

# External Reviews of Governance

## The picture now

14<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Pat and Mick Furness

# How the reviews began

- Effective governance for good schools: 20 questions for a school governing body to ask itself.
- “We wanted to keep the challenges to one page in order to engage as many governing bodies as possible in a simple exercise to reflect on their practice.”

# External Reviews of Governance

## A guide developed by the National College for Teaching and Leadership

- “An external review of governance considers how well a school’s governing body is working...Reviews are intended as a supportive process, to improve and develop governance, and not as an additional inspection.”

# And

- “Strong governance strengthens school leadership and helps schools flourish. ...there has never been a higher premium placed on the role of governors whatever the context of, or degree of challenge within, the school. The term “critical friend” has been subsumed within a new dawn of accountability and challenge, followed closely by impact and evidence.”

# Pilots

- Following HMI led Ofsted inspections, 60 reviews of governance were piloted by the National College between October 2012 and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013
- The aim was to move schools **requiring improvement** into at least **good**.

# GB Review Process

- Based on the 9 criteria for effective governance given in
  - School Inspection Handbook, Ofsted, April 2013
  - National College's Review Framework
- Questionnaire explores the 9 criteria- 45 questions
- Review of key documentation to support judgements
- Interview with Chair and significant others

# and

- Draft action plan and summary report highlights areas for development
- QA- HFL- moderation process
- Facilitated review -opportunities to redefine planned actions
- Report returned to Chair for implementation

## Ofsted identified issues which have led to recommendations for external self reviews

- Governors not being ambitious about expectations
- Lack of challenge and holding to account
- Over reliance on information from the head
- Lack of systematic and structured visits



# and

- lack of engagement with school development planning
- limited role in monitoring and none of it *independent*
- limited understanding of data and school quality

# Developmental

- Not inspection by another name
- Supportive, but robust
- Independent and honest

# Review phases

- December 2012 – March 2014 - 31 reviews
- 9 areas of governance initially
- April 2014 March 2015 – 27 reviews
- Modified the questionnaire to change from 5 columns to 4 and added Miscellaneous section

# Findings

- Most have 2 **high priority** and 2 **medium priority**.
- Some have more areas of high priority, reflecting various characteristics of the governing body
- Flat profiles - little, or no, variation in scores
- Professional judgement of the External Reviewer
- Some schools have identified areas of strength
- Not 360 of all achievements

# December 2012- March 2014-31

Points	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totals
Gov	Strategy	GB Effectiveness	Support School Leadership	Holding the Executive to account	Performance Management	Financial Management	GB Statutory Duties	Engagement	Pupil Premium	
Red	6	1	2	6	7	1	10	6	8	47
Amber	1	1	3	2	4	1	4	3	4	23
Green	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	5
Totals	7	3	5	8	11	4	15	9	13	

# April 2014- March 2015 -27

Points	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
Gov	Strategy	GB Effectiveness	Support School Leadership	Holding the Executive to account	Performance Management	Financial Management	GB Statutory Duties	Engagement	Pupil Premium	Misc	
Red	5	6	5	10	14	2	6	9	2	3	62
Amber	6	6	10	5	8	9	1	9	8	1	63
Green	1	-	-	1	-	2	4	2	2	2	14
Totals	12	12	15	16	22	13	11	20	12	6	

# New Framework

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- 2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- 4. Effective governance practice

# Revised process

- Same link to HFL through Kathy Dunnett
- Reviewer contacts you directly
- Short questionnaire sent out electronically to all governors
- Review meeting – facilitated by Leader of Governance- to include Chair, HT, and any significant others.
- Appraisal of documentation



# Process continued

- Facilitated discussion based on draft action plan and report
  - QA by HFL- moderation process
  - Written report and action plan finalised
- And
- Progress and Impact Review - PIR

# Getting a review

- Ofsted/HMI recommendation- Governance team will try to arrange quickly, so it is time sensitive to next visit
- Your choice, or recommended by Governance Officer, Improvement Partner or Leader of Governance (mentoring role)- Governance team will try to get the process completed within two months.

# From April 2015 - cost

- NCTL recommends £1,000-£1,500
- All Herts schools, regardless of status charged £845 or £795 if they subscribe to training.
- Potential for some discretion- Ofsted request and very small school (under 100), or if funds very tight- perhaps bid to SCC fund.
- Must negotiate with Governance.

# References

- All Party Parliamentary Group on Education and Governance –  
*Twenty Questions - 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2015*  
Key questions every governing board should ask itself  
NGA and the Key for School Governors
- *Framework for School Governance*  
published by NGA and the Wellcome Trust