Education Team
Supporting Schools | Enabling Excellence

Governors' Handbook

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BIRMINGHAM

A link to this Governors' Handbook will appear on the Church of England website
http://www.cofebirmingham.com/

If you would like a larger print version, please contact rachelr@cofebirmingham.com

Dear Governor,

Welcome to school or academy governance with the Church of England, Birmingham.

The Government's White Paper in November 2010, 'The Importance of Teaching', dedicates aspects to governance. It describes governors as 'unsung heroes of our educational system'.

You have joined a group of over 300,000 governors at a time of great change in education. Whatever type of school you are a governor of, essentially, you are working on behalf of the Church of England, Birmingham and therefore a good working relationship based on trust, respect and aspirations for all our pupils is critical to success. The principles of good governance are key to making a difference. The key ingredients needed to transform a team of diverse people, with a range of skills, experience and knowledge into a highly effective Governing Board are:

- The right people around the table
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities
- Good chairing
- Professional clerking
- Good relationships based on trust
- Knowing the school or academy - the data, staff, parents, pupils and the community
- Commitment to asking challenging questions
- Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

Having this in place will help ensure that our schools and academies have the support of a Governing Board which holds the school or academy to account for its standards and conduct.

I hope this handbook provides the information to create the strong governance needed to ensure that our schools and academies are never less than good or outstanding.

Thank you for your support.

Revd Canon Barrie Scott
Deputy Diocesan Director of Education

The Role of the Governor

The role of the Governing Board is to contribute to the work of the school or academy Governing Board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school or academy by:

- ensuring the school or academy's vision, ethos and strategic direction reflect those of the **Diocesan Board of Education** Birmingham;
- holding the Head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school or academy and its pupils; and
- overseeing the financial performance of the school or academy and making sure money is well spent.

As part of the Governing Board team, a governor is expected to:

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at Governing Board meetings which determine:

   - the implementation of the vision and ethos of the school or academy;
   - clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school or academy;
   - that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

2. Hold Senior Leaders to account by monitoring the school or academy's performance; this includes:

   - agreeing the outcomes from the school or academy's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the School or Academy Improvement Plan;
   - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by the leaders and external sources on all aspects of performance;
   - asking challenging questions;
   - ensuring the Governing Body has implemented the required policies and procedures and that the school or academy is operating effectively according to those policies;
   - listening to and reporting to the school or academy's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff and the wider community including local employers.

3. Ensure the staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors which include:

   - contribution to the appointment of the Head Teacher;
   - contribution to the Head Teacher's performance management;
   - hearing of the appropriate part of staff grievances and disciplinary matters;
   - hearing of appeals about pupil exclusions.

AN OVERVIEW OF GOVERNING BOARD'S KEY PRIORITIES

Understand our school or academy
- Pupil attainment and progress
- Pupil behaviour, attendance and safety
- Teaching quality and staff development
- Christian Distinctiveness

Performance Data

Ofsted & SIAMS Reports

Self-evaluation

School or Academy Visits

Set our school or academy's strategic direction
- Champion our vision, values and ethos
- Set priorities for school or academy improvement
- Consider governance structure & school or academy status

Local Aspirations

National Floor Standards

Parent and Pupil Voice

Commission Action
- Agree improvement targets and strategies
- Agree allocation of resources
- Agree how to monitor and review progress

Improvement Plans

Budget Data

Performance manage our school or academy leaders
- Support the leadership of the Head Teacher or Principal
- Hold school or academy leaders to account for progress
- Ensure financial probity and efficiency

Performance Data
Financial Data
School or Academy Visits

Check we are fit for purpose
- Clarify our role and purpose
- Review constitution and ways of working
- Make sure members have necessary skills

Policy and Procedures
Ofsted and SIAMs Criteria
Self-Evaluation

The Purpose of the Governing Board

The Governing Board is the accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school or academy and for promoting high standards. The Governing Board aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school or academy which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being. As a Church of England school or academy the governors will always foster the Christian values and ethos. Decisions made by the governors will always be made working within the Christian character of the school or academy.

