



GOVERNORS' GUIDE
ON THE
EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BODY

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Part 1: The Governing Body's Leadership Role

Introduction

The governing body is a major influence on the educational character, values and main aims of a school. Its responsibilities are many and sometimes complex. There are several ways to measure the effectiveness of the governing body but ultimately it will be held to account for the well-being of its young people and the value the school adds to help them attain results and achieve their full potential.

The Three Main Roles of the Governing Body

1. The Strategic Role

Governors will work with the headteacher to:

- (i) set the aims and objectives for the school;
- (ii) agree policies, targets and priorities for achieving these objectives;
- (iii) monitor and evaluate the aims and objectives and whether the policies, targets and priorities are being met, always with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

Please note that the strategic role is discussed more fully in Part 2.

2. The Critical (or 'questioning') Friend

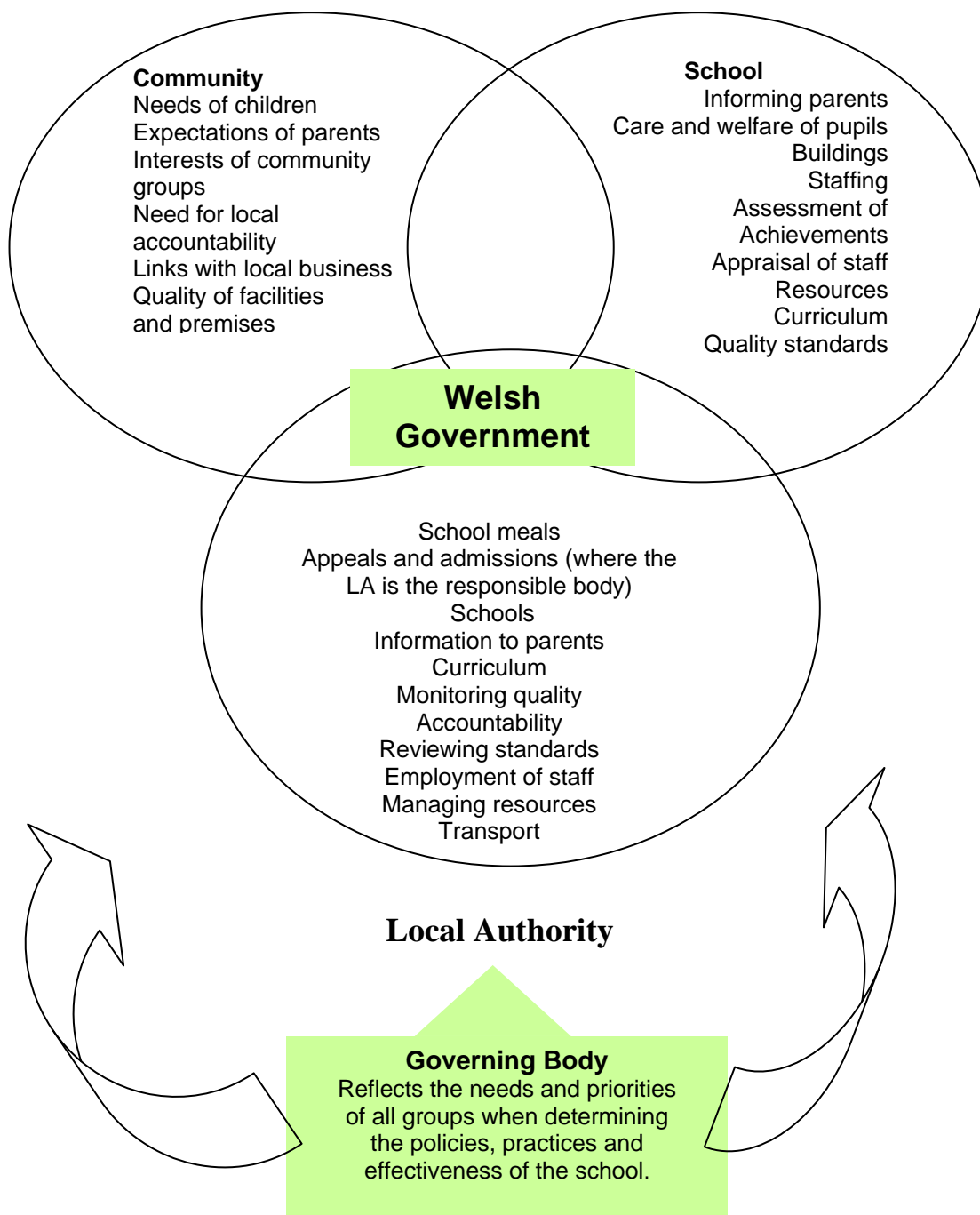
Governors will provide support and constructive advice to the headteacher and act as a forum for discussing ideas and initiatives. Governors also seek clarification, ask challenging questions and request information in order to arrive at the best decisions for all concerned.

