



Aspire, Believe, Succeed

Governor Handbook

(A Quick Guide)

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www.featherstoneprimaryschool.co.uk

The Role of a Governor at Featherstone Primary School

Welcome to your new role as a school governor at Featherstone Primary School. You have just been appointed to one of the most rewarding voluntary jobs that exist. You have joined a group of hard working people who give their time and energy freely, committing their talents to the service of their schools.

Governors come from different backgrounds, reflecting the many interest groups in our schools, but they have one important thing in common: they are dedicated to ensuring that the children in their school have the best education possible. This must be the primary focus of all Governing Body business.

Many of your fellow governors will have a huge amount of knowledge, experience and competence for you to draw upon. Effective school governance is a team effort and decisions are made corporately. You are not on your own and you must not act on your own.

Effective governance involves team-work with Head Teachers, staff, governors and community. The Governing Body, Headteacher and Senior Leadership, together constitute the leadership of the school.

This pack provides an overview of the school, the Governing Body and legal framework as well as the key relationships which must exist to make this team function well. There is much to learn about school governance. This document and its attachments are designed to give you some basic information and offers suggestions about sources of further information and support.

Governing bodies have many responsibilities but in general are there to set the strategic framework for the school and to monitor the implementation of policies as managed and carried out by the Headteacher and staff.

Governors who ask seemingly obvious questions, as well as those that are more challenging, will help ensure that the correct path of leadership is established to enable the school to prosper. Reaching out to other schools and organisations enables good practice to be reapplied.

We believe in building strong links between home and school, with those around us and across the world. Our environment matters to us and we will do all we can to care for it.

We believe that happy children learn best. We work together to understand ourselves and each other. We develop our personal values and bring them to life.

We believe in providing the best opportunities for everyone to achieve their potential. We work hard to provide support and challenge and to make learning fun for all. Our pupils have a voice.

We offer a creative curriculum in a safe, caring and well resourced environment. Good learning opportunities for all promotes the raising of standards and the development of outstanding leaders for the future.

Who are School Governors and what do they do?

School governors come from every walk of life. Each individual governor is a member of a Governing Body, which is established by law as a corporate body. Individual governors must not act independently of the rest of the Governing Body. Decisions are the joint responsibility of the Governing Body.

The role of the Governing Body is a strategic one, and its key functions are to:

- Set the aims and objectives for the school
- Set the policies for achieving those aims and objectives
- Set the targets for achieving those aims and objectives
- Monitor & evaluate the progress the school is making towards the achievement of its aims and objectives
- Be a source of challenge & support to the Head Teacher (a critical friend)

The Head Teacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and the implementation of the strategic framework established by the Governing Body.

Legal framework and accountability

Although being a School Governor may at first seem a heavy responsibility, you need to remember that an individual governor has no responsibility or power. The Governing Body is a corporate body of which you are a part. Provided that you always take joint decisions with the rest of the Governing Body in good faith and in line with all the advice available, you will not be personally liable for those decisions.

The Governing Body is bound by statutory requirements, overseen by the Department for Education (DFE) and is accountable to the public and to the parents for the way in which the school is directed and managed. The staff of the school is accountable to the Governing Body for the delivery of the curriculum, use of resources and for the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning that is taking place.

The statutory requirement of the Governing Body is to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement (School Standards & Framework Act 1998). Achievement should be considered both in terms of academic education but also in terms of personal and social development and welfare e.g. are the children developing in confidence, able to work collaboratively in teams as well as independently etc.

Governors should look for evidence of continual progress in Featherstone Primary pupils in addition to specific attainment alone i.e. results from formal examinations at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Such formal examinations provide a snapshot into the pupil's

ability and are not all encompassing across the broader curriculum (tests taken in Numeracy and Literacy)

Further information on the respective roles of the Governing Body and the Head Teacher are provided in The Education (School Government) (terms of reference) (England) Regulations 2000 (www.opsi.gov.uk). The DFE publishes the Guide to the Law for School Governors which is an invaluable resource.

Governors & OFSTED

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) is required by law to carry out inspections of all schools. The inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the school but also look at individual aspects of the school. One of these aspects is the quality of leadership and management at all levels in the school, and in particular the effectiveness with which governors discharge their responsibilities.

Inspections are carried out at short notice (2-5 days) and will usually last no more than 2 days. The inspectors will talk to the Head, School Staff but will also expect to talk to members of the Governing Body.

OFSTED look to see evidence of the effectiveness of the Governing Body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory requirements met. To this end, it is important that the decisions and actions of the Governing Body are properly documented in approved minutes.

The starting point for the inspection is the school's self-evaluation form (SEF). The Governing Body is responsible for signing off on the SEF and OFSTED state "...a completed SEF should reflect the governors involvement in a school's self-evaluation and show that it has been completed with the agreement of the Governing Body or appropriate authority".

As part of the inspection process, OFSTED will usually wish to speak to a member of the Governing Body – it is expected that this will be the Chair of Governors, but given the nature of the short notice inspections the Chair may not be available, so all governors should feel comfortable that this could be them!

At the end of the inspection process, the inspectors will hold an oral feedback session in which they will inform the school of their main findings. Again, at least one member of the Governing Body should try to attend this meeting.

