
20 key questions for governing boards

Governing board effectiveness

1. Have we completed a skills audit which informs the governor specification we use as the basis of governor appointment and interview?
2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?
3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing board's development needs?
4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?
5. How do we make use of good practice from across the country?
6. Do we carry out a regular review of performance and elect the chair each year?
7. Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than 2 terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every 6 years?
8. Does the governing body carry out an annual review of the board's performance?

Vision, ethos and strategy

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

9. Does our vision look forward 3 to 5 years, and does it include what the children who have left the school will have achieved?
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?
11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing board's activities and agenda setting?

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?
13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing board to our parents and local community?
14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

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?
16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?
17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?
18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?
19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?

Impact: are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?

20. How much has the school improved over the last 3 years, and what has the governing board's contribution been to this?