

THE SELF EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT DOCUMENT

JUDGEMENT: (for example) A4.3 The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met.

1. *What is this judgement about and what are Ofsted looking for?*

Read carefully the introductory section relating to this judgement, noting specific factors schools should consider and Ofsted will examine:

2. *What did you say and what did Ofsted last time?*

Read carefully the relevant section from your current SEF and previous Ofsted report relating to the judgement you are considering:

3. *What have you done to improve since then?*

Gather all the information you have relating to improvements you have made since your last inspection:

4. *How do you monitor progress and what evidence do you have?*

Read the section on key sources of evidence and gather the evidence you have to show these improvements. Keep this evidence in a "working" SEF file. Use the 'outline guidance' in the evaluation schedule to clarify the aspects inspectors will take account of when making their judgements.

5. *Make a judgement for your school:*

Grade 1: Outstanding Grade 2: Good Grade 3: Satisfactory Grade 4: Inadequate

6. Note key phrases:

Refer to the 'grade descriptors' section to confirm (or adjust) your judgement, noting key phrases used in the grade you have chosen to use in writing this section of the SEF.

7. Write/update your SEF:

Using phrases from the grade descriptors write/update your SEF by **briefly** stating the **major** reasons you have chosen this grade (a bullet point format is suggested).

8. Update your SEF on line and note the date below:

9. Consider how you could improve your school's performance in this area and make an **ACTION PLAN** for improvement:

10. Report SEF update and action plan to staff (noting date below):

11. Report SEF update and action plan to governors (noting date below):

12. Schedule date to review update this section (refer to SEF review cycle):

A4.3 The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met.

The governing body is responsible for the overall performance of the school and has a number of statutory responsibilities. As well as specifically reviewing its performance under this heading, the contribution the governing body and individual governors make should be considered and stated in several sections of the SEF and will be assessed by Ofsted in a more general way (e.g. safeguarding, community cohesion, equal opportunity etc). **If, in any particular judgement in the evaluation schedule, Ofsted inspectors assess the performance of the governing body to be inadequate due to a breach of statutory requirements, they are asked to consider judging the governing body overall to be inadequate.**

As part of the SEF completion/school improvement process schools should monitor, review and strengthen (and Ofsted inspectors will evaluate):

- how effectively governors help to shape the direction of the school
- how rigorously governors and supervisory boards challenge and support leaders and managers, holding them to account for tackling weaknesses and further improving outcomes for all pupils
- how well governors, supervisory boards and any joint committee(s) fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

Specific areas schools and inspectors should examine include:

- the extent to which the school's self-evaluation indicates compliance with statutory requirements
- the rigour of the governing body's procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and pupils
- how effectively governors fulfil their duties to promote community cohesion and inclusive practice relating to special educational needs, race equality, disability and gender equality
- how knowledgeable governors are of the work of the school, including its strengths and weaknesses, through their monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance
- how engaged governors are in actively setting priorities for improvement and how robustly they monitor and evaluate the impact of any improvement plans
- how effectively the governing body ensures that its skills and expertise are matched to the needs of the school and how effectively these are used to improve outcomes for pupils

- the extent to which the governing body understands the school's performance data and has an accurate picture of how well all the pupils are achieving compared with those in other schools, as well as how different groups of pupils within the school are performing
- how governors ensure that school targets are both achievable and sufficiently challenging to lead to and sustain improvement
- governors' understanding of barriers to learning, including attendance and behaviour issues, and what the school is doing to overcome them
- how effectively and confidently governors develop and use their skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account for improvement by robustly challenging underperformance
- how systematically governors consult and gather the views of users and stakeholders and how these views are taken into account in future planning.

Key sources of evidence:

Due to their strategic role and specific statutory responsibilities, information on the performance of the governing body will be found in several areas.