Membership of the Governing Body

The Instrument of Government sets out the composition of your Governing Body. At Featherstone Primary School, the Governing Body consists of:

Head Teacher	X 1
Parent Governors	X 2
Co-opted Governors (elected by the GB)	X 5
LA Governors (appointed by the County Councillor)	X 1
1 Staff Governor	X 1

Associate Members

Associate members can also be part of the Governing Body but do not hold any voting rights

Term of Office

The usual term of office for governors is 4 years but, assuming your willingness and eligibility, you are able to offer yourself for re-election for a further period of time. Parent Governors, whose children leave the school during their term of office, may complete that term of office before becoming ineligible as a Parent Governor.

Main Roles of the Governing Body

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction:

Governing bodies are the key strategic decision-making body in every school. It is their job to set the school's strategic framework. This includes ensuring the school has a long-term strategic vision – including for the type of school that will offer them most opportunities. The Governing Body should agree the strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the school and sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them. They should check on progress and review regularly their strategic framework for the school in the light of that progress.

Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils:

Governing bodies should support and strengthen the school's leadership in the day-to-day running of the school, including the performance management of teachers. Governing bodies should play a strategic role, focusing strongly on holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of its pupils, whilst avoiding being drawn into direct involvement in schools operational matters (This is strictly for the Head Teacher).

It is essential to have skilled governors, but equally important to emphasise that the skills required are those to create robust accountability, not to do the school's job for it. They do this by:

Asking the right questions

Understanding the importance of objective data

Using different sources of data – Ofsted Data dashboard, Performance Tables, RAISEonline, school's internal pupil data

Visiting the school

Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent:

Governing bodies are responsible for making sure their school's money is well spent. They should do this by making sure they have at least one governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters, and by asking questions such as:

Are we allocating our resources in line with our strategic priorities?

Are we making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?

Are other schools buying things cheaper or getting better results with less spending per pupil?

How can we get better value for money from our budget?

Features of Effective Governing Bodies

Working as a team:

Building an effective team requires regular attendance and energetic commitment from all governors. It means making use of what each governor has to offer, sharing the workload, give-and-take on individual issues, respect for colleagues and their differing opinions, and loyalty to final decisions.

Good relationship with Head Teacher:

It is essential to establish a good working relationship between the governing body and the Head Teacher. Each party must have a clear understanding of their respective roles.

In broad terms, the governing body is responsible for deciding the framework for the conduct and development of the school. But within that framework, the governing body should respect the position of the Head Teacher as the professional leader of the school and as the person responsible for the day to day management and administration of the school.

Effective time management and delegation:

Governing bodies have a lot to do, and limited time. They should identify the priority issues in which they need to be directly involved - including decisions which in law must be taken by the full governing body - and delegate the rest to committees, working groups or individuals. It is important to set clear terms of reference for such delegation, so that everyone knows what they are expected to do, and how and when they should report back to the full governing body.

Knowing the school:

Governors should get to know their school through visits organised in close co-operation with the Head Teacher, to talk to pupils and staff and possibly sit in on lessons.

Training and development:

To help their schools most effectively, governing bodies need to take their own development seriously. They should consider their training and support needs carefully, and be prepared to allocate funds for external courses, visits to other schools, or training for the whole governing body.

Committee structure and terms of reference

Governors are expected to attend the 6 meetings per year.

The three core function groups are

Full Governing Body (Strategic Leadership)	
Finance, Personnel & Premises, Health and Safety	Curriculum and Standards

Each team has a specific remit, summarised in their Terms of Reference.
These Terms of Reference are agreed by the Full Governing Body each year.

Meeting in which term?	Full Governing Body	Finance, Personnel & Premises, Health and Safety	Curriculum and Standards
AUTUMN	Sept to appoint Chairs of Committee Nov - standards meeting and Head Teacher's Report	X 1	October
SPRING	Jan – Head Teacher's Report)	X 1 Set New Financial Year Budget	February
SUMMER	June (Head Teacher's Report)	X 1	June

Monitoring Roles 2015-6	
Aspect	Governor
Standards English / Maths Achievement / Pupil Premium	1
Standards in EYFS	1
Inclusion Governor (SEND and Equality)	1
Pupil Premium	1
Behaviour, Safeguarding and Health and Safety	1
SMSC / British Values (inc R.E)	1
Head Teacher's PM	X 3

Effective Meetings:

At Featherstone Primary, the whole Governing Body generally meets six times per year. Dates and times are agreed at the start of the Autumn Term for the next academic year. Additional meetings may be called as needed and further dates for training may also be agreed. If the Governing Body need to meet for an extraordinary meeting, then this will be convened through the Chair of the Governing Body.

The business of the Governing Body is carried out by formal meetings. Relevant papers should be sent out by the Clerk at least 7 days before the meeting and should include the Agenda, together with appropriate enclosures.

The Agenda will often include various attachments e.g: copies of minutes of any working groups or committees, reports from other sources which are to be discussed, briefing notes on any recent decisions/changes made by the Government or the Local Authority, training details and notice of future events.

Governors wishing to add items onto the agenda should contact the Clerk or the Chair of Governors before the agenda is published.

To make best use of time at meetings, the Governing Body will need:

- carefully planned agendas which focus on the most important items.
- a Clerk who can organise meetings and papers efficiently and ideally provide information and procedural advice.
- purposeful chairing, bringing out the best in all governors, keeping a brisk pace and ensuring that decisions are properly taken and clearly understood.
- clear minutes setting out points for action.
- participation by appropriate outsiders – to give advice (e.g. a Local Authority officer or consultant), to make a presentation (e.g. the teacher responsible for an issue), or to act as an observer (e.g. a senior pupil).

