



**CITY OF YORK COUNCIL
LEARNING, CULTURE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Governing Body Review

September 2012

Introduction

Strong governance is essential for good schools. Governing bodies hold important strategic responsibilities for the development and improvement of the school. A key role of governing bodies is to support and challenge headteachers in order to ensure pupils receive the best possible education. This review tool aims to encourage governors and governing bodies to challenge themselves – as the best governing bodies already do.

This review tool is based on “20 questions for governing bodies” which was put together by the Government’s All-Party Group on Education Governance and Leadership and launched by Sir Michael Wilshaw on 9th July 2012. It also draws from the September 2012 Ofsted framework (see relevant extract at [Annex 1](#)) and inspection guidance (see relevant extract at [Annex 2](#)), focussing on the nine criteria on which governance will be judged. See [Annex 3](#) for characteristics of strong, good and weak governance. These questions should enable every governing body to challenge its own practice and, if the answers derive from a genuine discussion based on the evidence available, decide when and how improvements can be made. If you would like a facilitator to help you through the process as a governing body, please contact your Clerk or a member of the Governance Service team.

How to use the review model

The model is in a grid format and is split into seven sections, each one reflecting a different aspect of governance: skills, effectiveness, strategy, accountability, engagement, leadership and impact.

Governors should work through each section systematically, asking how fully they believe each statement is met by their governing body and ticking the relevant box. Do answer honestly – this is important if the review process is going to be effective. The toolkit could be broken into sections rather than completed in one go, or worked through in order of priority.

The review headings are linked by hyperlinks to the relevant section of the Characteristics of Strong, Good and Weak Governance document. The review questions are hyperlinked to explanations of why this aspect is important. Within the explanations are links to documents which might provide useful information or guidance.

The suggested process

It is suggested that governing bodies carry out the review process together, using the questions within the model to shape discussion. This could be done at a session organised specifically to do a review, or considered in sections at full GB meetings (this would take place over time). It is important that there is evidence to support the judgements made.

Once all the questions under each heading have been answered and evidenced, use an action planning sheet (see example at [Annex 4](#)) to set out what the governing body will do to improve their effectiveness, how they will do it and by when. This action sheet should be monitored regularly to ensure actions are on track to meet the deadline.

1 Do we have the right skills on the governing body?		Links to key characteristics Link 1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Met	Partly met	Not Met			
			Met	Partly met	Not Met						
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?									
Have we completed a skills audit of our governing body?											
Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?											

2 Are we as effective as we could be?		Links to key characteristics Link 1 Link 3 Link 2	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Met	Partly met	Not Met			
			Met	Partly met	Not Met						
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?									
Do we understand our roles and responsibilities?											
Do we have a trained, professional clerk?											
Are meetings run efficiently?											
What is our training and development budget?											
Does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?											
Do we know about good practice in other schools?											
Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working?											
Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution?											
Do we carry out an annual review of the governing body's performance?											

3 Are we fulfilling our statutory duties and responsibilities?		Links to key characteristics Link 1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Met	Partly met	Not Met			
Met	Partly met	Not Met							
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?							
How does the governing body ensure that all statutory policies and documents are in place?									
How does the governing body ensure that the school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding, pupil care and wellbeing?									
How does the governing body ensure that the school meets statutory requirements relating to Special Educational Needs?									
How does the governing body ensure that the school meets statutory requirements relating to the curriculum?									

4 Do we have a clear, shared vision for the school?		Links to key characteristics Link 1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Met	Partly met	Not Met			
Met	Partly met	Not Met							
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?							
Have we developed long-term aims for the school with clear priorities?									
Do we contribute to the writing of the school development plan?									
Is governing body improvement one of the priorities in the development plan?									
Do we monitor and review the development plan regularly?									
Does our strategic planning feed into governing body activities and agenda setting?									

5 Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?	Links to key characteristics Link 1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Met	Partly met	Not Met			
	Met	Partly met	Not Met					
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?						
How much has the school improved over the last three years?								
What has the governing body's contribution been to this?								

6 Do we hold school leaders to account?	Links to key characteristics Link 1 Link 3 Link 2 Link 4	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Met	Partly met	Not Met			
	Met	Partly met	Not Met					
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?						
Do we understand the school's performance data well enough properly to hold school leaders to account?								
How effectively does our performance management of the headteacher lead to improved outcomes for pupils?								
How effectively does the performance management of other school staff contribute to improved outcomes for pupils?								
What do we do to support and strengthen school leadership?								
Do we have robust financial management systems?								
How do we ensure best value for money?								
Are the pupil premium and other resources being used effectively to overcome barriers to learning?								

7 Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?		Links to key characteristics Link 1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Met	Partly met	Not Met			
Met	Partly met	Not Met							
Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?							
How do we listen to and understand our pupils, parents and staff?									
How do we report to our parents and local community?									
Do we report regularly to our parents and local community?									
Do we collaborate with other schools and sectors?									
What benefits do we draw from this collaboration?									