To set the strategic direction of the school or academy by:
- setting the values, aims and objectives for the school or academy;
- setting targets;
- agreeing the improvement strategy which includes monitoring all finances and agreeing the staffing structure.

To challenge and support the school or academy by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
- the implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework;
- progress towards targets;
- the implementation and effectiveness of the improvement strategy;
- the budget and the staffing structure;
- by conducting self-evaluation.

To ensure accountability by:
- responding to Ofsted and SIAMS reports when necessary;
- holding the Head Teacher to account for the performance of the school or academy;
- ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate;
- making information available to the community.

For Governing Boards to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:
- prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- supported by the appropriate authorities in that task;
- willing and able to monitor and review their own performance;
- willing and able to undertake appropriate training to at least meet statutory requirements.

The role of the governor as part of the corporate body

The Governing Board is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full Governing Board;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, co-opted, member appointed), the overriding concern of all governors must be the welfare of the school or academy.

The Governing Board follows the

Code of Practice for Members of a Church of England Governing Board

1.   Rationale

The purpose of this code of practice is to enable the Governing Board to:

- fulfil its primary role as the strategic leaders to make sure every child gets the best possible education;
- build a productive and supportive relationship with the Head Teacher and staff in promoting the Christian ethos of the school or academy while holding them to account for school or academy performance.

2.   Legal Framework

The Governing Board is a corporate body:

- governors have no authority to act individually except where the Governing Board has delegated authority to do so;
- all governors have equal status, and although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, the central concern must be the welfare of the school.

3.   Role and Responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction ensuring that the school or academy has identified what the Christian ethos means for the school or academy in its context and community;
- holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- overseeing the financial performance of the school or academy and making sure its money is well spent;
- ensuring the school or academy meets statutory requirements and additional functions and responsibilities depending on its category.

4. Commitment

Being a governor:

- involves participating fully in the work of the Governing Board so that individuals accept a fair share of the responsibilities and duties, including service on committees, working parties or as 'named governors';
- being prepared to serve on at least one committee;
- requires regular attendance at meetings of the full Governing Board and committees;
- requires getting to know the school or academy well and responding to opportunities to visit and get involved in school activities;
- requires seriously considering individual and collective training and development needs and using any designated funds to address them.

5. Confidentiality

Governors should:

- observe confidentiality routinely as a matter of course, but particularly when explicitly asked to do so, for example regarding matters concerning staff, children or their parents/carers;
- keep discussion about decisions confidential even when decisions themselves are made public through the minutes of meetings;

- exercise prudence when invited to respond in discussions and informal talk outside Governing Board meetings, and instead of passing individual comment, encourage issues to be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher or Governing Board (depending on the nature of the issue) through the proper channels.

6. Relationships

The Governing Board will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- the Head Teacher, staff, children, parents, the Diocese, the Local Authority, the local community and other local schools.

In forming, building and sustaining good working relationships governors will strive to:

- remember that they are typically representative of the *category* of governor to which they are appointed or elected, they are not representatives OF those *groups*, e.g. a representative parent, not a representative of the parents;
- work as members of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted, forming the Governing Board which functions with corporate responsibility and accountability and that all relationships are built on trust;
- develop an open and honest relationship with the Head Teacher and all school staff; acting as 'critical friend' to the school or academy, ensuring a balance is struck between offering challenge and support.

7. Conduct

Governors have a general duty to act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school or academy and will always strive to behave professionally.

- Governors will aim to discharge their duties in a manner that maintains and develops the positive Christian ethos of the school or academy and its reputation in the local community and wider educational community. Governors' actions should always reflect the responsibility to secure the positive Christian ethos of the school or academy.
- Governors should reflect on how they are perceived by stakeholders in all they say and do, both as individual governors and as a corporate body.
- Governors should consider carefully how their decisions and actions might affect others, whether they are individuals employed by the school or academy, children or adults who are part of the school or academy community, other schools in the locality or the wider community.
- Governors should express views openly at meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Board or any individual governor delegated to do so.
- Governors should not speak out against majority decisions in public or in private outside the Governing Board. The intention is to protect the reputation and authority of the Governing Board and the school or academy in the public domain. If governors have a concern they should speak to the chair of governors or the Diocese.
- Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Board when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- Governors will respond to criticism or complaints about the school and/or its staff by referring to the school or academy Complaints Procedure adopted by the Governing Board for the correct procedure to be followed and will advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors will record in the register of business interests any pecuniary interest they might have in connection with the Governing Board's business.
- Governors will be expected to declare when they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business and withdraw from the meeting while it is under discussion.
- Governors will always undertake visits in consultation with the Head Teacher.

Breach of this Code of Practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the Governing Board should seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes constructively.
- Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Governing Board, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be recorded in the minutes and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstances removal from the Governing Board.
- Governors will sign the Code at the first Governing Board meeting of each academic year.

Undertaking

- As a member of the Governing Board, I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school or academy at heart.
- I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school or academy, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos.
- I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school or academy, the Governing Board, the Head or staff.

Signed …………………………………………………………….

Printed Name …………………………………………………………..

Date …………………………………………………………….

Suggested Roles for Link Governors

1. Child Protection

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that the school or academy has effective policies and procedures in place for safeguarding pupils and monitoring the school's or academy's compliance with them.

As a Link Governor for child protection and safeguarding, you will play an essential role in ensuring pupils who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm are protected. Effective child protection is a vital part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

The Responsibilities of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Link Governor:

- to be familiar with legal guidance relating to child protection and safeguarding and attend any relevant training sessions;

- to ensure that the Governing Board implements an appropriate child protection and safeguarding policy;

- to help to ensure that the school or academy works well with relevant agencies and individuals;

- to encourage other members of the Governing Board to develop their understanding of the Governing Board's responsibilities with regard to child protection and safeguarding;

- to help to ensure that accurate records are being kept and the Single Central Record is kept up-to-date and kept securely in one place;

- to be aware of the number of pupils currently on the child protection register;

- to remedy any deficiencies in the safeguarding practices which may be brought to the attention of Governors by a member of staff, a parent or from any other source;

- to ensure that there is an up-to-date and agreed staff disciplinary procedure for dealing with allegations of misconduct against staff, including child protection allegations, that complies with the relevant legislation;

- to ensure that safe recruitment procedures are in place and appropriate checks are being carried out on new members of staff and volunteers;

- to understand how child protection and safeguarding issues are addressed through the curriculum;

- to meet regularly (at least termly) with the member of staff who is responsible for child protection and safeguarding;

- to monitor the effectiveness of the child protection and safeguarding policy;

- to work with the Link Governors for SEN (if appropriate);

- to ensure that the Governing Board receives an annual safeguarding report.

Getting started:

- arrange to meet with the member of staff responsible for child protection and safeguarding;

- ask for a copy of the child protection and safeguarding policy;
- ascertain information on the links with external agencies in relation to child protection and safeguarding.

Suggested questions for your initial visit:

Are arrangements in place to ensure that in the absence of the designated member of staff, staff know where to go to seek advice?

Are there enough resources available to the designated member of staff to enable them to carry out their role effectively?

Are the safeguarding responsibilities communicated to parents? How is this carried out?

What are the child protection and safeguarding priorities and how do you plan to address them?

What other agencies do we work with within the area and how effective are these partnerships?

Is there anything we can do as a Governing Board to enhance partnership working?

Do we need more staff dedicated to Safeguarding work (e.g. Learning Mentors)?

How safe do pupils feel? How do you know this?

Has anything changed in our policy this year? Why?