It's really important to thoroughly review the minutes before the meeting. You can make a note of any queries or points you want to raise. All papers of the Governing Body must be available at the school for any member of the public to read, with the exception of items which the Governing Body have agreed are confidential.

What to expect at a School Governors' meeting:

Whilst there are many important aspects of the role of a School Governor, the most important is the business that takes place at the School Governors' meeting.

Full Governing Body meetings are normally held once a term. It is most likely that your first meeting as a new School Governor will be a full Governing Body meeting.

Prior to your first meeting you will receive an agenda, along with copies of the Minutes of the previous meeting and any other relevant papers that are to be discussed at the meeting.

It is recommended that you take time to read and familiarise yourself with these prior to the meeting and make notes of anything you are unsure of so you can ask questions if necessary.

Your first meeting:

At your first meeting it is quite normal to feel inexperienced and a little daunted. The meetings do follow a formal agenda, however, we would hope that the Governing Body will make you feel welcome and comfortable. If you already know someone on the Governing Body you may want to arrange to meet up with them prior to the first meeting. Alternatively, the school's induction arrangements may allocate a 'buddy' for you in the first few meetings to support you.

At the beginning of the meeting, all Governors should introduce themselves. However, do not worry if you can't remember everyone's names straight away; this will take time.

The Chair of Governors:

The Chair of Governors will conduct and lead the meeting and his/her role is to ensure that the agenda is followed and that the meeting is conducted in a proper manner. It would be normal for the Chair to introduce any new School Governors at the beginning of their first meeting.

The Clerk to the Governors:

The Clerk [to the Governing Body] carries out administrative duties associated with the meeting and will normally have extra copies of papers if you have mislaid any you were sent. The Clerk will take the Minutes of the meeting and ensure that these are passed to the Local Authority if required and ensure that they are circulated with a future agenda. In addition the Clerk will normally provide advice to the Governors on matters being discussed, where relevant.

The Agenda:

The agenda lists the items that are to be discussed at the meeting. It will normally include the following:

Governing Body Membership:

This will identify any changes to the membership of the school's Governing Body together with any appointments that need to be considered.

Apologies:

If you are unable to attend a Governing Body meeting, your apologies should be given either to the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or the Clerk. If a Governor does not attend a meeting for six months and fails to submit their apologies, he/she can be disqualified from the Governing Body. If apologies are accepted by Governors, failure to attend a meeting does not count as non-attendance during the disqualification period.

Declarations of Personal or Business Interests:

Governors will be asked to declare any personal or business interests they may have in any item included on the agenda or raised at the meeting. The Governors' Handbook gives specific guidance on when a person should withdraw from a discussion. If there is a disagreement about whether or not an individual should withdraw from a meeting, it is up to the Governing Body to decide.

Minutes:

These are a record of previous Governing Body meetings and will need to be agreed as a correct record of the meeting. It will include the Minutes of both full Governing Body meetings and of any Committee meetings.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

This allows business referred to in the Minutes of previous meetings to be raised again. This is usually to allow any progress on the item to be reported.

Items to monitor:

These are likely to include the Head Teacher's Report as well as information about the school's budget.

Items for decision/discussion:

These are items that have been put on the agenda by the Governing Body or the Local Authority and require discussion by the Governing Body before reaching a decision. If the discussion highlights that there may be differences of opinion by Governors, the decision will normally be made through a voting process.

Date and time of next meeting:

This item will either be to remind School Governors of dates that have been set or will ask the Governing Body to set a date for the meeting.

Governor visits to the school/classroom:

New governors should contact the Head early in their term to arrange a purposeful visit to the school. It is important to remember that the governor's role is that of a critical friend, not an inspector. By observing the pupils and mixing with teaching and support staff, a governor can continue to get to know the school.

Learning Walks: The Head Teacher will on occasions arrange for Governors to accompany him on a learning walk in school. This will consist of visiting classes and knowing data, pupil conference and also discussions with subject leaders.

Link Governors:

At Featherstone Primary, each governor is appointed a Key Area at the school. Once a term the Governor should arrange an informal monitoring visit – advice on this is available in the Governor Visits Policy. Other visits may be arranged at the discretion of the governor and should always be made in advance so that the teachers are made aware.

Before visits can take place, governors must have a valid DBS check for Featherstone Primary School. Nominated governors are also required to make formal monitoring visits; details of which are given in the relevant policy. Following such visits, documentation including outcomes, must be recorded and shared back with the Governing Body. **It is excellent practice to show evidence of your visit as part of your on-going monitoring role.**

Effective governance relies on you knowing and understanding the school. Ask searching questions to the Head and Staff to help you achieve this:

- probe for evidence of how they are monitoring the pupils' continual progress
- look for evidence with respect to how they are capitalising on the schools strengths
- how they are addressing any weaknesses.

The better informed you are as a Governor the more productive you can be in helping the Governing Body set the right strategic direction for pupils at Featherstone Primary and to support and challenge the Head.

Governing Body and the Staff:

A Guide to the Law for School Governors gives full details of the legal requirements of the Governing Body in relation to the staff, including the non-teaching staff.

