



# St James C.E. Primary School

*Through God's Love we learn, we enjoy, we achieve.*

## **Governance**

### **Activities to support governors in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance**

- Looking at information about achievement – Raise Online, performance dashboard, pupil progress tracking, results of national tests and assessments, data from baseline assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Receiving reports - headteacher reports to governors, reports from subject leaders, progress against priorities in the Improvement Plan and summary self-evaluation, reports on what leaders have seen in lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work, reports from LA adviser
- Meeting with lead members of staff to explore the priority in the improvement plan – e.g. how the school is doing in a particular subject or for a particular group of pupils, especially SEND and pupil premium
- Learning walks – with a staff member looking at classrooms, playtimes, displays of pupils' work
- Attending lessons to get a first-hand view of the school at work – governor open days, pairs of governors visiting lessons and talking to pupils
- Looking at pupils' books with the subject leader to focus on, for example, marking and the use of assessment
- Meeting with a group of pupils, for example the school council, to ask what it is they like about school, what they think could be done even better
- Attending senior leadership team meeting as an observer
- Attending at parents' evenings to provide opportunity for parents to meet governors
- Attending school events – assemblies, award ceremonies
- Sending questionnaires to parents and replying back to them in the light of what they say
- Linking a governor to a priority in the improvement plan

*'While it may be helpful to see classes at work, governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the headteacher.'*

## **Questions governors might ask of themselves**

(Source: NGA All Party Parliamentary Group, 9 July 2012)

### **Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the governing body?**

1. Have we completed a skills audit of our governing body?
2. Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?

### **Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?**

3. Do we understand our roles and responsibilities?
4. Do we have a professional clerk and run meetings efficiently?
5. What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?
6. Do we know about good practice from across the country?
7. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working?
8. Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the governing body's performance?

### **Strategy: Does the school have a clear vision?**

9. Have we developed long-term aims for the school with clear priorities in an ambitious school development plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed?
10. Does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing body's activities and agenda setting?

### **Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?**

11. Do we understand the school's performance data well enough to properly hold school leaders to account?
12. How effective is our performance management of the headteacher?
13. Are our financial management systems robust and do we ensure best value for money?

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

14. How do we listen to and understand our pupils, parents and staff?
15. How do we report to our parents and local community regularly?
16. What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

### **Role of chair: Does our chair show strong and effective leadership?**

17. Do we carry out a regular 360 review of the chair's performance?
18. Do we engage in good succession planning?
19. Are the chair and committee chairs re-elected each year?

### **Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?**

20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing body's contribution been to this?

# Questions governors might ask of school leaders and teachers

## In relation to performance of pupils:

- What does data tell us about how well pupils are doing?
- What are the latest results in national assessments in Years 2 and 6?
- What is the trend in attainment at the end of Y2 and Y6 for the last three years?
- How well are pupils with special needs doing, do they make progress that is as good as others in the school or is it better or worse and why?
- How are we using pupil premium and what impact is this having on the achievement of this group compared to others in the school and nationally?
- Which year groups, subjects and groups of pupils get the best and worst results and why, and how does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school?
- What is your strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance as well as standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving?

## In relation to teaching

- Have we got the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements?
- What is the school's approach to implementation of pay reform and performance related pay, and if appropriate, is it compliant with the most up to date version of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document?
- What are the areas of success in literacy and mathematics and what needs to be improved?
- What are subject leaders and senior leaders learning when they do a scrutiny of pupils' books and what do they tell us about this?
- Where teaching is outstanding or consistently good what do senior leaders say makes it like this?
- Where teaching is less than good what is the reason for it and what training or performance management is in place to improve it?
- What do senior leaders identify as the strengths of teaching across the school?

## In relation to the well-being of pupils

- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
- What is our track record on attendance, behaviour and bullying?
- Are safeguarding procedures securely in place?

## Questions governors might ask of pupils

- What do you like learning about?
- How would you describe your teachers?
- What do you think could be done differently to help you learn better?

- What do you think about behaviour / how do you think it could improve?
- Do you feel safe / are there any places in the school where you do not feel safe?
- Do you have enough opportunity to visit places of interest, see visitors to the school, learn musical instruments, do projects in art, make things or do experiments in science?
- What opportunity do you have to take responsibility, do important jobs around school or have a say in how the school should be run?

## **Questions governors might ask of parents**

- How well do you think your children are learning?
- Are you happy with their progress?
- Do you feel you get good information about how well your children are doing?
- Do you think they have enough opportunity to visit places of interest, see visitors to the school, learn musical instruments, do projects in art, make things or do experiments in science?
- Do you think the behaviour of pupils is good, is there anything you think could improve?
- How well do you think the school deals with any bullying?
- Do your children feel safe?
- Are there any issues you have raised that you feel have not been dealt with appropriately?
- How well do you think the school is led – why?