3. The Accountable Role

"The headteacher and professional staff are accountable to the governing body for the school's performance. The governing body must be prepared to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest. This may include staff, pupils, parents and the press, as well as the LA, the school's foundation or Welsh Government." **(Guidance on the School Government (Terms of Reference) (Wales) Regulations 2000 – NAFW circular No: 34/2000 and The School Government (Terms of Reference) (Wales) Regulations 2000).**

Sharing Responsibilities – How Governors are Responsible and Accountable

The chart below indicates how governors are responsible and accountable.



School governors are expected to:

- attend a full governing body meeting at least once per term;
- participate in committees, as required, at least once per term;
- carry out their strategic role (see Part 2 of this series);
- visit the school to get a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and any issues there may be. Many schools have governors who are linked to teachers or curriculum areas to establish stronger relationships with staff;
- act as contact with parents, community, employers and other partners, receiving their feedback and reviewing their opinions;
- keep up-to-date with what is happening in education, particularly the law as it affects schools and governors;
- make best use of their own and other governors' talents to strengthen the team;
- set objectives for the headteacher and implement a pay policy for all staff;
- participate in the inspection of the school and prepare the action plan in response to the inspection report;
- respect people's rights to privacy and keep sensitive information confidential.

For further information, please refer to the Decision Planner in Section 1, Part 2 of the '**A Handbook for Governors of Schools in Wales.**' The planner sets out the various functions and responsibilities of schools, allocating the decisions to those:

- (i) made by the governing body;
- (ii) made by the governing body with advice from the headteacher;
- (iii) delegated to the headteacher;
- (iv) made by the headteacher.

Principles of Conduct

In order for governors to discharge their responsibilities and duties effectively and efficiently, governing bodies should adopt a set of guiding principles. The following list is suggested as something governing bodies may wish to consider. Governors should:

- ensure that their actions reflect the considered, best interests of the school and its pupils;
- attend governing body meetings regularly;
- on appointment / election attend induction training, data training and chair training (for chairs only) provided by the Local Authority, if the criteria set out in The Government of Maintained Schools (Training Requirements for Governors) (Wales) Regulations 2013¹ applies;
- on appointment / election, familiarise themselves with work of the school and keep this knowledge up to date;
- maintain their knowledge of current education policy, regulations and guidance and extend their skills by participating in training programmes including whole governing body training and other events;
- demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity and reflect this in developing and applying the policies the school is required to have in respect of sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability or age (as defined in the Equality Act 2010);
- act as a critical friend towards those with professional responsibilities in the school, bearing in mind the governing body's own responsibility to promote high standards of educational achievement;
- be conscious of, and act within, the limits of the responsibilities of the governing body and when necessary, seek and give due consideration to professional information, advice and guidance;
- respect the responsibility of the headteacher for the day-to-day decisions in the management of the school;
- observe collective responsibility by supporting, once determined by democratic means, the decisions of the governing body;
- respect the governing body's right to deem certain matters to be confidential, restricting discussion of such matters, whether inside or outside governing body meetings, solely to governor colleagues and in appropriate cases solely to discussion within governing body committees;
- develop with colleagues on the governing body, a clear vision for the school;
- focus their contribution to governing body decisions upon what is in the best interests of pupils, and be conscious that the welfare of pupils should always come first in terms of child protection, health and safety and helping each child to develop their full potential;
- encourage and participate in systems which provide for open and effective communication, helping to establish a clear vision of the school's development;
- be aware that all governors are equal and respect others' views and behave accordingly in dealings with governor colleagues;

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/2124/contents/made>

- be aware of their accountability to parents and others in the local community and seek to devise effective dialogue with all those interested in the conduct and standards of the school;
 - observe all protocols and procedures agreed by the governing body;
 - be open, honest, objective, fair and impartial and prepared to confront the personal prejudices that may hinder informed decision-making including conflicts of interest.
 - With the rise in popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, governors should remember that they are a representative of the governing body and part of a corporate body. It is therefore sensible for governors to maintain a certain level of separation on social networking sites, as this may create a conflict / difficult situation in the future.
- * Please note, in schools with a religious character, of the particular responsibilities of Foundation Governors, and assist them with the discharge of those responsibilities;

Working as a Team

It is often difficult for a governing body to emulate the same kind of teamwork that a natural work team or sports team can achieve.

