



Guidance for governing bodies: self-evaluation against the Ofsted framework

Does your governing body:

1) Work effectively with leaders to communicate the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and develop a culture of ambition?

Inspectors might look for evidence that:

- Governors are involved in setting the vision for the school and that they review this on a regular basis with senior leaders
- Governors promote the vision and ethos of the school both internally and externally
- Through their own behaviour and the way they conduct themselves, governors model the vision and ethos for others
- Governors are involved in setting the strategic direction for the school and their own work – they do this by putting the vision into their long-term planning and ensuring it is in the school's medium and long-term planning

Evidence of 'outstanding' governance:

- Notes, minutes and discussion indicate that governors have a strong involvement in setting the school's vision; they have a very clear idea of the kind of school they want
- This vision is well embedded through policies and procedures and underpins key activities such as who governors appoint as leaders of the school
- Everyone knows the school's key aims and vision – these might be printed on the back of ID badges and displayed on posters around the school; the school website makes the school vision and ethos very clear
- Targets and objectives set for the school and governors' own work are ambitious and challenging – key governors are involved in meetings where targets are set, for example
- Governors themselves set high expectations for the school's performance and outcomes
- Expectations are communicated through the website and other visible means such as posters around the school, within policies etc.

2) Provide a balance of challenge and support to leaders, understanding the strengths and areas needing improvement at the school?

Inspectors might look at whether:

- The headteacher's performance management included opportunities for the headteacher to identify how he/she could be supported and have personal and professional development needs met
- Minutes of meetings show that governors ask the headteacher about support and make supportive comments as well as asking challenging questions
- The headteacher is supported through the level of engagement of governors in key documents such as the school development plan and the school self-evaluation document
- Governors support the headteacher in taking difficult decisions, including decisions about pay awards to staff
- Governors can show how they have supported the headteacher where there have been significant issues in relation to staff, parents or pupils

Evidence of 'outstanding' governance:

- Governors take on key responsibilities including in monitoring plans such as the school development plan – there is a named governor for each objective/target as well as senior leader
- Governors provide support and check carefully where their support is most needed; they use expertise from their external roles, where present, to support the headteacher and other leaders

3) Have a good understanding of the issues facing the school and use this to provide support for an effective headteacher? i.e. not hindering an effective headteacher because governors do not understand the issues facing the school

Inspectors might look for evidence that:

- Governors understand the context of the school and the issues it faces
- The chair meets every week or two with the headteacher and the notes of these meetings identify any issues and the actions that need to be taken
- The chair maintains good email contact with the headteacher and is available should any major issue arise with which the headteacher needs support
- The vice-chair may also be involved in meetings with the headteacher and chair
- Governors do not try to run the school or take on responsibilities that are operational

Evidence of 'outstanding' governance:

- Governors can talk eloquently about the issues and the school's context. They show they understand how these issues and any context-related factors may affect how the school is led and the actions an effective headteacher needs to take
- During difficult times, such as major building work or a difficult situation with a member of staff, a parent or a pupil, the chair and vice-chair are actively involved and, if appropriate, present at meetings
- Governors ensure that the headteacher has mentoring and other one-to-one support if needed, especially when the school faces challenging issues
- Governors maintain their strategic focus and allow the headteacher to carry out the operational work. They do not interfere with decisions such as the approach to

	behaviour management taken by the school, but do check that this is effective
4) Understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression and performance?	
Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ Policies and plans for performance management, including for the headteacher, are robust ▪ Minutes show that governors receive anonymised information on the performance management targets/objectives for teaching staff. Governors focus on the extent to which these emphasise teaching, learning and progress and whether targets/objectives for staff with leadership responsibilities are challenging enough ▪ Governors check evidence of progression before they agree pay rises or thresholds for teaching staff. (Documentation and discussions with governors will provide evidence of this point for inspectors)	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ Minutes and the headteacher's reports to governors include information about the generic or general objectives set for staff and how these link with the school priorities. Minutes show that governors question senior leaders about the impact of these and request regular feedback ▪ There may be evidence that governors survey staff regularly and that surveys focus on the experience of performance management and how it is improving staff skills ▪ Documentation and discussion indicate that governors have a rigorous approach to checking evidence of performance before agreeing pay awards or agreeing to staff passing key thresholds for pay
5) Performance-manage the headteacher rigorously?	
Inspectors might look at: ▪ Policies and plans and how these set out the framework for performance management ▪ How governors link the headteacher's performance management targets to the school priorities ▪ Whether governors monitor how well the targets are being met/tackled during the year – for example, do they meet regularly with the headteacher to look at evidence of ongoing performance?	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ Policies and plans for performance management, including for the headteacher, are robust ▪ The governing body has a sub-group to review the headteacher's performance. An external professional is appointed to support this group ▪ The headteacher's targets/objectives are linked to achievement, teaching and learning, and leadership and management. They reflect the school's identified priorities ▪ The governors involved in the headteacher's performance management keep rigorous track of how well the targets set are being met – they collect evidence of performance throughout the year and check regularly to see if the headteacher is on track to achieve his/her objectives ▪ The headteacher feels the process of his/her performance management by governors is robust

6) Understand the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of pupils currently in the school?

