



# Governor Testimonials



David Ross Education Trust  
Broadening Horizons

We can give you plenty of information about the role of a Governor, but so you can gain an understanding of what it's actually like to be a Governor with the David Ross Education Trust we have asked some of our current Governors to share their thoughts and experiences.

Furthermore, our website has videos of Governors sharing their experiences that you may find useful.

If you have any further questions or would like to join us, email [Governorservices@dret.co.uk](mailto:Governorservices@dret.co.uk)

*"Becoming a Governor has given me rich and valuable experience in supporting my children's school, taking a place in my local community. The joy of listening to children read their favourite book, seeing their pride in their reading logs as they complete 'War Horse', beaming with accomplishment. Memorable moments for the children, and this Governor!*

*My first thoughts and impressions of becoming a Governor was that I may get a biscuit and cup of tea at a warm and cosy meeting with other Governors and staff, but getting a biscuit is just one positive on a long list of becoming part of the schools' family, sharing their vision and goals as one community.*

*The warmth and welcome I had in attending school is still there and glowing for Governors who want to support their local school in this valuable voluntary work. These past few years have shown how critical a school is to the local community, and to be invited to become a Governor is always an honour and privilege to work alongside our community heroes and provide the support they need to shine.*

*To be welcomed into a classroom by children who want nothing more than to show you the pride of their latest piece of writing, to read you their favourite book or show the Governors all of the rewards points they have won over the term will never appear on the job description of a Governor but the rewards and warmth is plentiful on every visit."*



**Ellis Jacklin**  
**Chair of the Hogsthorpe Primary Academy Scrutiny**  
**Committee**

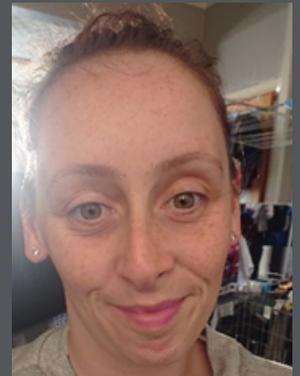


*"This experience has helped me give back to my local community and contribute towards the growth and development of our young people. The last four years have been a steep learning curve in not just education but also the mammoth collaborative effort it takes to effectively run a school. I am grateful for the very talented and committed people I work with at Bobby Moore Academy and trust I have been able to bring a new perspective to the team given my background and industry."*

**Sanda De Silva**  
**DRET Appointed Governor at Bobby Moore Academy**

*"I wanted to do this because at one point I had to home school my child and it proved a lot more challenging than I thought!*

*I now understand how much work the teachers do with the kids to help them become the best person possible."*



**Gemma McKiernan**  
**Parent Governor at Edward Heneage Primary Academy**



*"Being born and bred in the Northamptonshire and working in the education sector I really wanted to give back to my local community. Making sure that the local children get the best education but also the best possible start in life. Supporting a local school and challenging them to deliver this is one of the most rewarding things I have done."*

**Ben Brown**  
**Chair of Eastfield Academy Scrutiny Committee**



*"Becoming a governor has allowed me to influence the direction the school is taking. The role of governor is extremely rewarding allowing me to act in the best interests of the students ensuring that the school continues to improve, increasing the chances of excellent outcomes for the students. On top of this the governor role has also benefitted my own personal and professional development through regular and well delivered governor training with a superb network of support from the Governance Team."*

**George Selby**  
**DRET Appointed Governor at Havelock Academy**

*"Being a Governor allows me to part of the process that supports, nurtures, and develops opportunities for young people to reach their full potential. Being a governor allows me to be part of a school community - a rich, vibrant, community that shares the common goal of achievement for all. Being a Governor ensures that I am committed to the whole school, not just its incredible pupils, but its staff, parents, and other Governors too. In short, being a Governor gives me a tremendous sense of pride - it is both a privilege and absolute joy."*

**Dr Lorna Page**  
**DRET Appointed Governor at Charles Read Academy**



*"Having been in education all my working life I wanted to help to shape the education of children. I wanted to have the chance to give back some of my knowledge and expertise. It also gave me an opportunity to continue to learn about developments in education and to support the school, where possible, to put them in place."*

*Training and support from the Trust plus other Governors and staff has been invaluable to enable me to carry out my Governor roles.*

*Being a Governor is a special opportunity to be part of a school family no matter what expertise you bring to the role. It is a rewarding and enjoyable experience with the chance to see children grow, develop their knowledge and skills and to take up opportunities they have been given."*

**Susan Deane**  
**DRET Appointed Governor at Eastfield Academy and The Arbours Primary Academy**

# Spotlight on Gary Allen



Gary is currently serving his second term of office as a DRET Appointed Governor, and Chair of the ASC at Havelock Academy. He became a governor wanting to make a positive contribution to the academy and students after retirement from a 30 plus year career with BP, working on International Projects.

***Why did you become a Governor?***

*"I wanted to do something different when I retired from work and hopefully contribute to the success of the school."*

***What do you talk about in meetings?***

*"The meetings are varied, but focus on key areas: data/performance, Safeguarding, and feedback for Governors overseeing key areas such as SEND, pupil premium and careers."*

***How much time does your Governor role take up?***

*"The meetings are once per half term, lasting a couple of hours, but some preparation time is also required. There are then school visits and training, which you can take up to suit your schedule and requirements."*

**What surprised you most about your Governor role?**

*"The ASC is made up in the majority by people without an education background but who can ask questions and analyse data, without having preconceived ideas."*

**Why are Governors important?**

*"Governors are able to support and challenge the school in a positive manner, which can have a direct impact on the school's performance. They are also a good sounding block for members of the school leadership team. The ASC can be seen as a critical friend to the school."*

**What skills have you brought to your role as Governor?**

*"Common sense, team working, a view of issues discussed, outside the education setting."*

**Did you need to have a background in education to be a Governor?**

*"No and not having one is an advantage!"*

# Spotlight on James Tuffs



## *Why did you become a Governor?*

*"I joined the Academy Scrutiny Committee at my local academy, Greenfields Primary School in Kettering back in November 2017. I joined because my eldest daughter was due to attend the school at the time and I was really keen to get involved in the school. I wanted to understand the place and the people that I was soon to leave my daughter with on a daily basis.*

*I wanted to understand what she was going to learn how the children are being taught. I also want to reassure myself that the academy was going to be the best place for my daughter to be. I spoke with a parent who was a Governor at the school at that time and they told me I should consider joining so I contacted the school and arranged to meet the Chair of Governors."*

## *What do you talk about in meetings?*

*"There's a standard structure for meetings:*

- Safeguarding Reports*
- Principals Reports*
- Link Governor Reports*

*The lead Safeguarding Officer reads through a pre-prepared report highlighting all safeguarding matters/concerns in the school in the period between meetings. We will then review the Principals report, and we then discuss Link Governor reports that have been prepared by individual governors following visits to the school.*

*Governors have a chance to understand, ask questions and challenge actions and procedures.*

*We discuss general school activities, positive and negative. We also receive presentations from members of staff."*

### **How much time does your Governor role it take up?**

*"It normally takes between 2-3 hours for meetings and any school visits normally take up to 4 hours. These are done once every term."*

### **What surprised you most about your role as a Governor?**

*"The main surprise has been how highly you are regarded by staff, and the time they take to appreciate the work you are doing for the school. Its also the impact our role has on the schools ability to achieve the Ofsted ratings.*

*You also build very good relationships with staff, I really appreciate more the hard work that goes on behind the scenes, if I wasn't involved in the ASC, I don't think I would ever have got a true understanding of what all the staff actually do. There's more to their role then just teaching."*

### **Why are Governors important?**

*"Regardless of the school's performance whether it's a good school or bad school, having individuals from the outside coming in to help and challenging decisions and procedure is important".*

### **What skills have you brought to your role as Governor?**

*"Although I'm a DRET Appointed Governor – I do bring a parents perspective too.*

*I bring 20 years construction experience which has benefited me during my period as Health & Safety Link Governor in the school.*

*I also have 10 years' experience in policing. That's given me experiences in Safeguarding and SEND matters it also leaves me very confident to challenge individuals & procedures that I don't feel are right or could be improved."*

***Did you need to have a background in education to be a Governor?***

*"Absolutely not, I don't hold any formal qualifications and left school at a very young age to start a career in construction.*

*I believe it's important that Governors come from all backgrounds and all bring something different from their lives and experiences into the team. The academies are very diverse places, I believe that that ASC should represent every aspect of our academies that has to be the way forward."*



# Spotlight on Stephen Platten



Stephen joined Endike Academy as Governor in February 2020. Stephen is a STEM Ambassador and wishes to contribute to his local community by working with schools to promote STEM subjects.

**Why did you become a Governor?**

*"To give back to my local community."*

**What do you talk about in meetings?**

*"How the school is doing, checking on progress of certain benchmarks, inspections and other areas such as safeguarding and educational targets."*

**How much time does your Governor role take up?**

*"4 to 5 hours per term on average."*

**What surprised you most about your role as a Governor?**

*"That you did not have to be from an Education background to be useful, and how much effort people put into running a school."*

***Why are Governors important?***

*"We are offer impartial assistance, guidance and oversight of the school."*

***What skills have you brought to your role as Governor?***

*"I have an Engineering background, so data analysis; and I have a military background, so I'm good at asking questions on performance and have people skills."*

***Did you need to have a background in education to be a Governor?***

*"No!"*



# Spotlight on Robert Leaper



Robert joined Falconer's Hill Academy in November 2021. He believes in encouraging children to take an interest in the world of work from an early stage.

**Why did you become a Governor?**

*"I became involved with the Falconer's Hill Academy via a friend and fellow Rotarian, and wanted to help in any way I can."*

**What do you talk about in meetings?**

*"Meetings follow the agenda which normally has a report from the Headteacher. This is then discussed and sometimes queried. Relevant follow up actions are identified and responsibilities assigned."*

**How much time does your Governor role take up?**

*"Normally a couple of hours."*

**What surprised you most about your role as a Governor?**

*"Since I had no prior experience, I had no preconceptions of how the governors work. I am pleasantly surprised at how much direct interaction is expected with the school."*

***Why are Governors important?***

*"To act as a check and balance to the school and its staff. Primarily to challenge the standards of the school and ensure pupils are getting the maximum benefit."*

***What skills have you brought to your role as Governor?***

*"Principally a great deal of experience in the working environment."*

***Did you need to have a background in education to be a Governor?***

*"Not from my point of view. A balance of experienced teachers, staff, educationalists and members of the public facilitates a wider range of views."*



# Spotlight on Tim Drakes



## **Why did you become a Governor?**

*"Originally I chose to become a Governor to support my daughter's primary education. This was almost 9 years ago. I quickly discovered that my specific skillset added a different dimension to the board room. I was very quickly invited to be a Trustee and Director of the Trust. Since then I have learned so much about education and wanted to be able to support DRET in the same way when my daughter started at a DRET secondary school."*

## **What do you think makes a good governor – can anyone do it? How would you encourage someone to become a Governor?**

*"Any board room needs a balance of skills in order to function effectively. Not everyone needs to have every skill. If you have a specific skill such as HR, Premises Management, Legal, or providing effective challenge among many others, then you can bring these skills to an ASC. This does not, however, mean that you can't be a Governor if you don't have a specific skill. This is because the most important attributes for a Governor are to have a passion for improving the outcomes of every pupil in our care, to be willing to learn, and to be prepared to ask questions. All too often I find new Governors are very quiet and take a while to find their feet. During this time the most important question is to ask Why? This will not only help you learn, but will also challenge to the school to explain things in more detail. That in turn then leads to more constructive challenge.*

*So as long as you have a passion for seeing everyone succeed, are willing to learn, and will ask questions then anyone can become a Governor (subject to meeting the referencing requirements of course)"*

**What would you say are the advantages/benefits to you as an individual personally and professionally from being a Governor?**

*"Being a Governor has provided me with a level of insight into education which a parent normally wouldn't see. Its given me an opportunity to develop and learn. If I had not become a governor I very much doubt I would have seriously considered becoming a Trustee or completing the qualifications I subsequently have."*

**What is your favourite part of being a Governor?**

*"Seeing the children and staff succeed. We often focus a lot on the children and helping them get the best outcomes during their time in education, that we can often forget about our staff's development too. So the best thing for me is seeing staff learn and grow within the Trust, and seeing our pupils realise their dreams as leave secondary education."*

**And the least favourite?**

*"My least favourite part of being a governor is having to pick up the pieces after people have made mistakes. This is a really important part of the role. Invariably chairing a disciplinary, exclusion, or grievance panel means establishing the facts and trying to find the most appropriate solution for all concerned. This can be very hard when it has an impact on someone's future education, their career, and often their family too. So whilst I have done these kind of things for well over a decade and am confident in my ability, it is certainly one of my least favourite aspects of governance."*

**And a final word?**

*"Being a Governor is an extremely important and rewarding role. I'd encourage this for anyone that is passionate about seeing children succeed."*



## Our Mission, Vision and Values

David Ross Education Trust schools create a rich and exciting learning environment that inspires students to become their confident, academic best. Our Vision is to develop a school of choice within our communities and our Mission is to give every child attending one of our schools a world-class education.



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