General:

- the SEF – the contribution of the governing body should be mentioned in several sections of the SEF – see next section
- minutes of governor meetings are a **key** source of evidence. The minutes of the previous 12 months meetings of the governing body and its various sub-committees are likely to be scrutinised by the inspection team. It is essential these minutes accurately record the tasks governors are undertaking e.g. annual review of safeguarding procedures, classroom visits, reports received, involvement in school improvement processes etc.
- the lead inspector will meet with representatives of the governing body as part of the inspection. The sort of questions they will be asked are set out on page ???. Schools should consider putting up a selection of governors who can talk expertly on key topics (e.g. school improvement, health and safety, equal opportunity, community cohesion) and ensure they are aware of the sort of questions they will be asked
- governors have a written record of their skills base and this is taken into account when recruiting new members and planning training events
- governors have a record of training events individually and collectively attended

Strategic planning/school improvement:

- governors have an annual meeting to review the school's progress, agree priorities, set targets and approve the school development plan

Safety:

- governors visit the school to assess the health and safety of staff and pupils and record their findings and report back to the governing body

Statutory responsibilities:

- governors have approved a school policy for each area of their statutory responsibility and there is a named lead governor for each key area (e.g. health and safety). The governing body receives periodic monitoring and evaluation reports and annually reviews key policies.

Relationships with staff:

- there are periodic governor/whole staff meetings and social events for all staff members
- individual staff members regularly present reports to governors on their specific responsibilities, for example the teaching of science, key stage 2 SATS results etc
- each governor adopts a class and knows its staff and pupils, with one governor having responsibility for non-teaching staff
- governors meet to monitor staff performance, absence etc

Monitoring and evaluation:

- governors are aware of school's performance data & improvement priorities, set challenging targets & regularly receive & assess progress reports
- members of the governing body regularly visit classrooms to assess the quality of teaching and learning – asking pupils similar questions to those that may be posed by Ofsted inspectors, for example: Why are you learning this? How will you know if you have done a good job?

Engagement with and views of parents and pupils:

- the governing body regularly meets with parents (or their representatives, for example parent council) and pupils (or their representatives, for example school council) to obtain their views on key school issues and school life in general
- the governing body regularly considers the results of parental surveys and parental complaints

Assessing the performance of the governing body:

As part of the inspection process, inspectors will draw on a broad range of evidence to assess the effectiveness of the governing body. They will examine a number of sections in the SEF, looking for references to the role the governors are playing, particularly in Part A

- outcomes for pupils, especially enjoying and achieving
- pupils' attendance and punctuality
- the contribution of the governing body to the quality of provision
- aspects of leadership and management, including school improvement planning and review, target setting and whether the governing body meets its statutory requirements

In the remaining sections of the SEF reference can be made to the performance of the governing body in a number of areas including:

- extended services
- designated SEN resource base or similar provision
- partnerships, including whether the school is federated
- the nature of pupils' special needs and pupils' disabilities
- pupils' mobility
- looked after children
- statutory targets
- transfers and retention of pupils
- staff turnover
- temporary teachers and teacher vacancies
- explanation of surplus /deficit budget in excess of 5%

In Part C, look in particular for any statutory requirements that are not in place or partly in place so that this can be followed up in discussion with governors.

During the inspection the team will seek to secure robust evidence to support the judgement for governance. They will consider the following questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how do governors know?
- What are the strengths and areas for development of the governing body?
- What are the main barriers to learning and what action has been taken to overcome them? How successful have the actions been?
- What contribution does the governing body think it has made to improving provision, especially teaching and outcomes for pupils?
- To what extent is the governing body involved in the school's processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning?
- How do governors monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school improvement plan?
- Can governors give examples of how they have supported and challenged the school?

- What are the procedures for safeguarding pupils and how have training needs been met?
- How are governors involved in the life of the school?
- Do governors have specific areas of responsibility and/or links with school classes/forms/tutor groups/subjects/departments? What is the impact of these links?
- How do governors consult parents/the local community?
- Can governors give examples of when parental/community views have been sought and acted on?
- How are the training needs of governors identified and addressed?
- What training have governors undertaken recently and what has been the impact of this training?

Typically inspectors will carry out one or more of the following activities:

A) Hold a discussion with at least one representative of the governing body. If it is not convenient for a representative to meet in person, a telephone conversation can be arranged. They may want to arrange a discussion with a small group of governors which will give them a clearer picture of the breadth of governors' involvement in self-evaluation and improvement planning and review, the level of understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which statutory duties are met. Inspectors' questions will focus on the impact that governors have on tackling weaknesses and securing improvement.

