young people with a primary diagnosis of autism. The school opened in September 2015 and has grown to its current PAN of 96 pupils ages 4-16.

The aim of the school is to be a leading provider of education for children and young adults with the primary diagnosis of autism. Combining Applied Behaviour Analysis, evidence-based therapy and effective personalised curriculums to enable pupils to fulfil their potential, prepare for adulthood and lead happy lives.

The Forest Bridge School curriculum is divided into 12 domains: Independent Living, Employment (Pre-requisites), Employment (Functional), Community inclusion, Health and Wellbeing, Communication, Social Skills, STEAM (i.e., Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), Academic Literacy, Academic Maths, Academic Science, and Academic ICT

Some key facts about Forest Bridge School:

- 8 pupils per class (9 pupils in some classes).
- 96 pupils at capacity in 2021/22 (112 pupils in Sept 23').
- A class teacher and ABA Supervisor (behaviour analyst) who lead on your child's personalised curriculum.
- Personalised curriculum to suit the individual needs of each child/young person.
- Individual plans for each pupil setting targets and monitoring achievements across the areas of the Forest Bridge School Curriculum (FBSC) and their EHCP.
- Minimum adult to pupil ratio of 1:2, with approximately two-thirds of our pupils receiving 1:1 support.
- We have a wide range of pupils from Early Learners (working on basic communication and independent skills) through to more Advanced Learners (with good communication skills and preparing for fully independent lives).
- Access to OT, SaLT and art therapies.

Vision and Ethos

Teaching at Forest Bridge is centred around the individual pupil, meaning that each element of whole school and classroom practice is designed with an understanding of how individual children with autism learn best. The key principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis underpin our teaching.

We believe all of the 'teachers' in a pupil's life need to work in close partnership, delivering outstanding teaching to enable each child to achieve their best possible outcomes. At Forest Bridge School this partnership will include parents, teachers, behaviour analysts, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and tutors.

The curriculum will be delivered in a way that is motivating, highly individualised and with input from different specialists. Forest Bridge will provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all CYPs, as set out in the Forest Bridge School Curriculum (FBSC) with a focus on core deficits for our pupils and preparation for adulthood.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

On behalf of the governing body, we would like to welcome you to Forest Bridge and briefly introduce you to the work the governors do to ensure all pupils receive an education unique to their needs.

As a specialist free school for children and young adults with a primary diagnosis of autism our vision is very simple – to combine applied behaviour analysis with evidence-based therapy and a personalised curriculum to enable our pupils to fulfil their potential, prepare for adulthood and lead happy lives.

The role of the Board of Governors is to work with school leaders to set the vision and strategic objectives of the school and to ensure that pupils are safe and happy to be here and developing, both socially and educationally, to the best of their ability.

Our task is to govern the school through the implementation of four core functions:

- providing strategic leadership, ensuring clarity of ethos, vision, and strategic direction
- holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school
- overseeing financial performance and making sure money is well spent and,
- providing support and challenge to our superb school team.

We do this by meeting as a Board formally four times a year and by delegating specific tasks to sub committees who each meet three times a year. Committees have overview of Finance and Audit, Quality of Education and Behaviour and Welfare. Our board is a knowledgeable and experienced group who possess extensive experience in education, finance, human resources, and technology. Collectively we are well placed to provide support to the headteacher and her leadership team, while challenging them to ensure accountability, compliance, and strategic clarity.

We are very grateful for the support and commitment of our fellow governors, who devote so much of their free time to ensure objectives are met. We all work alongside the Headteacher and her staff, supporting and challenging, in a constant search for improvement and development of the whole school. We put the safety, welfare, and education of our pupils at the heart of everything we do.

All governors spend time in the school where we witness the quality, dedication and caring behaviour of our leadership team, teachers, supervisors, tutors, and support staff which is exemplary, and we are very proud of the team spirit, skill, hard work and commitment shown by them every day.

The work of a governor at Forest Bridge is truly rewarding, and we look forward to welcoming new members to the team.

Linda Halliday and Richard Ayling
Co-Chairs of the Governing Board



BECOMING A GOVERNOR

Forest Bridge School are seeking committed volunteers from a range of backgrounds to join as Governors on their Governing Board.

Governors are critical to the success of the school. Although they are volunteers, they provide challenge and monitoring. They ask questions and probe the information and data they have been provided with. Governors are often seen as the 'critical friend' to ensure school leaders are responding to the challenges and key priorities. Being a Governor is supportive within a group of other volunteers who work together as a collective voice.

You do not need experience of being a governor. Forest Bridge School will support all new governors to develop in their role as well as additional training where needed.

Governors come from many backgrounds. We are seeking individuals who may be able to offer expertise in the following areas:

- Strategic Leadership
- Education outcomes
- Special education needs
- Governance and compliance including experience of chairing boards.
- School improvement
- Health and safety and facilities
- Finance, estates, and/or resources

Forest Bridge School is a single academy trust and therefore registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status. Due to this company status, Governors are also known as Trustees and are registered with Companies House.

What are the benefits of becoming a Governor?

Forest Bridge School Governors find the role challenging, interesting and deeply rewarding because they can see how their work contributes to the well-being and prospects of our young people and the role they play in the wider community. It gives them a real opportunity to make a difference. It also provides you with the opportunity to develop your skills which may benefit your own career and life skills.

What does the role involve?

We have a full job description available (included in this pack). You will be required to attend around eight meetings per year (depending on your exact role). Governors are also expected to prepare for meetings by reviewing the meeting pack and may also be required to visit the school in relation to specific elements of their role; for example, if you are the link for health and safety you will be required to visit and meet the appropriate staff.

What next?

If you are interested, please contact the Clerk, Lesley Millard for an initial informal discussion. If you decide to apply, and once approved, you will be invited to complete paperwork and attend your first Board meeting backed up by induction activities.

Lesley Millard
Clerk to Forest Bridge School Governing Board
07921 645 756
lesleymillard@glkgroup.co.uk



Forest Bridge School Governor: Role Description

Job Title:	Governor
Salary Range:	N/A (Voluntary)
Responsible to:	Forest Bridge School Governing Board
Responsible for:	N/A

Role of a Governor

To contribute to the work of the governing board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction,
- Holding the school's leadership team to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils/students/young people, and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governors are expected to:

Contribute to the strategic discussions at local governing board meetings which determine:

- The vision and ethos of the school.
- Clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school.
- That all children/students/young people have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The school's financial targets and budget.
- The school's staffing structure and key staffing policies.

Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:

- Agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plans.
- Considering all relevant data and feedback provided, on request, by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of performance.
- Asking challenging questions of school leaders.
- Ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies.
- Acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing board on the progress on the relevant school priority.
- Listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.

Ensure school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including:

- The necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (continuing professional development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

Practicalities of the role of Governor

The Governor role is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role. A Governor does NOT:

- write school policies.
- undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health and safety – even if the governor has the relevant professional experience.



- spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other valuable voluntary roles within the school.
- fundraise – this is the role of the PTA, the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks.
- undertake classroom observations to make judgments on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources.
- do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing board needs to consider and rectify this.

To perform this role well, a Governor is expected to:

- Get to know the school, including visiting occasionally during the school day and gaining a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses.
- Attend induction training and regular relevant training and events.
- Read information provided by the Board in respect of national policy specific to governance and the aims and vision of the school as well as seeking your own information.
- Attend meetings (Governing Board meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting.
- Act in the best interests of all the pupils/students/young people of the school.
- Behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

The Role of Chair of the Governing Board

The role of Chair in the Governing Board has a slightly broader remit. Chairs remain part of the Governing Board and therefore part of a collective group, but they do have specific roles including:

Strategic and leadership responsibilities

The chair provides strategic leadership that allows governors to fulfil their functions by:

- Ensuring that there are transparent and effective processes for recruiting and inducting a new headteacher.
- Ensuring appropriate governor involvement in the recruitment of senior leaders.
- Ensuring the board has good knowledge of the school and has mechanisms in place to obtain and listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff.
- Ensuring that the governing board sets a clear vision and strategy for the school.
- Ensuring that the governing board and headteacher have a shared vision and sense of purpose.
- Leading the board in monitoring the headteacher implementation of the strategy.
- Setting the culture of the governing board, balancing and valuing both the support and challenge responsibilities.
- Ensuring the board acts as a team.
- Ensuring that there is a succession plan for the chair, vice chair and any committee chairs.

