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Professor Angela Thody has many publications and conference papers on the subject of school governance. This lecture is the outcome of many years of research on the topic, beginning with her doctoral thesis in 1990 on the Roles of Governors (University of Leicester). For other examples of her work in this field see

*School Governors: Leaders or Followers ?* (Editor) Harlow, Longmans, 1994

*Moving to Management: school governors in the 1990s*, London, Fulton, 1992

The Governor-Citizen: agent of the state, the community or the school?', in Macbeth A., McCreath D. & Aitchison A., *Collaborate or Compete ? Educational Partnerships in a Market Economy*, Falmer, 1995

'School Governors from the Business Community', (2000) *Education Management and Administration*, (with A. Punter), Vol 28 (2) pp 185-198.

Thody, A.M. (1999) 'From political servant to community democrat', *Education Today*, Vol 49, No. 2, pp 37-44

'Training School Principals, Educating School Governors', *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol 12, No. 5, 1998, pp. 232-239

'Developing School Governors, 1987-1997: Change or Inertia', *School Leadership and Management*, Vol 19, No 1, pp. 115-134, 1998

'Innovation in sub-central education government: Top, middle, bottom', *Total Quality Management*, Vol. 9, No. 2 and 3, 1998, pp. 383-394

## **For more information about the author, or to book her for lecturing**

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# British Chamber of Commerce Santiago 2005



**Governors' roles:  
A model to  
import?**

**Emerita Professor  
Angela Thody**





## **Who is Thody, what is she?**

**Educating school governors for over 20 years (in how to control their principals)**

**Educating school principals for over 20 years (in how to control their governors)**

**School governor 12 years -**

**2 secondary schools, 1 early years' school  
(Learning how to control my principal)**

**Research – PhD on roles of governors;**

**Research projects on governors from industry, roles, history, composition**

**Publications – 2 books, many articles,**

**National and international lectures (NB New Zealand)**



## School assembly

## The 21<sup>st</sup> century English school governors' hymn

Thoughts for the day –  
the roles of governors since the mid 1980s = ?



Trojan horse? Suburban guerilla? Principal's supporter?  
Critical friend? Trustee (as in independent schools) ?  
Manager? Pupils' protector? Staff performance monitor?  
Insider with the outside viewpoint? Leader?



## CONTEXT

Quick up-date on English

and Welsh education post 1986

Each state school:

**Is financially self-managing and must manage within their budgets. Contract for their own supplies and services. Select own students (within certain parameters)**

**Appoints, disciplines and dismisses its own staff**

**Must follow the National Curriculum. Subject to 4-yearly inspection. Can be closed for 'failure'.**

**Expected to achieve examination targets**

**There is a National College for School Leadership  
LEAs have few powers left**

**2005 - Just developing the extended school**



**CONTEXT**

**Quick up-date on English  
and Welsh education post 1986**

**Types of state maintained schools**

**LEAs: COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED**

**LEAs and religious bodies, some of original funding  
from religious authorities or historic charities:**

**FOUNDATION, VOLUNTARY AIDED**

**Some of current funding from commerce, benefactors:  
PARTNERSHIP, CITY (RURAL, COASTAL) ACADEMIES,  
CITY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGES**

**Any of these can have SPECIALIST status – languages,  
performing arts, technology, science, business etc.  
Some of these (eg Academies) will be directly controlled  
through central government.**

**NOTE – THE LIST CHANGES DAILY!!!!!!**



## Results of all the changes:

State schools operate more like independent schools (but not in class size, fees and selectivity)

Some improvements in results

Accountability for state schools is mediated through funding mechanisms, inspection, performance management for staff, the return of the national curriculum and national testing and

**GOVERNORS:** increased powers since 1986







## Governors' roles: A model to import?

**The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business**







## Governors' roles: a model to import?

English and Welsh maintained foundation schools

Composition of governing bodies: schools decide their own but

Elected parents: minimum 33%.

Elected teaching or support staff:  
at least 2, maximum 33% including  
the principal.