Staffing is an area of partnership between the Governing Body and the Head Teacher. The Governing Body is responsible for determining the staffing and management structure of the school on the advice of the Head Teacher who is responsible for making sure that the staffing level is sufficient to teach the National Curriculum. The Governing Body is responsible for appointing staff, although appointments, other than those of Head Teacher or deputy, can be delegated. There should be a clear policy for appropriate appointment procedures.

Teachers' Pay and performance management: teacher's pay is determined by the school Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Employment Document (STPCD) which is published annually by the DFE. As well as setting out the pay scales for the different categories of teachers it also sets out the "professional duties" of teachers, i.e. their roles & responsibilities. The document also takes account of changes to teachers' workload brought in by the National Agreement and more generally known as workforce reform.

These changes were designed to ensure that the teacher spends more time focusing on teaching and learning. Governing bodies were responsible for ensuring that the National Agreement was implemented in their school and have an ongoing role in monitoring its provisions. The Governing Body has a responsibility for the work/life balance of the Head Teacher.

Professional Standards for Teachers: In addition to the STPCD there is a set of professional standards for teachers. These set out the expectations of teachers at various stages of their careers in terms of their professional attributes, knowledge and understanding, and skills. In carrying out performance management arrangements reviewers must have regard to the professional standards. Governing bodies have overall responsibility for teachers pay and performance within their school and are directly responsible for the performance management of the Head Teacher. It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to arrange the review of the targets and performance of all other teachers and support staff.

Policies:

Policies are the basic tools of Governing Body work. In essence they set out in a clear and understandable form, the framework within which the school should be run. Policies will guide the Head Teacher in making decisions relating to the everyday management of the school. They will also help the Governing Body when it comes to making strategic decisions.

The Governing Body must agree on the subjects upon which policies need to be established and monitor and review them on a planned and regular basis. The policies which governing bodies are required by law to produce and those recommended are detailed in A Guide to the Law for School Governors. The Office For Standards in Education (OFSTED) Handbook for the Inspection of Schools lists all the written information that schools have to provide on inspection which governing bodies should consider when deciding on what policies to produce. Policies should be implemented throughout the whole school community. They will help to guard against charges of unfairness and will promote confidence within the staff when dealing with situations.

Policies do not have to be the Herculean task that some governing bodies imagine them to be. It is not necessary for the Governing Body itself to write the policies. The full Governing Body may delegate the production of particular policies to a committee or working party. The committee should be given a clear written remit of what it is that they are required to do.

It is important to appreciate the role of the Head Teacher in this process. The Governing Body and committees will need to take into consideration his/her professional advice. However, it is recommended that the Governing Body should not pass over all the work to the Head Teacher: policies are the prerogative of the Governing Body and it should not shirk this responsibility. A close working relationship must exist between the Head Teacher and Governing Body for effective governance of the school.

Training and Development Programme For Governors:

Birmingham School and Governor Support emails all governors with information entitled Governor & Training and Development Programme. Within this booklet there are details of the relevant training courses available for governors – both those new to the role as well as the more experienced governors. All governors are recommended to attend at least a couple of training courses each year.

Useful website: National Governor Association NGA.gov.uk

Common Questions that Governors may ask:

These questions are not meant to be mandatory or exhaustive, they are offered simply as typical questions that will help inform you about the school. During your initial period as a governor some of these questions will occur naturally, others will crop up at a later stage and whilst every governor will have their own way of asking the questions, it is important that a “searching” approach often secures much more informative responses. These questions will themselves generate further questions. Never be afraid to ask even the simplest of questions: it is one of the principle ways of discharging your role of monitoring

the school's performance; being better informed allows you to be a better strategist and help the school improve further.

Policies:

What are the stated aims and ethos of the school and are they effectively implemented?

What policies does the Governing Body have, where are they, how are they drawn up and reviewed?

How focused is the Governing Body on the welfare and progress of pupils?

Meetings:

What committees does your Governing Body have and what are their Terms of Reference?

What matters have been delegated by the Governing Body and to whom?

What targets are set by the school's Development Plan and how do governors contribute to the Plan?

Do the agendas and papers for Governing Body meetings keep you fully informed?

Legal Framework:

Who are your fellow governors and by whom have they been elected or appointed?

Curriculum:

Is there a Curriculum Policy?

Does the school offer a broad and balanced curriculum which meets National Curriculum requirements?

What are the policies regarding religious education, worship, sex education and home-school agreements?

How are literacy and numeracy tackled?

Do the Head Teacher's reports provide information about school and pupil targets, test and examination results and school performance in a way that enables the Governing Body to monitor progress?

What is the school's Homework Policy?

School Budget:

How many pupils are on the roll and how does this affect the budget?

What is the size of the budget, how is it apportioned internally and how is it planned to be spent?

How is the budget kept under regular review?

Who has authority to spend and up to what level, and what financial controls are in place?

What is Pupil Premium spent on?

What is the Sports Grant spent on?

Staffing:

What are the Governing Body's procedures for appointing staff, reviewing salaries, dealing with discipline and grievances and consultation?

Is there a Governing Body policy about governor's visits to the school?

How do staff and governors get to know each other?

Accountability:

How does the Governing Body assess the schools performance and effectiveness?

How is the School Prospectus prepared?

What is the school's Home-School Agreement?

What arrangements are there for consulting parents and dealing with complaints?

To what extent is the school involved in the community and vice-versa?

Is training available to the Governing Body?

Special Educational Needs:

What is the Governing Body policy relating to SEN?

Is there a governor specifically allocated to monitor SEN on behalf of the Governing Body?

