

The governing board: Roles on the governing board: Link governors:

Pupil premium: role of the link governor

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In-depth
article

What does the role of a pupil premium link governor involve? We relay guidance on the possible duties of a pupil premium link governor, and suggestions of questions to ask on a school visit. We also link to a job description for a pupil/sports premium governor.

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Role and remit

We asked Derek Balaam, an experienced governance consultant, to outline the activities and duties that might be undertaken by a link governor with responsibility for the pupil premium.

Derek said that a pupil premium link governor will analyse the following 2 areas of the school's management:

1. The allocation of resources and consequent audit trail
2. Narrowing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils

A pupil premium link governor should be familiar with the pupil premium: what it is, why it has been set in place, how it is allocated, how it is calculated, and which groups of pupils attract the premium.

Pupil premium: further reading for governors

We have a number of articles that may help a link governor get to grips with the pupil premium.



For example, in a [QuickRead](#) we summarise the key features of the pupil premium in just one page.

We also have in-depth articles on different aspects of the pupil premium and how it relates to the role of governors. You can find these in our [bundle of articles on the pupil premium](#), which links to articles on topics such as getting the best value for money and how Ofsted may evaluate your school's practice.

Remit of a pupil premium link governor

The following responsibilities could fall within a pupil premium link governor's remit:

Knowing the school

- Obtain and become familiar with the school's pupil premium policy, if it has one
- Know basic pupil premium facts for the school, such as how many pupils attract the premium, how this figure compares with other local and similar schools, and how the money is spent
- Meet occasionally with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and/or other staff responsible for performance data to discuss issues around under-performing groups, including those eligible for the pupil premium
- Challenge the allocation of the pupil premium grant if there is no clear audit trail showing appropriate use of the resources

Monitoring data

- Understand relevant pupil performance data for the school that shows the progress of different groups over time
- Monitor the spending of the pupil premium, ensuring money is spent in identifiable ways to support target groups of pupils
- Monitor the impact of pupil premium spending on target groups
- Monitor the attainment of different groups of pupils over time to provide evidence of how pupils eligible for the pupil premium are progressing compared with others

Governing board meetings

- Take an active part in any governing board or committee discussions when the allocation and monitoring of the pupil premium is discussed and decided
- Report back to the governing board on the school's use of the pupil premium

Job description: example

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has produced a job description for a pupil/sports premium governor for its schools. It says:

If a school receives significant additional funding and/or has significant attainment gaps which it needs to close then governing bodies should consider appointing a governor(s) to keep the governing body well informed.

It goes on to list duties a pupil premium governor could undertake, including:

- Ensuring governors are being involved in decisions about how the pupil premium is spent

- Ensuring the school has published information on its website about pupil premium allocation, its spend and impact, and that parents can find this information
- Meeting regularly with the senior leader who is responsible for overseeing how the pupil premium is spent to monitor and evaluate specific actions that it is funding

[Pupil/sports premium governor: what skill set is needed?](https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/School-governors-Pupil-Sports-Premium-Governor-job-description.pdf), London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (Adobe pdf file)

<https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/School-governors-Pupil-Sports-Premium-Governor-job-description.pdf>

Staff governors: suitability

A member asked us whether a staff governor can be the pupil premium link.

Vicky Redding, a governance consultant and associate education expert, said that having a staff governor holding the role of pupil premium link is not ideal, but that governing boards should make this decision on a case-by-case basis. When making their decision, they should think about the relationship between the staff governor and the relevant school leads.

The role of the pupil premium link governor involves holding staff to account. This may place a staff governor in an uncomfortable position if they are required to challenge their line manager.

Another article from The Key includes further advice on [staff governors filling link governor roles](#).

Questions to ask

Derek advised that visiting the school is an important part of the pupil premium link governor's role. The pupil premium link governor may wish to meet the school business manager, data manager, SENCO and/or others with relevant roles.

