



Governor Profiles

Steve King (Chair of Governors / Member Appointed Governor)

I retired in 2018 having completed 40 years in the civil service, most recently working for the Home Office as a budget manager. I was keen to become a governor at Godinton to enable me to put my skills to good use to support the school in recognition for all they were doing for my children and first became a Governor in 2000. By 2005 my children had left the school but its continued advances made me want to stay and share in its future successes and I took on the role of Chair of Governors. My experience in financial management, property management and health & safety assist me in my governor role and in leading the schools team of Governors. As Chair of Governors my main role is to chair meetings of the Governing Board and act as main point of contact with the headteacher. I am a member appointed Governor and have joint lead responsibility for finance and I share the other responsibilities of the Governor role with my fellow Governors. I am married with two grown up children and I have lived on the Godinton Park estate since 1988. My spare time activities include gardening, woodworking and, due to advancing years, long naps in front of the television.

Rob Wellard (Vice Chair of Governors / Parent Governor)

I now have all three of my children at Godinton Primary School, my youngest having joined in September 2023. I have been a Parent Governor since June 2019, Vice Chair of the Governing Body since 2022 and in my professional life, I am the Information Security Manager at Saga. When the Governor role came up, I thought it could be an opportunity for me to use some of my skills and experiences to give something back to the school to support the incredible work that our teaching and support staff put in. In the subsequent four years, I have learnt a significant amount about the inner workings of the school and in my role as Governor, I am involved in

the monitoring and scrutinising of various elements of the school operations. I get to work closely with lots of the staff, and fellow Governors, as part of this but among all of the Governor activities, the highlight for me is when I get the opportunity to go into the school and talk to some of the children about their learning and experiences. I feel very lucky to have this opportunity and see it as a huge privilege to be able to contribute to the success of the school.

Outside of my work and Governor roles, I spend most of my time ferrying my kids between their various clubs and parties; there's no doubt they all have better social lives than me! However, when I'm not playing taxi driver, I like to tackle home improvement projects, spend time outside in the garden (often over the BBQ), play board games with friends and family and, very occasionally, dust off the golf clubs.

Jill Talbot (Headteacher)

I am very proud to be the Headteacher of Godinton Primary School and to have the privilege of working with such brilliant children, staff, Governors and parents. I was one of those children who always wanted to be a teacher and my younger sister had to endure hours of playing schools when we were little. I qualified as a teacher in 1994 and started my career at Tenterden Junior School where I spent 7 very happy years. In 2001 became Deputy Headteacher at Godinton, at a time when the school was expanding to becoming a two form entry primary school. Having been such a key part of the school's development since then, I couldn't pass by the opportunity to apply for the position of Headteacher when this came up in 2017. I have seen many changes over the past 23 years as the school has evolved into the nurturing and caring community we have today.

Living by the sea in Littlestone, I enjoy spending time walking along the coast with my partner, Neil and when the sun is shining, I also love to spend time pottering in my garden.

Karen Ward (Staff Governor)

I am so proud to be representing the staff on the **Governing Body** at **Godinton Primary School**, where I have been currently teaching in one of the **Reception Classes** for the past three years. I have been a teacher for twenty three years in several schools across **East Kent** and am a passionate **Early Years** teacher and champion of children with special educational needs. I am committed to sharing my expertise and passion for education in order to contribute to the continued success of our school community. It is such a privilege to be teaching here at **Godinton Primary**, working alongside a dedicated team in order to foster a lifelong love of learning for all children.

It is always a privilege to be involved with the training days with the **Governing Body** and I thoroughly enjoy speaking with children across the school about their learning. The children are always so positive about their experiences at **Godinton Primary School** which makes me feel proud to be part of this caring, school community.

Sam Messenger (Parent Governor)

I joined the governing body at **Godinton** in **June 2022** as I wanted to give back to the school that is supporting the development of my three children. Since then, I have truly enjoyed the role, speaking to the students, helping manage the estate, being involved in the strategic planning and providing challenge to the leadership team when discussing how the school is improving. I also work in a school in my day job, which allows me to see new ideas from both sides of the fence, supporting the school while considering the views of staff that work here, which ensures everyone is striving for success while nurturing the individual. My current governor role provides me with opportunities to monitor the quality of curriculum (literacy), **Early Years'** education and with the site manager on health and safety/development of the site. A collective mix of responsibilities but an insightful and enjoyable one.

Heather Vernon (Member Appointed Governor)

I applied and was selected to be a Member Appointed Governor back in November 2022. Having never been a governor before and having recently completed a Level 7 Qualification in Career Leadership and Management I decided having got some time back from studying, that I wanted to try something new and had often considered being a staff governor at The Norton Knatchbull School where I work as the Careers and Enterprise Lead and have done so for over 12 years. Before that I was the Careers KS3/4 Lead at Highworth Grammar School.

