



What we think

about our effectiveness as a governing body

Building the team and excellence through self evaluation



Self-evaluation is essential for all school governing bodies and boards of directors. The Diocese of Blackburn has produced this unique tool to:

- ☀ help governing bodies/boards evaluate what is expected/required of them,
- ☀ provide a point of reference for developing and enabling governing effectiveness,
- ☀ enable members of the governing body to commit to an action plan for improvement.

Governors' Handbook

This tool should be seen to be a more faithfully Christian way of pursuing the guidance given in the latest version of the Governors' Handbook on how governing bodies/boards of directors should operate. It draws on the All-Party Parliamentary Group's "Twenty Questions for School Governing Bodies to ask themselves" as well as the features of the leadership of an 'Outstanding' Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools.

Using this tool

Individually or collectively grade the governing body/board by colouring the 'grade' column:

Red - criteria not met

Amber - criteria partially met

Green - criteria met

Discuss and write in evidence for the grading and complete the action plan provided by planning for improvement of the Amber and Red graded criteria.

	Questions	Grade	Evidence
1	Do we have the right skills and strengths on the governing body/board?		
a	A skills and strengths audit has been completed and analysed (<i>The one produced by the Diocese is recommended</i>).		
b	The audit has informed the roles each governor fulfils and any skills and strengths gaps have been identified.		
c	The audit informs the recruitment process of all category of governors.		
d	Governors are appointed on the basis of their skills and strengths.		
2	How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?		
a	Governors can articulate the three key roles of the Governing Body (GB).		
b	Governors consistently and confidently articulate, live out and promote a vision rooted in distinctively Christian values.		
c	Governors have a clear understanding of the role of the GB and Headteacher and the difference between operational and strategic.		
d	Governors can evidence a culture of keeping themselves up to date with education changes as well as the school.		
e	New governors are inducted effectively into their role.		
f	The Christian character and values of the school have a significant impact on the decision making of the GB.		
3	Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice, oversees the governing bodies induction and development needs?		
a	We have a knowledgeable and well informed clerk who advises us on our responsibilities.		
b	We have a job description and performance management process in place for our clerk.		

c	All our meetings, including committees, are clerked and the Agenda's/Minutes are of a consistent quality.		
d	Meetings keep to time and deal with agenda items		
e	Accurate Minutes, which record decisions and actions, are produced in a timely way and include evidence of GB challenge and impact.		
f	We have an appropriate level of funding for GB development and training which is part of the School Development Plan.		
g	We clearly identify governor training needs linked to the outcomes of the skills and strengths audit - all governors attend appropriate training during the year.		
4	Is the size, composition and any committee structure conducive to effective working?		
a	At least annually the GB reviews individual responsibilities and/or its committee structure and terms of reference to ensure they are fit for current purpose.		
b	The delegation of decision making (to individuals, committees, Headteacher) are clearly recorded and understood by all.		
c	GB meetings begin with a brief prayer or reflection and are mindful of the schools values in the way business is conducted.		
5	How do we make use of good practice from across the country?		
a	Lead governors keep themselves informed and disseminate information.		
b	Individuals access a range of sources including Diocesan/District briefings; Local Authority briefings; governor forums, local and national governance events, social networking, and relevant publications etc.		
6	Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair's performance and elect a chair each year (or as previously decided)?		
a	We undertake a review of the Chair's performance regularly using an appropriate tool.		

7	Do we engage in good succession planning so that recommended practice is followed?		
b	If the Chair stepped down is the GB confident that there would be an appropriately skilled governor to take up the position.		
c	Leadership is distributed across the GB e.g. committee chairing/lead responsibilities.		
d	A decision has been made that no governor serves longer than two terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every six years (recommended times).		
e	The GB has a clear and transparent mechanism for annual elections/ appointments understood by all governors.		
8	Does the Chair carry out an annual review of each governors' contribution to the Board's performance?		
a	All governors regularly attend and actively participate in GB meetings.		
b	The GB regularly evaluates its effectiveness in holding the school to account and supporting school improvement.		
c	The GB uses pupil/parent perception surveys to consult on a range of issues including asking all stakeholders their view of the GB and its effectiveness (e.g. staff, parents, Diocese/District, Local Authority).		
d	The development of all staff and governors as leaders in church schools is planned strategically with substantial benefits for the current leadership of the school.		
9	Does our vision look forward one, two, three and/or five years, and does it included what the children who have left school will have achieved?		
a	An agreed strategic plan is in place, having consulted all stakeholders.		
b	The strategic plan is regularly reviewed to take account of new challenges e.g. a new housing development, government policy etc.		