Wider leadership responsibilities

The chair has wider leadership responsibilities associated with the role and status of lead governor on the board, such as:

- Being a first point of contact and playing a leading role in employment matters as required by the adopted procedures of the school (for example, grievance, disciplinary, capability).
- Where required, acting as a first point of contact and respondent in matters raised with the school by external bodies (such as the local authority or Department for Education).
- Where required, representing the governing board in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the school.
- Attend school events as appropriate and encourage other governors to do so.



Developing the team

Governing boards need a range of skills and knowledge to carry out their functions effectively. It is the responsibility of the board's chair to:

- Ensure the board has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that appointments made fill any identified skills gaps and ensure a diverse team.
- Ensure all members of the board have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and ongoing development as required.
- Ensure that board members are involved, feel valued and encourage their development.
- Ensure members of the board act reasonably and in line with the board's agreed code of conduct.
- Develop a good working relationship with the co-chair.

Working with school leaders

Chairs and school leaders must develop effective working practices which are mutually supportive. It is the responsibility of chair to:

- Ensure that the governing board fulfils its duty of care to the headteacher, including ensuring a safe and secure working environment, a reasonable work-life balance, and support for their wellbeing.
- Ensure all board members concentrate on their strategic role and hold the headteacher to account.
- Build and encourage a professional relationship with the headteacher which allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings.
- Meet regularly (normally monthly) with the headteacher.
- Oversee and participate in the headteacher's performance review, ensuring that appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) is provided.
- Ensure that the headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the governing board and acts as link between the two.

Influencing improvement and achieving outcomes

The board's activities should be focused on school improvement and achieving the best outcomes for pupils. The chair of the board is expected to:

- Ensure the board is involved at a strategic level in the school's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities.
- Ensure the board's business is focused on the strategic priorities.
- Collaborate with school leaders to ensure the board has the information it needs to monitor the implementation of policies; pupil attainment and progress and the financial health and sustainability of the school.
- Evaluate and question information in order to identify appropriate actions, modelling this approach for other board members.
- Take the lead in representing the governing board at relevant external meetings with agencies such as Ofsted, the DfE and the local authority.

Leading governing board business

Chairs are responsible for the smooth and effective running of board meetings and so are required to:

- Ensure that the governing board appoints a professional clerk capable of advising the board on its functions and relevant procedure.
- Work with the clerk and the headteacher to plan for board meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the board's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- Chair meetings effectively and promote an open culture on the governing board that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible.
- Collaborate with the Clerk to establish effective working procedures and sound committee structures.



- Ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the governing board are implemented.
- Ensure that complaints made to the governing board are dealt with in a timely and effective manner through the adopted complaints procedure.

The Department for Education issued a Competency Framework for Governors in January 2017. This document provides a general overview of the skills and competencies required for Governors and Trustees (including those needed for a Chair/Vice Chair). You can download the document by [clicking here](#).

Time Expectations of a Forest Bridge School Governor

The average time commitment for a Governor is five to six hours per month. This may vary depending on the School's current need and any specific role you may have (i.e., Chair, Vice, or link role) and includes meetings and background reading.

Meeting/Committee/Activity	Meetings per Academic Year	Equivalent Hours per Academic Year (attendance and preparation/reading prior to meeting)
Governing Board	4 GB Meetings	16 hours
Link Role	Approx. 2 School Visits	6 hours
Finance, Audit, and risk Committee	4 Committee Meetings	16 hours
Pupil Behaviour and Welfare Committee	3 Committee Meetings	12 hours
Staffing and Quality of Education Committee	3 Committee Meetings	12 hours
School visits, training (internal and external), and general meetings/discussions.	N/A	Variable
50 hours (5 hours per month based on a 10-month calendar and being a member of one Committee meeting. It is worth noting that if a Governor is serving as the Chair of the Governing Board their time commitment may be higher, however, Forest Bridge School have a co-chair model and therefore the role is shared.		

Governors have a right to reasonable time off work for their public duties, although this may be unpaid. Your company's HR department will be able to advise you on their policy.