

HELPING YOU TO LEAD YOUR SCHOOL
Chair of Governors Handbook



This handbook is dedicated to the memory of
Beckie Fleming, 1967-2008, Governor
Development Service Training Co-ordinator,
Chair of Governors, Holy Cross RC Primary
School and Parent Governor at St Bernadette
Catholic Secondary School.

About this Handbook

This handbook has been produced to support you in your important role as leader of the governing body. It has been drawn up in close consultation with representatives of the Bristol Governors Forum and current chairs of governors in Bristol schools.

The handbook is designed to be read alongside the Bristol Governors Handbook. Its content is adapted from the “Taking the chair” national training programme (put together by the Department for Children, Schools and Families-DCSF), enhanced with information about processes and support available in Bristol and practical tips contributed by Bristol chairs. It also includes prompts and checklists to help you review how well you are doing. For further support, advice or guidance on any matter relating to your role please contact the Governor Development Service.

Governor Development Service
Bristol Education Centre
Sheridan Road
Horfield
Bristol BS7 0PU
Tel 0117 903 1396
E-mail GDS@bristol-city.gov.uk

Contents

1	The Chair and the Headteacher	7
1.1	The role of the chair	7
1.2	The chair's relationship with the headteacher	8
1.3	Getting off to a good start	9
1.4	Developing your working relationship	9
1.5	Types of questions	11
2	The Chair and the Governors	12
2.1	The chair's role as team leader	12
2.2	Leadership styles	13
2.3	Knowing your team	14
2.4	Managing a governor recruitment problem	15
2.5	Induction for new governors	16
2.6	Supporting governor development	17
3	Leading and Managing the Work of the Governing Body	19
3.1	The chair's role in planning the work of the governing body	19
3.2	Structuring the governing body: What committees shall we have?	20
3.3	Setting the agenda	22
3.4	Working with your clerk	23
3.5	Minute taking and effective meetings	25
3.6	Managing conflict and negotiation	27
3.7	The art of delegation; does it have to be the chair?	28
4	The Chair's Role in Supporting Strategic Leadership	30
4.1	Governing for improvement	30
4.2	Developing shared values	30
4.3	Looking for evidence of values in action	32
4.4	Sharing the vision	32
4.5	Keeping strategic: your role as chair	33
4.6	Getting involved in school self-evaluation and improvement planning	34
4.7	School improvement process	36
4.8	Planning for the School Improvement Cycle	38
4.9	The strategic use of resources	39

5	The Chair's Role in Ensuring Accountability	41
5.1	Aspects of Accountability	41
5.2	Accountability to stakeholders	41
6	Appendices	44
1a	Team health check	44
1b	Governance - Self Review	46
2	Leadership styles	49
3	Governing body skills audit	51
4	Model governor induction policy	53
5	Supporting governor development: Checklist	55
6	Governing body minutes audit	56
7	Governing body year planner	57
8	How effective are your meetings?	65
9	Empathetic model for conflict resolution	66
10	Evidence of values in action	67
11	Evaluating Strategic effectiveness	70
12	Showing evidence of accountability	71
13	More useful information and where to find it	73
	Acknowledgements	75

Welcome

Bristol Local Authority sincerely thanks you for taking on the demanding, but richly rewarding role of chair of governors in your school. You and your fellow governors make a critical contribution to our collective desire to improve our city's schools, and thereby secure the very best experiences and outcomes for our children and young people.

The main aims of this Handbook are to:

- Equip you with key information and guidance so that you can undertake this role with increased knowledge and confidence.
- Provide you and your governing body with helpful assessment tools so that you can evaluate your effectiveness.

The key aspects we have highlighted include:

- The fundamental importance of establishing a positive and effective relationship with the headteacher.
- Developing a productive 'team ethos' within your governing body in line with the school's shared vision and values.
- Providing and facilitating effective induction and development of governors.
- Ensuring that the correct meeting and committee processes and structures are in place – the key role of the clerk.
- Supporting strategic leadership through school self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Ensuring accountability.

The importance and extent of your role can appear daunting and indeed, at times overwhelming. The key thing to remember is that you are not alone. Headteachers gain significant support from consulting and working with their colleagues, and chairs are no different. Never hesitate to seek help should the need arise. There are several ways in which you can do this, including:

- Getting to know the other chairs within your Extended School Partnership.
- Attending meetings of the Bristol Governors' Forum meetings.
- Attending the triannual Agenda briefings for governors and the annual Bristol governors' conference.
- Requesting assistance through the Bristol Consultant/Support Governor programme.
- Completing the 'Taking the Chair' training programme provided by the Governor Development Service.
- Contacting the Bristol Governor Development Service.

We hope you will take these opportunities to build on your own experiences by engaging with LA officers and other governors to share good practice and hear first hand about local and national developments that will have an impact on your school.

The chair and the headteacher

This section introduces the role of the chair and examines the importance of developing an effective relationship with your headteacher.

The role of the chair

The key role for the chair is to lead the governing body and effectively organise the work and manage the relationships which enable the governing body to provide strategic direction, act as a critical friend and ensure accountability for standards.

