# PRESS RELEASE

**27 March 2018**

**Swindon children become face of national campaign to recruit school governors**

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**Local pupils assist launch of a national campaign to recruit more school governors**

Children, schools and employers in Swindon have teamed up to front a national campaign for school governor recruitment service Inspiring Governance to highlight the urgent need for more people to volunteer in schools across England.

Leading the campaign are two short films produced by Create Studios in Swindon, which highlight the benefits to both individuals and employers of supporting schools through governance. Filmed at St Joseph’s Catholic College on Ocotal Way, Holy Cross Catholic Primary School on Queen's Drive and various locations in Swindon, young people explain the role of school governors, the rewards to be gained for both volunteers and employers, and the opportunity for people from all backgrounds to get involved.

Despite a quarter of a million people across England already volunteering as school governors, it is estimated that one in ten school governor positions are vacant. In Swindon, there are over 140 vacancies in maintained schools alone, and there is a particular challenge to recruit governors in rural areas, deprived areas and schools that ‘require improvement’ according to Ofsted. Supported by Swindon Borough Council and Swindon Business in the Community, Inspiring Governance’s campaign asks local people and employers to ‘Join the 250k’ to make a real difference to the life chances of young people in the local community.

Becoming a school governor gives volunteers the opportunity to use and develop personal and professional skills, gain board-level experience and give something back to the local community. Encouraging and supporting their staff to govern gives employers the opportunity to shape their future workforce, access free professional development and contribute to the education system.

Anyone over the age of 18 can become a school governor: no specific knowledge or experience is required and there is no requirement to be a parent. Inspiring Governance uses an online mapping feature to connect volunteers with schools seeking governors, and all volunteers appointed though the service receive free training and support from the National Governance Association to help them be confident and effective in their role.

Anna Richardson, Governor Support Officer at Swindon Borough Council, said: “Swindon is fortunate to have a number of businesses who support their staff in becoming school governors. They recognise that the pupils are the town’s future workforce as well as giving staff the opportunity to develop in a variety of ways including decision making and strategic thinking. However, the majority of the 80 plus schools and academies in Swindon do not have a full complement of governors therefore we do need more businesses to encourage all of their staff to consider fulfilling this important role, by showing the films and highlighting the benefits. I am delighted that Swindon schools were able to assist in the production of these fantastic films that will promote the role of school governance at a national level. Governors in Swindon are highly valued and their hard work and dedication to the schools and academies they serve shows how committed the people of Swindon are in ensuring that the young people of the town get the best education.”

Eileen Brocklehurst, South West Regional Manager at Inspiring Governance said: “Strong governance is essential to school improvement, and through volunteers and employers investing their time, skills and experience, children across the country will benefit from the best possible education. We need more skilled people to volunteer on governing boards, and I really encourage the people and businesses of Swindon and the surrounding area to explore this opportunity. Inspiring Governance makes it easy for people to sign up and to discover governor vacancies near them, and for businesses, we provide support, resources and oversight of staff governing within the organisation.”

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Swindon Children's Services and School Attainment said: “School governors play a crucial role in ensuring schools run well and do their best for all our children. They support head teachers in helping all our children and young people achieve and learn about the world and have a great school experience in a safe environment. We have many excellent governors who give their time and we always need more people to come forward from all parts of the community.”

Thomas Craigie from Business in the Community Swindon and a newly appointed governor said: "Having supported Inspiring Governance with the promotion to recruit school governors, I was delighted to experience the benefits first hand, having been recruited as a governor myself through the website. A governor role is a unique opportunity to develop new skills and experiences; whether this is scrutinising the finances of a school, setting the strategic direction or supporting the head in a difficult situation. I strongly urge anyone looking to develop their own career prospects to be a part of the #JoinThe250k campaign and help to support our schools to be the very best they can be."

Marilyn Fitzgerald, Director of Create Studios said: "Create Studios are delighted to be able to use the creative medium of video to promote this national and local issue. Our graduates have really enjoyed the challenge of making these two films, and we especially loved working with the talented local children.”

People interested in becoming a school governor can visit www.inspiringgovernance.org/volunteers for further information and to watch the film. If you would like to become a school governor, register with Inspiring Governance to find a vacancy near you.

Employers interested in supporting their employees to volunteer can visit <https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/employers> to view the film, access resources and get involved. Please contact Eileen Brocklehurst on [eileen.brocklehurst@educationandemployers.org](mailto:eileen.brocklehurst@educationandemployers.org) to discuss this opportunity.