8 Does the governing body have strong and effective leadership?		Links to key characteristics Link 1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Met</td> <td>Partly met</td> <td>Not Met</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Met	Partly met	Not Met			
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Criteria	How do we know? What is the evidence?	What do we need to do?							
Do we carry out a regular 360 review of the chair's performance?									
Do we engage in effective succession planning?									
Do we re-elect the chair, vice-chair and committee chairs each year?									
Do we have clear "job descriptions" for the roles of chair, vice-chair and committee chairs?									

Have we completed a skills audit of our governing body? [BACK](#)

It is important that the governing body, as a group, has the capacity to lead, monitor, evaluate, challenge, understand data, make financial judgements and decisions, communicate, appoint senior staff etc. To ensure that all these skills are represented on the governing body, it is important to recruit people who have these skills, or to ensure that existing governors access appropriate training. The LA's governor support office has developed a skills audit for governing bodies to use if they wish – click here to find the [skills audit document](#).

Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills? [BACK](#)

Do all members of your governing body have the skills needed to make an active and useful contribution? One of the harder decisions for a group of volunteers with such a responsible role is to address non-attendance, poor performance and low contribution. In the current climate of rigorous inspection and high demands on governing bodies, this is, however, a conversation that should take place on a regular basis. Governing bodies may wish to consider the 2012 constitution regulations, which allow governing bodies to reconstitute under new arrangements which allow for less stakeholder representation and more freedom for governing bodies to recruit for skills. Click here for [reconstitution guidance](#).

Examples of where you might go to find suitable governors are [School Governors' One Stop Shop](#) (SGOSS) and the LA's governor support service.

Do we understand our roles and responsibilities? [BACK](#)

The Guide to the Law for School Governors (currently under review) gives detail of governors' roles and responsibilities. You might also find the [Decision Planner](#) and the [Roles and Responsibilities Summary Sheet](#) useful.

Do we have a trained, professional clerk? [BACK](#)

A clerk to a governing body is far more than simply a minute-taker and could be equated to a Parish Council Clerk. The Guide to the Law/Governors' Handbook (2013) sets out the clerk's specific role and [Learning from the Best](#) describes how a clerk can contribute to efficient and effective governance. Good, sound governance demands that records of meetings are made by a person who is independent of the school. A clerk can also support the chair and headteacher in planning meetings and ensuring that statutory requirements (such as policies) are met.

The LA offers University-accredited training for clerks to school and academy governing bodies. For more information contact salli.radford@york.gov.uk

Are meetings run efficiently? [BACK](#)

Do your meetings run to time? Are they set at a time which allows maximum attendance? Do meetings go on too long? Is there a lot of off-topic discussion or consideration of matters which do not fall within governing body remit? Is the agenda focussed on priorities? Is there an annual plan to ensure that statutory functions are met? Click here for a [year planner](#).

What is our training and development budget? [BACK](#)

Governing bodies who buy into the LA's governor support service have access to a wide range of face-to-face and online training. Does this meet all your training needs? Do you need to set aside a budget to enable focussed bespoke training or other development opportunities?

Does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively? [BACK](#)

What arrangements do you have for the induction of new governors? Do you have a buddy/mentoring system? What about any costs (such as childcare) that governors may have to cover in order to attend meetings – do you have a governors’ allowances policy? Do you have governors with other needs or disabilities (visual impairment for example) who may need specific provision to support them?

Do we know about good practice in other schools? [BACK](#)

The OFSTED document “Learning from the Best” (see link above) includes a series of good practice case studies. Do you have links with other governing bodies? Do you participate in “sharing good practice” events? Do you actively seek out high-performing governing bodies and learn from them? Your clerk or School Improvement Partner may be able to advise you, or contact the Governor Support & Development Service to find out about “good practice” events or if you would like help to broker contacts.

Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working? [BACK](#)

If it is some time since the governing body last reconstituted, it may now be time to review the structure and consider whether changes might be made. Do you struggle to fill vacancies? Do you think the governing body would be more effective with a smaller, more focussed composition? What about your committee structure? Do you have more than three committees? If so, it might be time to review the focus and terms of reference. If you would like to consider other models, your clerk may be able to advise. Alternatively the Governor Support & Development Service would be able to offer other examples or ideas.

Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution? [BACK](#)

Do all governors attend meetings regularly and make a valuable contribution to the work of the governing body? There may be circumstances when governors need to take a back seat for an agreed period of time (for example prolonged illness or bereavement), but in agreeing this, the governing body should consider whether they can discharge their functions effectively without the active contribution of all members. If there are governors who are not “pulling their weight” what are you doing about it? Do you know what sanctions are available to you to ensure that all members make an active contribution? Do you have a governor Code of Conduct which sets out the expectations of individuals who volunteer for this highly responsible role? Click here for a model [Code of Conduct](#).