LEA appointees (political parties):  
minimum 1, maximum, 20%

Appointed community: minimum 10%  
(20% in community schools)

Foundation or partnership: minimum 2, maximum 25%  
(none in community schools)



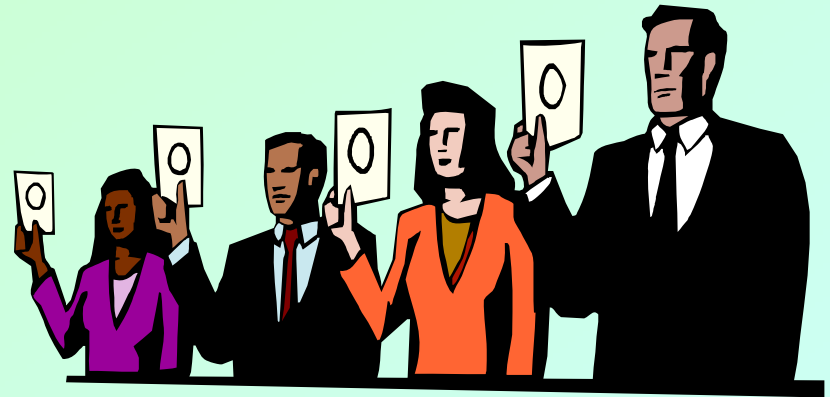
**Governors' roles: a model to import?**

## **Composition:**

**Enormous advance for democracy and  
adult education**

**'Educated' voices to  
advise schools of  
what the  
outside world  
thinks of them**

**Failure as a means of  
central control  
SO WHO CONTROLS  
WHOM IN THE  
SCHOOL?**



*There is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty is vested in the entire aggregate of the community: every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government*

*1859 John Stuart Mill On representative government*



## **Governors' roles: A model to import?**

**The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business with varied volunteer governors**





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**Report results  
to parents, LEA  
and Govt.**

**Governors' roles: a model to import?**

**WHAT DO GOVERNORS  
HAVE TO DO?**

**Aim – promote higher standards**

**Manage the budget; decide staff complement and salaries**

**Check the school complies with Race Relations Act**

**Establish performance management policy for  
staff plus grievance and discipline policies**

**Set targets for test results**

**Oversee special needs policies**

**Draw up the post-OFSTED action plans**

**Appoint principal and  
deputy, decide on  
procedure for other  
appointments**

**Pupil  
exclusions  
Behaviour  
policy**

**Ensure that the  
curriculum is  
balanced and  
broadly based and  
includes the National  
Curriculum, sex and  
religious education**



## **Governors' roles: a model to import?**

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### **The advantages:**

**Real power**

**Real job satisfaction**

**Real helpfulness**

**Real decrease for  
some principals'  
stress BUT**





# REAL WORK LOAD FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Responsible – to everyone and no-one**

**Likely collaboration with colleagues and outsiders-**

**Continuous committee**

**Qualifications-  
meetings-  
in plumbing and philosophy**



**Responsibilities-  
overwhelming**

**Extent of postholder's authority-  
From infinitesimal to infinity**

**Skills, abilities, aptitude –  
Weightlifting to carry DfES  
documents; insomniac – to**

**Knowledge and  
Skills – about  
everyone and  
everything**

**Tasks - everything**

**stay awake to  
read them**





**REAL WORK LOAD FOR VOLUNTEERS – cont.**

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**Training available – if you have time to attend**

**£ Pay? None. You have to pay to do the job**

**Personality –  
Conscientious  
but crazy**

*Equal  
Opportunities –  
We're not  
Proud –  
we'll co-opt  
anyone*

**Holidays –  
what holidays?**



**Work  
Hours –  
A lot**

**Experience? None needed - you'll soon get it.**



## **Governors' roles: A model to import?**

**The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business with varied volunteer governors with extensive responsibilities**





**So governors have the powers –  
How do they play the game?**



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Governors' roles: a model to import?

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## ROLE MODELS

A view from the past...

*In relation to the governors, the principal is  
Their instrument to work with  
Their servant, to carry out their plans and  
wishes*

*Their representative, to illustrate and  
maintain the good principles in which  
you are all enlisted*

*Their almoner, to bestow what is better  
than silver or gold - viz, a good  
education.*

**1853:** Anon A School Master's Difficulties, London,  
Longmans, Brown, Green and Longmans. P.65





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## Governors' roles: a model to import?

