Wednesday 28 February 2024

Support and challenge– a guide for Governors

Support and Challenge– a guide for Governors

This online session will be delivered by the LA School Improvement Education Advisors, topics to be covered will include strategic planning, school Improvement, financial management, accountability and compliance and effective working.

Introductions:

- Richard Woodfinn - Primary School Advisor (presenting)
- Nicki O'Flanagan - Education Improvement Officer (supporting)

Polite Request

Please do not record any of the sessions. We want leaders to be able to speak freely about their schools

An edited recording of the session will be made available

This session is part of a suite of training offered to support governors in Hillingdon Schools.

Suggestions

- Please use the ‘chat’ option to ask questions, all questions will be answered, some by a follow up email
- The slides will be made available to you, please make notes as you see fit

Agenda

1. Effective Ethical Governance
2. The Self Evaluation Form
3. The School Development Plan
4. Challenge and support
5. DATA
6. OFSTED and the deep dive methodology
7. Safeguarding

Effective Governing Boards

- Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Share in the common vision of what the school is trying to achieve
- Have meetings where all members feel able to speak
- Supported with good quality, relevant information from the school
- Undertake regular training – Audit skill set on a regular basis

Ethical Governance

- Ethical Leadership Commission Report ‘Navigating the Educational Moral Maze’
- The Nolan Principles
- DFE Maintained Schools Governance Guide (March 2024)
- Academy Trust Governance Guide (March 2024)

Governors as Strategic Leaders

DFE core functions

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

You need to know your school.

Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

- Does your school complete a SEF? If so, how often?
- What does the latest one say?
- Acronym

School Development Plan (SDP)
or School Improvement Plan (SIP)

- The SDP/SIP should be the driving force for school improvement
- The self-evaluation (SEF) needs to be accurate and give a clear picture of where the school is. For example, which subject area requires the most support? Why?
- The SEF should link seamlessly to the SDP

Governor self evaluation

- When did the last skills audit for your governors take place?
- Have you addressed those areas that need improving in your governing body?

Local and National issues

The continuing fall out from COVID

Reading

Disadvantaged/FSM (particular issue in borough)

BME – best performers – positive changes

Black Caribbean – not improving

EAL

Asylum and refugees

Agenda

Challenge and support

Challenge and support around school finances

- Delegated structure within the Governing Board to look at school finances.
- Interrogate the school budget setting (planning)process in conjunction with senior leaders and staff responsible for helping to set the budget.
- Signing off the school budget for the financial year.
- Holding leaders to account for their decision making. Financial risk and sustainability.
- Supporting leaders with their decision making.
- Monitoring the budget spend and reporting as required.
- Completion and submission of the schools SFVS annually to the DFE.

Challenge and Support around Statutory Policies

Governors Statutory Policies			
Safeguarding	Health and Safety	Equal Opportunities	SEND
Behaviour and Exclusions	Admissions	Complaints Data protection and Privacy	Charging and Remissions
Protection of childrens biometric informtion	Information published on the school website	Capability of staff	Early Career Teachers
Staff discipline – Code of Conduct	Children with health needs who cannot attend school		

Governors structures need to be in place to support leaders in formulating policies and also holding them to account for the content and effectiveness

Challenge and Support Structures

- Regular meetings with linked staff
- Staff presenting to the Governing Board
- High profile around school
- Governor protocols for visits to schools
- Challenging questions posed in a professional manner
- Celebration of schools successes
- Attendance at interviews
- Commitment to regular training
- Committee structure fit for purpose
- Accurate minutes

Challenge & Support

- How do governors balance appropriate challenge and support?
- How do you walk this fine line?
- Where does trust come into this?

Challenge & Support

- Begins with knowledge of the school. How do governors obtain their information SEF?
- Pupil voice? Teacher voice?
- Are governors ‘allowed’ to do exit interviews? Or ask staff their opinions?

Challenge & Support

- **Has your school addressed the areas identified for improvement at you most recent OFSTED inspection?**

Challenge & Support

- What questions have you asked recently?
- What documents have you scrutinised?
- What discussions have you had with senior leaders on improving areas identified for development?

Agenda

Data

Data

Governance Handbook

- It is a clear expectation of the Governance Competency Framework that all Governors, and not just the nominated Data Governor, are able to navigate and understand the data the school presents.