Normally, the chair of the governing body has no greater powers than those of any other governor, and is not the headteacher's line manager. Like any governor, chairs may only take decisions on their own if the governing body has delegated that decision to them. However it is important to stress that as 'first amongst equals' you have a key leadership and management role in creating the conditions for effective governance.

The chair can only act without permission if urgent action is required. It is also worth noting that neither the chair nor vice-chair can take decisions on behalf of the governing body on matters relating to the closure of schools, change of category of school (e.g. the decision to become a trust school), approval of budget, discipline policies, and admissions, even if the governing body wish to delegate these decisions to them.

Example Terms of Reference for the chair of governors are available on the Governor Development Service website.

With few individual powers, the chair's key roles are to lead, support and enable.




Bristol chairs say....

- I wish I had been aware the role of chair would mean so much to me emotionally; the dismay and disappointment that poor results bring, the joy when pupils achieve well, the pride I feel when the school's strengths are acknowledged and celebrated (by pupils, parents or the media as well as the LA), the attachment I feel to the staff and the children.
- Go in to school whenever you can. Attending our celebration assembly is a high point of my week, listening to all the wonderful things that have gone on and seeing the governing body's vision in action is fantastic.
- Spending time with the children reminds you what your objectives really are.
- Do talk to other chairs for support, moans or inspiration. Ensure that staff (Teaching and Support) are regularly commended for their contributions.



The chair's relationship with the headteacher

 You will need to establish and foster an effective working relationship with your headteacher based on trust and mutual respect for each other's roles. You also have an important role in ensuring the governing body acts as a sounding board to the headteacher and provides strategic direction. It is very important to respect confidentiality in order to build trust and openness. However, on issues that relate to the role of the governing body and for which the governing body ultimately has responsibility, information must be shared with the governing body, even if it is uncomfortable.

It may sometimes be tempting for the headteacher and chair to 'sort things out' on their own. As a good chair you will need to resist the temptation to make decisions outside the governing body and in contradiction of agreed procedures. The governing body should not feel that sides have been taken or decisions made behind their backs, and you will need to think carefully about what information and discussions should be shared with the governing body and what should remain confidential.

The type of issues that it would be appropriate to keep confidential include: personal confidences, ideas shared at an early stage of development, confidential issues about pupils, parents or staff where the headteacher is using the chair to sound things out.

Your relationship with the headteacher and the frequency of your meetings together may differ depending on personalities, the size and phase of the school, the issues facing the school and the time commitments of both the headteacher and yourself. It is likely that the frequency of meetings will increase where there is a newly appointed headteacher, or a new chair. There are no blueprints. You will need to find a balance between having enough time to cover everything and avoiding unnecessarily pressuring the headteacher to meet too frequently-the important thing is that you meet on a regular basis.

Always remember that the relationship between the chair and the head serves the governing body and should not become so personal that it excludes others or so 'cosy' that there is no challenge.




Bristol chairs say....

- Have a clear idea as to why you want to be a chair of governors and be completely honest about this with your head. Honesty is the best place to start a relationship and the one with your head has to work.
- Regular meetings with the headteacher (linked with regular visits to the staffroom) are essential.
- Allow the headteacher and Senior Leadership Team space to do their job, but remember to support AND challenge them in a productive way that will improve your school.



The chair and the headteacher

Getting off to a good start


 If you are a newly appointed chair, or have recently appointed a new headteacher it is important to arrange to meet up early on to start to establish a strong and effective relationship.

You will want to get to know your headteacher as a person, explore your expectations of each other, identify the priorities for the coming school year and establish a pattern of working. You may wish to establish some ground rules for working together including:

- Frequency of meetings
- Records of meetings
- Confidentiality
- Feedback to staff and the governing body
- Contact protocols etc.

You will also need to have a similar conversation with your clerk to governors.

Developing your working relationship

 Once you have established how you plan to work together it is worth reflecting honestly about your relationship and how it can be improved. A good place to start is to consider what it is reasonable to expect from one another. Here is a suggested list you may like to discuss together:

Chairs' and headteachers expectations of each other

- A commitment to the school and the governing body, and recognition of the role and contribution of governors and the school's senior leaders.
- A shared understanding of your own and each other's roles.
- To have a shared vision.
- A clear understanding of the school's priorities for improvement.
- To have a good working relationship based on mutual trust and respect.
- To be properly prepared for meetings and not produce surprises.
- To keep up-to-date by taking up appropriate training, development and networking opportunities.
- Effective communication and information flow.
- To be accountable, particularly with regard to difficult decisions.
- Openness and honesty.

- To recognise that headteachers and governors have a life outside school.
- To be open to challenge and not be overly defensive.
- To respect and understand confidentiality.
- To provide the governing body with timely and appropriate information and guidance to enable them to effectively fulfil their role.

Within the context of an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, your headteacher will need to understand and accept that the chair of governors, along with the governing body, is accountable for overall school improvement and will therefore need to support them in their work but also ask challenging questions when necessary and seek consensus when you don't agree.

When acting as a sounding board for the headteacher, you will need to listen, then ask searching questions to be sure you have a proper understanding before giving your views.




