**Governor Skills Audit**

* This skills audit 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 in that framework.
* Governors can tick a box to evaluate their own skill level in each area.
* The DfE lists the skills that **every** governor should have. They also list skills that **at least one** board member should have.
* Chairs need to have all skills listed here **plus** additional skills which I have listed in a separate skills audit for chairs. A clerk’s skills audit is also available.
* Once the skills audit is complete the clerk or chair can examine the results and arrange for targeted training, guidance or recruitment of new governors to fill skills gaps.

|  | **Skill Level (5 is highest)** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1a. Setting Direction. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| thinks strategically and contributes to the development of the organisation’s strategy |  |  |  |  |  |
| can articulate the organisation’s strategic priorities (and where appropriate, charitable objects) and explain how these inform goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| can put in place plans for monitoring progress towards strategic goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| supports strategic change having challenged as appropriate so that change is in the best interests of children, young people and the organisation (and aligned with charitable objects, where appropriate) |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1b. Culture, Values and Ethos. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| can set and agree the distinctive characteristics and culture of the organisation or, in schools with a religious designation, preserve and develop the distinctive character set out in the organisation’s trust deed |  |  |  |  |  |
| acts in a way that exemplifies and reinforces the organisation’s culture, values and ethos |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures that policy and practice align with the organisation’s culture, values and ethos |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1c. Decision-Making. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| identifies viable options and those most likely to achieve the organisation’s goals and objectives |  |  |  |  |  |
| puts aside vested or personal interests to make decisions that are in the best interests of all pupils/students |  |  |  |  |  |
| acts with honesty, frankness and objectivity taking decisions impartially, fairly and on merit using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias |  |  |  |  |  |
| brings integrity, and considers a range of perspectives and diverse ways of thinking to challenge the status quo, reject assumptions and take nothing for granted |  |  |  |  |  |
| identifies when to seek the advice of an independent clerk/governance professional for guidance on statutory and legal responsibilities and ethical aspects of the board’s decision-making |  |  |  |  |  |
| abides by the principle of collective-decision making and stands by the decisions of the board, even where their own view differs |  |  |  |  |  |
| encourages transparency in decision making and is willingly answerable to, and open to challenge from, those with an interest in decisions made |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1d. Collaborative Working With Stakeholders and Partners. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is proactive in consulting, and responding to, the views of a wide group of stakeholders when planning and making decisions |  |  |  |  |  |
| anticipates, prepares for and welcomes stakeholder questions and ensures that these are answered in a relevant, appropriate and timely manner |  |  |  |  |  |
| works in partnership with outside bodies where this will contribute to achieving the goals of the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses clear language and messaging to communicate to parents and carers, pupils/students, staff and the local community |  |  |  |  |  |
| is credible, open, honest and appropriate when communicating with stakeholders and partners including clear and timely feedback on how their views have been taken into account |  |  |  |  |  |
| considers the impact of the board’s decisions and the effect they will have on the key stakeholder groups and especially parents and carers and the local community |  |  |  |  |  |
| acts as an ambassador for the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| supports and challenges leaders to raise aspiration and community cohesion both within the wider community and with local employers |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1e. Risk Management. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to identify and prioritise the organisational and key risks, their impact and appropriate countermeasures, contingencies and risk owners |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures risk management and internal control systems are robust enough to enable the organisation to deliver its strategy in the short- and long-term |  |  |  |  |  |
| advises on how risks should be managed or mitigated to reduce the likelihood or impact of the risk and on how to achieve the right balance of risk |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the risk management and internal control systems are monitored and reviewed and appropriate actions are taken |  |  |  |  |  |
| actively avoids conflicts of interest or otherwise declares and manages them |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2a. Educational Improvement. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| establishes clear expectations for executive leaders in relation to the process of educational improvement and intended outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |
| defines the range and format of information and data they need in order to hold executive leaders to account |  |  |  |  |  |
| seeks evidence from executive leaders to demonstrate the appropriateness and potential impact of proposed improvement initiatives |  |  |  |  |  |
| questions leaders on how the in-school assessment system in use effectively supports the attainment and progress of all pupils, including those with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **And at least ONE governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is confident in their challenge to executive leaders on strategies for monitoring and improving the behaviour and safety of pupils/students |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2b. Rigorous Analysis of Data. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| analyses and interprets data in order to evaluate performance of groups of pupils/students |  |  |  |  |  |
| analyses and interprets progression and destination data to understand where young people are moving on to after leaving the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses published data to understand better which areas of school performance need improvement and is able to identify any further data that is required |  |  |  |  |  |
| questions leaders on whether they are collecting the right data to inform their assessment and challenges appropriately when data collection is not adding value |  |  |  |  |  |