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?		
a	Governors and other school leaders have a clearly articulated shared vision, which is regularly reviewed and underpins the school development (or single) plan.		
b	Governors have a clear understanding of the school's development priorities and progress made towards these.		
c	Parents, the local church, the diocese/district and the wider community contribute fully to school life so that there is mutual and substantial benefit for all groups including their understanding of local, national and global communities.		
11	How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the Governing Body/Board activities and agenda setting?		
a	Governors have considered how to approach monitoring progress against school plans and who is responsible for what area.		
b	The Chair/Clerk ensures relevant meetings are timed to coincide with key milestones eg. budget setting, RaiseOnline, pupil progress reviews, lesson observations, staffing changes.		
12	How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?		
a	The school signposts parents to Ofsted's Parent View website		
b	The GB has mechanisms in place to consult parents, pupils and staff regarding their views on aspects of the school.		
c	There is evidence of ways in which the GB and school have responded to these consultations and communicated this to the stakeholders including the local Church.		
13	How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing body to our parents and the local community?		
a	We meet the statutory requirements for information to be included on the school's website.		

b	Relevant school policies and procedures are easily accessed by parents.		
c	There are a variety of communication channels which address the needs of the parents.		
d	Parents are informed about the work of the GB (this may include publishing GB Minutes)		
e	The link with the Church and Diocese/District is valued, they are engaged and kept informed.		
14	What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors locally and nationally?		
a	Governors have a clear understanding of the networks and groups that the school participates in and the impact on the school.		
b	Governors are aware of where their school fits into the local and national picture of schools supporting other schools.		
c	Governors are aware of and take advantage of being a Church School in their Diocese/District.		
15	How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data) so we can properly hold the school leaders to account?		
a	Governors receive succinct and clear reports from the headteacher (and other leaders) on school improvement priorities.		
b	Governors are familiar with the Ofsted data dashboard and the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) governors' data dashboard.		
c	Some governors are more 'expert' in understanding data, including the full RaiseOnline report, and able to draw conclusions.		
d	Pupil progress data is regularly presented to governors in a way all can understand.		
e	Governors use data presented to ask appropriate questions and challenge school leaders.		

f	Governors are keenly aware of the need to value other aspects of the school's performance not measured by data but inspected by SIAMS e.g. collective worship, Christian values, creativity, personal development.		
16	Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?		
a	Clear policy and procedures are in place for governor visits.		
b	Governor visits are planned in advance with a clear focus and purpose.		
c	Visit (monitoring) reports are linked to the school plans, factual, refer to impact, are agreed (by HT) and make suggestions for future visits.		
d	Governors can articulate the distinctively Christian characteristics of the school's values and the significant impact they have on the daily lives and achievements of learners.		
17	How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?		
a	Responsibility for policy review is delegated to a specific person eg. the Clerk, School Business Manager or a governor.		
b	Staff and governors work together to write and develop policies.		
c	All staff and governors are aware of policies and can access them.		
18	Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?		
a	The GB has a trained performance management panel (PMP) for the HT with a good understanding of the process and Schools plans/data.		
b	An experienced external advisor has been commissioned to advise the PMP, meeting statutory requirements.		
c	The PMP holds at least one review with the HT during the year.		

d	The PMP reports in general the outcome of the HT performance management and makes appropriate recommendations on pay.		
e	Governor's are confident that the performance management of all staff is carried out effectively, is linked to the schools plans and to pay, in a way that is fair and just.		
19	Are our financial systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?		
a	We have successfully achieved the SFVS and addressed any action points which arose.		
b	We have robust auditing processes in place, including external auditing of any school fund.		
c	One or more governors access the government's financial benchmarking data and this informs decision making.		
d	Clear delegations are in place for levels of spending and for budget monitoring and approval.		
e	Financial decisions are clearly linked to school development priorities.		
f	Staffing decisions reflect the requirement to ensure value for money, and decisions regarding pay are clearly linked to the agreed policy.		
20	How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing bodies contribution been to this?		
a	The GB can clearly state the impact it has had on different areas of school improvement and list a variety of actions it has taken.		
b	The GB can explain and list how it has supported the development of the Christian Distinctive nature of the school.		



“...chase after justice, faith, love and peace; you'll be in the company of all who call on the Lord from a pure heart....And the Lord's servant mustn't be a fighter, but must be gentle to all people, able to teach, able to bear evil without resentment, able to correct opponents with a meek spirit...”

(2 Timothy 2 verses 22-25
from 'The New Testament for Everyone' Trans. by Tom Wright)

School:

Governing Body Self-Evaluation Action Plan

Important: Not so urgent

PLAN for soon

Urgent: Very important

DO NOW

Not urgent

PAUSE

Urgent but not so important

PLAN for later

Date Completed: