

**SOLIHULL GOVERNOR SERVICES**

**GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNING BODIES:**

**SELF EVALUATION AGAINST THE OFSTED FRAMEWORK**



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

This document can help governing bodies evaluate their performance against the areas identified in the Ofsted inspection framework. It sets out what evidence inspectors might look for when assessing a school’s governance, and includes examples of what you might see in an outstanding governing body.

Please note, Ofsted inspects school governance as part of the wider judgement it makes on the school's leadership and management. As such, governance in your school will not receive a separate grade.

Governors might also be assessed on some of the broader aspects of leadership that Ofsted has identified. Therefore this should not be seen as a comprehensive list of criteria governors will be assessed on, only those specific areas Ofsted has identified as relating uniquely to governance.

You can find more information on the inspection process in Ofsted’s inspection handbook.



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| **Aspects identified by Ofsted** |
| **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction** |
| What inspectors might look for:* The structure of the governing body demonstrates governors think strategically, i.e. there is a strategy committee in place along with other key committees
* There is clear evidence of forward planning of meeting agendas
* Minutes show governors review the school's aims annually
* Governors use ‘away days’ to consider the vision and aims of the school and identify key priorities
* Governors who attend staff or senior leader ‘away days’ or training days on the school’s vision report back to full governing body
* Governors are involved in drawing up the school development plan and identifying annual and longer-term priorities
* If the school has had a major project or structural change, related documentation shows how governors have been involved i.e. major building works; becoming a federated school; becoming an academy; helping the school to come out of an Ofsted category

Evidence of outstanding governance:* There is evidence, including minutes and reports, of governors taking a lead role in setting the school’s vision, and involving key stakeholders in the local community
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| **Contributing to the school’s self-evaluation and understanding its strengths and weaknesses**  |
| What inspectors might look for:* Evidence of the governing body carrying out (self-)evaluations of:
	+ The governing body
	+ Individual governors
	+ Committees
* Governors use their link roles to find out how well the areas they are linked to are performing. Evidence might include minutes from meetings or brief written reports
* Minutes show governors analyse school data and ask probing questions about performance
* Minutes demonstrate that governors review and contribute to the school’s self-evaluation on a termly or bi-annual basis
* Minutes show that governors receive regular presentations from middle and senior leaders on their work. Governors probe and question these leaders so that they understand how well the school is performing in that area
* Governors are actively involved in school reviews and mock Ofsted inspections
* 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.
* Minutes show that governors consider comments made in Solihull School Advisers’ reports.
* Governors are able to discuss the school's performance and identify priorities for development based on the weaknesses identified through self-evaluation.
* Governors focus on the impact of changes and innovations.

Evidence of outstanding governance:* Minutes showing 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 good the school is
* Governors visit regularly. They have clear purpose around information gathering. They use this to supplement information they are given at meetings
* Governors form part of any school or subject review
* There is evidence of regular interactions with key stakeholders such as pupils and parents
* The governing body has a sub-committee looking expressly at a particular issue that needs development
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| **Supporting and strengthening school leadership** |
| What inspectors might look for:* The committee structure includes a clear framework for examining staffing issues
* The governing body has effective policies on leadership roles. Expectations of leaders across the school are encapsulated in job descriptions, person specifications etc.
* Governors participate in recruitment processes for senior and middle leaders. Minutes show governors taking a critical look at person specifications for leadership roles
* Governors use recruitment opportunities, especially at senior leadership level, to identify any gaps in skills
* Governors support and encourage leadership development programmes – policies and minutes evidence this
* The chair of governors meets weekly or every two weeks with the headteacher to:
	+ Discuss upcoming issues
	+ Act as a sounding board
	+ Support the headteacher in the actions he/she may need to take in managing the school
* Link governors meet the middle or senior leader responsible for that subject/area on a regular basis. They report back to the full governing body
* Minutes demonstrate effective processes and procedures for decision-making by governors so that school leaders have clear support for acting on these decisions