How many pupils have 'Individual Child in Need' or 'Child Protection' Plans?

2. Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is additional funding given to schools or academies so that they can support their disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between them and their peers.

The government believes that Head Teachers should decide how to use the pupil premium. They are held accountable for the decisions they make through:

- the performance tables which show the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils compared with their peers;
- the Ofsted inspection framework, under which inspectors focus on the attainment and progress of pupil groups, and in particular those who attract the pupil premium; and
- the reports for parents that schools and academies must publish online.

The responsibilities of the Pupil Premium Link Governors include:

- being familiar with the concept of the pupil premium; what it is, why it has been set in place, how it is allocated, how it is calculated, which pupil groups attract the premium;
- obtaining and become familiar with the pupil premium policy;
- knowing basic pupil premium facts for the school or academy; how many pupils attract the premium, how this figure compares with other local and similar schools/academies, how the money is spent;
- understanding relevant pupil performance data that shows progress of different groups over time;
- monitoring spending of the pupil premium, ensuring the money is spent in identifiable ways to support target groups of pupils;

- monitoring the impact of pupil premium spending on target groups;

- meeting occasionally with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO) and/or other staff responsible for performance data to discuss issues around underperforming groups including those eligible for the pupil premium;

- liaising with the Link Governor for SEN when appropriate;

- monitoring the attainment of different groups of pupils over time to provide evidence of how pupil premium pupils are progressing compared with others;

- challenging the allocation of the pupil premium grant if there is no clear audit trail evidencing appropriate use of the resources;

- taking an active part in any Governing Board or committee discussions when the allocation and monitoring of the pupil premium is discussed and decided; and

- reporting back to the Governing Board on the use of the pupil premium.

Getting started:

- arrange to meet with the member of staff responsible for Pupil Premium;

- look at the Pupil Premium statement on the school website.

Suggested questions for your initial visit:

How effective is the pupil premium policy in supporting the target groups?

How confident are you that the pupil premium grant is spent appropriately on the intended target groups?

Is the pupil premium funding kept separate from general resources so it can be specifically and identifiably used as intended?

How is the allocation of the pupil premium decided?

What is the pupil premium used for?

How is the progress of different groups of pupils monitored so that the school or academy can identify any underperforming groups?

Are there groups of pupils whose attainment falls behind others?

How does the attainment of pupil premium pupils as a group compare with others?

What would you say are the main challenges in the use of the pupil premium, and how is the school or academy working to overcome them?

What benefits can you see from the allocation of the pupil premium?

Is there anything that the Governing Board should be aware of that could help the school or academy gain the maximum advantage from the pupil premium?

3. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

All Governing Boards have specific legal responsibilities in relation to pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

In recognition of these responsibilities, many Governing Boards appoint a specific SEND governor, who has responsibility for liaising with the SEND coordinator and must ensure that the Governing Board is

aware of, and fulfils its responsibilities for, special educational needs and disabilities as described in the DfE publication

SEND Code of practice

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

The 'Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of SEND' (known more commonly as the Code of Practice) recommends that a Governor be appointed as a Link Governor for SEND to work alongside the SEND Coordinator (SENDCO) in order to monitor the way in which the school or academy manages its provision for pupils with SEND and to report on this regularly to the Governing Board.

The responsibilities of the SEND Link Governor include:

- visiting the school or academy to witness first-hand SEN provision;
- keeping up to date with relevant guidance and legislation;
- liaising regularly with the SENDCO, other Governors and other staff as necessary;
- ensuring that the Governing Board implements an appropriate SEND policy;
- ensuring that all parents are kept informed of the SEND policy;
- helping to review the policy on provision for pupils with SEND;
- attending relevant training sessions;
- Informing the Governing Board about SEND systems and practices;
- helping to raise awareness of SEND issues at Governing Board meetings;
- helping to ensure that all SEND pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- ensuring that the budget for SEND is allocated to pupils with SEND;
- providing the Governing Board with regular, up-to-date information on SEND provision; and
- liaising with the Link Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding when appropr

Getting started:

- arrange a meeting with the SENDCO to find out about SEND provision;
- ask for a copy of the SEND policy and the SEND Code of Practice;
- ascertain how the school or academy identifies SEND pupils;
- ascertain how the school or academy decides how the budget for SEND pupils is spent;
- find out how the school works with external agencies.