| challenges senior leaders to ensure that the collection of assessment data is purposeful, efficient and valid |  |  |  |  |  |
| **And at least ONE governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| reviews and analyses a broad range of information and data in order to spot trends and patterns |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2c. Financial Frameworks and Accountability. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| has a basic understanding of financial management in order to ensure the integrity of financial information received by the board and to establish robust financial controls |  |  |  |  |  |
| has confidence in the arrangements for the provision of accurate and timely financial information, and the financial systems used to generate such information |  |  |  |  |  |
| interprets budget monitoring information and communicates this clearly to others |  |  |  |  |  |
| participates in the organisation’s self-evaluation of activities relating to financial performance, efficiency and control |  |  |  |  |  |
| is rigorous in their questioning to understand whether enough is being done to drive financial efficiency and align budgets to priorities |  |  |  |  |  |
| **And at least ONE governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses their detailed financial knowledge and experience, which is appropriate for the scale of the organisation, to provide advice and guidance to the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2d. Financial Management and Monitoring. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| assimilates the financial implications of organisational priorities and use this knowledge to make decisions about allocating current and future funding |  |  |  |  |  |
| interprets financial data and asks informed questions about income, expenditure and resource allocation and alignment with the strategic plan priorities |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2e. Staffing and Performance Management. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures that the staffing and leadership structures are fit for purpose |  |  |  |  |  |
| takes full responsibility for maintaining, updating and implementing a robust and considered pay policy |  |  |  |  |  |
| feels confident in approving and applying the system for performance management of executive leaders |  |  |  |  |  |
| identifies and considers the budgetary implication of pay decisions and considers these in the context of the spending plan |  |  |  |  |  |
| pays due regard to ensuring that leaders and teachers are able to have a satisfactory work life balance |  |  |  |  |  |
| **And at least ONE governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| monitors the outcome of pay decisions, including the extent to which different groups of teachers may progress at different rates and checks processes operate fairly |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2f. External Accountability. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures appropriate structures, processes and professional development are in place to support the demands of internal and external scrutiny |  |  |  |  |  |
| values the ownership that parents and carers and other stakeholders feel about ‘their school’ and ensures that the board makes itself accessible and answerable to them |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses an understanding of relevant data and information to present verbal and written responses to external scrutiny (e.g. inspectors/RSCs/EFA) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3. PEOPLE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3a. Building an Effective Team. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| demonstrates commitment to their role and to active participation in governance |  |  |  |  |  |
| has the ability to acquire the basic knowledge that they need to be effective in their role |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses active listening effectively to build rapport and strong collaborative relationships |  |  |  |  |  |
| welcomes constructive challenge and is respectful when challenging others |  |  |  |  |  |
| provides timely feedback and is positive about receiving feedback in return |  |  |  |  |  |
| seeks to resolve misunderstanding at the earliest stage in order to prevent conflict |  |  |  |  |  |
| raises doubts and encourages the expression of differences of opinion |  |  |  |  |  |
| is honest, reflective and self-critical about mistakes made and lessons learned |  |  |  |  |  |
| influences others and builds consensus using persuasion and clear presentation of their views |  |  |  |  |  |
| demonstrates professional ethics, values and sound judgement |  |  |  |  |  |
| recognises the importance of, and values the advice provided by, the clerk/governance professional role in supporting the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4. STRUCTURES** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4a. Roles and Responsibilities. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to contribute to the design of governance and committee structures that are fit for purpose and appropriate to the scale and complexity of the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to adapt existing committee structures as necessary in light of learning/experience including evaluation of impact |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5. COMPLIANCE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **5a. Statutory and Contractual Requirements. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to speak up when concerned about non-compliance where it has not been picked up by the board or where they feel it is not being taken seriously |  |  |  |  |  |
| can explain the board’s legal responsibilities and accountabilities |  |  |  |  |  |
| is able to identify when specialist advice may be required |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6. EVALUATION** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6a. Managing Self-Review and Development. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is outward facing and focused on learning from others to improve practice |  |  |  |  |  |
| maintains a personal development plan to improve his/her effectiveness and links this to the strategic aims of the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| is open to taking up opportunities, when appropriate, to attend training and any other opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours |  |  |  |  |  |
| obtains feedback from a diverse range of colleagues and stakeholders to inform their own development |  |  |  |  |  |
| undertakes self-review, reflecting on their personal contributions to the board, demonstrating and developing their commitment to improvement, identifying areas for development and building on existing knowledge and skills |  |  |  |  |  |
| **6b. Managing and Developing the Board’s Effectiveness. Every governor…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| evaluates the impact of the board’s decisions on pupil/student outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |
| utilises inspection feedback fully to inform decisions about board development |  |  |  |  |  |
| contributes to self-evaluation processes to identify strengths and areas for board development |  |  |  |  |  |