NB We strongly recommend that you put up a group of governors with expertise in areas particularly relating to the school improvement planning processes and their statutory responsibilities (e.g. including safeguarding, health and safety, community cohesion and equal opportunity).

B) Briefly scrutinise minutes of the full governing body and sub-committee meetings for the past year. This will help them to identify how robustly governors are focused on improvement and how effectively leaders are challenged and held to account. Inspectors will want to find out:

- if priorities in the improvement plan are discussed regularly
- whether issues are being addressed quickly enough or whether the same issues emerge with consistent regularity

Inspectors may identify pertinent issues from this scrutiny to pursue in discussion with governors or senior leaders, for example about the pace of improvement.

C) In discussions with senior and middle leaders, inspectors may include questions about the impact of the governing body and governors' involvement in self-evaluation and improvement planning. They might ask whether:

- middle leaders communicate directly with governors about standards and achievement

- named governors are linked to key aspects of the school's work. e.g. health & safety

D) Check when scrutinising the single central record whether governors in regular contact with children are included (see separate safeguarding guidance). Find out if the policy for safeguarding is reviewed annually.

E) When looking at the school's lesson observation and monitoring records, they may check the extent to which governors are actively involved. For example, whether they visit classrooms and provide feedback on their visits.

F) Where schools conduct child case studies, inspectors will check how governors may have been informed about issues and look at the extent to which they have challenged leaders to ensure the needs of all groups are being met effectively.

G) Look at the school's plan for improvement to identify how governors are involved in its development and evaluation. Check whether any of the success criteria are quantifiable and enable the governing body to hold staff to account. Check the extent to which the allocation of resources is linked clearly to appropriate priorities and whether it is based on a secure understanding of pupils' needs.

H) Analyse questionnaires and ask whether parents feel that their views are taken into account and acted on. Check whether the questionnaires' comments indicate how well complaints are dealt with by governors and how accessible parents feel governors are (they might look out to see if your governors are identified on the school notice board and website).

I) In moving around the school they will check whether it is safe and secure and may also check whether resources are of good quality and sufficient for all pupils' needs.

How well is your governing body doing?

We strongly recommend that the performance of the governing body is assessed and this section of the SEF is considered and drafted at a meeting of the whole governing body. This has a number of benefits: it will ensure that governors reflect upon their performance; it will deepen their understanding of their role; it will identify areas they can improve; it will enable them to better understand the SEF/school improvement process and it will enable them to gain an insight into the Ofsted inspection process, their role in the inspection and how they can be prepared.

A useful starting point can be to show the governing body the Ofsted grade descriptors for this judgement (set out overleaf) and ask governors to assess and grade their performance and briefly list the major reasons for choosing this grade and then draft this section of the SEF.

Governors should be aware that the new Ofsted framework has raised expectations of their role and achieving a "satisfactory" grade will be harder.

How well is the governing body doing – the grade descriptors.

	1 Outstanding	2 Good	3 Satisfactory	4 Inadequate
Strategic Planning	Governors make a highly significant contribution to the work and direction of the school. They have high levels of insight, are extremely well organised and thorough in their approach.	The governing body has the capacity to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school.	Governors are directly involved in setting appropriate priorities for improvement. They are well organised and are visible in the school community.	<p>The governing body has too little impact on the direction and work of the school.</p> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The governing body does not challenge the school to address weaknesses and bring about improvement <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The governing body's negligence in failing to meet its statutory requirements places the pupils' achievement or well-being at risk.
Safety	They are vigorous in ensuring that all pupils and staff are safe.	Governors are rigorous in ensuring that pupils and staff are safe	They ensure that pupils and staff are safe.	
Statutory responsibilities	In discharging their statutory responsibilities, they have highly robust systems for evaluating the effectiveness of their implementation, keeping the work of the school under review and acting upon their findings.	They discharge their statutory duties effectively.	Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities	
Relationships with staff	They engage very effectively with staff as a whole.	Their relationships with staff are constructive.	They support staff and pupils.	
Monitoring and Evaluation	Governors are innovative, flexible and adapt to new ideas quickly. They are confident in providing high levels of professional challenge to hold the school to account. They support the work of the staff in improving outcomes for all pupils.	They are fully and systematically involved in evaluating the school. They show determination in challenging and supporting the school in tackling weaknesses and so bringing about necessary improvements.	The governing body holds the school to account for tackling important weaknesses. Most governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and understand the challenges it faces.	
Engagement with and views of parents and pupils	Governors engage very effectively with parents and pupils as a whole and are well informed about users' views of the school. They use these views to inform strategic priorities for development.	Governors have clear systems for seeking the views of parents and pupils and mechanisms for acting on these.	Governors engage often with parents and pupils and respond quickly to their views and any significant concerns they may have.	