Suggested questions for your initial visit

How many pupils in the school or academy have SEND?
 *SEN Governors do not need to identify the names of individual pupils who are receiving support and it is inappropriate for them to view this list.

How many pupils have Education Healthcare Care Plans (EHCPs)?

How many members of staff have a particular role in SEND?

When were their skills last reviewed? What were the outcomes of the review?

What is the process once a pupil has been identified as having SEND?

What is the nature and range of SEND in the school or academy?

What is the proportion of SEND pupils within different groups, e.g. boys/girls, UK minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage, Looked After Children (LAC)?

Does the SEND policy reflect and meet the needs of pupils?

How does the policy ensure the support of pupils in their transfer to and from other schools or academies?

How does the school or academy provide equal access to both the premises and curriculum for pupils with SEND or disabilities?

What progress has been made on the SEND section of the School Improvement/Development Plan?

What links are there with external agencies regarding SEND?

Are there areas of SEND provision which could be improved by learning from other schools or academies which have expertise in this area?

Does the school or academy have expertise in one or more areas of SEND provision which could be shared with others?

How does the school or academy work in partnership with parents to help meet the needs of pupils with SEND?

Do parents of pupils with SEND have access to information about sources of advice and support?

Does the school or academy ensure that voluntary helpers are appropriately aware of the needs of pupils with SEND that they work with? Are voluntary helpers used to specifically support pupils with SEND? How?

How well do pupils with SEND perform?

How well is the school or academy's SEND work monitored?

Does the SENDCO have enough time and resources in order to carry out their responsibilities?

What is the rate of fixed term and permanent exclusions of pupils with SEND?

What are the authorised and unauthorised attendance figures for pupils with SEND?

How are Newly Qualified Teachers supported to meet the needs of children with SEND?

Is there an Accessibility Plan in place? When is this due to be reviewed?

What are the key issues in respect of SEND which need to be addressed in the School Improvement/Development Plan?

What progress has been made in addressing current SEND issues in the plan?

Governing Body Statutory Policies and Procedures
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-policies-for-schools

If you are unsure about any of these policies or require suggested model ones, please do get in touch.

Policy/Plan/Procedure	Review frequency	Approval
Accessibility Plan	Three years	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/Headteacher
Admission Arrangements	Annually Consultation at least every 7 years	Full Governing Body

Policy/Plan/Procedure	Review frequency	Approval
School Behaviour	Governing Body free to determine	Full Governing Body or a delegated committee
Capability of Staff	Every 3 Years	Full Governing Body
Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting Checks	Live Document	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Charging & Remissions	Governing Body free to determine	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Child Protection/Safeguarding	Annually	Full Governing Body
Complaints Procedure	Governing Body free to determine	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Data Protection Register with Information Commissioners Office	Every 2 Years Registration annually	Governing Body free to determine how to implement
Early Years Foundation Stage (see statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)	Every three years	Governing Body free to determine
Equality Information and Objective – publication	Every 4 Years, publish information annually	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Freedom of Information	Governing Body free to determine	Governing Body free to determine how to implement
Governor Allowances	Governing Body free to determine	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Health & Safety	Governing Body or Local Authority to determine	Governing Body free to determine how to implement
Home School Agreement	Governing Body free to determine	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Instrument of Government	Governing Body free to determine	Full Governing Body
Minutes of meetings	N/A	Full Governing Body or Committee
Medical Conditions Policy	Annually	Governing Body free to determine
Premises Management	See Website	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Register of Business Interests HT & Governors	Live Document	Governing Body free to determine
Register of Pupils	Live Document	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher
Register of Pupils Attendance	Live Document	Governing Body can delegate to the Headteacher
Relationships and Sex Education	Governing Body free to determine	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor/headteacher