Who is the school's SENCO?

How many pupils are recognised as having SEN and how many are statemented?

Pupils:

Is there equal access for all pupils to all areas of the curriculum?

Is there a positive policy of inclusion of all pupils despite any problems they may have?

What arrangements are made for the pastoral care of pupils?

What is the school's Behaviour Policy and how is it monitored?

Are instances of any exclusions regularly reported to the Governing Body?

Does the school celebrate pupils' achievements?

How does the school cope with bullying?

Useful Websites

School Performance Tables	http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/
Ofsted Data Dashboard	http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/
Governorline	(Information for School and College Govs) www.governorline.info 01483 300280
(National Governors' Association)	www.nga.org.uk
Ofsted	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Modern Governor	www.moderngovernor.com/

Checklist of Information for Members of Governing Bodies

All members of governing bodies should have the following information:

The school's instrument of government as required by law.	
The most recent version of the Governors' Handbook.	
A list of members of the governing body, giving name, category of governor (parent, staff, etc.), date of appointment and (if agreed) telephone number	
The governing body's agreed procedures or standing orders	
Conduct Policy from Birmingham SGS	
Whistle Blowing Policy	
A list of the committees and working parties of the governing body, with membership and terms of reference	
A calendar of governing body and committee meetings; school terms and holidays: and major school events for the current school year	
A copy of the staffing structure of the school, showing names of teachers and other staff, subjects taught and other responsibilities	
The school's current prospectus	
The school's current development plan	
The most recent inspection reports on the school	
A list of statutory and non-statutory policies adopted by the governing body and information on how copies of these may be obtained	

Searching and Challenging questions in holding the Head Teacher of Featherstone Primary to Account

Below are starter questions that would require follow up questions dependent on the answers provided to ensure accountability

Standards

How good are standards in the school? How do we know?

Are our pupils performing as expected, better or below expectations?

Are these results an improvement on last year?

Is there anything we should know about the cohort of pupils which could affect the results?

How is achievement analysed and evaluated?

What impact does this have on standards?

What are the trends in the key indicators in the Foundation Phase/Key Stage 2 over the last 3 / 4 years?

Is there a trend appearing for certain subjects, if so what strategies can we put in place to improve results in that area?

What are our best performing areas of learning /subjects in the Foundation Phase/Key Stage 2?

What subjects/areas are a cause for concern in the Foundation Phase/Key Stage 2?

What does the 'value added' element look like at the end of KS2

How do we compare with schools with similar Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement?

What are our benchmark quartiles for each indicator?

How do we compare with schools in our family?

How well do our boys perform compared to our girls? How well do our boys perform compared to boys in other similar schools?

How well do our FSM /Additional Learning Needs (ALN)/English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils perform compared to pupils in other similar schools?

How well do our More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils perform with regard to achieving the higher levels compared to pupils in other similar schools?

How well do other groups of pupils perform compared to pupils in other similar schools?

How well do these groups perform over time?

How can we show we are consistently "adding value" both within year groups and across phases?

What is the impact of the various interventions used in the school? Do they give value for money?

Skills:

What are the standards of our pupils' literacy, especially reading, writing, numeracy and Science?

Does work across the curriculum match the standards in the end of phase assessments and national tests?

How do we compare with similar schools – family and FSM group?

Wellbeing:

How well does the school promote pupils' wellbeing?

What are the overall absence levels for the school?

Has anything happened during the term to affect the attendance figures, e.g. bad weather conditions, high incidence of illnesses?

What were the attendance figures for the last two years?

How does our attendance compare to modelled expectations over the last 3 years?

Have we improved, stayed the same or worsened? Is there a pattern/trend to the figures?

Have we analysed the attendance of different groups of pupils? How do these compare?

Who are our persistent absentees?

What improvements have we made with these pupils?

What strategies do we use to improve or ensure good attendance?

How well do our pupils behave?

How do our exclusion rates compare with other schools?

What is the trend for fixed term exclusions over the last three years?

Have we analysed the exclusions of different groups of pupils?

How do these compare?

What strategies do we use to improve or continue this positive / negative trend?

How effective are our pupil voice strategies?

What input do they have in what they learn?

Learning experiences:

What are the good features of the curriculum?

What are the shortcomings in the curriculum?

Does the curriculum meet the needs of all our pupils? Are there any barriers in terms of equality or access to the curriculum?

How well do our options meet the needs of all our learners?

How do we develop progression in learners' literacy, especially reading, writing, and numeracy skills across all subjects?

How well do we develop our pupils' ICT skills? How well are these skills taught and reinforced across the curriculum?

How well do we plan to develop pupils' wider skills – thinking, problem solving, working with others, improving their own learning and performance?

What are the standards of our pupils' thinking / problem solving / skills?

Teaching:

How good is the teaching in the school? How do we know? What do we do to ensure good or improve teaching? What are our pupils' perceptions of the school?

As a result, how well do our pupils make progress in their lessons? Are there any classes / year groups / subjects that are a cause for concern? How do we monitor and support these?

How do we set targets for pupils and measure their progress? How effective is this?

What are expectations of teachers in respect to assessment without levels, recording and reporting to parents?

What training does the staff receive to develop teaching and learning strategies, including specific support to improve literacy and numeracy?

How consistent is AfL across the school? Do learners get good feedback and act on it successfully?

How do we know that our end of key stage assessments are accurate?

What are the perceptions of teachers? Are we managing staff absence/capability issues?

