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**BPSI Governance Review**

**Guidance Notes**

**and**

**Report Template**

*May 2017 – VO7*

***NB: These guidance notes are for the lead reviewer to help them plan the review, and for the chair of governors and headteacher who have requested the BPSI Governance Review to explain the review process.***

***The guiding principle is that these reviews are brokered in a spirit of collaboration and that there is full transparency regarding the format these reviews take and the process.***

***Where different governance arrangements exist (for example, in a Multi Academy Trust or federated governing body) the review process will need to be altered to capture the relevant elements of governance.***

***Introduction***

1. **The purpose of the review**

As we are all aware, there is increasing evidence that governing bodies play a critical role in school improvement, which is assessed rigorously during the Ofsted inspection process. The purpose of the BPSI Governance Review is to support a school in its improvement journey by helping the governing body to identify priorities for improvement in governance and to provide guidance on what steps should be taken to ensure improvement. **This review, brokered in a spirit of collaboration, aims to make the governing body more effective by demonstrating a balance between support and challenge of the leadership of the school. The expectation is that there will be areas of strength to be recognised and points for development to be identified.**

1. **The process of the review**

BPSI will identify a suitably trained lead reviewer, and governor reviewer who will be able to undertake the review of governance. The lead reviewer will be a BPSI adviser, who is likely to be a trained Ofsted Inspector or a National Leader of Governance (NLG).

The lead reviewer will be accompanied by a governor reviewer. The governor reviewer will be acting in an entirely supportive capacity. All governor reviewers will have received training on the review process from BPSI. Governor reviewers are chairs or vice chairs of a good or outstanding school who have also been recommended by their headteacher. The lead reviewer will ensure that there are no issues regarding conflict of interest in the choice of governor reviewer.

1. **Before the review**

The lead reviewer will phone both the chair of governors and the headteacher to:

* make introductions
* explain the supportive role of the governor reviewer and ensure that there are no issues regarding conflict of interest in the choice of the governor reviewer.

It should be emphasised that this is a supportive, developmental process. This is particularly pertinent in situations where the school has recently received a ‘Requires Improvement’ judgement from OFSTED which stipulates that a governance review should be undertaken.

They will then, either by phone or email:

* agree a date for the review
* discuss documentation that needs to be made available prior to the review
* discuss the context and needs of the school and explain the principles and process of the review
* agree a schedule for the day.

Each review will be tailored to the needs of the governing body, having considered the complexity of the issues for improvement identified by the Ofsted inspection if appropriate, and the size of the school.

**Each review takes 10 hours**, including pre-review analysis by the reviewer, and the writing up of the report but the timings for the review will be tailored to the availability of the governing body and school staff, where possible.

1. **Governor reviewers**

The lead reviewer will contact the governor reviewer by phone or email to:

* introduce themselves
* confirm the date and time of the review
* confirm there are no conflicts of interest
* answer any queries regarding briefings or protocols

NB: The governor reviewer should not contact the school or the governing body independently of the lead reviewer, without agreement from the lead reviewer.

1. **Putting together a timetable for the review**

The lead reviewer will produce a timetable for the review and share this with the governor reviewer, chair of governors and the headteacher with sufficient lead time to enable the necessary arrangements to be made by the school.

When producing a timetable lead reviewers should consider the following:

* the review can take place during the day or be a twilight session, according to the needs of the school and availability of colleagues
* the timings are only rough guides
* documentation can be reviewed prior to the review off site, or during the review on site. Time should be allocated accordingly
* postholders in *italics* and any additional postholders should be interviewed according to
	+ their involvement in governance
	+ issues identified in the recent Ofsted report, if appropriate
	+ trails identified through the pre-analysis process.

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| **Indicative times** | **Task** |
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|  | Arrive and meet the headteacher, *deputy headteacher* and chair of governors and *vice chair* |
| 30 mins  | Lead reviewer discusses review trails with governor reviewer and plans who will ask which questions |
| 90 mins  | Interview with chair of governors *(and vice chair)* |
| break  | Review questions for next interview in light of responses  |
| 90 mins | Interview with Headteacher *(and Deputy Head)* |
| break | Review questions for next interview in light of responses  |
| 90 mins  | Interview with as full a representation of the full governing body as possible. |
|  End | Lead reviewer and governor reviewer discuss findings and key messages.  |

1. **Pre-Review Analysis**

As a starting point for the review and discussions, the reviewer will identify review trails and produce a list of questions (**NB: These will be provided to the school with the report so need to be recorded and saved)** using:

* the school’s Ofsted report, in the light of the Common Inspection Framework: Education, Skills and Early Years September 2015 and the relevant Inspection Handbook, giving particular attention to the quality of leadership in, and management of, the school;
* data dashboard;
* the governing body constitution;
* the annual training record of the governing body;
* Full Governing Body minutes and Committee minutes for the last academic year;
* Committee Terms of Reference;
* Any other document pertinent to governance, and
* the school website.
1. **Areas to consider**

The following table includes areas the lead reviewer may wish to consider when scrutinising the documents during the pre-review and preparing their list of questions. The headings are taken from The Governor Competency Framework (NB: there is a link to the full document in section 11, supporting materials). This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of issues. Subject to the context of the school some areas may not be applicable. Equally, the documentation from the school may bring to light other areas that need to be explored more fully.