Bristol chairs say....

- Work in partnership with your head. If you recognise there are elements he/she is weak on, try and support them as much as you can with their agreement.
- “Critical Friend” includes handing out praise, encouraging celebration of success (however small), as well as offering advice and asking probing questions.



The chair and the headteacher

Types of questions

 Listening skills and questioning skills are important for all governors and chairs from appointing staff to challenging attainment and achievement. These skills are particularly important for the chair in their relationship with the headteacher.

The table below sets out different types of question with examples of when you might find them useful.

Question	Useful for	Not useful for
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open <p>‘Tell me about...’ ‘What about..?’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening discussions and exploring new information• Encourage people to talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talkative people• When specific information is needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closed <p>‘How many children were playing in the playground?’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarifying single facts• Narrowing the context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting people to talk• Opening up new areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Probing <p>‘How do our results compare overall and by subject with those of previous years?’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making statements more specific• Clarifying where something seems unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting a general view of the situation

The chair and the governors

This section focuses on the relationship between the chair and the other members of the governing body. Although you are ‘first amongst equals’ and have very few powers as chair, you do have influence, particularly on creating the climate in which the governing body works as a team.

2.1 The chair’s role as team leader

A good chair increases the effectiveness of the team so that it can play a full role as a partner in the leadership of the school. You will need to act as a facilitator ensuring that all members of the governing body contribute to school effectiveness and improvement by exercising strong organisational and interpersonal skills. Always keep in mind that how you act as “team leader” affects the involvement and motivation of other governors and will impact on the headteacher’s view of the governing body.

In other contexts team members are often chosen for their complementary skills and attributes. However in the case of a governing body the chair does not have control over who is in the team. This means that sometimes your governing body will have a good balance of skills and experience and at other times the team may be less well balanced. Your challenge is to get the best out of everyone, ensure they are working to the same goals and use the skills that are available (See also section 2.5).

At Appendix 1 you will find a “Team Health Check” questionnaire and “Governing Body Self Review Tool” questionnaire. Considering these questions will help you identify the priorities for developing your governing body as an effective team. Keep an open mind and be prepared to change the way you do things.

If there are areas where development is needed, are you able to address these using the skills and experience within your governing body or will you need external assistance? Talking to the Governor Development Service is a good place to start if you do. It may be appropriate to arrange some tailored ‘in school’ training.



Bristol chairs say....

Remember that the whole governing body must work as a group. There may be people within the group who feel very unsure of where their responsibilities begin and end, or some of the terminology. It is your job to ensure everyone is comfortable in their role.



The chair and the governors

2 Leadership Styles

Anyone in the role of chair will be exercising leadership, even if they do not think of themselves as a leader. You do not have authority over other governors but you have been elected to the role for qualities that others have recognised in you. You will be called upon to exercise leadership in a number of ways – mainly to do with managing situations and relationships. In most situations we adopt a range of leadership styles and no one style is better than another. The leadership style adopted in different situations will affect the outcome. You need to think about what style to adopt as different situations arise and develop.

Appendix 2 “Leadership Styles” will help you understand your own style and how it affects your team of governors.

The way in which you lead your governing body will have an effect on the motivation and involvement of individuals, the development of governors’ confidence in the role, the quality of corporate decision-making and the efficiency and effectiveness of the governing body. The chair facilitates the work of the governing body. An effective chair does not do this by dominating others but by creating a climate in which the governors feel they have done it all themselves:

A leader is best
When people barely know he exists;
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him;
Worst when they despise him.
Fail to honour people,
They fail to honour you.
But of a good leader who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will all say, ‘We did this ourselves’
Lao Tzu



Bristol chairs say....

- If a governor is not contributing during a meeting, ask them individually for their opinion on a matter.
- Keep in mind that we are all volunteers and amateurs, albeit quite experienced in some cases!
- Be gently persistent.
- Thank your governors a lot, publicly and privately, ask for their views on everything and listen carefully to what they say.



A question to ask yourself

- Reflect on your own leadership style; does it enable you to get the best out of your governing body?

Knowing Your Team

What is the balance of skills and experience on your governing body? Could you be more proactive in leading the governing body to fill in gaps in skills and experience?

You will need to consider the following:

- Training and development needs of individual governors and the governing body as a whole (See 'Supporting governor development – section 2.6)
- Whether your governing body represents a variety of views and can bring a variety of outside influences to bear on their work.
- A breadth of experience is an added resource to the school and the headteacher who may often be so close to issues that they cannot 'see the wood for the trees'.
- A range of expertise is also a practical resource, particularly in areas such as finance and management of contracts, but it is also important to recognise the value of life experience and common sense.
- Could you use associate members of the governing body to broaden the skills and experience base, particularly on committees? For more details on associate members see page 7 of the Bristol Governors' handbook.

Some governing bodies undertake a skills audit. Apart from being useful to know what expertise is on the governing body, it is also an indication that what people bring to the role is valued. It can help target recruitment and identifies training and development needs. It can also help in the formation of committees, or filling other roles, and assist with succession planning.

An example of a possible audit questionnaire is set out at Appendix 3.