Data

Governance Handbook

- Despite the shift in focus of the Education Inspection Framework, in order to both understand their school's strengths and areas of development, particularly at this point in time, and ask those constructively challenging questions that are expected of them, Governors still need to understand and interrogate their school's data

Data

How are leaders sure of the accuracy of internal data?

What moderation has taken place/planned?

Data

How are leaders sure of the accuracy of internal data? Moderation

What moderation has taken place/planned? Exam boards, working with other schools, national bodies, internal moderation, local authority

Data (COVID legacy)

When talking about data schools need to consider and discuss the year groups coming through from KS1 and KS2 with no external data

Current year 6 (no KS1 data)

and Current year 10 and 11 (no KS2 data)

Data (COVID legacy)

Did you know that:

- **Last year's year 6 had no KS1 data so there is no progress information?**
- **How are school leaders accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses in outcomes?**

Data (COVID legacy)

Did you know that:

- **The current year 11 have no KS2 data so there will be no progress data at the end of this year?**
- **How are school leaders accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses in outcomes?**

OFSTED

"We want to see the assessment information you use as a school to identify how well your pupils are progressing in your curriculum and, crucially, how you use that information to improve pupils' achievement." **Sean Harford HMI**

Attendance

Possible questions:

- How do attendance figures compare to schools nationally?
- What about punctuality, do Governors receive this information?
- Are attendance figures improving?
- Who are the weakest attenders? Which groups?

Agenda

OFSTED

Types of Inspection

- **Section 5 inspections are now ungraded**
- **Although the key judgements will still be graded:**

(quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision)

Types of Inspection

- **Section 8 inspections has no overall grading or gradings of key judgements**
- **Instead, it determines whether the school has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.**

OFSTED

- The intention was to increase the number of inspections that Ofsted conducts from the beginning of the academic year 2022/23.
- As a result, Ofsted says it plans to inspect every school in England by the end of July 2025.
- During 2022/23, Ofsted inspected schools about three terms (12 months) behind their ‘window’.

OFSTED

Possible questions

- OFSTED will ask what Governors know about what is happening in the school and how they ensure the reliability of that information.

OFSTED

Possible questions

- For example, have the subject areas that underperform been identified prior to the underperformance, and how well do governors know their school? What does internal data tell you? How have you, as a governing body, reacted to internal data? How can you trust internal data?

OFSTED

Suggestions for preparing for an OFSTED visit and discussion.

1) **Choose which governors will meet inspectors**
2) **Meet soon, go through the questions and prompts – get some support form school leaders in answering the questions**

OFSTED

Deep Dives

- The methodology around how Inspectors review the Quality of Education
- Is broader and allows inspectors to see the bigger picture and identify systemic issues

OFSTED

Deep Dives

INTENT

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPACT

OFSTED

Deep Dives

1) Discussions with the Curriculum Leader
2) Discussions with the Subject Leader
3) Lesson Visits
4) Book Looks
5) Discussions with Pupils
6) Discussions with teachers

OFSTED

Deep Dives

Do governors understand the school at such a level?

Do school leaders understand your school this deeply?

What is the most important area that OFSTED inspect?

SAFEGUARDING

Agenda

Safeguarding

Safeguarding

Discussion on responsibilities for Safeguarding and governors will be discussed.

1. Safeguarding audit
2. Compliance checks
3. School bus/The key

Safeguarding

1. Safeguarding audit

Is there a governor responsible for safeguarding?

Does the school conduct a safeguarding audit? Is this completed annually?

Are the outcomes of the audit shared? Is an in-house audit sufficient?

Safeguarding

2.1 Compliance checks

Do governors conduct a review of the Single Central Record? Unless they are trained it is recommended that they do not.

Is the safeguarding governor a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, (DSL)?

Are all governors familiar with the document ‘Keeping Children safe in Education 2024’? For example, do they refer to it? Does the DSL?

Safeguarding

2.2 Compliance checks

Referring to Keeping children safe in education 2024 (KCSIE 2024)

For example, what does your safeguarding policy say about school visitors?

Does it say ‘schools and colleges should check ID’ as directed by KCSIE? **In my experience ID is rarely checked.**

Safeguarding

3. School bus/The key

Where do governors get their information from, how do they keep up to date?

Any Questions?