

**Primary Inspection**  
**Guidance for the Board of Governors**

2017

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ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



Providing inspection services for:  
Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments



## 1. Introduction

Why is the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) strengthening its inspection of governance?

The ETI values the work undertaken on a voluntary basis by the governing bodies of all of the educational institutions we inspect. In his 'Putting Pupils First: Shaping Our Future' speech of September 26, 2011 the Minister outlined his support for governors who set high standards for themselves and for their schools; who are not afraid to challenge; and who put the interests and education of pupils first. He stated his intention 'to broaden and strengthen the existing inspection process to enable the effectiveness of boards of governors to be assessed, so that governors can have feedback on how they are doing and so that good practice can be identified and shared.'

While governors are volunteers, unlike many other types of volunteers, they have statutory responsibilities. The governors' handbook states:

*The role of the Board of Governors is to fulfil its statutory functions in relation to the school and to be accountable for ensuring that its decisions support the best interests of the school and its pupils.*

Inspection is part of that accountability. Significant contact is made already with governors during inspection and the new process is an extension of current practice.

From January 2013, the ETI implemented a phased approach to developing the evaluation of governance. It contains a strong self-evaluation element on the part of the governing body. These arrangements apply to standard inspections in post-primary, focused inspections in primary and special schools at this stage.

## 2. Purpose of this guidance note

This note is to support governors in:

- understanding the strengthened approach ETI is taking; and
- making their own evaluation of the effectiveness of their governance arrangements, particularly the impact of their work in supporting and ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching in their school.

This guidance for governors should be used along with the:

- Pre-inspection questionnaire for the Boards of Governors; and
- Quality indicators for use in the self-evaluation of governance.

All of these governance documents are available on the ETI website [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk) (Direct Link <http://tinyurl.com/ETI-Governance>)

## 3. Background

The strengthened evaluation of the effectiveness of governance arrangements is now part of the inspections of post-primary, primary (focused inspections only) and special schools.

From January 2013, schools will provide the reporting inspector with a self-evaluation document, completed by the Board of Governors, as part of the evaluation of governance. The school may use the document 'Pre-inspection questionnaire for boards of governors'. Additionally, the governors may find the quality indicators for governance helpful for completing their self-evaluation.

#### **4. What happens during the inspection?**

During the inspection, the reporting inspector will be available in the school to meet with the governors at an appointed time. At the meeting with the governors and during the inspection, the ETI will evaluate the quality and accuracy of the evidence provided and use the inspection evidence normally gathered, to verify and quality assure externally the internal self-evaluation of the governors.

The pre-inspection questionnaire completed by the Board of Governors will be used as the basis for the discussion with Inspectors. In this questionnaire, governors will self-evaluate the effectiveness of their work against the quality indicators provided by the ETI set out under the five key headings below.

##### **1. Strategic leadership**

How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging constructively the school/organisation to provide the highest quality of education for all learners?

##### **2. Action to promote improvement**

How effective are we in monitoring and evaluating the school's/organisation's performance and its development plan (including consultation with users<sup>1</sup>) to set/adjust priorities for improvement?

##### **3. Resources**

How effective are we in ensuring the efficient use of all available personnel, financial and physical resources in improving the outcomes for learners?

##### **4. Quality of the provision for learning**

How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging the management to ensure the best possible quality of learning, teaching, and assessment, and that the curriculum provision meets the needs of all the learners?

##### **5. Achievement and standards**

Do we have sufficient knowledge about the achievements of the learners? Do we use this knowledge effectively to lead, challenge and support the school/organisation to ensure that the learners achieve their full potential?

During the meeting with the governors and during the inspection, the ETI will evaluate the quality and accuracy of the evidence provided and use the inspection evidence normally gathered, to verify and quality assure externally the internal self-evaluation of the governors.

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<sup>1</sup> Users include pupils/children, parents, teachers, staff and members of the community

## 6. Reporting on governance

At the conclusion of the inspection, the ETI will report one of three confidence levels for governance along with main strengths and any areas for improvement.

The ETI's evaluation is that there can be:

- a **high degree of confidence** in the aspects of governance evaluated
- **confidence** in the aspects of governance evaluated
- **limited confidence** in the aspects of governance evaluated.

Evidence gathered throughout the inspection will be used for the evaluation of the effectiveness of governance arrangements and is relevant to making other judgements.

If relevant, for any subsequent follow-up inspection activity the confidence levels will be re- evaluated and reported on.