Before embarking on an audit, it is important to be clear about the reason for doing it, how it will be carried out and how it will help improve the effectiveness of individual governors and the whole governing body. Some governors may feel that their experience is less significant than others. It will be important to check that their confidence is not dented.



Bristol chairs say....

Are the governing body up to the job? A £4M business does not survive without a competent Finance Director, Marketing Director, etc. You need the skills to provide oversight of all aspects of the school and at the same time have effective links with all the School's stakeholders. Get the governing body to assess itself regularly and take action to fill in the gaps revealed, by active recruitment and training.



The chair and the governors

2.4 Managing a governor recruitment problem

There are few governing bodies that don't have difficulties in maintaining a full complement of governors with a good balance of knowledge and skills. You might need to act as a spokesperson and 'advertise' vacancies and develop a variety of strategies to deal with the situation. Tips on recruitment strategies and some appropriate recruitment literature are available from the Governor Development Service.

Planning ahead will help avoid a large number of vacancies arising at the same time. Always bare in mind that knowing the balance of skills on your governing body will help you target recruitment to fill any gaps in skills and experience.

Some of the actions that chairs might take are:

Short term:

- Delegate actions (letter writing, approaching members of the local community etc) to members of the governing body. Delegation is an important skill for chairs to practise!
- Hold a meeting to ask for suggestions.
- Encourage all governors to recruit volunteers and actively contribute to the process of 'marketing the school'.
- Ask the clerk to contact the Governor Development Service to find out about any prospective LEA Governor appointments.

Medium term:

- Set aside a time to review the terms of office regularly with the clerk.
- Think ahead to ensure that processes are instigated in good time, e.g. for the election of parent governors.
- Be aware of the spread of skills across the governing body and keep in mind the possibility that some will leave.
- Make use of links with the local community and be on the lookout for possible 'volunteers'.
- Develop a programme to allow individuals to share skills with others to enable succession planning.

Questions to ask yourself

- Can you identify which of your governors' terms of office end this year?
- Who is responsible for managing the process of appointing new governors at your school?

5.2 Induction for new governors

It is very important to make new governors feel welcome and ensure they feel involved in the work of the governing body early on. It is strongly recommended that governing bodies have an induction programme for new governors which gives them an opportunity to:

- Visit the school; meet the headteacher, chair and perhaps the clerk.
- Run through key paperwork so they are familiar with the main documentation and know what to expect to receive for each meeting.
- Find out what issues are currently being dealt with by the governing body.
- Be properly introduced to fellow governors when they attend their first meeting.

A model governor induction policy is set out at Appendix 4. This can be adapted to suit the individual situation of your school. It is worth noting that the establishment of a governor induction policy is one of the criteria for achieving the Financial Management Standard in Schools.



Bristol chairs say....

Never forget to welcome new governors and set them on the right track...get to know them and work out what committees they might join early on. It may make the difference between them serving the school well for a number of years or leaving very quickly because they feel un-noticed or under-used.



Questions to ask yourself

- Who are the newest governors on your governing body?
- How well did your governing body's induction impact on their ability to contribute to the work of the governing body?

The chair and the governors

Supporting governor development

Anything you can do to assist in developing individual governors will help ensure you have an effective team. Development ensures that governors are well informed and confident to contribute to corporate decision making. There are links to succession planning, as the development of knowledge and confidence in individuals increases the pool of potential chairs of committees and the governing body itself.

Remind governors on a regular basis that a range of training is available through the Local Authority, and that full details are included in each issue of the “Bristol Governor” Newsletter. Training can also be arranged at your school to suit your needs (contact the Governor Development Service for details). Attending training courses and whole governing body training sessions is important, however there are other methods of development including:

- Motivation and confidence is increased when chairs delegate responsibility and demonstrate trust.
- Re-cap (or ask the head to re-cap) on the basics regularly as part of routine governors meetings. Don't assume that everyone has a good understanding of, for example, target or budget setting just because they come up each year.
- Encourage governors to use their copy of the Bristol Governors' Handbook to gain a good understanding of their role and responsibilities.
- Make sure all governors know where they can find out more about new issues or initiatives that arise. Encourage them to read their copies of the Bristol Governor newsletter and seek out other information and background reading through the Local Authority website and other education bodies (useful sources of information are listed on the back of the newsletter).
- Make the most of any training individual governors may undertake by asking them to report back to the governing body.

At Appendix 5 you will find a checklist to help you evaluate how well you support the development of your governors.

The chair has a role to play in making the most of the commitment of both experienced and new governors. Here are some suggestions to help you do this:

- Make sure you are aware of the skills of individuals (see 2.3 “Knowing Your Team”).
- It may be beneficial for governors to change committees to broaden their understanding of school issues.

- Promote a climate of “teamwork” where the skills and contributions of all are valued.
- Pairing up a new or less confident governor to work with someone more experienced will develop their skills and encourage them to take on more.
- Be prepared to be assertive when seeking volunteers for particular roles or pieces of work, making sure everyone gets involved. It can be tempting to keep asking the same people if you know they will always say yes!
- Always thank people when thanks are due. Individuals are far more likely to volunteer again if they feel their efforts are appreciated.