Nevertheless, rising to the challenge to become a high-performing team is the best way for a governing body to help its school to also become high performing or 'outstanding'.

One of the most important tasks of every governing body is to ensure that it builds itself into an effective team, where governors trust each other, share goodwill and support and encourage one another. Remember that governors have no power to act as individuals unless tasks have been specifically delegated to them by the governing body. The functions of governing bodies are exercised corporately.

The qualities of a high-performing leadership team

- There is a good range of skills, experience and knowledge amongst team members that they are willing to contribute and share;
- Individual and team knowledge and skills are continually updated through training and information sharing. Specialist knowledge is developed to ensure it is not lost when people leave;
- Workload is shared and different people take a leadership role when their particular skill and expertise warrants it; the elected leader encourages and supports this;
- Members challenge each other in a constructive way – conflict is handled positively;
- There is open discussion and everyone's views and opinions are respected and valued;
- There is group responsibility for decisions and actions that are taken. No-one acts on behalf of the team without the team's permission – there is 'one face' to the community;
- The team systematically reviews its own effectiveness and efficiency – '*Did we do the right things?*' '*Did we do the right things well?*' and '*What do we need to change to do better?*'

Remember that to ensure 'good teamwork' a good team leader is needed. One of the most important tasks of the chair is to provide governor colleagues with the lead and support that will assist the governing body to perform as an effective team.

The relationship between the governors and the headteacher is extremely important. Working together in partnership, respecting and trusting each other's roles, are essential ingredients for the effectiveness of the governing body. In a well-managed school, the headteacher and governing body will work in close and balanced partnership.

The School Governors Guide to the Law provides further information on governing bodies, their functions, duties and relationships with the headteacher. Information is also provided in the Guide to the Law about the legal status of a governing body.

Effective meetings

A critical element of teams working well is good management of meetings. The headteacher, chair of governors (or chair of committee) and clerk to the governing body are key 'players' in making meetings productive and making good use of time.

The chair, like any other governor, has no power to act without the endorsement of the governing body, except in certain cases where urgency is required. The chair ensures that meetings are conducted efficiently and follow correct procedures.

The chair considers and approves the agenda for each meeting (refer to '**A Handbook for School Governors in Wales**', Section 4, part 2, for further guidance on the governing body agenda). The chair encourages participation and contribution, sets the tone and acts as a role model, making sure that decisions made are carried through.

A meeting is effective when it achieves its objectives in a minimum amount of time to the satisfaction of the participants.

The chair controls the start and finish times, ensuring that agendas are adhered to. An effective meeting, be it a full governing body or a committee meeting will allow for open discussion, encourages everyone to contribute, leads to clear outcomes and decisions and is conducted in a business like manner.

The clerk plans and organises the meeting on behalf of the chair, ensuring that all relevant documents to be used in the meeting are received at least five days beforehand. (S)he keeps a record of the meeting and 'next steps' – who will do what, by when – to follow up at the next meeting. The clerk will also keep records of attendance for the governing body to review at the end of the year.

The headteacher is the provider of much of the information that will be reviewed at meetings and (s)he will ensure that all the school and comparative performance data is accurate and up-to-date for governors to make sound judgements and decisions.

Good meetings are not just about content and outcomes. It is also about attitudes and behaviours.

An example of 'ground rules' for effective meetings:

- Be punctual;
- Participate openly;
- Focus on the problem, not the person;
- Listen actively to what others have to say;

- Respect others' opinions and values;
- Be constructive and positive;
- Summarise the issues;
- No hidden agendas;
- No telephones/no mobiles;
- Stick to the time contract (may mean postponing agenda items to another meeting);
- Do what you promise – follow through on any actions delegated to you and report back;
- Learn from past performance, but put the main focus on the future;
- One meeting at a time – pay respect to the current speaker;
- Take 'one-to-one' issues outside the meeting and report back any decisions taken (e.g. those issues that can be resolved by individuals or sub-committee decisions);
- Notify the clerk two weeks in advance of the meeting of any issues you want to raise.

It is often useful to spend five minutes at the end of a meeting to note the participants' 'benefits' and 'concerns.' Was the meeting a good use of time? What was good about it? What needs to be improved?

To enable governing bodies to make good, effective decisions, governors should be provided with detailed and high quality performance data and information, by the headteacher or the LA. This information should include comparative data and trends over time.

Lastly, an effective meeting is reliant on thorough and efficient preparation.

Training and Development

New governors must attend LA induction training. Schools / governing bodies should also provide new school governors with an effective induction programme. This induction may involve a presentation from the chair and/or headteacher with an information pack for the new governor to take away. It may also be useful to assign new governors with a mentor to guide them through their first year; this is a good way of ensuring that new governors are fully supported through their early experiences and builds upon the LA training.

It is good practice for governing bodies to issue new governors with an information pack – refer to the website for further information:

<http://www.governors.wales/publications/2016/02/17/information-new-governors/>

Whilst LAs are legally obliged to provide free training for school governors it is for the individual governor and the governing body to decide what development they need and what training they will attend. It is good practice for governing bodies to review training requirements as part of their self-evaluation and draw up a training plan for governors. It is also good practice for governors who have attended training sessions to share their new knowledge with the rest of the governing body and to have 'Training' as a standing agenda item at meetings.

Governing bodies hold many responsibilities and the need, therefore, for training has never been greater. Whether or not you are a new or experienced governor, training is highly recommended to enable you to carry out your role effectively.

Training may also be offered to governors in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools by the relevant Diocese of the Church of Wales or the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in the areas of developing the religious character of the school, and in the additional duties and responsibilities for such governors for staffing, admissions and buildings.

In Part 2 of this series the strategic role of governing body strategic will be explored.

Part 2: The Governing Body's Strategic Role

Introduction

Regulations (please refer to list on page 20) and **The School Governors Guide to the Law** clearly describe the respective roles and responsibilities of the governing body and headteacher. Of the three main roles of the governing body described in Part 1 of this series, it could be argued that the strategic and intervention role is the one that can make the biggest difference to the standards achieved by the school and its students. The setting of targets and the monitoring and evaluation of a variety of agreed measures enable the governing body to identify and react to the early warning signs of shortfalls in performance. Recognising where early intervention is needed can prevent failure to meet targets and achieve objectives. There are a number of things that the governing body should monitor over the course of the school year (see Page 8 Information Sources), in order to ensure that the school is progressing as expected and that targets are being met or exceeded.

The governing body should understand the difference between intervention at a strategic level ('what' needs to be done) and interference in the operational management responsibilities of the headteacher and staff of the school ('how' actions are carried out).

It is a requirement for every school in Wales to have a School Development Plan (SDP) covering at least three years. The minimum content of the SDP is also prescribed in The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014², supported by Guidance document number 155/2014³. This will be explored further over the next few pages.

A School Development Plan helps the governing body to the school's progress and for challenging any strategies that do not appear to be delivering expected results. This provides a systematic check that everything is in place to provide the quality of teaching and learning that the school is aiming for. If this is not the case, governors must work with the head and Senior Leadership Team to decide what needs to be done.

A good mix of skills, experience and knowledge within the governing body can help the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) create a School Development Plan (SDP) with all the targets and measures that really make a difference.

Creating the Vision

Before developing its strategic plans the question every governing body must ask is, "Do we know what 'good' looks like for us and our school?" Be that in terms of how an effective governing body performs or what an 'outstanding' school looks and feels like. It must also be clear about how far away from that vision it is and what it needs to do to bridge the gap.

The starting point for strategic planning is a vision that makes it easy for staff and the community served by the school to understand what the school is striving to achieve. It is good practice for governing bodies to take the time to discuss and decide what they want the school to look and feel like (within a specified period of time).

Once the vision has been confirmed, the governing body, headteacher and senior staff will determine the strategies and activities that will enable the school to progress towards it.

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/2677/contents/made>

³ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/school-development-plans/?lang=en>

If we do not know where we are going, how will we know when we get there?

Having a well-communicated vision can help to motivate everyone associated with the school to work towards common goals and break down some of the barriers that might prevent progress.

Everything else, such as strategic plans, objectives and targets, all emanate from the vision of where the governing body wants the school to be within the time agreed.

The process of 'vision setting' can use the standard problem solving questions:

Where are we now?

What kind of school are we? What kind of governing body are we? Have the decisions we have made over time made a significant difference to the results achieved by our staff and pupils?

Where are we heading?

What results are predicted for the school and our students? Do we need to change anything? What will happen if we do not change anything? Do we have all the information we need to make sound, fact-based decisions?

Where do we want to be?

What kind of school do we want to have? What kind of governing body do we want to be? What results do we want our young people to achieve? How do we compare with other schools? What do we want to achieve? What do we want the school to look and feel like?

How will we get there?

What is the plan? Does the School Development Plan address the practical implications of where we want to be and what needs to be in place to '*make it happen*'? What resources do we need? How will we ensure staff are properly prepared? Are our objectives *specific* and *measurable*?

What do we need to do?

