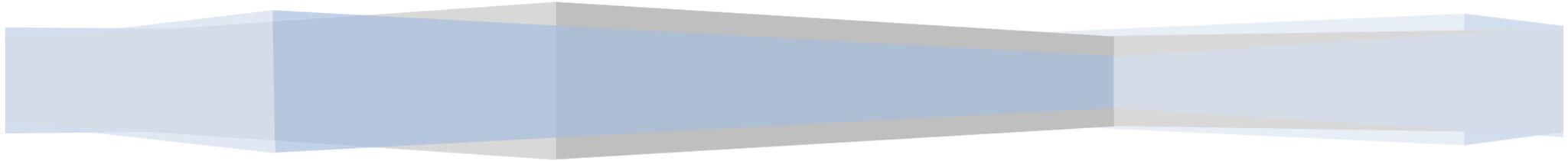


# GLM Quality Mark for School Governance



# Guidance for Schools and Academies

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, which aims to celebrate good governance in schools and academies.

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](mailto:info@glmpartnership.org). All documentation should be provided electronically, 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.

We have sought to reduce the bureaucratic burden in the 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 2015 is £725 + VAT.

Schools with a clear agenda for development may well find they are not quite ready to submit a Governor Mark application. This is because real impact on outcomes for pupils needs to be demonstrated and we know this takes some time. A number of schools who have enquired about development opportunities have commissioned an external review of governance. There are many agencies who provide these. Newport Educational, our contracted provider of the Governor Mark assessment process, can also provide these on enquiry.

## **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
- RAISE online report (schools without RAISE should provide other external data where available)
- Self-Evaluation documentation
- 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.

## **Step 3            Acknowledgement**

After the application is received we will acknowledge receipt, and tell you the name of the assessor who will visit the school. We will also inform you of the date of the Assessment Panel meeting to which we plan to bring the report on your governing body.

## **Step 4            Assessor Contact**

The Assessor will contact the school through the email address you provide and will arrange a date for the visit. They will almost certainly ask for further information to be sent. The precise list of further documents will vary from school to school, but you can expect to be asked for governing body minutes from the previous 12 months, reports from the Headteacher, external professional reports, such as from a school improvement partner or equivalent, and the school improvement plan if it can be sent as an attachment.

## **Step 5            School Visit**

The on-site visit should take place within three months of your application, and lasts for three hours. The Assessor will indicate who they would like speak to during the visit. This may include:

- Chair of governors
- Headteacher
- Clerk
- Chair of committees, particularly those who deal with school improvement
- One or two relatively new governors
- The clerk
- Governor (or a representative from the committee) linked to safeguarding

The assessor will be willing to meet any other governors who would like to contribute.

## **Step 5            Outcome**

After the visit the assessor will report back to the Governor mark Assessment Panel, which meets six times a year, towards the end of each half term.

**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, nor his or her recommendation, on the day of the site visit.**

## Part 1 – Evidence Grid

The grid that indicates evidence in support of your application is important. 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 should submit one piece of evidence to validate each sub criterion judgment, although in many cases you will have more than one example. 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 criteria, 'Ethos and Working Practice' (1-2) and 'The Assessment Framework' (2-3). All five 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 3-5 of the evidence grid to be completed.** Sections 1-2 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