Bristol chairs say....

- Where appropriate break FGB meetings into small groups for discussion - more comfortable for some and more air time for all.
- If they are not contributing overall, ask them why and what they would like the opportunity to contribute to. Suggest training if appropriate.
- Ask that each member of the governing body come with a least one question to ask arising from the Headteacher’s Report.
- Develop a good vice chair that you can confide in and test new ideas on.



Questions to ask yourself

- How are you encouraging the development of future chairs?
- How well do you know the strengths and weaknesses of your individual governors?

Leading and managing the work of the governing body

This section focuses on the chair's leadership role in enabling the governing body to organise itself and its work efficiently and effectively.

The chair's role in planning the work of the governing body

Your job as chair will be made much easier if you spend some time with the headteacher and the clerk in the summer terms planning for the year ahead. A comprehensive year planner is published in each summer edition of the Bristol Governor Newsletter. A recent version of this planner is included at Appendix 7. The DCSF also produce a useful planner which can be downloaded for your adaptation from www.governor.net.co.uk. When planning the work of your governing body and setting dates for the year you will need to consider the following:

- Your strategic priorities for the year ahead (see section 4).
- The school improvement planning cycle and budget planning cycle and cycles for the review of policies, monitoring progress.
- Whether information on matters requiring discussion and decision making will be available for the relevant meetings.
- Timely consideration of plans and policies to avoid holding up implementation.

Here are just some of the questions your governing body will need to consider during the year. Some will arise as part of your structured School Self Evaluation procedures whilst others will require dedicated evaluation and agenda time in their own right. Will the work you have planned enable these questions to be answered?

- How effective are teaching and learning?
- How do levels of attainment and rates of children's progress compare to similar schools nationally?
- How well are pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities developed?
- How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?
- Does the school have enough money to do everything we wish to do?
- Do the school's procedures for child protection follow the requirements of the local area Child Protection Committee, and does the governing body ensure that these are followed?
- Does the governing body have a performance management policy and does it ensure that all staff, including the headteacher, are appraised in accordance with statutory requirements?

- Does the school meet the requirements of the general duty and the specific duties in Race Relations and Equalities guidance and legislation?
- Does the school have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice when meeting pupils' special educational needs and make its policy known to parents?
- Does the governing body have procedures for ensuring the school meets all relevant health and safety legislation?
- Does the governing body regularly review the extent to which the school's curriculum meets the needs of your pupils?



Bristol chairs say....

- When you are developing new policies or procedures, get hold of as many examples as you can from other schools, the LA or the internet then tailor them to your school. It's a waste of time and effort to re-invent the wheel.
- Using a year planner really does make the difference between feeling overwhelmed and feeling in control.



Structuring the governing body: What committees shall we have?

There is no “recommended” governing body committee structure. It is up to each governing body to decide what is appropriate for their school. One size will not fit all!

There are no statutory committees- only statutory functions. The governing body's duty to convene appeals panels in certain circumstances is explained on pages 68 and 69 of the Bristol Governors' Handbook. The handbook also gives more advice on the role of committees and the establishment of an appropriate committee structure (pages 9 and 10).

It is recommended that governing bodies review their committee structure at the beginning of each year. Some issues to consider when deciding what committees to have are:

- What decisions can be delegated to a committee, individual or the headteacher? (see the Bristol Governors' Handbook or the latest version of Guide to the Law)
- What is the overall size of the governing body and have we enough members to serve on committees without overburdening individuals?

Leading and managing the work of the governing body

- Do we have to get through more than the average amount of work? (For example if we are a school undergoing a major development project or in Special Measures).
- How can we avoid duplication of effort and make the best use of people's time? In particular how do we avoid going over the same business at full governing body meetings that has already been considered in detail at committee level?
- Do we have enough experience and expertise to spread among the committees so that we can safely delegate decision making to them?
- What will the clerking arrangements be?
- Do a small number of committees put too much influence in the hands of a few?
- Do our committees share the review of policies?
- How efficiently and effectively do we deal with reports from committees – remembering that the governing body retains legal responsibility for decisions?
- Who might have the capacity to chair each committee and what support might the chairs need?
- Would the opportunity to chair a committee help develop future chairs of the governing body? Could we make more use of Working Groups to take on specific tasks?
- When will the committees need to meet in relation to the main governing body to enable efficient and effective reporting?

It is important that each committee has properly recorded terms of reference. Examples are available on the Governor Development Service website. The terms of reference should set out the role of the committee, its delegated decision making powers, membership and clerking arrangements, and be approved by the full governing body and kept up to date.

Remember that even where powers are delegated to a committee, the governing body is still responsible for the decisions and actions of that committee and minutes must be included on the agenda for the next full governing body meeting (except where the detail should remain confidential).



Bristol chairs say....

- Have a leadership team presence at every committee meeting and consider how you will hold the leadership team to account.
- Remember that most leadership teams prefer an active and questioning interest to passive neutral acceptance.



