



## Governance Reviews and Bespoke Training Information for our governing bodies

### Overview

The DfE Governance Handbook and Competency Framework 2019 identify *Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance* as one of the six key features of effective governance.

An external review looks at how well your governing body is working. It is intended as support to improve and develop governance, and not as an inspection. It will identify existing strengths and areas for improvement and make recommendations with practical suggestions.

It aims to help your board to:

- Be confident that it has a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities
- Have the right range of skills and experience to meet the needs of the school
- Provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support in holding school leaders to account
- Have a clear vision for how the school enables all children to flourish.

A governance review can be recommended as part of an Ofsted inspection. Increasingly, governing bodies are deciding to invest in a review as a tool for self-evaluation and development.

### Types of LDBS Governance Reviews

#### **Full review**

The NCTL (National College for Teaching and Leadership) has developed a process for external reviews which examine governance in relation to the three core functions of:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing financial performance and making sure money is well spent.

These reviews also include a fourth indicator, effective governance practice. We have adapted the NCTL review format to incorporate the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (Sept 2020), the Good Governance APPG/NGA 'Twenty key questions' review tool, the DfE's Governance Competency Framework (2019) and the SIAMS Schedule (Sept 2018).

A full review by the LDBS generally involves:

- Meeting governors / school representatives to agree areas of focus and hoped for outcomes
- Advance review of documentation (agendas, minutes, yearly plan, policy review schedule)
- Advance skills audit, managed by the Chair and the Clerk to governors (if desired)
- Individual discussions with Head teacher, Chair, other key governors
- Same-day board self-evaluation activity
- Report and recommendations.

### ***Short-form Review***

As noted above, the Good Governance APPG/NGA jointly developed a review tool, the 'Twenty key questions'. We have adapted this for use in church school governance. The twenty questions address seven key aspects of governance:

- Skills
- Effectiveness
- Role of Chair
- Vision, Ethos and Strategy
- Engagement
- Accountability
- Impact

A Short-form Review by the LDBS generally involves:

- Meeting governors / school representatives to agree areas of focus and hoped for outcomes
- Advance skills audit managed by the Chair and Clerk (if desired)
- Individual discussions with Head teacher, Chair, other key governors
- Report and recommendations.

A Short-form Review is likely to take 1-1.5 days, including the write-up of the final report.

### ***Supported Self-evaluation***

A supported self-evaluation is a more tailored approach that involves some of the elements of the Short-form Review described above, based on advance discussions with the Head teacher and Chair about the governing body's requirements. At a minimum, the LDBS will guide the governors through a self-evaluation activity with a summary report and action plan.

A Supported Self-Evaluation session and follow-up typically takes between 0.5 and 1.5 days, depending on the activities which are included.

It is possible for a Supported Self-evaluation to occur within a two-hour meeting, but this will require the assistance of the Clerk to governors to minute the discussion and agreed action plan. It can also incorporate a skills audit, which would require the advance assistance of the Chair / Clerk to collate the skills audit results and provide them to the LDBS.

### ***Bespoke Training***

After discussions with your LDBS link adviser or the Head of Governance Services, you may wish to arrange bespoke training for your governing body in specific areas where a need has been identified, for example through a skills audit managed by the Chair and Clerk.

### **Cost**

The cost of a review will depend on the process which is agreed between the LDBS and the school. Existing entitlements can be used towards, or to cover, the cost:

- Schools which subscribe to the LDBS Core Service are entitled to one two-hour governor training session at no additional charge. This could be used for the Supported Self-Evaluation or for Bespoke Training and would require the services of the Clerk.
- Schools which purchase a Grow package can also use some of their Leadership Support time towards a Full or Short-Form Governance Review, a Supported Self-Evaluation, or for Bespoke Training.

It is also possible to purchase any of our governance review and training services through Grow on a one-off basis.

**For more information, please speak to your LDBS link adviser or contact Anne Messer, Head of Governance Services.**

[anne.messer@london.anglican.org](mailto:anne.messer@london.anglican.org)

[enquiry@london.anglican.org](mailto:enquiry@london.anglican.org)