

**National Governance Association (NGA) 20 Questions every governing board should ask itself –
Hatherop Church of England Primary School**

Reviewed by all the governors during a group reflection and training session coordinated by Gloucestershire County Council Governor Services on the 15th March 2022.

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?	Not yet, but will in April to inform training needs. Will use the GCC template as it is relatively simple. Action: Skills Audit (April 22)
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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?	All governors undertook recent R&R training in addition to new governor training. A range of specific roles (e.g. Safeguarding, SEN) are allocated, with relevant training. We understand the need to be strategic not operational ('eyes on, hands off').
3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing board's induction and development needs?	Yes - an excellent professional clerk who provides legal advice, including updates on changes, and oversees induction and development needs.
4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?	Yes, current structure works – 3x effective committees and there is good communication / information provided at FGB. However, could reduce the number of committees to be more efficient. Action: Review committee structure (March FGB).
5. How do we make use of good practice from across the country?	School budget is benchmarked against similar schools. Regular training explores examples of good practice. Membership of the Key for Governors is a source of good practice from other schools.

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

6. Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair's performance and elect the chair each year?	Not historically but keen to do this. Process can be relatively simple and inform annual election cycle. Action: Develop simple form (for Dec '22)
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?	No current governor has served longer than two-terms. New Chair appointed in Jan after previous served for 4 years. Will have open conversations about succession planning going forwards.
8. Does the chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the board's performance?	Yes, plan to continue doing this informally, involving an annual two-way conversation with each member about how it is going.

Vision, ethos and strategy

Strategy: does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?

<i>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?</i>	Not yet but planning to address this with staff in May, to develop a relatively simple set of shared long-term priorities, based on our vision and values . May also explore tracking children who have left. Action: Staff / Governor strategy session (May '22)
<i>10. Have we agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?</i>	Yes. Governors contribute to our annual School Development Plan (SDP) which identifies key school improvement priorities, plus actions, intended impacts and planned evidence to monitor implementation and impact of each (e.g. visits, discussions, surveys, assessment data).
<i>11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing board's activities and agenda setting?</i>	Reasonably effective and an area being actively worked-on e.g. ensuring governor input to early versions and mid-year SDP updates in committee meetings, identifying evidence against SDP priorities up-front, linking governor visits more tightly to SDP priorities, and planning the process for summer term governor input into next year's SDP.

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

<i>12. How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?</i>	We conduct annual stakeholder surveys (staff, parent, and pupil), attend parents' evening at least once/ year, capture pupil voice in visits, and attend at least one staff meeting / year. High-level results and actions are fed-back to staff and parents.
<i>13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing board to our parents and local community?</i>	Plan to improve this e.g. send a termly update to staff, publish an annual governance statement on website and input into monthly newsletter. Actions: Termly staff update, newsletter, annual governance statement.
<i>14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?</i>	Hatherop is in the South Cotswold School partnership and a safeguarding partnership with Southrop. The school collaborates with various local partners for e.g. for events and educational visits (recently Ernest Cook Trust, the Church, sports)

Effective accountability

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

<i>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?</i>	This is a strength. Termly attainment and progress data (based teacher assessment informed by NFER and other tests) across subjects and for different groups are discussed. The Data Governor has access to anonymous data on Insight platform. Will be
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	interesting to see how internal assessments relate to 2022 external summer assessment data.
<i>16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?</i>	Yes – although unable to do this well recently due to COVID, now have a planned schedule of monitoring visits linked to SDP priorities, with at least two visits per term. There is a visits policy and form.
<i>17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?</i>	This is good, thanks to our clerk. There is a three-year policy review schedule via committee meetings to ensure compliance. Policy review is delegated to appropriate governors where appropriate.
<i>18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?</i>	HT conducts annual and mid-year reviews. Staff objectives are linked to SDP where appropriate. HT annual review is conducted by three trained governors, supported by LA. HT mid-year review is booked. Staff survey indicates satisfaction with management and training opportunities.
<i>19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?</i>	We have a finance committee, with an effective Chair. The finances are reviewed 4x / year by the LA and 3x / year by the governors. We complete the Schools Financial Values Standard annually. Spending is aligned with the SDP.

Impact: are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?

<i>20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing board's contribution been to this?</i>	The school has worked hard to improve its offer in many areas (e.g. writing provision, curriculum planning, phonics and reading, embedding maths mastery), whilst maintaining the schools' caring ethos and high standards of behaviour and attitudes, which is impressive, given this has happened along-side staff managing complex transitions to and from remote learning during COVID. This is for the most part due to the outstanding leadership and management provided by our new HT, hard work and dedication of staff. Governors have also contributed; appointing our HT, supporting her during difficult decisions, providing constructive challenge and discussion on key priorities (e.g. on evidence-based writing programmes, Pupil Premium funding, SEN, spiritual education), and gathering / reporting on stakeholder views. As a small, low-disadvantage, school, the finances have been a keen, on-going focus, and more recently attention has turned to school structure and buildings. This is in addition to the regular drum-beat of committee meetings, policy review and input into / monitoring of the SDP and its impact.
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