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| ***1. Strategic Leadership**** ***Strategic direction (planning, prioritising and managing change)***
* ***Vision, culture, values and ethos***
* ***Decision making***
* ***High expectations and aspirations academically and socially***
* ***Leading by example and modelling professional standards***
* ***Succession planning (GB & staff)***
* ***Collaborative working***
* ***Risk management***
 |
| ***2. Accountability for educational standards and financial performance**** ***Challenge and hold to account***
* ***Support and challenge in equal measure***
* ***Broad & balanced curriculum (including British Values & extra curricula provision)***
* ***Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development***
* ***Behaviour & Safety***
* ***Assessment***
* ***School Improvement***
* ***Monitoring***
* ***Rigorous analysis of data***
	+ ***Pupil progress and understanding of progress of key groups***
* ***Financial management and monitoring***
	+ ***Pupil Premium spend***
	+ ***deployment of staff and resources***
	+ ***use of resources linked to whole school priorities and used to drive school improvement***
* ***Staffing & performance management***
	+ ***quality of teaching***
	+ ***effectiveness of headteacher appraisal***
	+ ***quality assurance of whole school appraisal process***
	+ ***overview and understanding of staff CPD***
	+ ***effective Pay Committee and teachers’ pay decisions made (by 31 October annually)***
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| ***3. People**** ***Building an effective team***
* ***Induction arrangements for new governors***
* ***Good communication***
* ***Knowledge & understanding of the school***
* ***Developing their own skills***
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| ***4. Structures**** ***Clear roles and responsibilities***
* ***Transparent and accountable in terms of governance structures***
* ***Effectiveness of committees (terms of reference; delegated powers; annual review etc.)***
* ***Timing of and attendance at meetings***
* ***Properly constituted***
* ***Properly clerked***
* ***Use of best practice***
 |
| ***5. Compliance**** ***Statutory and legal requirements***
* ***Safeguarding (including Prevent Duty)***
	+ ***maintenance of the single central record and appropriate arrangements for child protection***
	+ ***rigour with which absence is followed up***
	+ ***decision-making process involved in taking pupils off roll***
	+ ***care taken to ensure that pupils placed in alternative provision are safe at all times***
	+ ***action taken following any serious incident***
	+ ***promotion of safe practices and a culture of safety, including e-safety***
	+ ***Annual Safeguarding Audit and report to the GB.***
* ***Equality***
* ***H&S***
* ***Effective policies and procedures***
* ***Website audit***
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| ***6. Evaluation**** ***Rigour of self-evaluation***
* ***Understand strengths and weaknesses, including the impact of own work***
* ***GB Skills Audit***
* ***Governors Development Plan***
* ***Effective improvement planning***
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1. **During the review**

The reviewer will scrutinise other pertinent evidence (if not completed before the review) including:

* evidence of governing body self-evaluation eg. NGA skills audit; 20 Questions for a Governing Body to ask itself;
* governing body/committee minutes and agenda from the last year;
* governor visit reports;
* school development /improvement plan/single plan.

The reviewer will meet with:

* chair and vice chair of governors
* headteacher
* other governors including staff and parent governors.

During the review, it is important that the review team take notes that can feed into the written report. The governor reviewer will need to give any notes to the lead reviewer at the end of the review.

At the conclusion of the review the lead reviewer should discuss with the chair of governors and headteacher whether a BPSI Governance Review Follow-up within 4-6 months is necessary. If a school has recently received a ‘Requires Improvement’ judgement from OFSTED a follow-up is strongly recommended. The lead reviewer should make clear that the BPSI Governance Review Follow-up is a separate product and costs 3 BPSI hours.

1. **After the review**

The final written report should be completed by the lead reviewer off-site after the completion of the on-site review using the report template. The lead reviewer will submit a first draft of the review (including the list of questions compiled during the pre-review analysis) to the chair of governors and the headteacher, amend factual accuracy as they see fit, and re-send a final second draft to the chair of governors and headteacher. The final written report will not give formal Ofsted judgements or grades, but the report will be clear with regard to how the reviewers judge the governing body and its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for development.