Special Educational Needs or Disability	Annually	Full Governing Body
Staff Discipline, conduct and grievance	Every 3 Years	Full Governing Body
Statement of Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff	Governing Body free to determine	Governing Body free to determine
Teacher Appraisal	Governing Body free to determine	Free to delegate to committee or individual governor
Teachers Pay	Annually	Full Governing Body

The following policies should be provided by your HR provider

Policy
Pay Policy
Performance Management/Appraisal Policy for Teachers
Teachers Capability Procedure
Disciplinary Procedure for Schools
Grievance Procedure for Schools
Support Staff Competency
Procedure for SOSR
Managing Attendance Procedure
Whistle Blowing Procedure
Health & Safety Policy
The following procedures will enable schools to discharge other responsibilities under general employment legislation. There is also guidance on how to prepare a health and safety policy and guidance on meeting duties under the Equality Act, but models cannot be offered for these because they must reflect the individual needs and circumstances of the school.
Procedure for considering requests for flexible working including time off for study and training
Safer Recruitment including recruitment and selection complaints procedure
Job Sharing included in Flexible Working Procedure
Covering Teachers Absence CPD Policy
Anti-Harassment Policy & Procedure including Dignity at work
E safety
Temporary & Fixed Term Contracts Procedure
Code of Conduct All Staff

Additional Policies & Documents that the GB Maintains

Topic	DfE Recommendation or Requirement
Pupils' Attendance	Every 3 Years
Lettings	Every 3 Years
Policy Regarding Internal Financial Control	Annually
Best Value	Annually
Summary of Safeguarding Information for Visitors and Volunteers	Annually
Visitors Policy	Every 3 Years
Records Management Policy	Every 3 years
Educational Visits Policy	Annually
Confidentiality	Annually
Security	Annually

Financial Management Risk Self-Assessment	Annually
Lettings	Every 3 years
Mobile Phone	Every 2 years
Equal Opps & Inclusion / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Ever 3 Years

Assessment of Governing Board's Effectiveness

Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the Governing Board?

1. Have we completed a skills audit which ensure that the Governing Board has all the appropriate skills sets it needs?

If it does not, you need to have a recruitment strategy.

Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?

2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?

You need to consider what role you play in developing the School Improvement Plan and the input you have as a body to the strategic direction of the school.

3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the Governing Board's induction and development needs?

4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our Governing Board conducive to effective working?

There is no right or wrong answer to this, but it is worth considering that people's skills are linked to the various sub-committees.

5. How do we make use of good practice from across the country?

This is harder but it is useful to speak to other Governing Boards or to have training that enables you to get tips from how other Governing Boards work.

Role of the Chair: Does our Chair show strong and effective leadership?

6. Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair's performance and elect the chair each year?

This does not need to be formal, but it may be useful to have a small group of governors looking at the role of the Chair – Are the meetings run efficiently? Does the Chair liaise with the Head and Clerk? Does the Chair delegate well?

7. Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than two terms of office and the Chair is replaced at least every six years?

This may be the ideal but there may be good reasons for people serving longer; if so, you need to be aware what they are: people shouldn't just serve because they always have done - they still need to have the appropriate skills.

8. Does the Chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the Board's performance?

This does not need to be a formal process but might be linked to the skills audit – are we sure we have people with the appropriate skills? If someone needs to step down, is there a sensitive process to enable this to happen?

Vision, ethos and strategy

Strategy: Does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?

9. Does our vision look forward three to five years, and does it include what the children who have left the school or academy will have achieved?

Do the Governors (with the Head) have a clear long-term vision with measurable targets for the school or academy?

10. Have we agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?

If the governors know where they want to get to, do they know how to get there? Are there milestones along the way that everyone can understand?