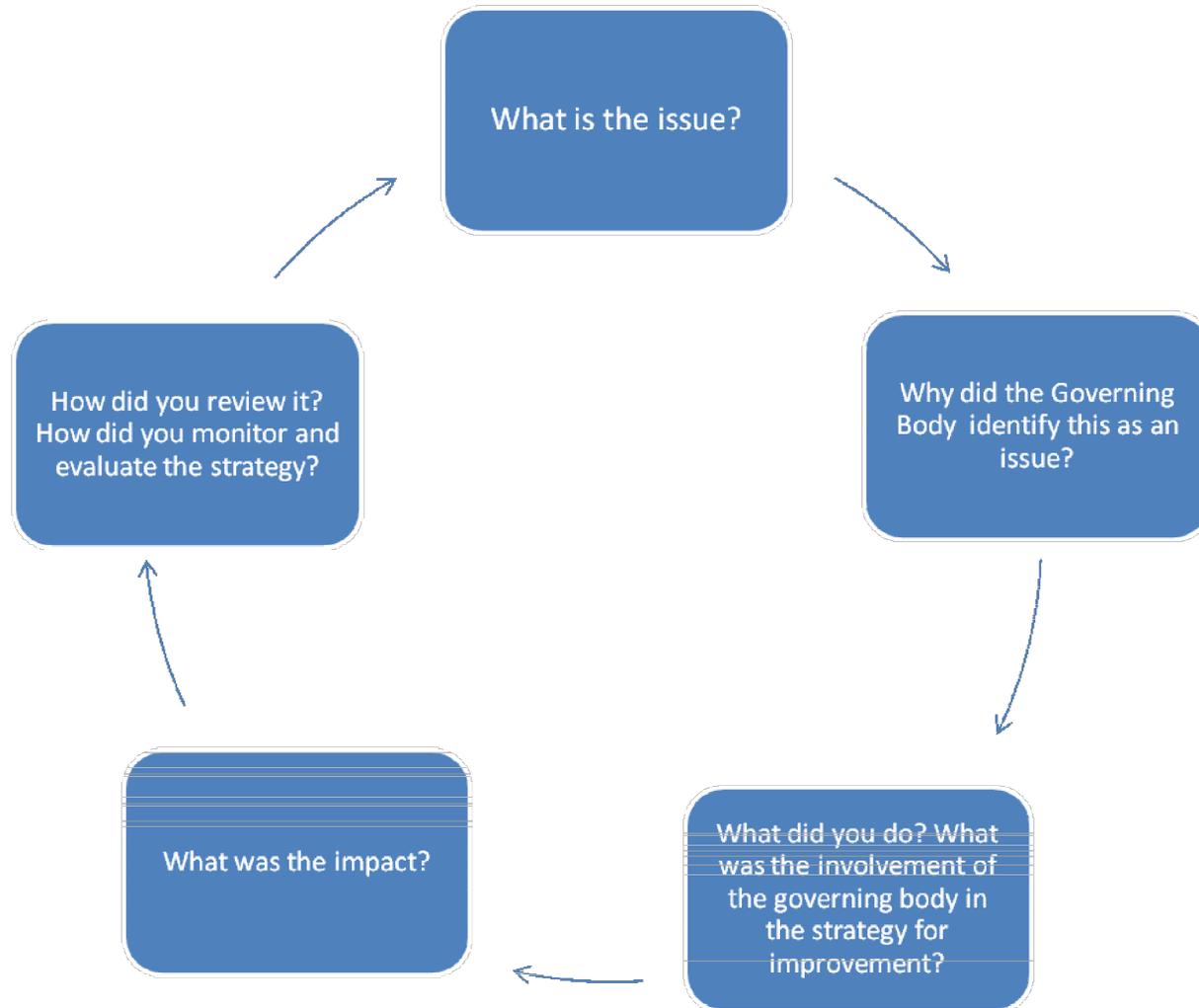
- **You should aim to achieve full compliance in the majority of criteria to meet the standard.**
- **Some sections require more evidence than others.**
- **Do not be afraid to include some aspects of 'partial compliance', where the governing body is developing its work.**

## 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 3 areas listed on page 9. 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 three 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 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.

Make sure you use the school improvement impact statement to talk about the governing body's influence over **the key issues facing the school**. If Ofsted, RAISEonline, the SEF and the SDP all say that the main improvement area is quality of teaching, the assessor will be puzzled if you decide to use the school improvement impact statement to talk about how the governors raised funds for an outside play area.

The way you write impact statements is also particularly important. **Avoid descriptive narrative**. 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 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 3-5 of the evidence grid.

# Impact statements

**The three impact statements required are:**

## **1. School Improvement**

Assessors will start their work by using RAISE, the Ofsted report and any self-evaluation documents to identify the key improvement priorities for the school. Your impact statement should focus on an improvement priority (or priorities) and show how the work of the governing body has supported the raising of pupil performance standards in the school.

## **2. Pupil Safety and Wellbeing**

The safety and wellbeing of pupils is a very important aspect of the work of the governing body. You should write about governor engagement with the life of the school and the wellbeing of pupils. You should include the way the governing body meets its obligations for child protection and safeguarding.

## **3. Partnership and Community Engagement**

The connections between the school and its community, as well as growing partnerships and collaborations between schools are a growing feature of the education world. You should aim to show in the statement the way your governing body engages with these links and partnerships, and the impact this has on the quality of both yours and partner schools.