



Governor Mark

Recognising high quality school governance.

Guidance for Schools and Governing Bodies



Supported By the DCSF

Guidance for Schools

Thank you for your interest in achieving the Governor Mark. This document will guide you through the process and help you understand what the Assessor will be looking for.

It may be that you are not yet ready to put in an application. You will nevertheless find useful guidance here as to how to go forward with the right sort of evidence that will strengthen your application when it is ready to be submitted.

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Step by Step Guide

Step 1 Preparing to apply for a Governor Mark assessment

Welcome to Governor Mark, whose aim is the celebration of good governance in schools.

This is a rigorous assessment process and we would want governing bodies to know in advance that they will be asked to show evidence of school improvement, impact on pupil outcomes, records of the governing body supporting and challenging the school and evidence of shared strategic leadership.

When you have completed the evidence grid and impact statements you need to submit them together with the other documents listed on the application form to info@glmpartnership.org. An electronic signature would be useful but is not essential. All documentation should be provided as e-mail or weblinks, and this will help the process happen more quickly.

Good governance does not exist in isolation. If governance is good there will be evidence of demonstrable impact of the governing body on school performance and outcomes for pupils. Your main objective in a successful Governor Mark application is to show this impact.

Most schools will follow **Routeway 1**, which is the standard application process. We aim to complete the whole process in three months from receipt of the application and first set of evidence, and the cost in the April 2010 – March 2011 year is £645.

Schools who follow **Routeway 2** will be schools with a clear agenda for development. This process will include an initial assessment and a report to support the governing body to address areas of improvement. The process then allows time for the work of the governing body to impact on pupil performance and for this to be documented. This routeway includes a follow up assessment, and costs £1,050. This may be particularly useful for governing bodies of schools causing concern or in an Ofsted category, and we would expect costs to be spread over two financial years.

Step 2 Application

There are six documents you need to provide, and an assessment cannot be arranged until all this is received:

- Application/contact details
- Evidence Grid
- Impact statements
- RAISEonline report (schools without RAISE should provide other external data where available)
- Self Evaluation Form (schools not required to produce a SEF should provide the closest equivalent)
- Ofsted report (or date of inspection)

The key to good evidence is that it shows the impact of the governing body on the work of the school. Yours may be an outstanding school, but if governors simply follow the professionals in the school and rubber stamp school initiatives, you will find it hard to achieve this award.

Step 3 Assessor Contact

After the application is received it will be passed to an Assessor who will contact the school through the email address you provide and will arrange a date for the visit.

Step 4 School Visit

The on-site visit should take place within three months of your application. The Assessor will indicate who they would like speak to during the visit.

Step 5 Outcome

After the visit the assessor will report back to GLM. **You will be notified of outcome of the process following the next meeting of the awarding body, and you will know the date of this when the visit is arranged. The assessor will not be able to confirm the outcome at the site visit.**

Part 1 – Evidence Grid

Probably the most important aspect of the grid is the indication of evidence in support of your application. Please try to indicate on the grid itself what the evidence is, e.g. minutes, headteacher reports, agendas, reports from local authority inspectors or advisers, any development plans, and so on. A list of reference codes in the evidence grid makes the assessment much harder and time consuming

You may submit up to 2 pieces of evidence to validate each sub criterion judgment, and in most cases one piece of evidence is enough. Experience shows that most governing bodies do too much work, producing more evidence than is needed. The Assessor will ask for more if necessary, and their task is to help you focus on what you should provide. Pieces of evidence can be duplicated for different sub criteria and will need to be referenced carefully to ensure clarity for the assessor. It is important to help the assessor to understand how the evidence is relevant to the judgment being made.

Instructions for completing the grid.

There are two sets of four criteria, 'Ethos and Working Practice' (1-4) and 'The inspection Framework' (5-8). All eight criteria can be used as the basis of governing body self evaluation, but for a Governor Mark assessment it is important that you follow the following guidance.

A Governor Mark application only needs sections 5-8 of the evidence grid to be completed. Sections 1-4 remain available for use as a self-evaluation tool for governing bodies.

You need to provide evidence against each of the sub-criteria assessing whether you are:

FC – Fully Compliant with the standard

PC – Partially Compliant with the standard

NC – Not Compliant with the standard

BP – If you believe that you are not only compliant but exhibit a Best Practice example

- You must achieve at least 50% in each sub-criteria to meet the standard and at least 60% for the criteria overall.
- Some sections require more evidence than others.
- It will tell you how many FC / BP you need in each section.