How do we know if other staff in the classroom are impacting on standards?

Care, support, guidance and safety:

How well do we support all our pupils' health and wellbeing, including healthy eating and living? What structures do we have in place? How do we monitor their progress?

What provision is there for less able and more talented pupils? How do we monitor this?

How effective is this provision?

What staff training is there on identifying and supporting pupils' additional learning needs?

What staff training is there on Child Protection (CP) matters? How are CP issues recorded?

Are our procedures robust? How do we know? Are all adults in the school included in this training?

How secure is our site and buildings? How do we know?

Is the safeguarding audit complete for Birmingham LA

Do staff know about MASH?

Do staff know how to report a concern?

Learning environment:

How effectively do we promote an inclusive ethos, racial tolerance, equal opportunities and diversity? Have all staff received appropriate equality training? How do we record and monitor issues or complaints that arise?

What are the current priorities for the accommodation and resources? Do our pupils agree?

What plans do we have in place to meet these?

Leadership:

What is our vision for the school?

How do our aims, strategic objectives and plans meet the needs of our pupils? How are they monitored?

How well do you communicate these expectations to all the staff in the school?

How well is the school and teams within the school managed? How effectively is the work of these teams monitored?

How effectively do you challenge, but also support staff through performance management to achieve their best?

What is the impact of this?

What are the arrangements for succession planning and talent spotting?

How is leadership contributing to the development of the next generation of school leaders?

Are there any issues of under-performance? How have you addressed these issues? What strategies are in place to challenge and support these members of staff?

What are our local and national priorities? How effective are we in meeting these?

Improving quality:

What are the school's strengths and weaknesses?

How well do we evaluate and review all aspects of school life? How often do we observe lessons? How often do we scrutinise pupils' work and teachers' assessment of the work?

Does the SLT work together and with others to ensure judgments are standardised?

How effectively do we take on the views of pupils? How effectively do we take on the views of parents? How effectively do we take on the views of external stakeholders e.g. LA, consortium, community members, other providers...? What effect does this have on teaching and learning, management or provision?

How often and how effectively do we review the work of year groups?

As a result, what are the school's priorities for improvement? Do these arise from self-evaluation? How well is progress against priorities monitored and evaluated? What improvements has this led to?

How well have we planned to ensure these improvements? What actions, resources and time are required to achieve these? How do we/will we monitor these?

How well do our pastoral/learning co-ordinators (heads of year/learning) evaluate their work and plan to improve the provision in order to raise standards?

How does all this impact on pupils' standards?

Partnership working:

What strategic partnerships do we have?

How do we work with all these partners to plan, manage and quality assure provision?

What impact do these partnerships have on pupils' standards and wellbeing?

Can we develop stronger relationships with partnership schools?

How well does the school engage with other schools to raise standards?

Resource management:

How do we plan and monitor the management of our resources, especially staff development?

Are all staff deployed in their specialist subjects? How do we support those staff who teach outside of their specialist subject?

What opportunities are there for staff to develop teaching and managerial skills? What impact do these have on standards and wellbeing?

Do we work with schools within our family on aspects to improve standards?

Are there schools in our family that have high standards in certain indicators/outcomes that we could collaborate with effectively?

What impact do these have on pupils' standards?

How do we prioritise our spending to ensure improvements over time?

What impact does our spending of the pupil premium grant have on specific pupils' performance?

What might an OFSTED Inspector ask Governors?

INSPECTION HISTORY:

What were the key findings of the last Ofsted report? What were the strengths?

Which were the areas identified for further development?

What progress has been made against these?

How has the school changed since the last inspection – eg expansion, demographic changes, staff changes, new projects? Have the changes had any impact on pupil attainment, attendance, safety etc, and if so, how has this been addressed

ATTENDANCE:

What is the difference in the attendance rates of the different groups of your students?

What have you done to improve your attendance figures? Has it worked?

How is challenging behaviour dealt with?

What is your exclusion policy?

BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY:

What is behaviour like at your school? How do you know?

What underpins your Behaviour Policy?

Do your students feel safe while at school? How do you know?

How do your attendance figures compare with those nationally?

How many exclusions have you had in the last three years?

What do your parents think of your Behaviour Policy? How do you know?

Is there bullying at school?

How is bullying dealt with?

Are there safeguarding procedures in place? What are they?

How many people have completed safer recruitment training?

Is the Single Central Record in place and is it checked regularly by governors?

Are child protection procedures in place?

Are health and safety procedures in place? How are they monitored?

What can you tell me about Safeguarding? Who is responsible in school? Who is contacted and when should an issue arise?

Who on the Governing Body has responsibility for safer recruitment and how is that covered in interviews?

If a specific safeguarding issue had arisen at school; who knew, who dealt with it, outcome?

How do you manage bullying?

QUALITY OF TEACHING:

Is quality of teaching same throughout the school? How do you know?

How are you raising the quality of teaching?

How do you monitor quality of teaching?

Where is the best teaching? How do you know?

What do you know about CPD of your staff? What is the impact of CPD? How do you know?

How do you ensure that students in every group (SEN, FSM etc) are able to make progress?

How do you deal with underperformance in teaching?