The completed documentation will be:

* pre-review analysis *copy to school and BPSI*
* questions for meetings *to BPSI*
* written report *copy to headteacher, BPSI and chair of governors.*

As part of this programme, BPSI will ask the reviewer and the school, separately, to complete a short evaluation of the process of the review to help us to develop these reviews of governance further.

**Once the review is concluded, it will be up to the school to implement the identified actions for improvement. Should the school feel additional support to implement these actions is required please do not hesitate to contact BPSI for more support options.**

**Please note that after 7 days from receiving the report and in the interests of good practice, BPSI will pass a copy of the report on to the school’s Learning Network Inspector (LNI).  If the school does not want the report sent to their LNI they should contact BPSI within the 7 days.**

1. **Protocols**

The review will be:

* linked to the most recent Ofsted report and Ofsted evaluation criteria so that the governing body is better able to understand its strengths and weaknesses and the basis upon which it will be judged in subsequent monitoring visits and inspections
* a combination of self-review and external assessment
* manageable in terms of time and process
* flexible to take account of the differing needs, contexts and size of schools.

Reviewers of schools should appreciate:

* the potential sensitivity of a school being judged as ‘Requires Improvement’
* any attending issues of confidentiality
* that the review is being carried out on behalf of the governing body, in a collaborative and supportive way, based on trust and mutual respect, and is not an inspection
* that the audience for the review, in addition to the governing body, in the case of a ‘Requires Improvement’ inspection report, is likely to be the Section 8 monitoring HMI and the report should be written accordingly
* the supporting chair or vice chair of governors carrying out the review is not there to promote their particular way of working, but use their expertise to make the review process robust
* that in the light of a ‘Requires Improvement’ inspection report, the review’s recommendations should directly address issues in the inspection report, and be as clear and direct as possible in helping move the governing body and the school to ‘Good’ Ofsted judgement
* the confidential nature of any information shared by the school, and
* take any necessary arrangements to maintain that confidentiality.

Reviewers should make it clear to the school that the reviewer will consider amendments to factual accuracy of the first draft, but, in order to ensure the review’s robustness, will not amend the review if they deem that requested amendments would make the report inaccurate.

1. **Support materials**
* Most recent Ofsted Inspection Framework
* Governors Handbook and Governors Competence Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>
* Governance review report template.
1. **Contact**

If you would like further information, please contact BPSI:

Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI)

Cambridge Education

North London Business Park

Oakleigh Road South

London N11 1NP

Tel: 020 8359 6341/6306/6325 e-mail: sdtued.admin@barnet.gov.uk

Website: www.bpsi.org.uk

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| **Completed by**xxx - BPSI Adviser xxx – Chair / vice chair of governors (xxx School)**On**xx.xx.xx Date | **Interviewed*** Chair (CoG), vice chair, Executive headteacher (HT), Associate HT
* Representation from full governing body (GB)

*<delete as appropriate>* | **Documentation** * School SSE
* Governors’ self-review
* Ofsted report
* Governors’ minutes
 |
| **Objective/ purpose of review:***e.g. To review the effectiveness and capacity of the governing body in the light of direction from the school’s most recent Ofsted inspection on xxx / or at the request of the GB.* |
| **Context:***e.g. recent history of the school; stability/turnover of governors/CoG/HT; last Ofsted findings in relation to governance. Any other key contextual issues that explain the content of the findings within the report.* |
| **Overview of GB strengths:***Reviewer to summarise key findings from the review that demonstrate what the GB is currently doing well.* |
| **Best practice:***Reviewer to highlight any best practice.* |
| **Overview of GB developments:***Reviewer to summarise areas for GB development into key groups (e.g. understanding roles and responsibilities; improving working relationships; developing the wider GB leadership team; streamlining the committee structure and holding the SLT to account)***.**  *These should be reflected in the action plan.* |

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| **Area for improvement** | **Objective** | **Date for completion** | **Action Officer** | **RAG status \*** | **Success Criteria** |
| *e.g. 1. Ensuring governors understand their roles and responsibilities*  | 1. *e.g. Implement a governor induction pack for all new governors* |  |  |  | *e.g. New Governor’s Induction Pack which clearly explains governor role and responsibilities approved by GB, and provided to new governors on appointment.* |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |  |
| *e.g. 2. Improving GB structures* | 1. *e.g. Review current committee structure to ensure fit for purpose*  |  |  |  | *e.g. Committees deal effectively with all GB business, ensuring that key issues do not fall through the gaps and that there is clear accountability for committee workload.* |
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**\*For the school to complete to demonstrate progress against actions.**

**Key to RAG status:**

**Red** Action has not been implemented and is overdue; there is serious risk to delivery that requires urgent action.

**Amber** Date for completion is imminent and/or there is a risk that action will not be implemented.

**Green** All is going well. Delivery is on track and there are no significant risks or issues.

**Blue** Complete. No further action required.

Purple Complete, but will evolve through continuous improvement