Hackney Governors’ Conference 2015

Governing Body
Self Evaluation

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The Current Context
Since September 2012, OfSTED has significantly increased the focus on school governance

Proportion of all inspected schools receiving recommendations regarding governance

Sept-Dec 11
Sept-Nov 12
Sept 10-July 11

Main recommendations for governors
September to November 2012

- Communication: better links with pupil and parents
- Attendance: Dealing with parents who are absent
- Monitoring of achievement for different groups
- Performance management and monitoring
- Specifics: monitor staff performance/attendance
- Develop lines of enquiry/track progress
- Ensure that policies are put into practice or effective
- Over monitoring processes including regular reviews
- High expectations
- Vision/strategy
- Focus on achievement
- Direct involvement in performance management
- Makes the right appointments
- Has a comprehensive range of skills
- Financial management
- Exemplary management of school day

Main governance strengths identified from an analysis of reports on outstanding schools, Sept-Nov 2012

What Do We Currently Do?

- Share your experience of GB self-review
  - What do we do/have we done?
  - How often?
  - Who is involved?
  - How long did/does it take?
  - What was/were the result/s?
As a board of governors ....

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we be sure?

**Evidence gathered from self-evaluation can be analysed and used to:**

- diagnose precisely where strengths and weaknesses lie & the implications for change
- identify the key priorities
- plan the action needed to bring about improvement.

—— “the board needs to continually improve just like the rest of the organisation.”

A review of the literature on the role of the board chair: What are the messages for chairs of school governing bodies

1.7.1 Inspection

Ofsted has published the criteria that inspectors will use to judge the effectiveness of a school’s governance. Inspectors will look at the extent to which governing bodies:

- contribute to the school’s self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching, and reviewing the impact of their own work.”

Governors Handbook (DfE Sep-14)

Self-evaluation can only work if:

- People are honest
- Do we have factions/interest groups
- Are we united (or divided)?
- Is everyone involved in discussions?
- Do we trust each other?
Who, When, How?

It depends!

Who, When, How?

- No board of governors likes to think it is anything less than good and few are prepared to admit it
- Self-review must be rooted in evidence – “How do we know?”
  
*The value of the process is in the discussion!*

Who, When, How?

- Who?
  - The whole board of governors
- When?
  - As appropriate – it takes time!
- How?
  - RAG rating (red, amber, green);
  - 1, 2, 3, 4
  - Outstanding, good, requires improvement, inadequate (Ofsted)
  - Development points

Try to avoid ...

3 core functions:

a) ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;

b) holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and

c) overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

These functions are reflected in regulations for maintained schools that came into force in September 2013 and in the criteria Ofsted inspectors use to judge the effectiveness of governance in both maintained schools and academies.

Don’t Lose Sight of ……

Understand our school

- Pupil attainment
- Pupil behaviour, attendance & safety
- Teaching quality & staff development

Set strategic direction

- Champion our vision, values & ethos
- Set priorities for school improvement
- Consider governance structure & academy status

Commission action

- Agree improvement targets & strategies
- Agree education of resources
- Agree how to monitor & review progress

Performance manage school leaders

- Appoint & support their leadership
- Hold leaders to account for progress
- Ensure financial probity & efficiency

Check we are fit for purpose

- Clarify our role & purpose
- Review our ways of working
- Make sure members have necessary skills

Tools

External Review of Governance

Nov-13

- NCTL

The eight elements of effective governance

1. The right people round the table
2. Understanding role and responsibilities
3. Professional clerking
4. Good chairing
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people
Tools

GLM Quality Mark for Governor Standards
2006 (revised Jan-13)
• http://www.glppartnership.org/governor-mark.html

Tools

20 Key Questions
Apr-13
• The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Education Governance and Leadership
• http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/docinfo?id=178224&filename=effective-governance-for-good-schools-20-key-questions.pdf

Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?
3. Do we understand our roles and responsibilities?
4. Do we have a professional clerk and run meetings efficiently?
5. What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?
6. Do we know about good practice from across the country?
7. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working?
8. Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the governing body’s performance?

Tools

Governance Self-review
(based upon the Quality Mark for School Governance)

20 key questions for a school governing body to ask itself
Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the governing body?
1. Have we completed a skills audit of our governing body?
2. Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?

Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?
3. Do we understand our roles and responsibilities?
4. Do we have a professional clerk and run meetings efficiently?
5. What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?
6. Do we know about good practice from across the country?
7. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working?
8. Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the governing body’s performance?

NGA Governors Self-evaluation
• Based upon the 20 questions
The Effective Governing Body Exercise
(Westminster)

Starting Points

Starting Small!
- Hackney School Improvement Journey
- GB structure
- Effectiveness of meetings
- School website – statutory compliance
- Governor training
- GB statutory duties
  - HT performance management (maintained schools)

What evidence do we have?
Where is it?

NGA Governors’ Self Evaluation

Tools

Skills Audit

Starting Points

Starting Small!
- SEN report
- Information to parents
- Statutory policies (date adopted, review date, available on website) & equality statement & objectives
- Scheme of delegation
- SFVS (maintained schools)
- GB accountability to students, parents, staff & the community

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GBs Structure

Starting Points

Statutory Functions

Governing Body Accountability
Governing Body Accountability

What are the names of the governors?

Who is the Chair?

What is the background of the governors?

How do I become a governor?

Can I read the governors’ minutes?

Can I read the HT’s reports to the governors?

Sample of outstanding schools’ websites governor information

Can I read the HT’s reports to the governors?

Can I read the governors’ minutes?

How do I become a governor?

What is the background of the governors?

Who is the Chair?

What are the names of the governors?
Planning for action

3 core functions:

a) ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;

b) holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and

c) overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.