How does performance management improve quality of teaching? How do you know?
What percentage of your lessons are outstanding, good, require improvement or inadequate? How do you know?
Are there any concerns or issues with teaching?
Governor visits to check learning, how do you check progress?
What can you tell me about the curriculum of the school?
Do you visit the school to observe teaching?
Do you participate in learning walks?
Do you jointly look at other evidence such as work in pupils' books to note progression, and how marking is used to further develop pupils' understanding of their learning?
Do you talk to pupils about their learning?
Are you aware of the ways in which the quality of teaching is monitored across the school?
Do you know how good practice is shared within the school?

Attainment and Progress:

Are you familiar with the school's tracking and monitoring systems for improving **attainment** and **progress**?
What do you know about the strengths and areas for development and how they are being addressed?
How is the school 'narrowing the gap' for any underperforming groups? Who are the vulnerable pupils (Free school meals, children looked after, SEN, EAL etc) and how have they performed relative to their peers?
Are you familiar with the headline data for Key Stage 1 and 2 on RAISEonline and OFSTED Dashboard?
Broadly speaking, are you familiar with the trends in **attainment** over the last 3 years? (in Early Years, in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2)
How does this compare with national data?
What does the **pupil progress** data tell you about the progress of pupils in the school at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2?
What percentage of pupils performed in line with expectations (2 level gains at the end of KS2) and what percentage exceeded expectations?
How does this compare with national averages?

ACHIEVEMENT:

How good is the progress of your SEN students as compared to others? How do you know?
How good is the progress of your students on FSM? How do you know?
How good is the progress of your students as compared to those nationally?
Which groups of your students are making the least progress? How are you addressing this?
What is the impact of your interventions? How do you know?
What are your three year trends in terms of progress and attainment? How do you know?
What are your areas of weakness? What are you doing to improve these? What has been the impact of your interventions?
What is the gap in attainment between your students on FSM and those not on FSM? How are you reducing this gap? How do you know you are reducing the gap?
What do you know about the Data dashboard?
What do you know about RAISEonline?

How much Pupil Premium does the school receive? How do you spend your Pupil Premium?
How do governors track how pupil premium is allocated and the impact that is having on standards? How do you know?

Pupil Premium Grant and Sports Premium Grant :

How many of your students are eligible for pupil premium?
How much pupil premium money did you receive this year ? How much did you receive last year? What is the impact of the pupil premium spend?
How much money do you receive in catch up funding? How is this spent and what is the impact of this?
Do you think the Pupil Premium funding reaches the most disadvantaged children?
Who is eligible for the Pupil Premium now (i.e. what types of groups)?
Can you tell me where your key gaps are with Pupil Premium?
How is Sports Funding put to use and does it benefit the pupils?
How do you use your upper pay scale staff to drive up standards?
How do Governors ensure evidence of achievement presented at meetings is checked and validated?

Head Teacher's Report:

The quality of Head Teacher reports, which links to the above question.
Specific questions regarding tables in RaiseOnline – he referred us to the relevant pages and asked us what the info was telling us and about the trends over the years.

School visits and how you evaluate the information you are given by the school – ie: checking for yourselves and not just taking it at face value.

Tell me about how the pupils are progressing.

How we monitor progress by all groups particularly SEN/ESL groups.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:

What is leadership like at your school?
How do you set objectives for your Head?
How rigorous is performance management of the staff, including the Head?
How are Performance Reviews carried out at the school and what role do Governors play in this?
What are the key areas of development in your SDP?
How do you monitor and carry out self-evaluation?
What is the contribution of governors to the SDP?
How does the school make decisions on salary progression?
How do you know your safeguarding procedures are adequate?
Have governors had any prevent training?
Who on the governing body has the safeguarding role? When were they last trained?
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership team?
How does the GB engage with stakeholders? What has been the impact?

What is your vision for the school? How will you achieve it?
How do governors find out about the quality of teaching?
Are your UPS teachers the best? How do you know?
How do you know that policies are put into practice and are effective?
How do you evaluate your performance as governors?
Can you give an example of a time when you have had to challenge the head?
How effectively do governors perform the full range of their statutory duties?
What do you know about the CPD of the senior staff?
Is the SEF discussed at every FGB meeting?
How are the governing body challenging/ supporting the School?
Are you canvassing the views of parents? How are you doing this and are you giving feedback?
How are you involved in performance management?
Do parents know who you are?

How do you act as a critical friend to the school and specifically, the Head Teacher?
How do you support the Head in their leadership role?
How are leaders grown and supported in the school?
How are new staff, including NQTs, inducted and supported?
How are support staff led and managed and how do they contribute to improving outcomes for pupils?

Behaviour and Safety (including attendance)

Are pupils well behaved and polite?
Do you know how any poor behaviour is addressed? Are you familiar with the Behaviour Policy?
Do you know about the measures the school has in place to improve attendance and punctuality?
Are learners taught in a healthy and safe environment?
Do you know the designated governor and staff member for safeguarding? How do they report back to the governing body?
Are you aware of any safeguarding concerns?

Governor Visits:

How are governor visits organised?
How often do governors visit the school?
Do governors visit the classroom and are individual governors linked to classes?

Performance Management:

How are governors involved in the Head Teacher's performance management?
How does the governing body review the Head Teacher's performance management throughout the year?
What is the performance management structure in school?
How are responsibility points allocated to staff and how many senior teachers are there?
How much outstanding/good/ satisfactory/ inadequate teaching is there in school and what actions had been taken to bring about improvements?

Knowing the new performance management for teachers what impact has performance management had?