Setting the Agenda



As the chair you are responsible for working with the clerk to produce the agenda and decide the order of items on it. Agenda items should reflect the governing body's focus on school improvement and their three key roles: Strategic view, critical friend and ensuring accountability. Other points to bear in mind are;

- You will need an idea in advance of what the headteacher's report contains so that you can ask the headteacher for any information which has not been included.
- You or the clerk should cross check the agenda against the LA recommended agenda items listed for each term in the Bristol Governor Newsletter and considered at the Governors' Agenda Briefings held three times a year.
- Make sure all governors are aware of your procedure for putting forward agenda items e.g. chair to be notified of proposed items at least two weeks before the meeting.
- Consider carefully the inclusion of 'Any Other Business'. This can be used inappropriately, for example when governors raise issues that take the headteacher and other governors by surprise or when issues are raised that need prior notice to allow for information to be gathered and reflection time. Some governing bodies do not have 'AOB' on the agenda at all, but practice varies. It is recommended that each governing body agrees a protocol in this respect, for example that all AOB items are to be put in writing to the chair at least 48 hours before the meeting, to be added to the agenda at the chair's discretion.
- Avoid tabling documents unless essential. If a document is tabled, make sure it is clearly identified in the minutes and that a file copy is kept with the meeting papers.
- Consider using a 'timed' agenda and avoid allowing too much time going over the minutes of the last meeting and committee reports. If everyone has read their papers in advance it should be possible just to 'note' these in most cases.
- It is good practice to put any advisors or guest speakers at the top of the agenda so that they can leave once you move on to other business.

Questions to ask yourself

■ What is the process for setting the agenda at your school?

■ How do you engage with the headteacher and Senior Leadership Team in this process?

Leading and managing the work of the governing body

3.4 Working with your clerk

Every governing body must appoint a clerk. Your relationship with your clerk is an important one which has a very significant impact on the effective working of the governing body. The clerk serves the governing body by providing legal and procedural advice. Many chairs are unaware of the level of service that can be expected from a clerk or the duties they are contracted to undertake. A standard clerk's job description has been produced by the Local Authority. You will need to familiarise yourself with this document, which can be found on the Governor Development Service website.

We asked a group of clerks to sum up how they can help with the smooth running of the governing body and how the chair can enable them to be most effective. Here is what they said:

I can make my governing body's role easier by:

- Ensuring I am knowledgeable about legal matters relating to school governance so that I can advise the chair and the governing body and ensure that the governing body is acting within regulations.
- Working with the chair and headteacher to set the agenda.
- Circulating draft minutes and actions as soon as possible after each meeting and following up actions where appropriate.
- Setting up a central filing system (hard copy and/or electronic) that everyone can access.
- Keeping contact details and lists of committee members and named governors up to date and circulating them regularly.
- Having Committee Terms of Reference readily to hand.
- Being ready to check that each meeting is quorate.
- Communicating effectively between meetings –preferably by setting up an email group.
- Keeping up to date by reading the Governors' Bulletins and Newsletters.
- Passing on all items identified in the Governors' Bulletin for the attention of specific members of the governing body.
- Organising (and minimising!) paperwork.
- Supporting yearly agenda planning.
- Maintaining and circulating a calendar of dates for the year.
- Maintaining a register of governor skills.

- Consulting on the length and timing of meetings that would suit most governors.
- Ensuring that the meeting room is suitable/comfortable and any visual aids work.
- Attending clerks training and network sessions on a regular basis.

My role is made easier when my chair of governors:

- Works with the headteacher and myself to set the agenda, and agrees supporting papers in good time for circulation before each meeting.
- Provides documents electronically where possible so that they can be circulated quickly and easily.
- Is easy to contact between meetings (by email if possible).
- Carries out agreed 'actions' before the meeting and supports me in chasing other governors.
- Encourages the headteacher and others to produce all papers in time to be circulated with the agenda (It's difficult to pass papers round, read them and take minutes all at the same time).
- Introduces new attendees and any visitors at the beginning of each meeting.
- Keeps to the items on the agenda and stops discussion going off course.
- Highlights when an item should be treated as confidential.
- Avoids using acronyms or too much jargon.
- Summarises discussion at the end of each agenda item, confirming all action points and decisions to avoid misunderstandings.
- Uses a timed agenda... and sticks to it!
- Returns draft minutes promptly and signs the agreed minutes at each meeting.
- Ensures that committees have properly appointed chairs and appropriate arrangements for reporting back to the full governing body.
- Keeps up to date with developments at school and reads the Bristol Governors' Bulletins and Newsletters.
- Attends LA Agenda Briefings (or ensures another governor attends on their behalf) and lets me know what items and actions arise from these meetings.
- Encourages governors to attend training.
- Carries out my performance review meetings (with the headteacher) in line with the school's Performance Management Policy.
- Has a good understanding of my role and its limits and knows what it is, and isn't, reasonable to ask me to do.

In summary, the governing body makes decisions and takes responsibility – the clerk supports them in doing so.

Leading and managing the work of the governing body

Questions to ask yourself

- How well does your clerk support the work of your governing body?
- Have you established clear expectations and ways of working with you clerk, and are you aware what is, and isn't, covered in their job description?
- Do you carry out Performance Review meetings with your clerk?



