

We greatly value the work of governors in all our schools who act to support, challenge and encourage. In these unprecedented times support and encouragement for school leaders has been even more vital and we know that many of you have been holding your schools and communities in your thoughts and prayers. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all you do in your voluntary role. - The Education Team

Pause for thought: Is love high on your agenda?

In 1 John 4:12 it says *'No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.'* This recent period has given us all time to reflect on ourselves and our relationships, placing love high on our agenda. Mark Twain said, *'There isn't time - so brief is life - for bickerings, apologies, heartburnings, callings to account. There is only time for loving, and but an instant, so to speak, for that.'* Take fifteen minutes to [watch this TED talk](#) about the results of a longitudinal study into life, health and happiness. Perhaps take some time to consider what it says about what is truly important. Do you agree with the findings? How is this reflected in how you live now? What advice might you give your eighteen year old self?

Board Effectiveness

As with any leadership role, the key to good governance is to set the tone from the top. The role of the chair is a critical one in any governing board. With support from the clerk, they are responsible for ensuring that the governing board functions effectively within the law and upholds the highest professional standards at all times.

The relationship between the head and chair of governors is also a crucial one. The two leaders must work closely together and support each other in a relationship that requires honesty and mutual respect. The chair must be a critical friend to the head by offering support, challenge and encouragement. In December we offer a development opportunity for heads and chairs to get together to work on board effectiveness.

Dominant chairs can give the appearance of a strong board but this may also be a sign that the board is less effective as a whole. An effective governing board is a strong team and the chair has the main role of facilitating the work of the board, ensuring everyone plays their part.

All governors should welcome feedback. Chairs in many of our schools complete a 360 degree evaluation of themselves in their role every one or two years.

All governors have a role in ensuring that the board is effective. Here are some questions which may help you reflect on the effectiveness of your board.

- Is there a sense of inclusiveness where each member understands their individual contribution to the collective work of the board?
- Is there an atmosphere of open, honest discussion where it is safe to constructively challenge conventional wisdom?
- Is there a process to ensure new governors understand their leadership roles, the role of the board and the vision and strategy of the organisation?
- Do all governors make a full contribution to the work of the board?
- Do meetings keep to time and do they focus on what is important and not what is just interesting?
- Do all governors access training and is this shared with other board members and is its impact evaluated?

Digging Deeper:

- [Leading governors: The role of the chair of governors in schools and academies](#)
- [How to Run an Effective Non-profit Board Meeting- Stanford Business School](#)
- [What governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other](#)

Our half day course **'Managing an Effective Governing Body: Chairs and Heads Working Together'** is being held on 9th December 2020, further details and [booking through Eventbrite is available now.](#)