What do we need to do? What part will we play in implementing the plan? How far away are we from 'where we are now' compared with 'where we want to be'? Who else needs to be involved? What kind of help do we need?

When do we have to be there?

What timescales are we working to? What are our short term, medium term and long term objectives? Are all our objectives *agreed* with staff and our other stakeholders and do they have *timescales*? Are they *realistic*?

How will we measure and sustain success?

What are the measures of progress and success? What review mechanisms do we have? Who will review what? When will we review? What happens as a result of review? How do we compare with other schools over time? Do we understand the reasons for both success and failure? How will we ensure that what we have learned is turned into improvement? How will we record and demonstrate improvement?

Where we are heading and where we want to be may be two different destinations. It may be that predicted results are not what we would like them to be, so how can we ensure that the governing body's vision brings about greater added value for pupils during their time at school?

Schools add value by helping students realise or exceed their predicted outcomes in terms of social, vocational or academic achievements.

The School Development Plan

Based on the information it has, and guided by the Headteacher and the senior staff, the governing body must decide what the priorities are for the school and what can realistically be achieved in any given period of time. In this context, the various skills, knowledge, experience and background of governors can make a significant contribution to the strategic plan, otherwise known as the School Development Plan (SDP). The plan will describe, to anyone who has an interest in the success of the school, what actions are being taken to achieve its aims and objectives and realise its vision.

It is very important that the governing body devotes time specifically to developing the SDP as it summarises what the school will do to improve its performance and provides a vehicle for governors to review performance, ask relevant questions and challenge the status quo, e.g.

- What is the demographic forecast for the area in which we operate?
- What differentiates our school from others in our area?
- How can we/should we broaden the curriculum offering to be more inclusive, e.g. artistic or vocational skills?
- Are our relationships with partner schools and others as strong as they should be?
- How can we improve our facilities and resources?
- How can we improve the expertise of our staff?
- Can we show that we are adding value for pupils to exceed expectations?

As a minimum, the School Development Plan must include:

- School improvement priorities for current year and the next two years;
- A brief statement setting out the school improvement targets and expected outcomes and the governing body's strategy to meet those targets;
- Details of the governing body's strategy for the current school year as to how it will further the professional development of staff at the school in order to meet the school improvement targets;
- Details of how the governing body will seek to meet the school improvement targets for the current school year by working with the community;
- Details of how the governing body will make best use of the current school staff and school resources (including its financial resources);
- A brief statement setting out the extent to which the school improvement targets for the previous school year (beginning with school year 2015 to 2016) were met and where they were not met fully, a brief explanation as to the reasons for that failure.⁴

The headings used for different sections of the plan can vary according to what best suits the school. Using the Estyn key question format may help to familiarise everyone with the requirements of inspection, especially if the same headings are used for school self-evaluation.

⁴ Schedule - The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014

The plan must cover at least three years and will be subject to change, particularly where school budgets and finances are concerned, but at the very least it will give everyone with a vested interest in the school (the stakeholders) a clear sight of the governing body's aspirations and enable people to make long term plans. The plan will contain more detail for the immediate year ahead as priorities and targets are more clearly defined.

With any objective and its associated actions it is important to establish:

- Who will carry out the actions?
- Who does the person responsible report progress to?
- Who should be involved in the decision making process?
- Who needs to be communicated with to tell them what is happening?

The plan's objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timed) as these are easier for the governing body to review and for the headteacher and the senior staff to action the appropriate day-to-day operational management decisions.

Information Sources

For any governing body to make fact-based decisions and sound plans, it needs to have up-to-date, accurate information from a comprehensive range of sources, for instance:

- School value added performance data;
- Relevant comparative benchmark data;
- What other schools in the same area are doing;
- Headteacher's Reports and recommendations;
- Financial performance and forecasts;
- SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats);
- The previous year's School Development Plan;
- Observations from Estyn, LA, RC, Diocese or others, such as IIP assessments;
- Needs analysis from the community the school serves;
- Parental expectations and perceptions of the school;
- Pupil expectations and perceptions of the school;
- Staff expectations and perceptions of the school;
- Demographic profile and skill/knowledge/experience of staff;
- Partner expectations and perceptions of the school (partner schools, colleges, employers and any others who make a major contribution to the performance and success of the school);
- Complaints and grievances;
- LA, RC, Diocesan and Local Council expectations and perceptions;
- Welsh Government legislation, strategies and guidance.

A more comprehensive list of measures is suggested on the Governors Wales' website, but of paramount importance is the knowledge of how each stakeholder group: parents, pupils, staff, partner organisations and governors measure success.