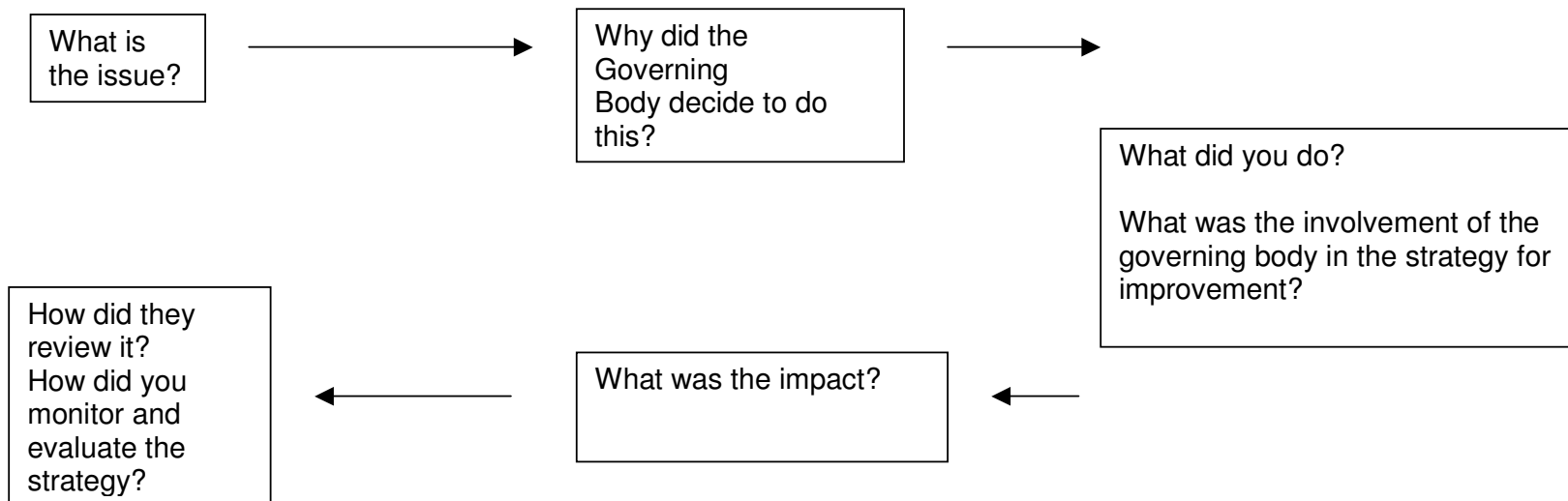
Part 2 – The influence of the governing body

This part of the assessment requires the governing body to identify how they have influenced achievement in the school.

You will need to write an impact statement for each of the 4 areas listed on page 8. Each statement should be limited to a maximum of 1000 words.

Guidance:

The assessor will be following the audit trail shown below.



Guidance on completion of Impact Statements

The evidence against the sub and main criteria provide the first indication of the quality of governance. However it will be the governing body statements on its contribution to school improvement and outcomes in the Areas of Impact that are likely to be decisive. It is necessary to have a good body of evidence for each of the four areas (see the Standards Document for more detail) of impact demonstrating that the work of the governing body makes a difference in terms of outcomes.

Assessors will use the following factors to assess impact:

- Whether there are positive trends leading to sustained good performance
- Whether targets (objectives or goals) have been set and have been achieved
- The number of areas for consideration that have been addressed and where achievement has been made
- Whether the school is benchmarking its outcomes (not just standards) with other schools.

Plus:

- The quality of the audit trail between governing body activity and results.
- The extent to which the governing body works with and supports other schools in their locality.

This is particularly important. The impact statements should prompt the enquiry 'show me' from the assessor. If the question raised in the assessor's mind is 'so what?' it is likely that the evidence trail is weak. Examples of weak impact statements would include those that focus on governing body organisation ('we revised the terms of reference for the Curriculum Committee...') rather than outcomes for children ('we decided that maths was a priority...').

A good impact statement will focus on two or three examples of governing body work that has made a difference in their school.

The assessor will consider the outcome and track the audit trail to the work of the governing body and the evidence suggested in sections 5-8 of the evidence grid. If most of these factors are well covered the area of impact will be judged to be good or outstanding. If there is limited evidence of trends, targets, extent of coverage or benchmarking and the audit trail is slight or not evident, then the area of impact will be satisfactory or inadequate.

Impact statements

School Improvement

Include information on:

- Positive Trends
- Objectives / targets
- Coverage (trends over a number of areas)
- Use of benchmarking

Every Child Matters

Include information on:

- Positive Trends
- Objectives / targets
- Coverage (trends over a number of areas)
- Use of benchmarking

The Life of the School

Include information on:

- Positive Trends
- Objectives / targets
- Coverage (trends over a number of areas)
- Use of benchmarking

The Community

Include information on:

- Positive Trends
- Objectives / targets
- Coverage (trends over a number of areas)
- Use of benchmarking

Appendix 1

Sources of evidence.

