**Chair of Governors Skills Audit**

* This skills audit for chairs was directly adapted from the DfE’s “A Competency Framework for Governance” which applies to both maintained schools and academies. It is a complete list of skills for chairs in that framework.
* Chairs can tick a box to evaluate their own skill level in each area.
* Once the skills audit is complete the clerk can examine the results and arrange for targeted training or guidance.

|  | **Skill Level (5 is highest)** |
| --- | --- |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1a. Setting Direction. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| thinks strategically about the future direction of the organisation and identifies the steps needed to achieve goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads the board and executive leaders in ensuring operational decisions contribute to strategic priorities |  |  |  |  |  |
| adopts and strategically leads a systematic approach to change management, that is clear, manageable and timely |  |  |  |  |  |
| provides effective leadership of organisational change even when this is difficult |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1b. Culture, Values and Ethos. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to recognise when the board or an individual member is not behaving as expected and take appropriate action to address this |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads board meetings in a way which embodies the culture, values and ethos of the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1c. Decision-Making. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the board understands the scope of issues in question and is clear about decisions they need to make |  |  |  |  |  |
| summarises the position in order to support the board to reach consensus where there are diverging views |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures that different perspectives, viewpoints and dissenting voices are properly taken into account and recorded |  |  |  |  |  |
| facilitates decision-making even if difficult and manages the expectations of executive leaders when doing so |  |  |  |  |  |
| recognises the limits of any discretionary chair’s powers and uses them under due guidance and consideration and with a view to limiting such use |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the board seeks guidance from executive leaders or others in the senior leadership team and from the clerk/governance professional before the board commits to significant or controversial courses of action |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1d. Collaborative Working With Stakeholders and Partners. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| communicates clearly with colleagues, parents and carers, partners and other agencies and checks that their message has been heard and understood |  |  |  |  |  |
| considers how to tailor their communications style in order to build rapport and confidence with stakeholders |  |  |  |  |  |
| is proactive in seeking and maximising opportunities for partnership working where these are conducive to achieving the agreed strategic goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| is proactive in sharing good practice and lessons learned where these can benefit others and the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| demonstrates how stakeholder concerns and questions have shaped board discussions if not necessarily the final decision |  |  |  |  |  |
| when appropriate, seeks external professional advice, knowing where this advice is available from and how to go about requesting it |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1e. Risk Management. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads the board and challenges leaders appropriately in setting risk appetite and tolerance |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures that the board has sight of, and understands, organisational risks and undertakes scrutiny of risk management plans |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads by example to avoid, declare and manage conflicts of interest |  |  |  |  |  |
| knows when the board needs external expert advice on risk management |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2a. Educational Improvement. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| *(No skills for chairs listed in this area.)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2b. Rigorous Analysis of Data. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| works with the clerk, to ensure the right data is provided by executive leaders, which is accessible to board and open to scrutiny |  |  |  |  |  |
| promotes the importance of data interrogation to hold executive leaders to account |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2c. Financial Frameworks and Accountability. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the board holds executive leaders to account for financial and business management, as much as educational outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads the board to identify when specialist skills and experience in audit, fraud or human resources is required either to undertake a specific task or more regularly to lead committees of the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2d. Financial Management and Monitoring. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| *(No skills for chairs listed in this area.)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2e. Staffing and Performance Management. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is confident and prepared in undertaking leadership appraisal |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to explain to the board their proposals on leadership pay awards for approval |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2f. External Accountability. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is confident in providing strategic leadership to the board during periods of scrutiny |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the board is aware of, and prepared for, formal external scrutiny |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3. PEOPLE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3a. Building an Effective Team. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures that everyone understands why they have been recruited and what role they play in the governance structure |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures new people are helped to understand their non-executive leadership role, the role of the board and the vision and strategy of the organisation enabling them to make a full contribution |  |  |  |  |  |
| sets high expectations for conduct and behaviour for all those in governance and is an exemplary role model in demonstrating these |  |  |  |  |  |
| creates an atmosphere of open, honest discussion where it is safe toconstructively challenge conventional wisdom |  |  |  |  |  |
| creates a sense of inclusiveness where each member understands their individual contribution to the collective work of the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| promotes and fosters a supportive working relationship between the: board, clerk/governance professional, executive leaders, staff of the organisation and external stakeholders |  |  |  |  |  |
| identifies and cultivates leadership within the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| recognises individual and group achievements, not just in relation to the board but in the wider organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| takes a strategic view of the skills that the board needs, identifies gaps and takes action to ensure these are filled |  |  |  |  |  |
| develops the competence of the vice-chair to act as chair should the need arise |  |  |  |  |  |
| builds a close, open and supportive working relationship with the vice-chair which respects the differences in their roles |  |  |  |  |  |
| values the importance of the clerk/governance professional and their assistance in the coordination of leadership and governance requirements of the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| listens to the clerk/governance professional and takes direction from them on issues of compliance and other matters |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4. STRUCTURES** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4a. Roles and Responsibilities. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads discussions and decisions about what functions to delegate |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5. COMPLIANCE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5a. Statutory and Contractual Requirements. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| sets sufficiently high expectations of the clerk/governance professional, as applicable, ensuring the board is compliant with the regulatory framework for governance and, where appropriate, charity and company law |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the board receives appropriate training or development where required on issues of compliance |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6. EVALUATION** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6a. Managing Self-Review and Development. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| actively invites feedback on their own performance as chair |  |  |  |  |  |
| puts the needs of the board and organisation ahead of their own personal ambition and is willing to step down or move on at the appropriate time |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6b. Managing and Developing the Board’s Effectiveness. The chair…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| sets challenging development goals and works effectively with the board to meet them |  |  |  |  |  |
| leads performance review of the board and its committees |  |  |  |  |  |
| undertakes open and honest conversations with board members about their performance and development needs, and if appropriate, commitment or tenure |  |  |  |  |  |
| recognises and develops talent in board members and ensures they are provided with opportunities to realise their potential |  |  |  |  |  |
| creates a culture in which board members are encouraged to take ownership of their own development |  |  |  |  |  |
| promotes and facilitates coaching, development, mentoring and support for all members of the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| is open to providing peer support to other chairs and takes opportunities to share good practice and learning |  |  |  |  |  |