## 6. SUMMARY

### Before the inspection

Be familiar with the documents:

- Pre-inspection questionnaire for the Boards of Governors;
- Quality indicators for use in the self-evaluation of governance; and
- Guidance for governors.

### During the inspection

The Reporting Inspector collects the governors' self-evaluation response from the Principal on the first day of the inspection.

The ETI meet with the Chair of the Board of Governors or a nominated representative and Principal to discuss the role of the governors at a pre-arranged time during the inspection.

The ETI use normal opportunities during the inspection to secure a robust evidence.

### End of the inspection

The ETI report back a confidence level and associated bullet points.

A statement of the confidence level on governance will be included in inspection reports.

### **Relevant Websites**

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/school-governance>

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/articles/supporting-self-evaluation>

## ETI PRE-INSPECTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GOVERNORS

Key Question	Effectiveness Level **	Evidence	Ongoing action?
1. <b><u>Strategic Leadership:</u></b> How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging constructively the school/organisation to provide the highest quality of education for all learners?			
2. <b><u>Action to promote improvement:</u></b> How effective are we in monitoring and evaluating the school's/ organisation's performance and its development plan (including consultation with users <sup>2</sup> ) to set/adjust priorities for improvement?			
3. <b><u>Resources:</u></b> How effective are we in ensuring the efficient use of all available personnel, financial and physical resources in improving the outcomes for learners?			
4. <b><u>Quality of the provision for learning</u></b> : How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging the management to ensure the best possible quality of learning, teaching, and assessment, and that the curriculum provision meets the needs of all the learners?			
5. <b><u>Achievement and Standards:</u></b> Do we have sufficient knowledge about the achievements of the learners? Do we use this knowledge effectively to lead, challenge and support the school / organisation to ensure that the learners achieve their full potential?			

*\*\* There are three possible levels to select from in completing the column **Effectiveness Level**. Board of Governors to insert the number 1, 2 or 3 opposite each of the five key questions depending on the evidence they have.*

1      Highly effective in the aspects of governance evaluated.

2      Effective in the aspects of governance evaluated; a few aspects to review.

3      Limited effectiveness in the aspects of governance evaluated; the governors are not sufficiently informed about / acting on these aspects where needed, and need to review their arrangements to deal with these matters.

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<sup>2</sup> Users include pupils/children, parents, teachers, staff and members of the community

The Education and Training Inspectorate

## QUALITY INDICATORS

For use in the self-evaluation of  
GOVERNANCE



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



## Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide governors with the criteria used by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) when making judgements about the overall effectiveness of the governance of an organisation/school. In addition, the guidance is designed to help the governors implement a rigorous and effective self-evaluation process as part of their own quality assurance arrangements. Since the introduction of local management of schools, governors have had more autonomy and more responsibilities. Without strong and effective governance, schools will not be as good as they can be. The Department of Education's (DE) vision statement is to ensure that every learner fulfils her or his full potential at each stage of development. The quality indicators used by the ETI in guiding their evaluation of the effectiveness of governors' work link closely to this overall vision statement of the Department of Education (DE).

### Vision Statement

DE exists to ensure that every learner fulfils her or his full potential at each stage of development.

These quality indicators support the following priorities for the education sector (as well as meeting the ETI mission and vision statements):

- Raising Standards for All
- Closing the Performance Gap, Increasing Access and Equity
- Removing barriers to learning

### ETI Mission Statement

'Promoting improvement in the interest of all learners.'

### ETI Vision

'The Education and Training Inspectorate will be a highly regarded and influential body, dedicated fully to the education and well-being of all learners'

## Section A: Leadership and Management

### How effective are the governors in supporting and influencing effective strategic leadership?

<p><b>1. <u>Strategic Leadership:</u></b></p> <p><b>How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging constructively the school/organisation to provide the highest quality of education for all learners?</b></p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <p><i>Evaluate the extent to which governors:</i></p> <p>Use the reports and policies provided by the Principal/leader of the organisation and other delegated staff to the governors to set and maintain the vision and direction for the school/ organisation.</p> <p>Ensure that the governing body has the right blend of experience and expertise to work effectively with the Principal to take a critical and informed view on the quality of the learning and teaching, and whether the academic progress and personal and social development of all of the pupils are good enough.</p> <p>Provide the right balance of professional support and critical challenge for the Principal/ leader of the organisation, senior staff or teachers to help them improve the school's effectiveness.</p> <p>Contribute to the identification of the organisation's/ school's priorities for development and improvement.</p> <p>Work effectively with the Principal/ leader of the organisation and senior staff to set, share and, where appropriate, review realistic targets.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> highly effective</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> effective</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> limited effectiveness</p>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p>