Do we carry out an annual review of the governing body’s performance? [BACK](#)

Just as your school will carry out regular reviews, set out priorities for action and monitor performance, so it is a valuable exercise for a governing body to undertake on a regular basis. This toolkit will help you to review your work. Other questions to ask are “what difference have we made over the year?”; “what impact has our work had on pupil performance?”

How does the governing body ensure that all statutory policies and documents are in place? [BACK](#)

Policies set out the framework under which the school will operate and statutory documents provide a record. Examples of statutory policies are the Budget Management Policy and Teacher Appraisal Policy; examples of statutory documents are the Instrument of Government and the Register of Pecuniary Interest. Policies have to be reviewed on a regular basis – some annually, some bi-annually, some longer. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that all statutory policies and documents are in place. How do you make sure you have them all? Do you have a programme of review? Do you know where to find your school’s policies? An effective clerk will help you to manage this aspect well.

How does the governing body ensure that the school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding, pupil care and wellbeing? [BACK](#)

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that statutory requirements are met; the headteacher is responsible for putting the mechanisms in place to meet the statutory requirements. What do you, as a governing body, do to make sure the school is meeting its responsibilities whilst maintaining your distance from the day-to-day running of the school?

Do we have a clear, shared vision for the school? [BACK](#)

Where governors, headteacher and staff work together on a shared vision for the school, this strengthens joint working and purpose and is vital for a successful, positively governed school. The shared vision will be reflected in the school improvement (or development) plan and this plan will, in turn, drive the governing body's agenda for the year as they monitor to ensure progress. It is important, therefore, that the governing body not only share the vision, but contribute to drawing up the plan by jointly setting priorities with the headteacher and staff. Governing bodies may also wish to scrutinise their own effectiveness and include specific priorities for their own development within the improvement plan. Because the effectiveness of governance is included in a shared plan, this ensures that the whole school workforce is "signed up" to supporting strong governance systems. How can you demonstrate governors' engagement with the process of improvement planning? How does the GB monitor progress, and how often? Are your current monitoring systems effective? Do you have a shared vision? Do you consult more broadly (eg with the local community) when setting the vision for the school?

Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils? [BACK](#)

One of the aspects of governance that Ofsted will look for is the impact the governing body has on outcomes for pupils. So – the question governing bodies need to ask themselves is "what difference have we made"? The governing body can contribute to improved outcomes is by understanding the performance data and finding out what is being done to address any concerns and ensure that all pupils make at least two levels of progress within each key stage. Governors will want to satisfy themselves that monitoring of teaching and learning is robust and effective and that teacher appraisal and development is addressing any weaknesses. They will want to ensure that anything which might affect pupil outcomes is addressed – for example by ensuring that all pupils feel safe in school, are free from bullying and aren't hungry or thirsty. All these things can affect how an individual engages with education.

Do we understand the school's performance data well enough properly to hold school leaders to account? [BACK](#)

In order to secure professional accountability, it is essential for governors to be able to understand and unpick performance data – every governing body should have at least one member (apart from the headteacher) who is able to do this and help the rest of the governing body to understand what the data is telling them about their school. There is training for governors on understanding data – see the training programme for more details and look out for one-off sessions which are offered from time to time throughout the year.

How effectively does our performance management of the headteacher lead to improved outcomes for pupils? [BACK](#)

The Headteacher's performance management objectives should be set based on the school's priorities as set out in the school improvement plan. Over the year the Performance Management group should monitor progress towards fulfilling the objectives and a full review should take place every year. What evidence do you have that the performance management process is contributing to improved, or high levels of, achievement for pupils? Click here for the Guidance on [Headteacher Performance Management](#).

How effectively does the appraisal of other school staff contribute to improved outcomes for pupils? [BACK](#)

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that there is an appraisal policy in place and ensuring that it is applied effectively. Whilst the process is confidential between the appraiser and appraisee, the governing body may ask general questions of the headteacher and for evidence that the policy is having positive outcomes for pupils. Do you do this? Do you know what the impact of the appraisal process is? Remember, too, that Ofsted will scrutinise staff pay against appraisal outcomes – so governors need to ensure that there is correlation between pay and performance.

What do we do to support and strengthen school leadership? [BACK](#)

Do you have a succession plan? Do you have a strategy to strengthen the leadership of the school? Even if your headteacher isn't planning on leaving, it is important to build strong leadership teams to provide support for the headteacher as well as ensure that, should the headteacher be out of school for a while, you have people who can step up into that role.

Do you take responsibility for the work/life balance of the headteacher? Is there a culture of good work/life balance within the school? This is a GB responsibility. A tired head cannot sustain tiptop performance and so a balance between time spent in school and leisure is vital.

