

20 Questions Every Governing Body Should Ask Itself: 30/08/19

Introduction

The 20 Questions are from the National Governors Association (NGA). They are just one tool which governing boards can use to assess their effectiveness. There may be other aspects which you think we need to capture either strengths or areas for improvement.

Andrea, Jill and I met on 03/05/19 and 07/05/19 to go through the questions together. I have tried to capture the main points here but have not tried to include every piece of evidence. Rather the focus is what action we could take to make us even better.

Please focus on the questions where there is highlighting as these are ones where we had less evidence and/or it would be helpful to discuss what action may be appropriate. Following the Strategic Planning meeting, I can then update the report before the governors' meeting on 17/09/19.

Trisha White

Governing Board Effectiveness

Right Skills: Do we have the right skills on the governing board?

1. Have we completed a skills audit which informs the governor specification we use as the basis of governor appointment and interview?

Yes. Completed Skills Audit February 2019. Following a governor resignation, identified what we would like from new governor and using to help fill vacancy.

Action: Continue to complete and analyse skills audit annually, identifying how to develop skills and experience as necessary.

Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?

2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?

Each governor has specific responsibilities and reports back on those during the year. Strategic Planning meetings at the start of each term. Looking ahead eg to new Ofsted Framework: Intent, Implementation and Impact. Planning for

conversion to academy status eg training sessions on what conversion process involves.

Actions: Review responsibilities at start of term so that governors get opportunity to develop expertise in new areas.

Make use of local information eg birth rates/population changes to help inform decision-making.

3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing board's induction and development needs?

Yes. An excellent clerk. Training and Development Governor oversees development needs.

Action: Find out if the clerk would like to develop his role further.

4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?

Yes. Review structure 2018 and moved from committee structure to monthly governor meetings. Reviewed how this was working and agreed it resulted in less duplication of discussions and papers. Governors gradually developing their knowledge of different areas.

Action: Keep structure under review following conversion to Academy.

5. How do we make good use of practice across the country?

Information from RoSIS training courses and newsletters, School Bus updates. Feedback from Headteacher about events attended.

Action: Continue to learn from JMAT. Anywhere else? Examples?

Role of the chair: Does our Chair show strong and effective leadership?

6. Do we carry out a regular 360 degree review of the chair's performance and elect chair each year?

Review carried out several years ago. Chair elected every two years.

Action: Carry out 360 degree review?

- 7. Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than two terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every six years?**

Yes. Terms of office reviewed at termly Strategic Planning meetings. Chair not standing for re-election 2019/20 as will have completed six years.

- 8. Does the chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the board's performance?**

Gives informal feedback.

Action: Discuss if this is something we want to do and how it would work.

Vision, ethos and strategy

Strategy: Does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities

- 9. Does our vision look forward three to five years, and does it include what the children who have left the school will have achieved?**

Have a vision which is set out in the Developing Excellence Plan. "100 Things to do before you leave Meadow View".

Action: Do we need a strategy looking forward three to five years etc? Does JMAT have a long-term strategy? Do we get any information from Winterhill about the progress of children from MVP?

- 10. Have we agreed a strategy for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?**

Do we do this via the DEP? Any actions?

- 11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing board's activities and agenda setting?**

Works very well.

Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school section and the outside world?

12. How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?

The Headteacher has conducted a parent survey. Chair has attended parent evenings, school council and meetings with staff and parents about conversion to academy status. Parent governors listen to other parents and feed back concerns. Staff governor raised colleagues' concerns and questions at governors' meeting about conversion. Governors have met some staff on school visits etc.

Action: Do we need to do more to engage with pupils, parents and staff?

13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing board to our parents and local community?

Governor Awards evening once a year Any other examples? Do we want to do more here? What could we do? Termly newsletter?

14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

Share ideas and experience and learn from other schools about how to address different issues eg reading? Any other examples? Immersive learning and EOS ethos? Headteacher's work on sharing experience and learning from other schools?

Effective accountability

Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?

15. How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data) so we can properly hold school leaders to account?

Data subgroup meets with Headteacher termly to look at attainment and progress data for all years. Information provided for SEN, EAL and PP children. Governors attend training courses about performance data. Discussions about performance data and governors questions recorded in board minutes.

Any actions?

16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor implementation of the school strategy?

Parent governor helps in class (Is this correct?) Governors have conducted learning walks (but not recently?) Have had tours of school when visiting Headteacher for other reasons and get overall impression of children being engaged and committed staff.

Action: Do we need to do more here?

Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?

17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?

Works well. Governors ask questions about specific policies which are recorded in board minutes.

Any actions?

18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?

Headteacher conducts performance management of all teachers and reports to Pay Committee. Information is anonymised. Pay committee conducts HT appraisal with support from external adviser who also manages appraisal of other JMAT Heads. Governors are not involved with performance management of other staff.

Action: Do we need to do more here?

19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?

Yes. School keeps within budget. School lettings and SLT doing work elsewhere for the local authority bring in additional money. School Business Manager works very effectively with other schools and suppliers to secure best value for money.

20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing board's contribution been to this?

Discuss at governors meeting.