How can your school strengthen the role of the governing body?

It is recommended that the governing body meet to collectively review its performance and complete this section of the SEF.

On the CD we provide you with 6 key documents that should be distributed to governors to prepare for and use as part of this meeting:

1. The Improving Schools Programme "Strengthening Governance: Knowing Your School" document produced by the National Strategies Group of the DCSF for Primary School which clearly sets out governors role as critical friends and their role in the school improvement process
2. "Questions for Your Governing Body to Consider" - A document produced by the National Audit Office with key question set out under a number of strategic headings
3. "A Governing Body Self Review Check Sheet" for each governing body to complete
4. "Questions Ofsted Will Ask" relating to the performance of the governing body as part of the inspection process
5. "Ofsted Descriptors for Grading Governing Bodies" for use in completing the SEF and the Ofsted inspection process
6. "The Effectiveness of the Governing Body" - This is the full supplementary guidance provided by Ofsted to help inspectors to judge the effectiveness of schools' governing bodies.

As a result of this meeting the governing body can draft an action plan for improving its performance.

<http://www.governor.net.co.uk/> is a website set up by the government specifically for school governors and contains the latest publications and guidance for school governors, the DCSF termly newsletter for governors and is a valuable general resource.

Here you can also download "A Guide to the Law for School Governors" in word, pdf or CD format.

Visit <http://www.teachers.tv/roles/primary/governor> to view programmes dedicated to primary school governors. This governor channel enables governors to keep up to date with the latest educational developments and get tips on how to be a better governor.

There is a wealth of 15 to 30 minute programmes on topics such as being chair, setting targets, federations, child protection community cohesion which could usefully be viewed during governor meetings.

Every term, some key inspection documents are updated and you can download a summary document of these changes which details the latest amendments from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Education-and-skills/Schools/Main-inspection-documents-for-inspectors> .

It would be useful to designate a governor with responsibility for visiting this site termly to keep up to date with key changes and pass on to other members of the governing body.

Documents on the CD

In the A4.3 "The effectiveness of the governing body" folder on the CD provided can be found:

The Improving Schools Programme "Strengthening Governance: Knowing Your School" document

Questions for Your Governing Body to Consider document

A Governing Body Self Review Check Sheet

Questions Ofsted Will Ask

Ofsted Descriptors for Grading Governing Bodies

The Effectiveness of the Governing Body supplementary guidance for inspectors

Questions for Your Governing Body to Consider

(Extracted from a National Audit Office Document)

DOES YOUR GOVERNING BODY HAVE THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE?

1. Does your governing body have enough members to fulfil all its responsibilities effectively?
2. Governors bring diverse skills and experience to the table. Has your governing body identified its current strengths and any additional skills it should look for in future governors?
3. Do all governors participate in appropriate training events?
4. Has your school nominated a governor to undertake the Safer Recruitment Online Training?
5. Does the Chair of Governors meet regularly with the headteacher (i.e. at least once a month)?
6. If yours is a good school with an effective governing body, have you thought about sharing your expertise with other schools in your area?

Skills and experience in the following areas are useful to governing bodies:

- *Strategic planning
- *Decision making
- *Project management
- *Team working
- *Financial management
- *Human resources
- *Communications and marketing
- *Law
- *Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- *Buildings and maintenance
- *Basic understanding of statistics
- *Theories and methods of teaching
- *Key areas of the curriculum
- *Behaviour management
- *Special needs

GOVERNOR FOCUS AREAS AND QUESTIONS

SCHOOL LEADERS

1. Do you assess the headteacher's performance each year by reference to the school's progress against its published and internal targets?
2. Is your headteacher developing the leadership skills and team work of senior staff to help improve school performance and make it easier for a new headteacher to take over?
3. When recruiting a new headteacher, do experienced governors assess the candidates with the help of knowledgeable and experienced officers of the local authority?
4. When appointing deputy headteachers and other senior staff, does the school consider candidates' potential for becoming a headteacher?

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

1. Effective self-evaluation by schools is a key tool for school improvement. Ofsted provides an electronic form for schools to use to record the results of their self-evaluation. Is your school's self-evaluation form up-to-date to aid school performance monitoring and Ofsted inspection?
2. Have governors reviewed and approved the completed self-evaluation form?
3. Have you taken into account the views of parents and pupils?
4. Have you identified how self-evaluation has improved your school?

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS

1. Do all teachers feel supported and valued by governors and management?
2. Do governors know the reasons why teachers leave the school?
3. Does the school set and monitor a programme of Continuing Professional Development for teachers?
4. In secondary schools, do the governors know the extent to which subjects are taught by non-specialist teachers?

TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

1. Is your school offering a balanced curriculum with an appropriate range of academic and vocational subjects?
2. Does the governing body receive regular information from heads of departments and other curriculum leaders?
3. Is there regular observation of teaching staff, including feedback, with the results reported to governors?
4. How does the school address the need for improvement in any areas and how does it ensure good practice is shared? n In January 2005, there were 432,000 teachers in maintained schools.

MANAGING STAFF SICKNESS

1. Does your school monitor trends in staff sickness?
2. Is staff sickness above or below average?
3. Does the school have a policy in place to support teachers who are sick?
4. Does the school have a policy in place to support supply teachers?

PUPIL SATISFACTION

1. Are your pupils happy in school?
2. Does your school have a school council to represent the views of pupils?
3. Do pupils have the opportunity to give both written and oral feedback?

PUPIL ATTAINMENT

1. Does your school have a culture of high expectations and achievement?
2. Is the attainment of individual pupils monitored regularly?
3. Does the school have a range of annual attainment targets that stretch pupils and staff and, in setting them, does the school refer to the annual guidance issued by the DCSF?
4. Does the governing body monitor progress towards targets and know the reasons why progress exceeds or falls below these targets?
5. Are subject and year groups' specific strengths and weaknesses identified?
6. Are plans made to address weaknesses and are they followed up?
7. Do school leaders and governors use and understand a variety of performance data, including Ofsted's Performance and Assessment (PANDA) reports (replaced by RAISEonline from July 2006)?

PUPIL ATTENDANCE

1. Does your school give a high priority to managing attendance?
2. Does the school have a written attendance policy?
3. Do you compare authorised and unauthorised absence rates to the national average and to the rates at other schools in your area, as well as looking at your school's trends over time?
4. Do you work with the local authority on tackling the underlying causes of persistent absence of individual pupils or groups of pupils?

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

1. Does your school have a home-school agreement, approved by the governors, and sent to homes for all parents to sign and return?
2. Does the school have an up-to-date behaviour policy (including anti-bullying) that pupils understand and that staff enforce where appropriate?
3. To what extent are lessons disrupted by poor behaviour?
4. Does the school consider all options for exclusions – fixed period and permanent, internal and external?

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. Do school leaders and other relevant staff members collectively have the financial management skills needed to manage budgets that extend over several years?
2. Are all components of the school budget being used efficiently and effectively?
3. Does the school leadership team meet regularly to discuss financial matters related to the school?
4. Does the school draw upon the financial expertise of its local authority where appropriate?

SCHOOL FACILITIES

1. Is the school environment safe, clean, well presented and fit for purpose? Do you have plans to improve any outdated buildings?
2. Does your school have a planned prioritised maintenance programme to keep the buildings in good condition?
3. Does the school have appropriate and well-managed ICT equipment?

SCHOOLS IN THE COMMUNITY

1. Does your school have good links with the local community?
2. Does the school have a good relationship with local authority school advisors?
3. Do parents get involved in the school, for example attending parents' evenings and assisting in classrooms and/or with school events?
4. Does the school place sufficient emphasis on marketing itself within the local community? (For example do you have a prospectus, website, welcoming reception area, open days, good contacts with the local media?)
5. Do pupils present a positive image, inside and outside the school?