11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the Governing Board's activities and agenda-setting?

Do you do things at the right time e.g. School Improvement Plan summer term, admissions policy Autumn term, look at data from previous year autumn term? Do you know when policies need to be reviewed and who reviews them (sub-committee or full governors)?

Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?
12. How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?

This is not about staff/parent governors but about gauging opinions through such things as questionnaires, visits etc.

13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the Governing Board to our parents and local community?

How do you work out what to communicate and what not to?! It is worth reviewing your website regularly.

14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

Lots to include in here potentially: focus on what has worked well and what will help in terms of your strategic plan, although a Christian ethos should run right through this – it is worth here looking at your relationship with the local church and the Diocese.

Effective accountability
Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?
15. How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data) so we can properly hold school leaders to account?

Some governors need to be aware of Analysing School Performance but key points need to be communicated to all governors – but in being aware of issues, what are governors and the school doing about them?

16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?

Is there a strategy around visits and how they are recorded? Are governors linked to classes, subject areas or is there some sort of other link that enables governors to visit?

17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?

Do you know what you are doing and when?!

18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?

You don't need to know details but that it is happening, and you need to make sure that there is a group of governors to performance manage the Head.

19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?

This may be down to the Finance sub-committee, but other governors need to be aware it is happening. The Finance sub-committee should get robust information and, if an Academy, be checking end of year accounts and getting budget updates. Also need to be particularly aware of how pupil premium money is spent and this should be communicated to all governors and be on the website.

Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?
20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the Governing Board's contribution been to this?

Part of the review process – but what about moving forward?

WEBSITE COMPLIANCE

What MAINTAINED SCHOOLS must publish online – updated by DfE 15th December 2022

What maintained schools must publish online - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

If you are an ACADEMY or FREE SCHOOL what must be published has been updated by the DFE on 15th December 2022

What academies, free schools and colleges must or should publish online - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Role of a member in an Academy

Members are much like "shareholders" in a company except that there are normally very few of them. They can be individuals or individuals representing a corporate body. So, for instance, in most of our Diocesan sponsored academies the members are the Diocesan Education Trust, the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Archdeacon and the Chair of Governors. The first three of these are people representing these organisations (or indeed someone representing the Archdeacon). The decision as to who these people are rests with the corporate body, but they might be appointed with an informal consultation with the school.

Members can also be Governors (or Directors - these terms are interchangeable) but they don't have to be, and it is good practice for at least one not to be. Members meet once a year at the annual general meeting which would normally take place just before the governors meeting. They have two specific roles at this meeting
1.   To appoint or re-appoint the Governing Board (or the Directors). The members don't appoint all the governors – there are normally 2 elected parents together with an elected staff member and some other governors may be appointed by the Church.
2.   To receive the annual accounts.
3.   To appoint the auditors

Members also have the power to amend the Articles, to wind up the company and to change the name of the company.

This is a key role because the members are the guarantee of the Church of England status of the school, but it is not a hands-on role – there is no requirement to visit and get to know the school as there is with a governor/director.

USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES/LINKS

1. **Governing Board Skills Audit - nga (National Governors' Association)**

   This is available as a pdf from the nga website: http://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx

   Link to skills audit:
   http://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/Workings-Of-The-Governing-Body/Governance-Tools/Skills-Audit.aspx

Governance handbook and competency framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2. **GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK 2017 - DfE**

   https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582868/Governance_Handbook_-_January_2017.pdf

   The NGA also has a version, with added notes, here:
   The Governance Handbook - National Governance Association (nga.org.uk)

3. **GOVERNORS FINANCIAL HANDBOOK 2018 - DFE**

   https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714474/Academies_Financial_Handbook_2018.pdf

4. **COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNORS 2017 – DFE**

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance_.pdf

5. **CLERKS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK 2017 – DFE**

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609971/Clerking_competency_framework.pdf