Strengths and areas of development of the Governing Body:

What are the strengths and areas for development for the governing body?
Can governors give examples of how they have supported and challenged the school?
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?
How effective/strong is the governing body?
How long have we been governors?

Challenge and support:

How does the governing body work with senior leaders in school?
Can you provide examples of where the governing body has challenged the school?
Give me an example of a time when you have ever had to challenge the Head Teacher.

Communication with parents and other stakeholders:

How does the school communicate with parents?
How does the governing body get feedback from parents and the children and how is this fed back to school?
How are parental complaints dealt with?

Improving outcomes:

What contribution does the governing body think it has made to improving provision, especially teaching, and outcomes for pupils?
Are governors aware of the priorities for the school?
What do you see as the three main priorities for improvement in this school?
What reasons are there for the choice of the priorities in the School Improvement Plan?
Give me an example of a time when you have ever had to challenge the Head Teacher?
Tell me who are the most vulnerable pupils in this school and what is being done for them?

Does the Governing Body have the right skills set?

How have you developed as a governing body? What training have you accessed?
How do you think you could improve as a governing body?
Are governors linked specifically to areas of the curriculum or phases? How does this help you know more about the school? What is the impact of your involvement?
Are you aware of how the school manages its finances?
Are you aware of the Head Teacher's Performance Management targets and how they relate to whole school priorities and the Performance Management targets of staff?
Are you aware of the proportion of teachers who have progressed along the main pay scale, those progressing to, and through, the upper pay scale, those on the leadership scale, and teachers who have achieved additional responsibility points?

Overall effectiveness and capacity to embed and improve

1. How has the school improved over the last 3 years?
2. What has been the governing body's contribution to school improvement?

3. What are governing body's priorities for the coming year?

GENERAL

How is the school doing? How do you know?

How would you rate the school?

What do parents and the community think of your school? How do you know?

What are the strengths of the school?

What are the weaknesses?

What are your weakest areas in school? And what are you doing to see that improvements are being made?

What is the state of the budget?

What are the strengths of you as a GB? What training do you receive within your role?

How are the school's finances managed?

How do governors ensure pupils are tolerant of others, including other ethnicities and faiths?

How do you consider tolerance and diversity?

What do you feel the ethos of the school is?

British values – Do you know how the school promotes these?

Diversity – is R.E valued and SMSC promoted – how do you know?

What roles and responsibilities do governors have?

Can you give any examples of the impact that the Governing Body has had?

Glossary of Terms:

ASCL	Association of School and College Lecturers Associate Member A member of the Governing Body (with limitations on their voting rights) representing staff, community or local businesses chosen by members of a Governing Body who have themselves been elected or appointed
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers.
Capital expenditure	Capital expenditure Spending on projects, improvements, and extensions to the school.
Catchment area	Catchment area The area from which a school takes its pupils.
CPD	Continuous professional development for school staff.
Delegated budget	Delegated budget Money provided under Fair Funding (see below) which governors can manage at their discretion (see also Devolved funds, below).
Delegated powers	Delegated powers Authority given to a committee, an individual governor or the Headteacher to take action on behalf of the Governing Body
Devolved funds	Devolved funds Such as the Standards Fund, are those which have to be used for specific purposes.
DFE	DFE Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated School Grant Differentiation The organisation of teaching programmes and methods specifically to suit the age, ability and aptitudes of individual children.
Directed time	when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the Headteacher. Maximum of 1265 hours in a school year.
Disapplication	A term used where National Curriculum requirements may not apply to a pupil.
EAL	English as an additional language
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
Exclusion	The temporary or permanent banning of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy.
Fair Funding	The system of funding for schools introduced in April 1999 which set the framework for the financial relationship between schools and their LAs.
FMSiS	Financial Management Standards in Schools, a system of certification that assures that a school has in place appropriate financial systems for control of its funds, but also implies sound systems of management of its affairs
FSM	Free School Meals.
GB	Governing Body
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
IEP	Individual Education Plan for pupils with special educational needs.
INSET	In-Service Education and Training – courses for practising teachers
Instrument of Government	A legal document setting out the composition of Governing Bodies.

DFE	KS2 for 7-11; KS3 for 11-14; KS4 for 14-16.
LA	Local Authority (formerly Local Education Authority)
Mixed ability	A teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together.
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers.
NAS/UWT	National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers.
National Curriculum	This was established by the 1988 Education Reform Act to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced education which is relevant to their needs.
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher.
NUT	National Union of Teachers.
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education. The body which arranges, and set standards for, school inspections.
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
PP	Pupil Premium. Money allocated to children who have been on free schools meals over the last 6 years. "This is ring fenced" and has to be published on the schools website on how the money is spent.
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
Quorum	The minimum number of members at a meeting before decisions can be made.
RAISEonline	Reporting Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation is a web –based system to disseminate school performance data to schools.
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. Local statutory body which advises on religious education and collective worship.
'SATs'	Standard Assessment Tasks© used for National Curriculum Assessment.
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SEN	Special Educational Needs. Learning difficulties for which special educational provision has to be made. May include children with physical disabilities or emotional and behavioural disorders.
SENCO	SEN Co-ordinator. The teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEN provision in the school.
TAs	teaching Assistants
Value Added	When pupils are enabled to achieve above their assessed performance levels; the additional benefits accruing from, eg, a school_s ethos or extra-curricular activities
Virement	The agreed transfer of money from the budget heading to which it has been allocated to another budget heading.