



governance, leadership and management

...achieving excellence in schools

Governor Mark

Guidance for Schools and Academies:

How to Succeed

Governor Mark: How to succeed

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Completing the Evidence Grid and Impact Statements

Before completing the documentation, reflect on the key principles of the Governor Mark standards and the fundamental concept that success is dependent on a governing board being able to demonstrate the impact it has on outcomes for children and young people.

- Ensure that the purpose of all your governing board meetings is focused on the core strategic functions of governance and particularly school improvement. Ensure that is what the meetings are essentially about
- Make sure there are good records of governing board activity in improving the school or organisation
- Make sure there is a positive impact in your work – do not accept excuses as to why children are not learning
- Ensure that the application for Governor Mark is steered by the governing board, not the headteacher or CEO.

The Evidence Grid and Impact Statements should demonstrate how you have applied the logic of making an impact and support your governing board's answers to the following questions:

- How did the governing board determine their areas for focus in which to make an impact? (For example, the board identified a dip in outcomes or progress in certain subjects.)
- To what extent did the board plan and develop approaches to make full use of effective working practices and to comply with statutory requirements? Are priority areas included in improvement plans? Do improvement targets form a focus for such activity? Has the board ensured appropriate allocation of budgets and resources to take priorities forward?
- How did the board implement the working practices to achieve the determined impact?

- What is the impact? How is it measured, how does the board know? Positive trends will indicate improvement and sustained good performance. Data and benchmarking will indicate how schools compare nationally, locally and with other similar schools.
- What lessons have been learned – what else need to be done?

Governing boards will want to determine how their strategic leadership, values and policies have impacted upon:

- Outcomes which demonstrate school improvement
- The life of their schools in their breadth and richness
- The role that schools play as a hub in the community
- Preparing children and young people for life in modern Britain (tolerance and respect)

The scope of the data available to governing boards will give a clearer picture as to whether their impact has been influenced by their approach to the basics and requirements.

Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) and Local Governing Bodies (LGB)

We welcome applications from MATs and/or LGBs provided there is clear evidence of how the MAT supports governance in the LGB through a clear scheme of delegation that is understood by all and the organisation can clearly demonstrate how the MAT has engaged with the process, added value and had an impact on outcomes in the academy(ies) applying.

A LGB applying for Governor Mark must have delegated responsibility for setting the local vision, contributing to performance management of academy leaders and holding the academy to account for outcomes.

The directors/trustees of a MAT must support the application from a LGB and at least one trustee or director will need to meet with the assessor during the on-site visit.

Full Impact Statements must be completed for each academy that applies for Governor Mark. The assessment will require data to be submitted for each academy application, with evidence of how the trustees' focus on strategy has supported and added value to outcomes in the academy(ies)

The award of Governor Mark also requires evidence of shared responsibility for academy improvement, connectivity between the board and local governance, with evidence of how the board raises expectations of local governance to impact on standards. The MAT board will be able to demonstrate that the LGB monitoring local standards, is sufficiently well informed by the school leaders' performance management targets.

Part 1 – Evidence Grid

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

The Governor Mark Standard Document includes examples of suitable evidence for each of the criteria. You should include 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 boards 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 Evidence Grid

There are two sets of criteria, 'Ethos and Working Practice' (1-2) and 'The Assessment Framework' (3-5). All five criteria can be used as the basis of governing board 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 submitted.

Sections 1-2 remain available for use as a self-evaluation tool for governing boards. In Sections 3-5, you need to provide evidence against each of the sub-criteria assessing whether you are:

- FC – **Fully Compliant** with the standard - all aspects of the element are met
- PC – **Partially Compliant** with the standard - some but not all aspects of the element are met and remedial action to meet the remainder could be put in place within a short period of time (maximum of three months)
- BP – If you believe that you are not only compliant but exhibit a **Best Practice** example where all aspects of the element are met **and you can demonstrate how your governing board has gone beyond the requirements and the practice is transferable.**
- NC – **Not Compliant** with the standard none of the requirements of the element are met or the assessor concludes that remedial action to address those elements that are not met would require a timescale of more than three months

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 board is developing its work.

Part 2 – The influence of the governing board: Impact

Section 6 of the Governor Mark Framework

Governor Mark is intended to support schools/academies through moderated quality criteria of the governing board's contribution to leadership and management.