Do we have robust financial management systems? [BACK](#)

How do we ensure best value for money?

Are the pupil premium and other resources being used effectively to overcome barriers to learning?

Does your finance committee function well? Have you got your Budget Management Policy in place? Do you have a school business manager or bursar? As the holders of significant public monies, governors are held accountable for the way in which it is spent. Do you monitor the expenditure of the Pupil Premium to ensure that it is having most effective impact on improving educational opportunities for the most disadvantaged? Do you use the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) (statutory for LA maintained schools, but useful for all others) as a tool to structure the work of your Finance Committee, to identify challenging questions, and to ensure that your school's funding is effectively focussed on raising achievements for pupils?

Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world? [BACK](#)

How do you find out what the parents, the pupils and your local community think of the school? Do you consult with them and take their views and ideas into consideration to help you shape your strategic planning? There are various tools around to help you to do this, including a parent survey which the LA will do for you – contact Yasmin.wahab@york.gov.uk to find out more.

What are your arrangements for involving staff in your decisions? You have staff governors who will give a view from their experience, and the headteacher will hold regular meetings with staff. But to what extent does the governing body know the staff – and do the staff know who the governors are? Do you hold shared events, such as training days and times when you work together on vision, policy and planning?

Communication with parents is absolutely vital – and not just the good headlines. If you're open with parents about the areas you're working to improve you can often tap into resources of support and, in some case, finance. Of course, communication needs to be done carefully to give the right messages clearly. How do you communicate with parents? Do you reply on "pupil post"? Do you have a good school website? Do you use social media – and if you do, do you have clear guidelines on conduct? Have you ever monitored the effectiveness of your methods of communication? Are you aware of Ofsted's "Parent View" and the importance of maintaining a balanced profile of your school through this important portal? Do you have a Governors' tab on your website so that parents and others can find out who the governors are what they're doing?

Are you, as a governing body, in touch with other governing bodies? There is a lot of training available through the Governor Support & Development Service, but does this meet your needs? Is there any bespoke training you need which could be shared with another governing body? You could use your school's cluster arrangements to share good practice in governance and resources.

If you already have collaborative arrangements with other governing bodies, what impact is this having on your practice and from there to improved outcomes for your pupils?

Some schools have cross-phase links; for example primary with secondary and secondary with further/higher education establishments. As a governing body is there any way you could use these links to help direct your policy and planning; is there anything you can learn from each other. For example, have you ever observed each other's meetings, or shared training/planning events? Do you have governors in common?

Does the Chair show strong and effective leadership? [BACK](#)

The leadership of a good chair will strengthen governance, ensure that business is carried out in an effective and timely way and that the governing body makes an impact on outcomes for children. Governors will engage with training and will carry out regular self-evaluation as a tool to drive improvement and rigour. A good chair will ensure that future leaders of governance are developed – and will know when it's time to step down and allow these new leaders to move things forward. S/he will be an enabler with high expectations, encouraging others to share responsibilities and leading governors through difficult decisions. S/he will have a good working relationship with the headteacher which is built on trust and mutual respect. Whilst holding a "special working relationship" with the headteacher, this must not be overly-familiar, "cosy" or give the impression that decisions are made outside of meetings and presented to governors for "rubber stamping". Governors will feel engaged, consulted and that their views matter; all will be invited to share their thoughts and the less confident will be encouraged to speak. The chair will have a strong commitment to collaborative decision-making and joint accountability. A good chair will have a commitment to his/her own development, will invite constructive feedback on his/her own performance and will recognise that, as a leader of governance s/he is also a leader within the local community.

(Extract from the School inspection handbook from September 2012)

Quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

1. Inspection must examine the impact of leaders at all levels, including governors, and evaluate how efficiently and effectively the school is managed.
2. Many schools are cooperating to form managed groups, federations or chains, with an overarching board and chief executive officer that assume some of the responsibilities formerly shouldered by the individual school governing body. Commonly, this infrastructure is supported by a portion of the budget of the member schools. In the case of such extended management arrangements, inspectors should seek evidence of the impact of the overarching board and its staff and the school's local board, committee or governing body.
3. Inspectors should focus on the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in promoting improvements within the context of the school. They evaluate the extent to which the school enables all pupils to overcome specific barriers to learning.
4. Inspectors should consider:
 - a. how well leaders, managers and governors pursue excellence, modelling professional standards in all of their work, for example through:
 - the rigorous implementation of well-focused improvement plans which are based on robust self-evaluation
 - the consistent application of policies and procedures, in particular in relation to reading, writing and mathematics
 - the extent to which pupils, parents and staff are committed to the vision and ambition of leaders, managers and governors
 - the respect and courtesy shown by staff towards each other and pupils
 - b. the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation and the extent to which it is shared with governors – this includes monitoring and evaluation of:
 - the quality of teaching and the achievement and progress of all groups of pupils, including those for whom the pupil premium provides support, relative to other schools nationally
 - the performance of the school, including, if applicable, the school's sixth form
 - the satisfaction of pupils and their parents
 - c. the robustness of performance management and effectiveness of strategies for improving teaching, including the extent to which the school takes account of the 'Teachers' Standards' – this is demonstrated through:
 - the robustness of procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the extent to which underperformance is tackled

