

**GOVERNOR TRIAL RUN FOR OFSTED WITH MARK WILSON  
24TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

Attended by Bob Sydes, Eileen Robertson, John Fletcher, Don Henson

Mark highlighted three overarching questions that would be covered:

1. How do governors drive the school forward?
2. How do governors know the quality of management and teaching in the school?
3. How have governors ensured the school's finances are effectively used?

A key theme underlying the questioning was how do governors know the school is as the senior leadership team describe? Do we simply take on trust what they tell us?

**1. How do governors drive the school forward?**

Key answers:

- a. the system of governors' committees linked to oversight of specific parts of the School Improvement Plan
- b. link governors responsible for detailed oversight of specific elements of the School Improvement Plan or important policies

Secondary questions

Are governors happy with the action plan of the school?

Answers:

- a. discussed at the key committees and developed with full input from governors in these committees

What are our priorities for the future of the school?

Answers:

- a. that the new procedures become embedded and are capable of being implemented regardless of the personalities of the SLT
- b. that consistency of quality teaching is established

How do we hold the Headteacher to account?

Answers:

- a. through his reporting to the Executive
- b. through his fortnightly meetings with the Chair of Governors

Can we show where we have successfully challenged the headteacher or senior leadership team?

Answers

- a. the appointment of a Business Manager was sought by the Headteacher, governors insisted this could not be in addition to the existing SLT while finances were not yet under control, and insisted on a good case to be made for one being appointed and it must come out of existing SLT costs which led to the loss one Assistant head post
- b. the SLT brought a proposal to consider applying for Academy status which was received with reservations among the governors who took a lead in setting up a task and finish group to look into this and came back with recommendation not to proceed

Can we show where we have supported the headteacher or senior leadership team?

Answers

- a. proposals to reform the school day could have been controversial with parents but was fully backed by governors
- b. placing CCTV in the school toilets was also a potential sensitive issue, fully discussed with governors who gave full support in spite of ideological misgivings

**2. How do governors know the quality of teaching in the school?**

Key answers:

- a. we see that procedures have been put into place such as classroom observation, individual pupil tracking and targeted interventions that are aimed at improving quality of teaching
- b. we receive data reports from the SLT to the governors' committees
- c. link governors can directly interrogate the SLT on their understanding of quality in the school
- d. we have seen excellent results this year which reflect the application of the new procedures
- e. reporting back of the school improvement partner, Maxine Squires, encourages us to have trust in what the SLT are reporting

Secondary questions

Is performance management within school adequate to ensure quality of teaching?

Answers:

- a. new procedures have been established and have now had time to produce results, proven by the 2013 exam results
- b. attainment has improved across *all* subjects in school
- c. new members of the senior leadership team have been appointed to drive forward teaching quality and middle leadership
- d. we expect the results in 2014 to confirm the gains made this year

Can we be sure that the GCSE results in 2013 weren't merely a blip?

Answers:

- a. it is the 2013 results that were the blip, below the level of the previous three years (53% compared to 59-64% in 2009-11)
- b. the 2013 results correlate with the new procedures (e.g. pupil tracking and targeted intervention), we would have been surprised had there not been an improvement in 2013

### **3. How have governors ensured the school's finances are effectively used?**

The key question here seems to be focussed on one subsidiary question

How do we know whether the pupil premium is being effectively used?

- a. we receive reports to committee on its use, with details on how it is used for specific activities with specific groups of pupils
- b. we now have a link governor who will interrogate the details with the relevant member of the senior leadership

### **FINAL QUESTIONS**

**Do governors have any doubts about the category of good being applied to all the activities in the school?**

Answer:

- a. no doubts but we want to make sure that the new procedures are embedded within the school to ensure consistency across all subjects and independently of senior leadership personnel

**Do governors have the right skills to carry out their role?**

Answers:

- a. we carry out regular self review of the governing body
- b. we have discussed recruitment of governors to ensure we have the right governing body

**What do we see as the main areas for improvement in the school?**

Answers:

- a. narrowing the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and higher performing pupils
- b. embedding procedures in the routines of the school
- c. ensuring consistency of teaching quality across all subjects

One answer not given but of key importance to get across is that the school punches above its weight. Pupils' attainment is high compared with the underfunding of the school. Millthorpe is in the bottom 10% of schools in England for funding per pupil but lies in the top 20% of schools of its type as measured by the Fischer Family Trust.

Don Henson

Chair School and Community Committee

3rd October 2013