Inspectors might look at whether:

- The quality and range of information in the headteacher's reports provides governors with a thorough and helpful analysis of the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' progress, including for different subjects and year groups
- Minutes show that governors ask questions and discuss the information provided by the school, and that they are focusing on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on pupils' progress
- Where there are issues in teaching, learning and assessment, governors ask for separate reports and regular updates to follow through the impact of actions that are being taken. (Minutes of meetings and discussions with governors will provide inspectors with evidence of this)
- Governors are linked to year groups or subjects, and records show that they visit regularly to check for themselves how teaching, learning and assessment are impacting on pupils' progress. This includes having discussions with pupils and ways of getting feedback from parents

Evidence of 'outstanding' governance:

- Governors have a comprehensive range of first-hand evidence of the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on progress, through their visits to the school. This includes talking to pupils about their learning experiences, looking at books, having discussions with year leaders, subject leaders and teachers, and obtaining feedback from parents
- Governors ensure that they have good-quality reports from the school about the impact of teaching, learning and assessment and actions to improve where learning and progress are slower
- Minutes and forward plans show that governors are following up, or tracking, areas where the impact of teaching is not as good as it should be
- Governors are actively involved in school development planning and ensure that any issues of teaching and its impact on learning and progress are addressed in the plan; named governors are identified on the plan as being responsible for monitoring progress against the various actions/targets in the plan
- Governors also feed into the school self-evaluation and ensure that this accurately captures the impact of teaching, learning and assessment – evidenced through discussions with governors, headteacher and minutes of meetings

7) Ensure that assessment information from leaders provides governors with sufficient and accurate information to ask probing questions about outcomes for pupils?

Inspectors might look at whether:

- The headteacher's reports contain relevant assessment information for governors to scrutinise
- Governors receive detailed analysis of examination results, including the data dashboard, and this is evident from meetings and minutes
- Governors question the assessment information robustly and this is evident in

Evidence of 'outstanding' governance:

- When interviewed by inspectors, governors show that they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of pupil performance, progress and attainment
- Governors also show that they understand comparisons with national data and that they look for outliers when comparing their data with national averages/medians etc.

the minutes of meetings Governors demonstrate that they understand the school's assessment information, they question leaders at all levels, and they also check that the assessment information is robust and accurate – they check the school's mechanism for internal and external moderation	- Training records show that all governors have attended training on how to read the RAISEonline report and the data dashboard - Governors look in depth at assessment information through their committee structure (for example, in a standards committee or curriculum committee); this is evidenced in minutes and agendas for meetings - Minutes and reports to governors show that they examine assessment information for different groups of pupils and know the actions the school is taking to improve pupil performance - Subject leaders are asked to present assessment information for their subjects, so that governors are able to question them and check what they are doing (and how well) to secure improvements, especially in the performance of pupils/groups that might be underachieving or falling behind - Individual governors have a role in focusing on assessment information in particular subjects or year groups, and they visit the school to check how pupils in their subject or year are progressing; this is reported back to a committee (standards or curriculum) or to the full governing body in terms of key headlines - Governors have shaped the headteacher's reports so that assessment information is presented to them in a way that makes it easier for them to identify issues in performance quickly; this is evidenced by discussions with the headteacher and the governors, and by written notes of requests for changes to the reports - There may be a working group of governors that looks at assessment information in detail to present key highlights and issues in pupil performance to governors. They track issues through checking on the impact of the school's actions to improve the progress of targeted groups, subjects, cohorts - All governors have, at their fingertips, the key areas and groups where performance
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	needs to improve and know what the school is doing to address these ▪ Governors are keeping a close watch on the impact of the school's actions to improve performance ▪ Most governors understand how to interpret progress tables and ask incisive questions about different groups ▪ Governors are actively involved in target setting for achievement in the school development plan, based on their understanding of how well the school is doing and how this compares with attainment on entry and national data
8) Ensure that the school's finances are properly managed and evaluate how the school is using the pupil premium and the primary PE and sport premium?	
Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ The governing body, in its committee structure, has an appropriate mechanism for overseeing the school finances ▪ There is a named accountable governor who has a lead role in overseeing the school's finances ▪ Financial policies are fully in place ▪ The forward agenda programme and minutes show a clear process for budget setting ▪ The school business manager meets regularly with the finance governor ▪ The school development plan is linked to finance; minutes of governing body or finance committee meetings clearly show that governors are linking finance and resource considerations to developments ▪ Audit reports demonstrate the effectiveness of finance and resource management ▪ Governors assess value for money in their financial and purchasing decisions – as shown by minutes ▪ School finances are in the black. If in the red, there is a clear recovery plan that will quickly get the finances back into the black ▪ Minutes show that governors monitor the budget and spending to ensure that the school does not go over budget ▪ There is a completed and up-to-date register of interests for members	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ The finances of the school are in excellent order with very positive audit reports ▪ The school has met national financial standards and governors have sophisticated methods of reviewing their spending decisions ▪ There is evidence that decisions are closely linked to promoting the best outcomes for pupils – for example, thorough evaluations of the impact of spending ▪ Reports on the use of pupil premium, sports funding and catch-up funding show sharp and incisive evaluations of the impact of how the money is spent

