

Name Carly Dobson

Role West Walker Primary School Local Governing Committee

Carly has worked for Barnardo's since 2004, most recently in the role of a Children's Service Manager, leading and managing work in the east of Newcastle to help children from ages 0-19 as part of a leadership team. This includes the delivery of opportunities and programmes to strengthen and support families and running volunteer programmes across the east of the city to allow local people to give back to the community. Carly joined West Walker Primary School as a local governor in 2017.



What do you enjoy about being a governor?

I enjoy being involved and learning about the schools and since joining the local governing committee I've took up the role of being the SEND governor and Early Years governor to have more of an influence and impact. I've found the knowledge and experience I have, despite not working in education, is a real strength. When I was at college, I piloted an after school group at West Walker. I instantly got a positive feeling about the school so when the opportunity of being a governor came up, I knew I wanted to go for it.

How does the local governing committee work together as a team?

We've evolved over time as a team and learnt each other's strengths. We continue to expand our thinking, which is a real positive. Working together to scrutinise and evaluate how well the school is doing and taking part in governor training sessions has helped us become a strong team.

What do you feel that you contribute to the trust and its schools?

I have strong relationships and work collaboratively with members of staff in the school which leads me to have regular support and challenge discussion, alongside fact finding visits. I can offer an outside perspective as I am not embroiled with the details which allows me to have a good overview and ask curious questions that might not have been thought of.

What makes NEAT a great place to be a governor?

I feel confident about what NEAT is trying to do and really value the contribution the trust makes. I've always had a positive experience of the CEO: her vision ensures all the schools work together. NEAT provides governors with lots of opportunities for professional development and upskilling. I feel valued as a governor and that the efforts I put in are appreciated. The trust has allowed schools to keep their individuality and understands each school is different. Collaboration between schools is inspirational, they help and learn from each other and share best practice. Staff are passionate about pupils and schools want the best for their children; this is apparent across the whole trust. I love the ethos of the schools.

Why would you encourage someone to become a governor with NEAT?

There are so many opportunities to learn and share your own knowledge and skills to influence and make a difference for pupils. The most important thing to remember is that we all do this to make sure we are giving children the best start in life. I would really encourage people to become a governor to become a voice for the children in your community. You don't need to be a teacher or know the terminology, local people bring a lot to the governing committee by sharing what life is like for children in your community. Let schools work with you to help all children. Be the community advocate in your local school.