- a strong link between performance management and appraisal and salary progression
 - the coherence and effectiveness of the programme of professional development, and the opportunities provided for promotion. Particular attention should be given to the extent to which professional development is based on the identified needs of staff and the needs of newly qualified teachers and teachers at an early stage of their career
 - the accuracy with which best practice is identified and modelled
- d. how well leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum:
- focuses on the necessary priorities for ensuring that all pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - is broad and balanced (in the context of the school) and meets the needs, aptitudes and interest of pupils including, if applicable, pupils in the sixth form
 - promotes high levels of achievement and good behaviour and successful progression to the pupils' next stage of education, training or employment
 - promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils
 - is effectively planned and taught
 - does not compromise pupils' achievement, success or progression by inappropriately early entry to public examinations
 - is based at Key Stage 4 on an appropriate balance between academic and vocational courses
 - planning in the sixth form takes account of completion rates in sixth form courses
- e. how well leaders and managers demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement through, for example:
- a track record of improvements in achievement and/or maintenance of high levels of achievement
 - improvements in the quality of teaching over time or the maintenance of good and outstanding teaching
 - robust self-evaluation which underpins actions and plans that are focused accurately on the areas requiring improvement¹
- f. the effectiveness of governance including how well governors:
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses
 - support and strengthen school leadership

¹ Good intentions and an aspirational outlook or a recent change of headteacher following a period of poor leadership do not in themselves provide sufficient proof of the capacity for further improvement.

- provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety
 - use performance management systems, including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
 - ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
 - operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved
 - engage with key stakeholders
 - use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- g. how well the school's strategies and procedures, including the provision of appropriate guidance, help pupils to prepare for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society, and to prevent extremist behaviour
- h. how effectively the school promotes the confidence and engagement of parents and works in partnership with other schools, external agencies and the community, including business, to improve the school, extend the curriculum and increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for pupils
- i. the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure that there is safe recruitment and that all pupils are safe. This includes:
- the maintenance of the single central record and appropriate arrangements for child protection
 - the rigour with which absence is followed up
 - the decision-making process involved in taking pupils off roll
 - the care taken to ensure that pupils placed in alternative provision are safe at all times
 - the promotion of safe practices and a culture of safety, including e-safety.

Grade descriptors – Quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- The pursuit of excellence in all of the school's activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising and highly successful drive to strongly improve, or maintain, the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period of time.
- All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, are highly ambitious for the pupils and lead by example. They base their actions on a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance, and of staff and pupils' skills and attributes.
- Governors, or those with a similar responsibility, robustly hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- There are excellent policies which ensure that pupils have high levels of literacy, or pupils are making excellent progress in literacy.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning and provide focused professional development for all staff, especially those that are newly qualified and at an early stage of their careers. This is underpinned by highly robust performance management which encourages, challenges and supports teachers' improvement. As a result, teaching is outstanding, or at least consistently good and improving.
- The school's curriculum provides highly positive experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning. It has a very positive impact on all pupils' behaviour and safety, and contributes very well to pupils' academic achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents to the benefit of pupils, including those who find working with the school difficult.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Staff model professional standards in all of their work and demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy for pupils and others.
- Through highly effective, rigorous planning and controls, governors ensure financial stability, including the effective and efficient management of financial resources such as the pupil premium funding. This leads to the excellent deployment of staff and resources to the benefit of all groups of pupils.

Good (2)

- Key leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition.
- Teaching is good and/or improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring, effective performance management and professional development, which are closely matched to the needs of the school and staff.
- Self-evaluation is robust and the school's actions are carefully planned, concerted and effective.
- The well-thought-out policies ensure that pupils make at least good progress in literacy.
- Governors, or those in a similar position, systematically challenge senior leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved, or previous good performance in these areas have been consolidated.
- The school's curriculum provides well-organised and effective opportunities for learning for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. It promotes positive behaviour and a good understanding of safety matters and provides a broad range of experiences that contribute well to the pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works well with parents, including those who might find working with the school difficult, to achieve positive benefits for pupils.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Governors ensure the efficient management of financial resources. This leads to the effective deployment of staff and resources.

Requires improvement (3)

- Leadership and/or management require improvement because they are not good but are demonstrating the capacity to secure improvement in the school.

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if **any** of the following apply.