Governors may play a part in the implementation of the plan through, for instance, a link governor role or bringing their personal expertise into the school to work with staff or through the work of committees. Governors can be linked to teachers, subject areas, faculties or departments and will meet staff to discuss progress being made to meet targets and assess what impact the strategic decisions made by the governing body is having on teaching and learning.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The governing body, following approval of the plan, is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the SDP. The headteacher and members of the senior staff are responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan (SDP). The 2014 Regulations state that the governing body must monitor the SDP at least annually, however, it is recognised good practice to carry this out on a termly basis.

Further information about the '**Critical friend**' role of the governor and supplementary information can be found as a 'Fact File' in the publication section of

<http://www.governors.wales/publications/2009/03/16/01-09-critical-friend/>

The full governing body will not usually have time in its three or four meetings during the school year to look at everything in the plan in detail. To make the best use of time it will delegate aspects of the plan to committees, who will then give oral or written reports on progress at full governing body meetings. Certain committees are statutory and must be appointed (refer to '**A Handbook for Governors of Schools in Wales**', **Part 2, Section 6** and **The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005**).

The governing body will determine the structure of additional committees that best serves the aims of the school. It will decide the constitution, membership, reporting procedures and terms of reference for each committee. The membership of committees can include non-governors, as long as the majority are governors, but the full governing body will decide whether they can vote at committee meetings. The governing body can delegate certain powers to committees in order to facilitate more efficient and effective decision-making (refer to the Governor Guide on Model Committee Structure and Example Terms of Reference

<http://www.governors.wales/publications/2013/04/23/model-governing-body-committee-structure/>

Vision, Strategy and Ownership

It must be remembered that the world in which the school operates is forever changing and the Strategic Plan (SDP) must be equally dynamic. In reviewing the plan it is perfectly valid to question, 'Are we still doing the right things?' as well as, 'Are we doing things right?' What was identified as a priority when the plan was first developed may be less important and could be replaced by something else six months later.

The ability of the School Leadership Team and the governing body to communicate the vision and Strategic Plan (SDP) is a critical element of success. Keeping stakeholders, particularly staff, involved and informed will build commitment, ownership and loyalty.

Everyone with an interest in the success of the school can make a contribution to its strategic planning. (In schools, with a religious character, this includes the relevant diocesan authority). An effective and successful governing body will create the environment where that can happen.

Part 3: The Governing Body's Role in School Improvement

Introduction

Improving school performance is the main priority of the governing body. Working alongside the headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the governing body plays a crucial part in providing the appropriate learning opportunities and environment that encourages young people to succeed. There are a number of Models or Frameworks that are designed to help schools to continuously improve and four of the most common are described here.

The Estyn Inspection Framework

Estyn Inspection (and in schools with a religious character, the section 50 inspection) uses a number of key questions to enable the School Leadership Team and governors to validate their own self-evaluation of school performance. It provides a benchmark for schools to gauge their progress along an agreed scale, the top of which indicates that the organisation is demonstrating excellence in a particular facet of their education provision.

The key questions and subsidiary questions asked by the framework are graded to give schools a measurable comparison with other schools.

The main objectives of inspection are to:

- identify strengths and areas for improving standards and quality;
- provide an independent evaluation of school effectiveness;
- identify and promote good practice and strive for excellence;
- keep the Welsh Government and public informed.

A school's self-evaluation is one of the key inputs to the inspection, so it is crucial that governors have realistically and systematically assessed their school against the key questions and can demonstrate a good understanding of what is happening in their school. Inspectors will question governors about all the areas discussed in guidance notes 2 and 3 of this series. For further information on the inspection framework, please refer to

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection>

The governing body, working with the head and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), must ensure that parents and other stakeholders are informed and involved in the inspection, including arrangements for a pre-inspection meeting with parents/carers. Also ensuring that Staff, pupils and the school's nominee are supported in preparing for the inspection. Usually the chair, another governor and the SLT will meet the Registered Inspector to discuss all aspects of governance, with particular reference to the governing body's influence over standards achieved by the school and its students.

On publication of the Inspection Report, the governing body must produce an Action Plan within 20 days. The Action Plan will address all the issues and points raised by the Inspection Report. The governing body must ensure that it monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Action Plan and reports progress in its Annual Report to parents.

If self-evaluation has been carried out systematically and realistically, then many of the issues raised by inspection will already be incorporated in the School Development Plan. Please refer to the Governor Guide on Self Evaluation for further information

<http://www.governors.wales/publications/2011/03/31/governor-guide-self-evaluation/>

Other Quality Frameworks

In addition to the Estyn Inspection Framework (and section 50 inspection), most schools and governing bodies are familiar with the concept of quality improvement frameworks. The most popular and frequently adopted are the Investors In People Standard and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model.