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### ROLE MODELS

**The view from the present –  
The governor's role is to be  
the critical friend**

**BUT WHOSE FRIEND?  
PARENTS?  
GOVERNMENT?  
PUPILS?  
PRINCIPAL?**





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## Governors' roles: a model to import?

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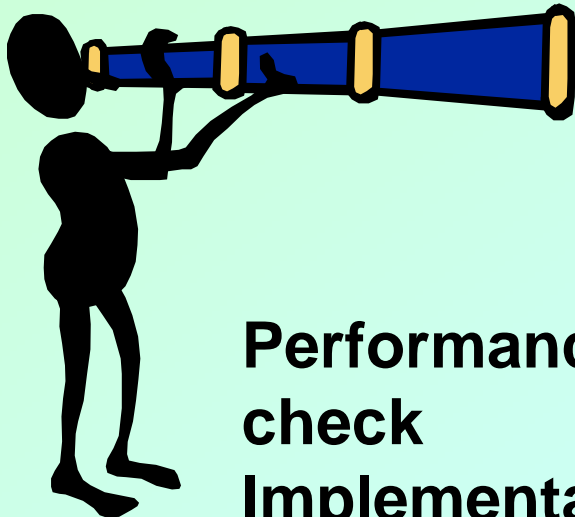
### ROLE MODELS: Evaluator

Needs knowledge of teaching and learning

### SO GO GET IT

Observe teachers in  
classrooms

Controversial – but how else  
can governors learn about  
the core business?



Performance management powers – policies,  
check

Implementation, reward and discipline staff



## **ROLE MODELS: The non-executive director**

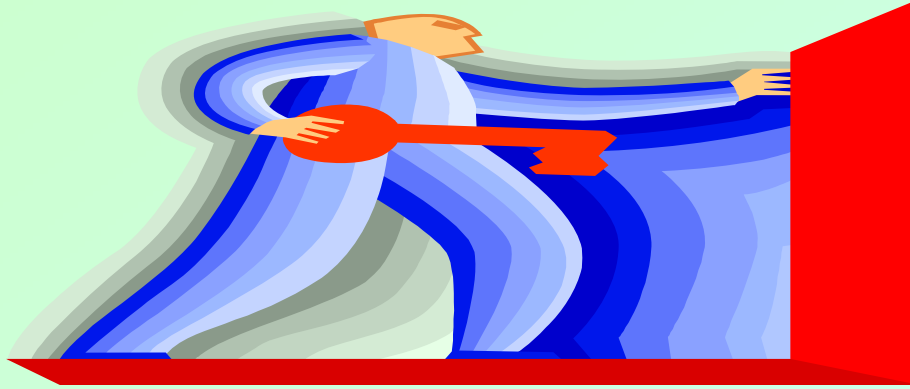


**Governors each specialise.**

**Governing bodies have committees.**

**Strategic role – initiating and checking but not managing**





**ROLE  
MODELS  
THE TRUSTEE**

*The trustees are the life of the school. If they are active, watchful and faithful, the school will flourish; but if they are irresolute and indifferent, the school will dwindle and eventually go down*



**Trustees have responsibilities of stewardship...Legally a trustee is a person entrusted with the administration of property for the benefit of a third party. This third party is usually a minor, hence the trustee is specifically looking towards the welfare of the future generation... the pupils and staff of a school are necessarily transient members but the governing body prevails as the trustee**

**Trusteeship fits the style of those who volunteer as governors – altruistic, goal-, interest- and rogue- orientated, bystanding and ambitious; they balance current needs against future needs**



**Still room for fun...**

**Governors' weeks**

**Classroom attachments**

**Helping out**

**Being an audience**

**PR**



## **Governors' roles: A model to import?**

**The 2000s context in English schooling: each state school is a target orientated, self-managing business with varied volunteer governors with extensive responsibilities and a choice of being critical friends, teaching and learning evaluators, trustees, non-executive directors and fun roles.**

**So – which will you import?**





**But keep the governor's role in perspective...**

**Who has not repeatedly seen cases of best governance where ... everything in the school...has been truly miserable: whilst on the other hand, where governance has been defective...all that is valuable prospers?**

**1853 – *A School Master's Difficulties*. Anon. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman**