- Capacity for securing further improvement is limited because current leaders and managers have been ineffective in securing essential improvements.
- Improvements which have been made are fragile, too slow or are dependent on external support.
- Self-evaluation lacks rigour and is inaccurate in its conclusions so that leadership and management do not have a realistic view of outcomes or provision.
- Leaders and managers are not taking sufficiently effective steps towards securing good teaching for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders and managers are not taking sufficiently effective steps towards securing good behaviour from all pupils and a consistent approach to the management of challenging behaviour.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils or particular groups of pupils, or pupils are entered for public examinations inappropriately early, and pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are significantly impaired.
- A lack of attention to literacy is impeding pupils' progress.
- Governors are not sufficiently robust in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the effective and efficient deployment of resources.
- The school's strategies for engaging with parents are weak and parents have expressed little confidence in the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements and give serious cause for concern.

The quality of leadership in, and management of, the school (OFSTED subsidiary guidance (inspection of maintained schools and academies) – April 2013)

Governance

1. Inspectors will increasingly encounter different models of governance, such as those associated with federated arrangements, free schools and academy chains.
2. Whatever the mode of governance, inspectors must evaluate the extent to which governors both challenge and support the school and hold senior staff, including the headteacher, to account for the achievement of the pupils. Governors are not expected to be routinely involved in the day-to-day activity of the school. Governors are not expected to undertake lesson observations, unless the school has clear protocols for visits so their purposes are understood by school staff and governors alike². However, they hold important strategic responsibilities for the development and improvement of the school.
3. Inspectors should meet with as many governors during an inspection as is possible, and should determine how well governing bodies evaluate the performance of the school, particularly in terms of: pupil progress; the leadership of teaching; the management of staff; and the difference made by initiatives such as the pupil premium or the Year 7 catch-up premium.
4. Inspectors should consider whether governors:
 - carry out their statutory duties
 - understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching
 - ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, particularly their understanding and use of the school data dashboard
 - are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
 - are challenging and supporting leadership in equal measure
 - are providing support for an effective headteacher, or whether they are hindering school improvement by failing to tackle key concerns
 - understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression
 - performance manage the headteacher rigorously
 - are failing to perform well and contributing to weaknesses in leadership and management.

² School governance: Learning from the best

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-resource-%E2%80%93-school-governance-learning-best>

5. Inspectors should also satisfy themselves that the governing body is ensuring that the school's finances are properly managed, and investigate governors' role in deciding how the school is using the Pupil Premium.
6. If inspection evidence reveals particular weaknesses, these should be followed up assiduously. For example, if safeguarding arrangements do not meet required standards, inspectors must take this into account when evaluating governance and judging leadership and management. Similarly, if pupils' performance is in decline and the governing body has not pursued this issue effectively with the headteacher, this should be reflected in inspectors' evaluation of the effectiveness of the governing body and may have an impact on the leadership and management judgement.

Schools judged as 'requires improvement'

7. Where governance is ineffective in a school judged as 'requires improvement' and is graded three for leadership and management, inspectors should include an external review of governance in their recommendations for improvement. The form of words to be used in the report under What the school should do to improve further is "An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved". It is for the school to decide how this review will take place, and to commission and pay for it. Such reviews aim to be developmental, and do not represent a further inspection. Full details on what might be the form and nature of such reviews can be found on the following link: <http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/review-of-governance>.
8. In addition, when HMI conduct monitoring visits to schools judged as 'requires improvement' where the section 5 inspection was AI-led, HMI may judge that such schools may warrant an external review of governance. In such circumstances, the monitoring HMI should raise this matter with the school at the feedback session and refer to it in the monitoring visit letter, through reference to the evidence that led the inspector to recommend a review.

Schools placed in categories of concern

9. Where leadership and management is found to be inadequate and governance is weak or failing, Ofsted will write to the responsible authority (for example, the local authority, an academy organisation, the Department for Education, or a diocese) to draw the issue to their attention. In such cases, inspectors must include a statement that Ofsted will make recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school, under What the school should do to improve further. Inspectors should also consider that, when writing to the responsible authority, the recommendations for actions could also include an external review of governance. It will be for the school to commission and pay for the external review.