The Investors In People Standard

By 2008, Investors In People recognition had been achieved by around 600 schools in Wales since the Standard's introduction in the early 1990s. In recent years around 70 Welsh schools have had their Leadership and Management more vigorously assessed and achieved additional recognition. The Standard has been reviewed and updated a number of times since its introduction and there are now many more similarities with parts of the European Excellence Model. <https://www.investorsinpeople.com/iip-standard>

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model

The Excellence Model was launched in the early 1990s, around the same time as IIP. The Model is founded on eight fundamental concepts: Results Orientation; Customer Focus; Leadership and Constancy of Purpose; Management by Process and Facts; People Development and Involvement; Continuous Learning, Improvement and Innovation; Partnership Development; Corporate Social Responsibility.

Since its conception as the European Business Excellence or Total Quality model, the framework has been reviewed and updated several times to keep pace with changes in both the private and public sector. Its growing popularity as a self-assessment tool in the public sector, schools and colleges has been one of the factors that has led to the framework maturing into the European Excellence Model of today.

Self-assessment and external assessment (for National and International recognition) are based on nine criteria:

Enablers:

1. Leadership
2. Policy and Strategy
3. People
4. Partnerships and Resources
5. Processes

Results:

6. Customer Results
7. People Results
8. Society Results
9. Key Performance Results

In each criterion there are several sub-criteria that assessors will use to gauge the effectiveness of the organisation's Plan-Do-Review mechanisms, e.g. are the school's strategies and activities soundly based and integrated? How well and how systematic have the strategies been deployed? How has progress been measured and learning and improvement demonstrated? Have the results targeted been achieved or bettered? Do the trends of all key results show improvement over three years or more? If not, can shortfalls be explained? Do the results compare well with best practice?

The points system used with this model is from 0 to 1000, 700 to 750 points being regarded as 'World Class' (regardless of market sector or industry). European Excellence Award winners will score in this region whereas winners of National Awards will typically score between 550 and 650 points.

Small to Medium Enterprises (organisations with less than 250 employees) would normally be assessed using a condensed version. The benefit of the points system is that it provides a benchmark against which organisations can measure progress.

For instance, if a governing body wanted to benchmark 'Leadership', it could locate partners who score well in that criterion to share knowledge and experience.

For more information: www.efqm.org

Comparisons with and use of the different models

Self-evaluation is an extremely important part of the continuous improvement process and the Models that are described in this guidance note can help a school and its governing body to benchmark progress against a variety of criteria.

There are strong relationships between these models for improvement and they can be used to drive outstanding performance in the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the governing body and within the school.

The potential linkages between the various frameworks can be seen in a table on the Governors Wales' website. Not all linkages are shown, but the table is indicative of the overlap that exists between the various frameworks. It attempts to demonstrate that evidence that satisfies a particular criterion or sub-criterion in one model, will almost certainly satisfy elements of another.

Frameworks such as those above play a significant part in promoting school and governing body effectiveness because they provide a benchmark against which progress towards excellence can be measured.

They are the tools that governing bodies and School Leadership Teams can use to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement to prioritise activities in the School Development/Improvement Plan.

Self-evaluation

The governing body and SLT should have a common vision or model of what 'good' looks like for their school. This model will have been developed from their own combined professional experience together with the information gathered to prepare the Strategic Plan or School Development Plan, described in Part 2.

Whatever framework the governing body chooses to use to evaluate its effectiveness, it is important to be realistic and systematic. The starting point for improvement is critical self-evaluation. If self-evaluation is inaccurate, the starting point for improving performance will be wrong and much time and resource could be wasted trying to build for success on a weak foundation.

An example of a governors' questionnaire to check the governing body effectiveness is illustrated in '**A Handbook for School Governors in Wales**', Part 3, Section 8. Alternatively, the LA may provide a document designed to do the same thing.

What makes a good governing body?

Governing bodies have a direct impact on all aspects of strategic leadership. The qualities of a high-performing team discussed in Part 1 will be clearly evident in an effective governing body. In addition, the concepts of excellence as applied to governing bodies are:

1. They have a clear understanding of stakeholder (staff, pupils, parents, employers, local community, LA, Diocese and the Welsh Government) needs and expectations and are able to respond appropriately. This knowledge is used to develop, implement and review policies, strategies, targets and objectives.
2. They are able to differentiate the needs and expectations of individual pupils and parents and when things go wrong they can respond quickly and effectively. They have a good understanding of the education sector and manage change to the school's advantage.
3. They provide leadership and a constancy of purpose that clearly sets out their expectations and vision for their school. They establish values, standards and a governance structure that attracts loyalty and commitment to achieving the school's aims.
4. They understand the interdependence of systems and processes and how the school works. They have defined the success factors and key processes that are vital to the success of the school. Meetings are focused on the facts and performance data. Decisions are based on reliable information. All major risks to performance are identified, including budget restrictions, and plans put in place to minimise or eliminate them.
5. They appreciate the importance of recruiting and retaining good teachers and support staff. Personal development is promoted and supported to meet future demands. They care for, reward and recognise people, building a culture of respect and trust.
6. They challenge the status quo and are not afraid to be the first to try something different. They use the learning from internal reviews and that of others to innovate and create improvement opportunities. Internal and external benchmarking is systematically used to identify more effective ways of doing things.
7. They recognise that in the fast changing education environment, success may depend on developing strong partnerships with other schools, employers, sectors of the community, FE Colleges, the LA and Diocese. Partnerships are focused on delivering more value to pupils and parents and developing the school's core competencies.
8. They adopt a highly ethical approach to the school's social responsibilities, ensuring that care for the environment and the local community is reflected in the values they promote and is integrated into the processes used by the school.

Critical Success Factors and Key Processes

For excellence in anything to be achieved all the prior conditions that must be fulfilled need to be acknowledged and catered for. These prior conditions are also known as 'Critical Success Factors' (CSFs). In focusing staff and other stakeholders on the school's aims and objectives it is important for the governing body and SLT to determine the CSFs as part of the strategic planning process. The acid test for a CSF is, 'If this Factor is not fulfilled, can our vision be realised?' An example of a CSF is '*Achievement of Learners / Successful Completion*'. More information on Critical Success Factors and Key Processes and an example of a matrix can be viewed on the Governors Wales website.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The governing body and SLT will use a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to manage school improvement and review progress towards their vision for the school. In selecting which KPIs to monitor and evaluate, the governing body will ask a number of questions:

Are we measuring the right things?

- Do we have three years data to demonstrate that trends are going in the right direction?
- Do we have realistic, logical targets?
- Do we have comparisons with best practice (LA, Wales or UK)?
- Can we link outcomes (results) to our strategies and our intervention?
- What review mechanisms do we have? Are the outcomes as predicted or better than target?
Can we show continuous improvement?
- Can we show 'value-add'?

See also: Information Sources in Part 2 of this Governor Guide series.

A mark of a good School Leadership Team (SLT) is to ensure that this data is accurate and timely.

A mark of a good governing body is being able to work with the SLT to turn this performance data into strategies that help all pupils reach their full potential.

In Summary

Having reviewed this three-part guide, school governors will be left in no doubt about the significant role that the governing body can play in both developing and achieving their school's vision, objectives and targets. The governing body bears a heavy responsibility for ensuring its school delivers the best opportunities for each child, whatever the age or ability, to reach his or her full potential in a caring environment.

However, governing bodies and schools cannot hope to meet the challenges facing them without the help and support of parents and a strong and effective network of partner organisations.

Other schools (and their governors), colleges, employers, community organisations, the LA, the Diocesan Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government can all help the school achieve its aims.

An effective governing body will ensure that it utilises every available resource that could add value to the educational experience their school and its partners can offer.

This guide offers a summary of some of the main points on Effective Governing Bodies. It should be used in conjunction with detailed advice and support produced by your LA and diocesan authority where appropriate.

Bibliography and useful website links

Reference material for this Governor Guide

- Critical Success Factors and Key Processes
- Cross-referencing Critical Success Factors with Key Processes
- Framework of improvement Models
- Suggestions for performance measurement

Governors Wales: www.governorswales.org.uk

- [A Handbook for School Governors in Wales](#)
- [The Critical Friend' Fact File](#)

Publications from the Welsh Government

- [The School Governors' Guide to the Law](#)

Regulations

- [The Government of Maintained Schools \(Wales\) Regulations 2005](#)
- [The School Government \(Terms of Reference\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2000](#)

Other sources

- [EFQM Excellence Model](#)
- [Estyn: 'Annual Reports'](#)
- [Investors In People UK](#)
- [Wales Quality Centre \(Wales Quality Award\)](#)
- Drucker P: Managing challenges for the 21st Century – 1999 Harper Business
- Taylor & Ryan (2005) Excellence in Education: the making of great schools - David Fulton Publishers
- Tuckman B (1965) – Developmental sequence in small groups