Evidence of outstanding governance:* There is evidence of a well balanced relationship in terms of support and challenge between school leaders and the governing body
* Governors assess carefully, through a staffing committee and use of performance management, the leadership roles across the school. They use this information to ensure that effective programmes for leadership development are in place
* The chair of governors has formed an excellent working partnership with the headteacher within which he/she can ask challenging questions but also provide support for difficult decisions
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| **Providing challenge and holding the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils’ achievement and pupils’ behaviour and safety** |
| What inspectors might look for:* The headteacher's report to governors provides clearly structured information under key headings, for example:
	+ Achievement
	+ Teaching and learning
	+ Behaviour and safety
	+ Leadership and management
* The headteacher’s report provides key performance data and information
* Minutes show that governors ask challenging questions based on the information provided by leaders
* Minutes show that data from external exams and tests is considered in depth by governors. Governors understand how to 'read' such data and compare with national averages
* Minutes also show the level of discussion and challenge to the school, especially where performance has not been so good, i.e. governors asking leaders what they intend to do to improve the performance
* Minutes and agendas show that the governing body invites middle and senior leaders to make presentations directly to them. Governors at these meetings ask probing questions and make relevant suggestions

Evidence of outstanding governance:* Governors demonstrate in meetings they have a sophisticated understanding of the school's performance so that they can quickly recognise weaker performance
* Evidence from meetings shows that governors get beneath the data to ask more difficult questions of senior leaders
* Governors ask leaders for solutions about how they intend to bring about improvement
* Minutes show that action plans are requested to address weaker performance and rigorously reviewed by governors to check for improvements
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| **Using performance management systems, including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management** |
| What inspectors might look for:* 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 headteacher feels the process of his/her performance management by governors is robust
* Minutes show that governors receive anonymised information on the performance management targets/objectives for other teaching staff. Governors focus on the extent to which these emphasise teaching, learning and achievement enough and that targets/objectives for staff with leadership responsibilities are challenging enough

Evidence of outstanding governance:* Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and ensure that the school's objectives for others will lead to better teaching, learning and achievement, and will help strengthen leadership across the school
* Governors review their own performance and use feedback from the school and other stakeholders to help them to improve this
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| **Ensuring solvency and probity, and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively** |
| What inspectors might look for:* 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 it 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 will have sophisticated methods of reviewing their spending decisions
* There is evidence that decisions closely linked to promoting the best outcomes for pupils
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| **Operating in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved** |
| What inspectors might look for:* Forward planning of agenda items includes statutory requirements and appropriate review cycles
* There is a clear timetable to review statutory policies and plans
* There is a register of statutory requirements of the governing body with self-evaluation notes as to whether these have been met or not. Where not met, the notes set out how and when they will be
* Policies on safeguarding and equalities are up-to-date with annual review of how well the school is performing in relation to both
* There may be external reviews of safeguarding which are reported to governors

Evidence of outstanding governance:* Documentation will clearly outline all statutory responsibilities with clear evaluation and evidence to show that these are being met
* All policies will be up-to-date with a review cycle and timetable clearly in place.
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| **Engaging with key stakeholders** |
| What inspectors might look for:* Governors have mechanisms for engaging parents and pupils regularly
* Governors use regular surveys for consulting with pupils, parents and staff and they use these to support decision making
* Surveys to other stakeholders - partners; local community etc
* Engagement events with local community, especially if major or significant changes to the school are planned i.e. becoming an academy; building works etc
* The school's website has opportunities for feedback to the school including to governors. Governors regularly check the feedback that is received
* The website publicises members of the governing body, their roles and information about their work
* School newsletters have a regular slot for governors to communicate with parents and pupils
* Governors are available at parents' meetings and other school events to which stakeholders and parents are invited in order to engage with them

Evidence of outstanding governance:* There are monthly engagement events with parents
* Governors are known to parents, pupils, staff and the local community
* Governors regularly feedback to parents on how they have responded to any suggestions and issues
* Governors also meet with pupils either through the school council or through focus group meetings on a termly basis. They make sure they provide full feedback
* The governing body has a clear engagement and communication strategy and an action plan
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| **Using the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics** |
| What inspectors might look for:* Evidence in minutes and headteacher's report about the use of the pupil premium
* Reports to governors on the impact of the pupil premium on different groups and on the contribution to raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics
* Minutes show that governors question and make suggestions about the use of the pupil premium
* Minutes of the finance committee (or committee that deals with finance) show that pupil premium is discussed in terms of the best way to spend it and its spending and impact reviewed

Evidence of outstanding governance:* Minutes show governors take a lead role in identifying the level of pupil premium and, through discussion with the school, decide how best to spend it
* Minutes and reports show governors review the impact of the spend in terms of pupil achievement and school performance
* Governors are able to give a clear account to inspectors of how, why and where the pupil premium has been spent and the impact it is having on pupils' achievements
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Proforma for governing bodies: self-evaluation against the Ofsted framework

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| Summary of current practice | Rating | Suggested actions for improvement | Owners and deadlines |
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| **Contributing to the school’s self-evaluation and understanding its strengths and weaknesses** |
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