Having lived in Ashford almost all my life, I knew Godinton Primary well and had visited the school on several occasions in previous years as part of secondary transition visits. This enabled me to know just how I could support the Governing body and the school with my local knowledge and extensive business background. I have for many years worked with schools and businesses across Ashford and the surrounding areas and know of the challenges that we face. I am extremely passionate about education and I am also a keen fundraiser.

I am married and have one teenage son who will shortly be looking to go off to university to study Law hopefully!

Amanda Stevenson (Member Appointed Governor)

I joined the Governing Body at Godinton Primary School in April 2023 as a Member Appointed Governor. I have a background of working in Human Resources in the City for 20 years and then in Education for 20 years. My last post was as Acting Head at a large primary school and I have experience of being a staff governor at four schools. I made the decision to “retire” at 60 and am now lucky enough to have five grandchildren aged 5 and under who my husband and I look after during the week. My passion is still to work alongside like-minded individuals (both staff and parents) to ensure that every child achieves their full potential and, more importantly, has a fun and enjoyable time at school.

Rachael Dray (Member Appointed Governor)

I have been a governor at Godinton since March 22. I have lived in Ashford for 20 years, after moving from London. I worked as a primary teacher in London and then spent 15 years as a Deputy Headteacher (at three different primary schools) in Ashford. During my time as a DHT, I was responsible for a range of things including pupil and staff wellbeing, assessment, newly qualified teachers and behaviour.

In August 2021, I left my role as DHT to take on a new challenge. I currently deliver training for a range of education related companies. I work for a company called Thrive, delivering training in children's social and emotional learning and I have various roles with Best Practice network, including Initial Teacher Training, Early Career Teacher training and Leadership Performance Coach for a leadership programme (NPQSL). I also wanted to volunteer, in some capacity, in a local school and becoming a governor seemed a good use of my skill set.

I have five children of my own – three who are grown up (two are secondary school teachers) and two who are still in primary school. I enjoy spending time with them all and our extended family. I like to cycle whenever possible and enjoy walks with our Springer Spaniel 'Pebbles'. I play saxophone in Ashford Concert band and spend the rest of my time being a taxi for the various sports activities my youngest two boys take part in.

Dora Grant (Member Appointed Governor)

I joined the Governing Body at Godinton Primary School in April 2023 and this is my first appointment as a school governor. I am the mother of two school aged children and the Chief Risk and Compliance Officer for a U.K. bank and recently decided it was the right time to support the community with the skills I have developed over 20 years in financial services. In return, I have been learning a great from the children and my fellow governors. It is a pleasure to serve as Godinton's Governor.

Kelly Holden-Smith (Parent Governor)

As a proud parent of two children who have thrived at Godinton Primary School, with one now adventuring in secondary school, I've seen first-hand the amazing impact this school can have. Since 2017, I've been honoured to serve as a Parent Governor, helping to steer our school toward continued excellence.

By day, I'm a Secondary School teacher specializing in children with health needs right here in Kent. With a degree in Animal Science Care and Management, a Recognized Teacher of SEND award, and a Master's degree in Education, I'm pretty much your go-to person for all things educational and animal-related.

I channel my expertise in SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), health needs, and secondary education to support Godinton Primary in every way possible. And when I'm not doing that, you'll find me paddle boarding or enjoying a good board game.

My passion lies in ensuring that every child at Godinton Primary has an experience as enriching and positive as the one my own children have enjoyed. It's a joy to be part of this wonderful community, and I'm excited to continue working together to make our school the best it can be!

Alex Prickett (Member Appointed Governor)

I come from a background of psychology, focusing on behaviour change and child development. I took these analytical skills to move into a role in strategy consulting, involving due diligence for both public and private companies with regards to their strategy and use of budget. Having studied the structural and psychological barriers that inhibit behavioural change, I wanted to see how these learnings could be used to accelerate climate action - I have now moved into the sustainability sector and work for a climate technology business. I specialise in helping logistics and financial services organisations with navigating the latest sustainability regulations. My experience with regulatory compliance, alongside business acumen,

compliments my interest and university studies into childhood development/education to facilitate my role as school governor.

Kerry Baines (Co-opted Governor)

I applied and was invited to join the Godinton Primary Board in autumn 2023. Although I now work in Social Care as a Kent Supported Homes assessor with the KCC 18+ Care Leaver's Team, for the majority of my working life I have worked within education. As well as being an Early Years teacher for 12 years, I specialised in Behaviour as a TA in SEND provision before achieving my PGCE. In my earliest working life I was a Community Children and Families worker and whilst in this role I became a community governor for a LA junior school. I love learning! In 2018 (aged 35) I completed an MA in Education, Policy and Society and I hope one day I get to do a PHD. I'm proud that I was the first person in my family to get a degree, and I did this whilst I worked full-time after a tricky start, including some time in foster care. I 100% believe that learning looks different for different people and that's one of the things that drew me to Godinton as a school; the child-centred approach that's taken to learning and the sense of joy that is evident within the school community. I'm very proud to be a governor for such a wonderful school.