▪ Pupil premium, sports premium and catch-up funding are evaluated to indicate the impact on outcomes and personal development of pupils	
9) Have transparency and accountability, including in terms of recruitment of staff, governance structures, attendance at meetings, and contact with parents?	
Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ All governors sign up to a code of practice ▪ At the start of meetings, any personal or prejudicial interests are declared ▪ The school website has details about individual governors in terms of a pen-portrait and their role(s) on the governing body ▪ The website includes clear information on how staff and governors are recruited, the committee structure and how members are appointed to committees. ▪ Key decisions are minuted properly and any decisions taken by the chair and vice-chair in consultation with the headteacher are reported at the next governing body meeting and recorded ▪ Where decisions need to be communicated to staff and/or parents, letters from the chair are effective ▪ There are clear mechanisms for selecting governors, including for specific tasks or lead roles, and these are documented ▪ The governing body carries out a skills audit of its members regularly and uses it to identify areas for development and for allocating responsibilities ▪ Attendance at meetings is checked and there is a robust process for dealing with members who do not attend regularly enough ▪ The engagement strategy sets out how governors engage with parents and carers; it makes clear who meets parents and when, and describes the process by which governors should feed back to the chair or the governing body if approached by a parent or group of parents ▪ There is a clear process for dealing with complaints or appeals, with appropriate committees in place; the school website/governors' area explains the	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ The governing body is very open to staff and parents and carers and takes time to explain its roles through a wide range of engagement and feedback mechanisms ▪ The governing body has exceptionally clear and well-produced records of decisions it has taken and how these have been communicated to relevant parties ▪ The governors' area of the school website is highly informative about the work of the governing body and how it takes responsibility for its decisions and actions ▪ All governors have signed up to a code of conduct and demonstrate through their behaviour and actions that they are living up to the high standards expected by the Nolan Principles in public life ▪ Swift and decisive action is taken if a member is not attending or is in breach of the code of conduct

complaints and appeals processes Any complaints or appeals dealt with by governors are properly documented	
10) Evaluate quality of provision and outcomes through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and using the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement?	
Inspectors might look at whether: - The governing body carries out evaluations of: - The governing body - Individual governors - Committees - Governors use their link roles to find out how well their respective areas are performing – evidence might include minutes from meetings or brief written reports - Minutes show that governors analyse school data and ask probing questions about provision and performance across the school - Minutes show that governors review and contribute to the school's self-evaluation, once a term or twice a year - Minutes show that governors receive regular presentations from middle and senior school leaders on their work, including provision and outcomes; governors question these leaders to understand how well the school is performing in their areas and how good provision is - Governors are actively involved in reviews, internal and external - Governors meet regularly with pupils and parents to listen to their views; key points from these meetings are recorded and reported at governing body and committee meetings - Minutes show that governors consider reports of internal and external reviews of the school and monitor the actions from these - Governors are able to discuss the school's provision and performance and prioritise development areas based on the weaknesses identified through self-evaluation. They use the information they	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: - Minutes show that governors discuss the school's stage of development with great accuracy and confidence - Discussion with governors shows they have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development - Governors are active and independent in the way they find out how the school is performing - Governors visit the school regularly. There is a clear purpose to information-gathering during visits which supplements information governors are given at meetings - Governors form part of any school or subject review - The governing body has a committee looking expressly at a particular area for development