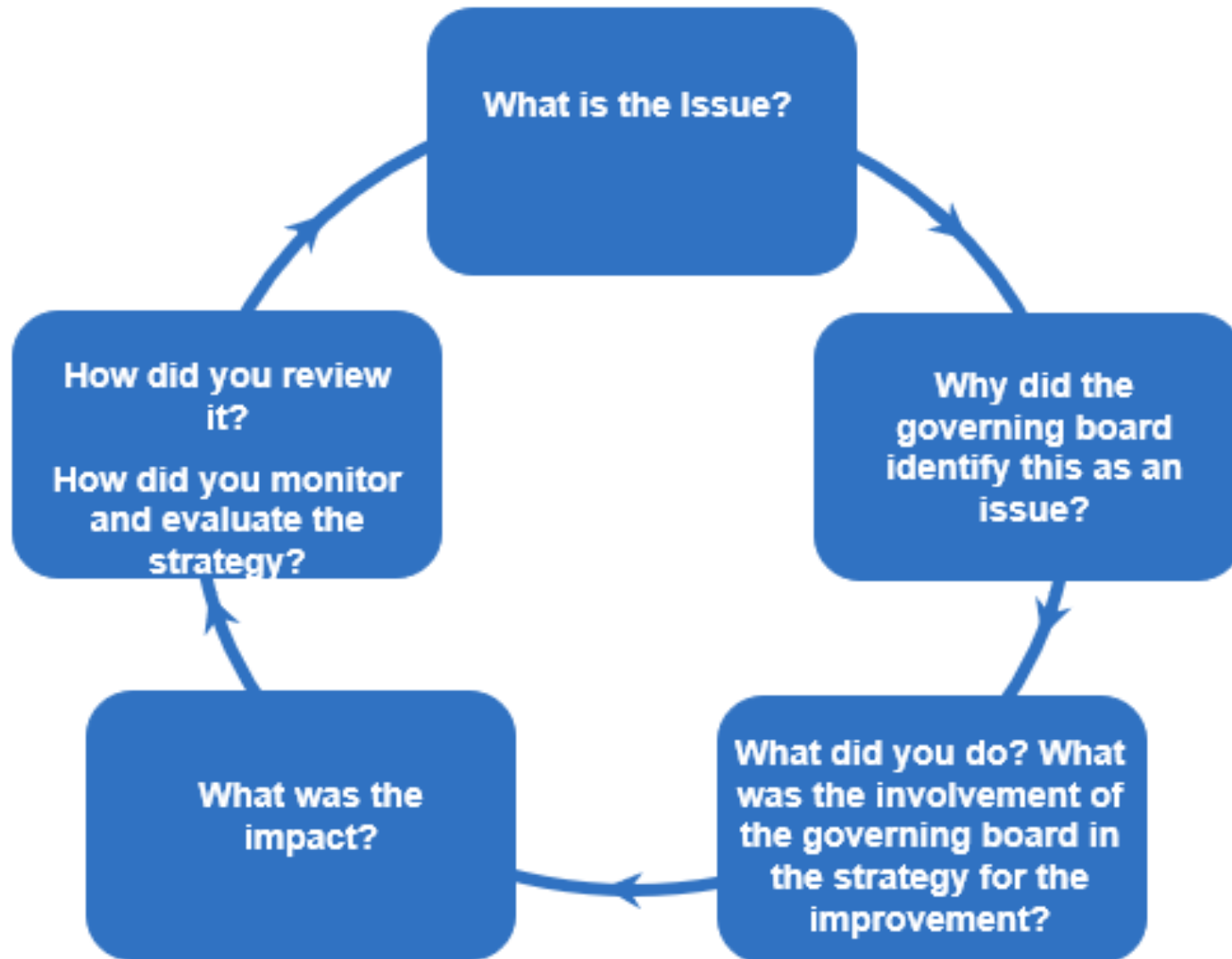
Underpinning the principles behind this model is the emphasis on a governing board ensuring that quality processes are in place which make a significant **impact** upon the achievements of the school/academy. Intrinsic to this approach is the belief that if governing boards have adopted such quality processes their contribution and influence can make a real difference to the leadership and management of the school/academy or organisation.

This part of the assessment requires the governing board to identify how it has influenced achievement in the school/academy/organisation.

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.

The assessor will be following the audit trail shown below:

The audit trail :



Impact Statements

Effective governance **must** be evident in outcomes for pupils and the school/academy community. For this section you need to identify areas where the work of the governing board has influenced achievement in the school. The areas of achievement we would like you to consider fall into three headings and we require Impact Statements on:

- 1. School/Academy Improvement**
- 2. Partnerships and Community Engagement**
- 3. Pupil Wellbeing and Safety**

The evidence against the sub and main criteria provide the first indication of the quality of governance. However, it will be the governing board 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 spread of evidence for each of the three areas (see the Standards Document for more detail) of impact demonstrating that the work of the governing board 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/academy is benchmarking its outcomes with other similar schools/organisations

Plus:

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

Writing Impact Statements

Make sure you use the school improvement impact statement to talk about the governing board's influence over **the key issues facing your organisation**. If Ofsted, school performance data, the self-evaluation document and the improvement plan all say that the main improvement area is quality of teaching, the assessor will be puzzled if you decide to use the school/academy 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 board 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 examples of governing board work that has made a difference in its school/academy. The assessor will consider the outcome and track the audit trail to the work of the governing board and the evidence suggested in sections 3-5 of the Evidence Grid.

Please use the template provided (it is in Word format as Section 6 of the Evidence Grid) to write your impact statement which should be no more than 1000 words for each statement.

Examples of good Impact Statements are available on the GLM website.

For **each** of the three areas identified above complete the following: (N.B This blank form is included at the end of the Evidence Grid for completion)

<p>1. The issue identified and why? <i>In this section it is important that you identify a particular issue and explain how the governing board discovered / learned about the issue and why it was a priority for the school/academy to address.</i></p>
<p>2. What did the governing board decide to do about it? <i>In this section you should explain what the <u>governing board decided</u> to do to address the issue</i></p>
<p>3. What action was taken by the school/academy? <i>As a result of the governing board decision what did the school/academy do</i></p>
<p>4. How did the governing board monitor progress? <i>In order to ensure that action in (2) was followed through – how did the governing board monitor progress</i></p>
<p>5. What was the impact of this strategy and action? <i>What was the IMPACT of (2) and (3)</i></p>
<p>6. What lessons did the governing board learn? <i>Did the governing board discuss the process and review whether there were any lessons learned from the process?</i></p>

Each Impact Statement should be a maximum of 1000 words.