

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE

What is it?

A review of your board's governance based on the descriptors in the Ofsted School Inspector Handbook; the DfE Competency Frameworks for Governance and Clerking; and HfL/BEP Governance good practice recommendations. It is not another inspection. The review is designed to support, improve and develop and will help the governing board identify priorities for improvement and steps to take.

What does it involve?

Kathy Dunnett, Herts for Learning (HfL) Governance Team, leads on the arrangements for our External Reviews. She will allocate a local reviewer who will contact you directly to explain the process.

- **Online governor survey.** This anonymous survey will be sent to all governors to complete. It will be distributed by, and returned to, the Governance team. The questions are not a test, they ask for individuals' opinions and perspectives of the governing board. It is important that governors complete the survey individually, and not with peers at a governing board meeting.
- **Desk' appraisal of documentation.** The board will be asked for documents such as minutes, Headteacher report, SIP/SDP and SEF (not an exhaustive list). This part of the review can sometimes signpost governing boards to 'quick wins'.
- **Review Meeting.** Facilitated by an HfL Leader of Governance, this 2 hour meeting will involve the Chair, Head and any significant others (e.g. Vice Chair, Committee Chairs) up to a maximum of five. Should it be necessary to hold separate meetings this will be accommodated. Meetings focus on identified areas from the survey and how to empower the board to improve. This usually takes place at the school, but can be undertaken off site.



- **Facilitated discussion with all governors.** The reviewer will draft a Report and Action Plan on the information made available so far. This will be sent to the Chair of Governors for distribution to the full governing board. The governing board and reviewer will meet to discuss the Action Plan and finalise actions, responsibilities and timelines. This will take about two hours and is held at the school. At this point, the reviewer will agree a timescale for the Progress and Impact Review (PIR)
- **Written Report and Action Plan.** The reviewer will re-write the Action Plan with the input from the governors and send this to the Chair for final sign off. If accepted, the governors must minute at a GB meeting an acceptance of the Action Plan. At every governing board meeting (when appropriate) there should be a note made of how the Action Plan is being progressed. This will provide suitable evidence for the Progress and Impact Review.
- **Progress and Impact Review.** This follow up meeting will replicate the review meeting and will happen 3 to 6 months after the first. IF the board delays the process beyond 8 months, it is considered that the PIR will be non-viable. Unfortunately, there can be no refund to the school. This meeting will focus on progress the board has made. If the reviewer has concerns about slow progress, this will be discussed in an open and transparent way about what further help and support the governing board can access to speed up the process.
- **Bespoke Reviews.** Whoever commissions the review may want to ensure certain aspects of governance are focused on. This may be governor competencies, finance, recruitment and retention or governance structures. External reviews can be tailored to meet your needs. Do have a discussion with the reviewer in the initial stages as this may require more time and extra cost.

Who will do it?

One of the HfL Strategic Leaders of Governance (SLoG) will undertake your review. This may be National or Hertfordshire Leader of Governance who has been trained to carry out reviews, either by the National College of Teaching and Leadership, or by the HfL Governance team. They have been interviewed and appointed by HfL and their work is all quality assured by the Governance team. Sometimes Lead Reviewers will be accompanied by a Support Reviewer. This enables us to train and mentor new Leaders of Governance, with a benefit to the board of two experienced experts supporting their development.

Costs

£1025 plus travel and overnight accommodation if required

- extra costs may be payable for bespoke reviews.
- there may be a cancellation fee of up to 50% if a school cancels after the process has begun.
- these costs are as of April 2020

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