collect and receive to ensure they have a strong understanding of why performance is as it is and how it is linked to the provision	
11) Provide learning programmes or a curriculum with breadth, depth and relevance to meet relevant statutory requirements and the needs and interests of children, learners and employers, nationally and in the local community? 12) Successfully plan and manage learning programmes, the curriculum and careers advice to give all children and learners a good start and prepare them well for the next stage in their education, training or employment?	
Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ Relevant curricular policies have been signed off by governors ▪ Governors check curricular policies and how they ensure these are implemented ▪ Governors have links with subject areas, including PSHE, so that they can check the quality of provision ▪ Minutes show governors' monitoring of how well the curriculum meets the needs of different groups of pupils ▪ Governors check transition arrangements from their school to the next stage of education, training or employment ▪ In secondary schools, governors receive and probe leavers' data to check that there are as few NEETs as possible ▪ Governors ensure there is good careers guidance by obtaining information at meetings, checking at the school themselves and by asking pupils	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ Governors have strong understanding of the curricular provision in the school. They check how well this is implemented, using independent means as well as governing body or committee meetings ▪ Subject leaders are regularly invited to governor meetings to present information on their subject area so that governors are well informed ▪ Governors have a strong understanding of the range of pupils in their school, how well the curriculum matches their needs and how well prepared they are for their next steps
13) Actively promote equality and diversity? 14) Tackle bullying and discrimination? 15) Narrow any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners?	
Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ Policies on equality and diversity and British values are in place and reviewed by governors ▪ Minutes of meetings show that governors have discussed the school's approach to promoting equality of opportunity and making sure that no discrimination is accepted ▪ Minutes show that questions raised at meetings have focused on how equality and diversity are being promoted by the	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ Governors have a strong understanding of the context of their school and, therefore, what aspects of equality and diversity might be more important ▪ The curriculum and extra-curricular activities are developed to reflect the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of British society and promote tolerance and respect for others. Minutes and papers from governing body meetings, in particular meetings of the curriculum

school ▪ The headteacher's reports contain information on any discriminatory behaviour or incidents, including racist, homophobic or sexist bullying, and governors challenge and question the headteacher about any such incidents	committee, provide evidence of governors' input ▪ Records and reports from governors show that governors meet with different groups of pupils to check how well they get on with one another and gather their views on how harmonious the school community is ▪ The governing body includes clear and emphatic statements on the school website and in policies about its aims for promoting diversity and equality and not accepting any discriminatory behaviour or attitudes ▪ The governing body membership reflects the diversity of the local community and modern British society, and the governing body consciously recruits a diverse range of members
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16) Actively promote British values?

Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ Policies on British values are in place and reviewed by governors ▪ Minutes of meetings show that governors have discussed the school's approach to promoting British values and how these are reflected in the curriculum ▪ Governors have received presentations on how the school is providing pupils with opportunities to understand key British values such as tolerance, democracy and the rule of law ▪ Minutes show that questions raised at meetings have focused on how British values are being promoted by the school ▪ The headteacher's reports contain information on how British values are being embedded in the work of the school	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance: ▪ Governors have a strong understanding of the context of their school and, therefore, what aspects of British values might be more important ▪ The curriculum and extra-curricular activities are developed to reflect the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of British society and promote tolerance and respect for others ▪ Records and reports from governors show that governors meet with different groups of pupils to check how well they get on with one another and gather their views on: how harmonious the school community is; the level of respect between pupils of different backgrounds; and how well they understand the rule of law and democracy ▪ The governing body includes clear and emphatic statements on the school website and in policies about its aims for promoting British values
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17) Ensure there are safeguarding arrangements to protect children, young people and learners?

18) Ensure safeguards meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote the welfare of all learners and prevent radicalisation and extremism?

Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ The safeguarding policy is up to date and contains all the required information ▪ There is a lead member for safeguarding who visits the school regularly and highlights any issues for the governing body to consider or review ▪ Governors have ensured that staff have completed required training ▪ Governors have completed training also so that they understand their responsibilities ▪ At least one governor has completed the safer recruitment training – preferably several have done so ▪ There is an annual review of safeguarding in which governors are involved, with evidence of this in the review findings and in reports to the governing body ▪ Any external reviews of safeguarding are reported to governors	Evidence of ‘outstanding’ governance: ▪ Safeguarding requirements are effective and no issue of welfare or safety is ignored ▪ Safeguarding is on the agenda at every meeting. In addition, governors are regularly in school to check that the policy is being well implemented ▪ Governors gather the views of parents and pupils, and also staff, to ensure that the school is considered to be a safe place for all ▪ Policies and training for governors are of a high standard, and governors keep close track of the training that staff undergo to make sure they are all up to date ▪ Governors have required all staff to read Keeping Children Safe in Education, and have a record to indicate that all have read and understood this document
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19) Ensure effective tracking by leaders and governors of groups of pupils so none falls behind and underachieves?

Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ The headteacher's reports contain relevant data for governors to scrutinise ▪ Governors receive detailed analysis of examination results, including the data dashboard, and look at the performance of different groups of pupils; this is evident from meetings and minutes ▪ Governors robustly question the data where there are differences in progress between groups, and this is evident in minutes of meetings ▪ When interviewed by inspectors, governors show they clearly understand the school's strengths and weaknesses in terms of pupil performance, progress and attainment and any gaps in relation to the performance of different groups ▪ Governors show that they understand comparisons with national data for similar groups and that they look for outliers when comparing their data with national averages ▪ Training records show that all governors have attended training on how to read the RAISEonline report and the data	Evidence of ‘outstanding’ governance: ▪ Individual governors have a role in focusing on data for particular subjects or year groups, and they visit the school to check how pupils in their subject or year are progressing. They report back to a committee (standards or curriculum) or the full governing body ▪ Governors shape the headteacher's reports so that the data is presented in a way that helps them to quickly identify issues in performance. Evidence of this is seen in discussions, and in governors' written requests for changes to the headteacher's reports ▪ A governors' working group scrutinises data in detail and presents key highlights and issues in the performance of different groups to the governing body. These issues are tracked by checking on the impact of the school's actions to improve the progress of targeted groups, in specific subjects and/or year groups ▪ All governors have information at their fingertips on the key areas and groups where performance needs to improve, and
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dashboard ▪ Governors look in depth at data through their committee structure – in a standards committee or curriculum committee ▪ Minutes and reports to governors show they examine data for different groups of pupils and know the actions the school is taking to improve pupil performance where any groups are underperforming ▪ Subject leaders are asked to present data for their subjects, so that governors can question what they are doing, such as how they are improving the performance of any underachieving groups	they know what the school is doing to address these ▪ Governors keep a close watch on the impact of the school's actions to improve performance ▪ Most governors understand how to interpret progress tables and ask incisive questions about different groups ▪ Governors are actively involved in setting targets for achievement in the school development plan, based on their understanding of how well different groups are progressing and how this compares with attainment on entry and national data
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20) Discharge its core statutory functions effectively?

Inspectors might look at whether: ▪ There is evidence in documents that governors have looked in depth at the Governors' Handbook and understand their responsibilities ▪ There is a systematic approach to statutory requirements – for example, governors have a schedule that keeps track of such requirements and how they will be met ▪ All key statutory policies are in place ▪ The school website has all the required information and this is up to date ▪ Minutes of full governing body and committee meetings provide evidence of meeting requirements, such as ensuring key policies are in place and reviewed regularly ▪ A schedule for policy reviews is in place and available ▪ Key governors who have responsibility for areas such as safeguarding and special educational needs (SEN) are identified. They provide reports to the governing body on how well statutory requirements are met in their areas of responsibility ▪ Governors show, through minutes, that they keep a focus on strategic elements and not the operational aspect of the school; governors have a clear understanding of their boundaries ▪ Records show that all governors' statutory policies are in place	Evidence of 'outstanding' governance ▪ When questioned, governors have an excellent understanding of their statutory duties; they can explain and provide robust evidence of how they are meeting these ▪ Governors are very familiar with the governance handbook, and actively use it to promote and review their work ▪ There is clear forward planning, which outlines the work ahead and includes ensuring that statutory requirements are met ▪ A clear schedule of statutory responsibilities is available to governors so they can see what duties they must ensure the governing body and school undertake ▪ Lead governors for specific areas such as safeguarding and SEN provide regular and detailed reports to the rest of the governing body, gained from visits to the school and first-hand evidence, to show they are checking on statutory responsibilities ▪ The chair of the curriculum committee is, in particular, exceptionally well informed about statutory requirements regarding the curriculum and ensures checks are made ▪ Statutorily required policies are of high quality and governors monitor their implementation, as evidenced in a governors' folder containing reports from governors' visits and other activities ▪ Governors use a wide range of evidence to
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▪ There are clear timetables for checking on various policies and procedures that are statutorily required	monitor statutory requirements, such as discussions with pupils, examination of school documents, discussions with lead members of staff, and visits to lessons ▪ Evidence of this is in self-evaluation, governors' schedules of visits, and their reports to the governing body
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*This KeyDoc is featured in our article 'Self-evaluation against the Ofsted framework: guidance and proforma'. To read the article, visit <https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/> and enter the reference number **3958** in the search box.*