1 CRITERION: ORGANISATION AND TEAMWORK

Sub criterion 1a

Governing Body Training Record (especially Chair's record over 2 years)
Clerk's Job Description
Clerk's Training Record
Full Governing Body minutes addressing appointment of the Clerk
Governing Body Meetings' Schedule
Annual Schedule of Governing Body Business
Committees' structure and membership
List of individual governors' delegated responsibilities
Delegation Planner
Terms of Reference
Headteacher's report (3)
Governors' Code of Conduct

Sub criterion 1b

Governing Body Training Attendance Record, especially Chair's record (over 2 years)
Clerk's Training Attendance Record (2 years)
Report from SEN Governor to Governing Body
Full governing body and Committee meeting minutes
Governors' Visit Policy/Protocol
Annual Schedule of Governing Body Business
Monitoring Policy
School Improvement Plan
Committees' structure and membership
List of individual governors' delegated responsibilities
Delegation Planner
Terms of Reference
Governors' Code of Conduct

Sub criterion 1c

Whole Governing Body/Partnership Training Record, especially Chair's record(over 2 years)
Clerk's Training Attendance Record (2 years)
In-house induction programme
In-house induction materials
Governor 'buddy/mentor arrangements
Full governing body and Committee meeting minutes
Governing Body Meeting Attendance Record
Record of joint Governing Body/Staff activities
Governors' Visit Policy/Protocol
School Improvement or Development Plan
Committees' structure and membership
List of individual governors' delegated responsibilities
Delegation Planner
Terms of Reference
Governors' Code of Conduct

2. CRITERION: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Sub criterion 2a

Instrument of Government
Record of Governing Body membership and terms of office and vacancies – including length of vacancies
Correspondence with relevant governor appointing and nominating bodies e.g. documentation to invite nominations from the community
Standing Orders
Election procedures
In-house induction materials
LA Induction Training Attendance Record (All governors)
Clerk's Training Attendance Record (2 years)
In-house induction programme
In-house induction materials

Summary of governor 'buddy/mentor arrangements
Full governing body meetings' minutes
Governing Body Meeting Attendance Record
Record of joint Governing Body/Staff activities
School Improvement or Development Plan
Committees' structure and membership

Sub criterion 2b

Correspondence from the Chair, on behalf of the governing body, welcoming the new member
Whole Governing Body/Partnership Training Record (especially Chair's record) (2 years)
Clerk's Training Attendance Record (2 years)
In-house induction programme
In-house induction materials
Governor 'buddy/mentor arrangements
Full governing body and Committee meeting minutes
Governing Body Meeting Attendance Record
Record of joint Governing Body/Staff activities
Governors' Visit Policy/Protocol
School Improvement Plan
Committees' structure and membership
List of individual governors' delegated responsibilities
Delegation Planner
Terms of Reference
Governors' Code of Conduct

Sub criterion 2c

Dates and attendance record at in-house self-evaluation exercise, including name of facilitator.
Resultant action plan
Full governing body/committee minutes; including reference to the SEF and participation in training
Evidence of governing body subscription to training
Finance Committee minutes

Sub criterion 2d

In-house induction programme
Details of in-house governor buddy/mentor programme
Sample finance summaries – in management information form
Governing body agenda and minutes
Chair's training attendance record
Governors' Code of Conduct
Delegation Planner

3. CRITERION: SELF-REVIEW AND CHANGE

Sub criterion 3a

Governing Body record of self-review activities e.g. Skills Audit; Governor Profile; Effective Governing Body Exercise
Action Plans arising from governing body self review process; illustration of links to SDP/SIP; results – illustrated
Governing body/committee agenda and minutes – to provide an audit trail
Governing body agenda and minutes

Sub criterion 3b

Governing body/committee agenda and minutes – to provide an audit trail
Finance and Personnel Committee agenda, minutes and terms of reference
Monitoring Reports
Surveys' responses
Feedback means e.g. newsletters
Action plans and results
Details of joint projects and bids; outcomes

4. CRITERION: PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Sub criterion 4a

School vision and mission statement; record of review
School prospectus
School Improvement Plan
Complaints policy and data e.g. number of complaints; level at which resolved
Governing body/committee agenda and minutes – to provide an audit trail

Finance and Personnel Committee agenda, minutes and terms of reference
Monitoring Reports

Sub criterion 4b

Governing Body Training record
Terms of reference
Delegation planner
School Policies
Committee structure and reporting arrangements ie those accountable to the governing body; those to whom the governing body is accountable
School Profile
Details of how and what information is routinely disseminated to parents

Sub criterion 4

School policies
Monitoring reports on effectiveness of policies
Governors' Code of Conduct

Sub criterion 4d

Governing body/committee agenda and minutes
Meeting papers
Minimal use of 'confidential items' unless to protect individuals
Governors' Code of Conduct
Delegation planner
Monitoring reports and actions

Sub criterion 4e

In-house induction programme
Attendance at central induction programme
Outcomes of Skills Audit and action plan
Delegation planner
Minutes
Terms of reference
Schedule for committee membership review.