Characteristics of Strong, Good and Weak Governance

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	1. How well governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction	
	Characteristics	Examples of evidence
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good' governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors play a significant role in creating a vision that is shared by all members of the school community and is based on input from and consultation with a range of stakeholders. • The Governing Body (GB) is influential in setting the strategic direction of the school in partnership with senior leaders. • The GB ensures decisions are made in line with the school's vision and strategic priorities and monitors the impact of these decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School prospectus • GB agendas • Governance Structures, Committee work programmes and Terms of reference • GB and committee minutes • School Development Plan • School website • Headteacher's report to GB • School self-evaluation documentation
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors can articulate the vision of the school, which is consistently set out in relevant school documents. • Governors know the school's main priorities for improvement. • The work of the GB is focused on and driven by the school's strategic priorities. • The GB monitors progress against school development plan priorities. • Governors monitor how effectively the policy framework and its practices support the ethos of the school. 	
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of good governance are not evident. 	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	2. How well governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses		BACK
	Characteristics	Evidence to be sought	
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good' governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's overall performance. • Governors have an understanding of the data which they use to cross reference and challenge what they are told by school-leaders • Governors regularly evaluate their own effectiveness and this informs the evaluation of school leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Development Plan • Self Evaluation Summary • Governor Skills/Experience audit • Governor visit reports 	
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteacher provides GB with a range of information including external views and performance data to enable the governors to have confidence in the schools evaluation of its performance. • Governors have a balanced and accurate view of the schools main strengths and priorities for improvement. • The GB includes members with appropriate skills and understanding who have the ability to engage in self evaluation. • Governors' visits inform their knowledge of the school. • The School Development Plan (SDP) is clearly aligned to school self-evaluation and addresses any improvement priorities that have been identified. • The SDP indicates governor monitoring of progress in achieving key improvement priorities. • Minutes and discussions demonstrate that governors are using their time effectively to engage with school self-evaluation. 		
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 		

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	3. How well governors support and strengthen school leadership		BACK
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence	
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors can articulate high expectations for their school and these are reflected in the way they plan their monitoring, are present in school and encourage/support of collaboration. • Governors ensure the performance management of the Headteacher and other staff is focused on the school's strategic priorities and on improving the quality of teaching/pupil outcomes. • Governance structures are kept under review to ensure they reflect school and national priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee structures, terms of reference and work programmes • Governing Body/Committee minutes • Reports of Governor visits • School organisation structure • School Development Plan 	
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGB meetings are efficient and effective, with a clear focus on school improvement priorities. • GB structures/working practices are focussed on standards. • There is a strong/trusting relationship between the SLT and GB. • Governors understand how leadership and management responsibilities are divided among SLT and Middle Leaders. • Robust succession planning is in place, for senior/middle leaders and the Governing Body. • There is evidence of support/ funding for a wide range professional development for all staff including SLT and monitoring of its impact. • There are clear and robust procedures in place for Senior Leadership Recruitment and governor involvement in this is clear. 		
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 		

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	4. How well governors provide challenge and hold the Headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety		BACK
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence	
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor questions demonstrate a relentless drive for improvement, e.g. what more can be done to improve quality of teaching and pupil achievement? • Governors monitor the impact of a range of interventions and bring robust challenge where these are not successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher's reports • appropriate policies 	
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors receive a range of data, which is understood/questioned • Governors systematically challenge Head/SLT so that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has improved, or previous good performance in these areas have been consolidated. • Governors monitor the quality of teaching and improvement. • Governors receive a full range of data on pupils' behaviour and safety and challenge the school to bring about further improvement. • Governors know outcomes for groups of children, e.g. those with Special Educational Needs. • Where applicable Governors have an understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage/Sixth Form data. • Governors understand the school uses a range of interventions and can make reference to the most significant. • Governors have an understanding of national expectations of pupil performance and how their school compares. 		
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 		

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	5. How well governors use performance management systems, including the performance management of the Headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management	
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors can clearly articulate the link between self evaluation, school development planning and the appraisal/performance management process. • Clear and consistent monitoring of the impact of the Appraisal process demonstrates the impact of CPD on quality of teaching, leadership and management and pupil progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing Body agendas and minutes • Copy of Headteacher Appraisal • Headteacher's reports • Appraisal policy
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors select the external adviser, with clear understanding of what the role involves and what would constitute an appropriate individual. • The head's appraisal panel is appointed on the basis of appropriately trained/experienced panel members. • Head's performance monitoring meetings are held at least termly • Appraisal policy is in place and governors monitor its effectiveness. • The head's report shares evidence that performance management is robust, including explicit information about threshold and leadership progression and links to pay. • Challenging objectives are set for the head, which are consistent with school development priorities • Appraisal objectives of all teachers contribute towards school development plan priorities. • Clear links exist between appraisal, professional development activities, and their impact on the quality of teaching. 	
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 	