<p><b>2. <u>Action to promote improvement:</u></b></p> <p><b>How effective are we in monitoring and evaluating the school's/ organisation's performance and its development plan (including consultation with users<sup>3</sup>) to set/adjust priorities for improvement?</b></p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <p><i>Evaluate the extent to which governors:</i></p> <p>Use the knowledge gained from effective and regular self-evaluation processes to exercise our challenge function with the Principal and senior staff as appropriate or when necessary to review the provision and effect improvement.</p> <p>Use the SDP process as an effective improvement mechanism to: (i) know that the work of the governors is effective, (ii) make improvements based on first hand evidence.</p> <p>Engage actively in the development, monitoring and review of the SDP, and take appropriate actions where required.</p> <p>Ensure that the work of the school is underpinned by sound financial planning, linked well to the school's priorities and targets in the SDP and supported by well-planned continuing professional development.</p> <p>Consult and involve the learners, parents and members of the community in planning the work of the school and in evaluating its success.</p> <p>Ensure the work of the governing body is open and transparent, including providing information about how to raise a concern</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> highly effective</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> effective</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> limited effectiveness</p>	

<sup>3</sup> Users include pupils/children, parents, teachers, staff and members of the community

<p><b>3. <u>Resources:</u></b></p> <p><b>How effective are we in ensuring the efficient use of all available personnel, financial and physical resources in improving the outcomes for learners?</b></p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b></p> <p><i>Evaluate the extent to which governors:</i></p> <p>Oversee the budget effectively to provide appropriate learning resources and accommodation to meet the needs of all the learners and the statutory curriculum.</p> <p>Ensure that the organisation's/school's financial and human resources are deployed equitably and in the interests of all the learners.</p> <p>Plan effectively, in the short, medium and longer term to ensure that the budget stays within the parameters set by DE using robust and transparent financial accountability structures.</p> <p>Plan, participate in and implement any relevant training and development, in particular, any statutory training to ensure that members of the governing body are trained and competent to take over important roles that become vacant and to ensure that the governors continue to have the necessary skills and knowledge to make sure the smooth running of the organisation.</p> <p>Make certain that in the selection and recruitment of staff that the relevant Department's guidance on the safeguarding of children and young people is strictly adhered to.</p>
	<p><b>Evidence</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> highly effective</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> effective</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> limited effectiveness</p>	

## Section B: Quality of Provision for Learning

**How effective are the governors in promoting high quality learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum provision?**

**4. Quality of the provision for learning:**

**How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging the management to ensure the best possible quality of learning, teaching, and assessment, and that the curriculum provision meets the needs of all the learners?**

**Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which governors:*

Demonstrate a clear understanding of our roles and responsibilities including how these complement the role of the Principal in promoting high quality learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum provision.

Support the Principal/ leader of the organisation and senior staff in devising internal mechanisms to determine that there is high quality learning and teaching across the organisation/ school and that there is effective care, guidance and support for all learners.

Challenge constructively the Principal/ leader of the organisation for evidence that indicates that learning and teaching outcomes are of the highest quality.

Engage actively in the planning, monitoring and review of the development of the school curriculum to ensure that the learning programmes and extra-curricular activities meet the needs of the learners and wider community, including the Entitlement Framework.

**Evaluation**

**Evidence**

- highly effective
- effective
- limited effectiveness

## Section C: Achievements and Standards

### How well do learners develop and achieve?

#### 5. Achievement and Standards:

**Do we have sufficient knowledge about the achievements of the learners? Do we use this knowledge effectively to lead, challenge and support the school / organisation to ensure that the learners achieve their full potential?**

#### **Indicators:**

*Evaluate the extent to which governors:*

Ensure that the information provided by the organisation/school about the achievements of the learners is robust, accurate and, if quantitative, includes relevant benchmarked data where this is available.

Have a clear view on whether the progress and standards of attainment of the learners are good enough and use this knowledge to inform our challenge function in relation to the Principal/ leader of the organisation and senior staff as appropriate.

Ensure that the organisation's/school's targets are both achievable and sufficiently challenging to lead to and sustain improvement in the standards attained by the learners.

Have an understanding of the barriers to learning experienced by learners including attendance, behaviour and special educational needs, and what the organisation/school is doing to help the learners overcome these barriers.

Monitor the progress made by learners with special educational needs and from areas of deprivation.

#### **Evaluation**

- highly effective
- effective
- limited effectiveness

#### **Evidence**