Sub criterion 4f

Survey and consultation data; action plans as a result
School Newsletter items
School website
Complaints procedure
Complaints data
Enrolment trends

5. CRITERION: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Sub criterion 5a

Full governing body and committee minutes
School prospectus or other documents demonstrating governors' strategic influence
School profile
Staffing structure matched with above information
Governing Body plans for head teacher recruitment

Sub criterion 5b

Policy schedule and review timetable
Policies promoting equality and tackling discrimination
Procedures for policy formulation and review
Procedures for governors engaging pupils, parents and others in policy formulation
Record of governing body collaboration with one or more schools in joint policy formulation

Sub criterion 5c

Calendar of governing body and committee meetings
Evidence of budget priorities matched with school improvement plan/SEF priorities
Procedures for 3 year budgeting
'Keeping Your Balance' questionnaire
Procedures for budget monitoring
FMSiS self-assessment
School audit report
Asset management report

Sub criterion 5d

Record of engagement between representatives of the governing body and the school improvement partner
Record of governing body engagement in target setting
Log of governing body school monitoring visits
Record of governing body engagement in activities which promote the well being of learners

Sub criterion 5e

Record of head teacher planning and review meeting dates
Record of interim review meeting dates
Schedule of staff appraisal meetings
Performance Management Policy
Pay Policy, showing integration with above
Procedures for agreeing staff pay

6. CRITERION: STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES**Sub criterion 6a**

School curriculum statement
Procedure for curriculum complaints
Policy for collective worship
Policy for religious education
Policy for sex and relationships education

Sub criterion 6b

School policy on inclusion
Policy for Race Equality
Policy for Disability Equality
Procedures for monitoring incidents of discrimination (race, disability, etc)
Procedures for recruitment demonstrating equal opportunities
Record of governor engagement in school activities promoting inclusion

Sub criterion 6c

Procedures for governing body monitoring of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
Schedule of school visits to monitor SEN

SEN governor role description
School Policy for Special Educational Needs
School Accessibility Plan

Sub criterion 6d

School Health & Safety policy and procedures
School procedures for child protection
Record of safer recruitment training
Behaviour policy
Committee meeting minutes
Record of risk assessments
Record of Safer School Partnership activity
Record of governor engagement in planning and monitoring the school's PSCHE programme
Record of governor support for the Healthy Schools initiative

Sub criterion 6e

Record of governing body decisions to enhance reporting to parents on pupil progress
Record of engagement with student council or parent council on communication issues
Record of governing body involvement in preparing the school prospectus and profile
Evidence of compliance with Freedom of Policy legislation

Sub criterion 6f

Terms of Reference planner for delegated powers
Terms of Reference of the Finance Committee
FMSiS school self-assessment
Performance Management Policy
Procedures for the Recruitment and Selection of staff, including vetting and barring arrangements
Certificate showing a governor has done the Safer Recruitment training
School's complaints procedure

7. CRITERION: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Sub criterion 7a

Schedule of governors with specified delegated monitoring responsibilities
School policy on assessment for learning
Log of governor school visits
Governing body meeting and committee meeting minutes
Record of governor engagement in monitoring school performance data

Sub criterion 7b

Governing body meeting and committee meeting minutes
Record of governing body engagement in school self-evaluation
Record of how governors use Pupil and Parent Surveys
Record of governing body use of RAISE-Online, Fischer Family Trust data, or other external data
Record of governing body use of attendance and exclusions data

Sub criterion 7c

Governing body meeting and committee meeting minutes
Record of governing body engagement in school self-evaluation
Record of how governors use the head teacher and other staff reports for monitoring
Record of meetings between the head teacher and chair of governors
Record of governors' engagement with the Senior Management Team

Sub criterion 7d

School Visits Policy
School Visits code of practice
Log of school visits
School visit monitoring reports
Record of governor attendance at school events

8. SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE

Sub criterion 8a

Record of engagement between governors and the Senior Management Team

Agendas and minutes of meetings between senior staff and governors
Record of governor attendance at school events
Record of governor activity in promoting the school externally in the community

Sub criterion 8b

Governing body meeting and committee meeting minutes
Minutes of meetings between senior staff and governors
School governing body handbook indicating potential relevant questions

Sub criterion 8c

Record of engagement between governors and the Senior Management Team
Minutes of meetings between senior staff and governors
School improvement initiatives which demonstrate joint working between senior staff and governors