Minute taking and effective meetings

Minutes:

- Are a record of the way in which the governing body has discharged its responsibilities and demonstrate how those present shape the school's direction and priorities.
- Are a brief but accurate record of the main points of a discussion at a meeting, the decisions made and any actions decided on.
- Do not have to be long, but must be a fair reflection of the variety of views.
- Must be able to be understood by someone who was not at the meeting.

Always bear in mind that minutes (unless deemed by the governing body as confidential) are public documents that anyone can ask to see, regardless of their connection to the school. There should be an agreed practice on confidentiality.

Matters which it is advisable to treat as confidential are:

- Personal matters concerning named pupils, teaching and support staff (though not where the person involved is being thanked or congratulated).
- Disciplinary matters involving staff or pupils.
- Matters regarding the running of the school that are referred to the governors before they are made public.
- Items where disclosure might prejudice the position of the governing body in legal proceedings.
- Spending estimates which might benefit a contractor.

Clerking arrangements must be in place for every meeting of the governing body and of committees... is this the case at your school?

Demonstrating accountability

The governing body must have access to an accurate summary of all discussions and decisions so that it can show stakeholders and external bodies, such as Ofsted, that it:

- Is acting as a critical friend by questioning, acknowledging success and challenging the school to improve. In order to help in the self evaluation process it is good practice to highlight relevant sections of the minutes that demonstrate these activities.
- Is acting strategically, demonstrated by the focus on evidence of pupil achievement and school improvement priorities. It can be useful to record the expected impact of strategic decisions to help in reviewing their effectiveness at a later stage.

Minutes should record the key points made by those present in a fair and balanced way, and give a true account of the outcome of any debate. Because of the corporate nature of the governing body, questions and comments are not usually attributed to individuals, although occasionally a governor may ask to have a comment or dissention specifically recorded in their name.

Where a formal proposal is made, it is useful to ask the clerk to read out the proposal before the vote is taken, to ensure it is recorded correctly in the minutes and everyone knows exactly what they are voting on.

It is good practice to highlight agreed actions, identifying who will take them forward and an indication of timescale.

The chair's role

The chair has a role to play in ensuring that the minutes of governing body meetings serve as an accurate record. The chair does this by:

- Listening carefully to the discussion.
- Summing up the key points to aid the clerk in recording the discussion.
- Bringing each agenda item to a clear conclusion with an agreed decision or action when appropriate.
- Ensuring that governing body decisions and actions are recorded correctly by gaining agreement on wording to aid the clerk.
- Making clear which items are confidential and why.
- Checking draft minutes before they are circulated by the clerk, to ensure they are an accurate record and pick up any errors.

Leading and managing the work of the governing body

- Taking action if minutes are not being produced to an adequate standard i.e. making your expectations clear to your clerk, discussing with them how the minutes could be improved, and ensuring that the clerk has access to appropriate training (available through the Governor Development Service).

The chair also ensures that chairs of committees work in the same way with the clerk to the committee.

Governors will have the opportunity to raise queries or request changes at the next meeting. Any changes are then made, subject to the agreement of those present at the meeting.

Do your minutes provide evidence that your governing body is fulfilling its statutory functions? At Appendix 6 you will find a Minutes Audit that will help you check.



Bristol chairs say....

- Sometimes the objective of the meeting just seems to be to fly through the paperwork and finish on time. Never lose sight of the fact that we as governors are there first and foremost to make the school the best place it can be for the children.
- Try not to make meetings so formal that they lose the sense of supporting your individual school and just become “business”.

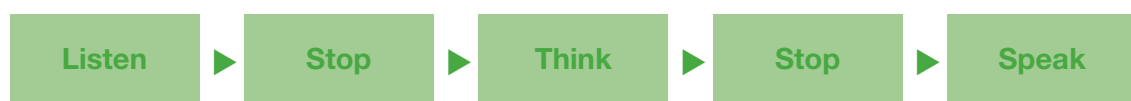


Managing Conflict and Negotiation

Conflict is an inevitable part of decision making. Research shows that teams that do not always agree make better decisions and achieve more than teams who are always in agreement.

When people become entrenched in their views, the chair has to manage the situation carefully so that relationships are not damaged and the group is not prevented from making a corporate decision.

When faced with conflict, we sometimes become emotionally involved and become challenging or defensive. This sort of reaction can cause long-term damage rather than resolving the situation. Instead try to:



Strategies for resolving conflict include:

- Asking people who are upset to explain why they feel strongly so that everyone understands.
- Asking for the views of those who are less emotionally involved but who will give a frank answer.
- Summarising the different view points, adding any information which may clarify the situation.
- Remaining emotionally uninvolved.
- Ensuring that the views of all are given a good hearing by not rushing the decision making.
- Being firm about the need to make a decision - if not immediately, then in the very near future.
- Considering a vote to help come to a resolution.
- Securing commitment to a corporate decision so that the disagreement does not continue.
- Being clear about the process for revisiting the decision in the future.
- Being sensitive to those who have lost their argument.
- Being positive about the value of a healthy debate.

At Appendix 9 you will find a table setting out the Empathetic Model for Conflict Resolution.