BACK

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	6. How well governors ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively BACK	
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget is consistently balanced with no significant carry forward balance. • Numbers on roll and projections inform future planning for min 3 years. • Governors routinely monitor the schools financial control mechanisms and know through evidence that financial probity exists. • Governors lead the SFVS/FMGE process and follow up on identified improvements. • Governors routinely engage in benchmarking and are able to articulate how the school has acted on findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegation (poss. within Terms of Reference Resources/Finance Committee) • Finance Reports • Work Programmes/Terms of Reference of Resources/Finance Committee • FGB, Finance/Resources Committee minutes
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a balanced budget. • Governors share a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and delegated authority relating to school's finances. • There are explicit links between school improvement priorities and the budget, which are openly discussed and reflected in minutes. • Minutes reflect monitoring of the impact of major spending decisions. • Minutes reflect appropriate challenge on financial issues. • Governors can articulate the controls in place to ensure probity (e.g. annual review of delegation of tasks and evidence of compliance). • SFVS/FMGE has been completed/is in progress with clear governor involvement and understanding of the process. • Scheduling of meetings reflects key priorities/ need for appropriate monitoring (e.g. approval of budget and key monitoring i.e. September). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit requirements (where appropriate) met • Register of Business Interests • SFVS or FMGE (academies) • Schedule/calendar of meetings
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	7. How well governors operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved		BACK
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence	
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGB documentation demonstrates a clear and consistent approach to fulfilling a wide range of statutory duties and the GB's determination to keep abreast of new initiatives and any changes in legislation. • Agendas/work programmes reflect a clear commitment to an annual cycle of timely discussion, review and approval of key compliance requirements e.g. Child Protection Policy. • The Headteacher, Chair and Clerk jointly agree the structure of agenda for each FGB to ensure they reflects statutory requirements and school priorities. • GB plans its training and development to reflect SDP priorities and latest government initiatives/requirements. E.g. Pupil Premium, SFVS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website • Minutes of FGB and committees • Scheme of delegation /terms of reference/work programmes for committees. • Policy review schedule 	
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors understand their statutory role and responsibilities. • Terms of reference clearly outline which policies require annual review. • FGB and committee agendas reflect statutory responsibilities. • The Clerk ensures agendas reflect statutory compliance issues. • Minutes reflect governors review and approval of statutory policies. • Governors know their responsibilities relating to safeguarding. • Governors know what information is required on the school website. • There are no references in Ofsted report to failure to meet statutory requirements. • Any parental concerns are effectively addressed in line with school policy. 		
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 		

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	8. How well governors engage with key stakeholders		BACK
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence	
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-School Agreement is reviewed each year and governors know the school takes reasonable steps to ensure all parents/carers sign it. • Parents, Pupils and staff are surveyed regularly and their views impact GB decisions. • Governors closely monitor parental engagement using a range of indicators, including how school engages with “hard to reach” parents. • Governors know that effective links with other schools, the local and wider community have a positive impact on pupil outcomes. • Governors actively take advantage of a wide range of opportunities to engage with all key stakeholder groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of signed home-school agreements • Attendance at parents’ evenings, curriculum events • Pupil/parental/staff surveys • Parents’ forum/council • Website – parents portal • Accessibility of policies • Cluster/partnerships arrangements • Community links • Engagement with local employers? • Engagement with hard to reach parents? • Communications to/with parents from GB. 	
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of parent and pupils are undertaken and reported to governors • Attendance at parents’ events is monitored. • A parents’ forum with clear terms of reference has structured meetings. • Links with other schools are known and their impact discussed. • Website – regularly maintained, has a range of useful info for parents • Governors know the school has effective community/business links. • There is evidence of governors engaging with parents. 		
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 		

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	9. How well governors use the pupil premium (PP) and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.		BACK
	Characteristics	Sources of Evidence :	
Strong Governance <i>all characteristics of 'good governance plus these bullet points:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors have discussed in detail, including intended outcomes/impact, how Pupil Premium (PP) funding is used. • Governors have regularly and monitored the outcomes of PP and know gaps are being reduced/removed. • Governors have a clear understanding of where gaps exist, both within the school and against national performance data. • Value for money (in terms of impact on pupil outcomes) is regularly discussed and challenged by governors (e.g. is PP having the impact we anticipated?). • The school's website and provides parents with a clear understanding of the amount of funding, how it is spent and what difference it makes to pupil outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of FGB and/or relevant committee e.g. Standards committee • Headteacher Reports (or other SLT member) to FGB or committees • Report on school website (statutory) 	
Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of PP is reported to GB or relevant committee and questions are asked relating to the broad impact of spend? • Governors understand the aim of PP and can point to at least one use of how it is spent in their school. • Governors know where gaps in attainment exist in their school. • The school website meets the statutory requirements regarding PP info. 		
Weak Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of sound governance are not evident. 		

EXAMPLE Governing Body Self-Review Action Plan Grid

[BACK](#)

Key Area: Holding School Leaders to Account						
Priority	What outcome do we want?	What will we do to achieve this outcome?	Who will do it?	How will the GB check on progress?	Deadline	What resources and training are needed?
1. Understanding RAISEonline	All governors having an understanding of pupil performance	Arrange a bespoke training session	The Chair via the LA	(a) The training will have taken place (b) All govs will have attended (c) All govs will be familiar with RAISE	Easter 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of session £200 • Printouts of RAISE data for each governor
2.						
3.						
4.						

* Choose your own, most appropriate milestone dates; eg Christmas, Easter, next July