The governor could ask the following questions when visiting the school:

- How effective is the school's pupil premium policy in supporting the target groups?
- How confident are you that the pupil premium grant is spent appropriately on the intended target groups?
- Is the pupil premium funding kept separate from general school resources so it can be specifically and identifiably used as intended?
- How is the allocation of the pupil premium decided?
- What is the pupil premium used for?
- How is the progress of different groups of pupils monitored so the school can identify any under-performing groups?
- Are there groups of pupils whose attainment falls behind others?
- How does the attainment of pupil premium pupils as a group compare with others?
- What would you say are the main challenges in the use of the pupil premium, and how is the school working to overcome them?
- What benefits can you see from the allocation of the pupil premium?

How effective is the school's pupil premium policy in supporting the target groups?

- Is there anything the governing board should be aware of that could help the school gain the maximum advantage from the pupil premium?

In another article from The Key, we refer to further examples of [questions that governors could ask](#) pupils and staff on a school visit.

School visit report: examples

Primary school examples

The website of Holy Rosary and St Anne's Primary School in Leeds includes guidance documents on link governor roles developed by the local authority. It includes a sample record of a school visit by a governor responsible for pupil premium.

The report allows the governor to record the purpose of the visit with links to the school improvement plan and the activities seen.

In the example, the governor met with the deputy headteacher to discuss pupil premium tracking, data collection dates and interventions. The governor looked at the school's internal tracking system and its system for monitoring the cost and impact of all interventions.

[Pupil premium governor, Holy Rosary and St Anne's Primary School, see pages 5-7 \(Adobe pdf file\)](#)

<http://www.holyrosaryandstannes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Pupil-premium-governor-guidance.pdf>

Foxfield Primary School in Greenwich has published a report from a visit by a governor with responsibility for pupil premium. It includes question prompts for the governor such as:

- Are all staff aware of which pupils are eligible for the pupil premium grant and the strategies they should be using to support these pupils?
- How is the school evaluating the effectiveness of its pupil premium strategy?
- What is the school's ambition for the attainment and progress of pupil premium eligible pupils? Is this in line with the national average?

How is the school evaluating the effectiveness of its pupil premium strategy?

[Pupil premium governor's report, Foxfield Primary School \(Adobe pdf file\)](#)

http://upload.reactcdn.co.uk/foxfield/uploads/asset_file/3_403_pupil-premium-governors-report.pdf

Secondary school example

Grobby Community College in Leicestershire has published a report from a visit by a pupil premium link governor. The proforma for the report allows the governor to record:

- The purpose of the visit
- Links with the school's improvement plan
- Governor challenge: observations and comments about the visit
- Key issues for the governing board
- Follow-up action

The report explains that the visit relates to the following priorities in the school improvement plan:

- Closing the gap
- Engaging hard to reach parents

- Raising achievement

[Governor visit record 2014-15, Groby Community College \(Adobe pdf file\)](http://grobystreamweb.co.uk/images/pdf/governor-visit-pupil-premium-mike-rule26nov14.pdf)

<http://grobystreamweb.co.uk/images/pdf/governor-visit-pupil-premium-mike-rule26nov14.pdf>

In another article from The Key, we look in more detail at [how governors can report back](#) to the governing board following a visit to school. This article includes a KeyDoc template which governors can use, as well as links to other examples of report forms.

Sources

Derek Balaam is a school and children's centre governance consultant. He has extensive experience of governance issues having been a school teacher, local authority governor support manager, and chair of the London Co-ordinators of Governor Services.

Vicky Redding is a governance trainer and consultant. She provides training, advice and support on effective school governance.

This article was updated in response to feedback from the chair of governors of a medium-size primary school in London.

Next steps

- [QuickRead: Pupil premium](#)
- [Reporting pupil premium expenditure to governors](#)
- [Guidance for governors on visiting the school](#)
- [Pupil premium: demonstrating the impact](#)
- [Pupil premium: spending and accountability](#)
- [Ofsted inspection: pupil premium spending](#)
- [Pupil premium: ensuring value for money](#)
- [Allocating link governor roles](#) **UPDATED**

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