The art of delegation: Does it have to be the chair?

Delegation is not about the chair abdicating their responsibilities, but sharing the load. Chairs and vice chairs can successfully share the load using each other's strengths to best advantage. This job share is particularly advantageous for governing bodies of schools in challenging circumstances. Be creative: responsibilities can be shared with governors other than the vice-chair. Remember the corporate nature of the governing body and that its powers are vested in the body not individuals.

The advantages of lightening the load of the chair include:

- Delegation provides development opportunities for others.
- Strengths and skills are used effectively.
- Broader participation strengthens involvement and motivation.

Leading and managing the work of the governing body

- Distributing leadership around the governing body reflects what happens in effective school staff teams.

Establishing an expectation that governors will share the workload will also help when you are seeking volunteers to take on the role of chair in the future.

When delegating tasks to committees, working parties or other ad-hoc groups, ensure that matters are still dealt with in the professional way you would normally expect. It is not appropriate for groups to meet to deal with governing body matters in people's homes or other social settings – keep this for celebratory occasions!



Bristol chairs say....

- Delegate as much as you can whenever you can (but see above!).
- Engage as many people as possible. Ask for and accept offers of help with the workload.



Questions to ask yourself

- Do you, as chair, have an agreed record of your role?
- How well does the role of vice-chair support you?
- Are other key governors (such as committee chairs) able to support governing body leadership?

The chair's role in supporting strategic leadership

This section focuses on the role of the chair in ensuring that the governing body fulfils its strategic role – particularly the governors' role in answering the school improvement questions “How well are we doing?” “How do we compare with similar schools?” “What more should we aim to achieve this year?” and “What must we do to make it happen?”

4.1 Governing for improvement

The process of school improvement is called a cycle with good reason. The planning, evidence gathering and decision-making processes are part of a continuous cycle and there are overlapping starting and finishing points for different aspects of school management and improvement. It is not possible to completely separate the governing body's contribution to strategic planning from its role in holding the school to account for standards. Both these aspects of the role are played out alongside each other and the critical friend role continually informs the interactions between the governing body and the school leadership team. It must also be remembered that the governing body is itself accountable to its stakeholders both for the work within the school and for the way in which it has contributed to school improvement.

Almost all the topics referred to in Sections 4 and 5 are the responsibility of the whole governing body. However, we have tried to emphasise how the chair can support more effective working and create the climate in which the governing body challenges and supports the school and where the chair can enable and support the role of the governing body.

4.2 Developing shared values

The purpose of this section is to help you distinguish between values and vision and clarify the importance of values and vision being shared by all stakeholders.

Often prospectuses confuse values and vision. **Values** are the core beliefs that underpin the way people think and act. We should not assume that they will be shared by all stakeholders in a school. **Vision** is the preferred future for the school. It should be exciting and dynamic and must relate to the context in which the school is operating.

Ofsted is clear that governing bodies should influence the values, vision and direction of the school and that the values of the community should be understood and respected by the governing body. The headteacher's perspective is crucial and if there is consensus amongst all key stakeholders then everyone's efforts will be focused on the same goals.

Here is an example of a statement of shared values:

Our school is developing a learning community where:

- Everyone is proud to belong
- We all have high expectations of ourselves and each other
- Individuals respect each other
- There are positive attitudes to learning
- Many different styles and ways of learning are valued
- It is recognised that we all go on learning throughout our lives
- Everyone respects the right of others to learn
- We recognise the importance of playing a part in our wider community

Here is a list of 'values prompts' to consider when developing or reviewing shared values for your own school:

- High expectations of all
- Independent learners
- Imagination
- Challenge
- Enjoyment
- Positive reinforcement
- Pride in achievement
- Added value
- Participation
- Equality of opportunity
- Fair treatment for all
- Empowerment at every level
- Lifelong learning
- Celebrating ethnic and cultural diversity
- Consistency
- Financial enterprise
- Value for money

- Mutual respect
- Integrity
- Truth
- Justice
- Compassion
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Self-esteem
- Self control
- Leadership at all levels
- Team working
- Partnership with parents
- Community involvement
- Security (physical/emotional)

Looking for evidence of values in action

It is important to consider with your governing body the actual evidence they might see around the school if the agreed values were being lived out in practice. The evidence might be tangible but will also be found in observing relationships and how people behave towards each other. It is important not to rely on others for evidence of how well the school is doing. By identifying first hand evidence that values are translated into action, your governors will gain confidence in accounting for the school to stakeholders such as parents and Ofsted.

Some examples of common values statements and evidence you might expect to find are set out in Appendix 10.

A question to ask yourself

- Do you need to plan any action? You might like to use a governor meeting or part of an in-service day to re-visit your school's values and consider how they can be reinforced through the way your school is run.

Sharing the vision

You may consider the idea of 'vision' to be rather woolly. However, the development of a clear shared vision for a school enables a head and the leadership team to feel secure in their ability to lead a school forward with a sense of purpose. Without a vision to guide the future of the school and what it wants for its pupils, decisions are made in a vacuum. All plans should be evaluated for the contribution they will make to the school's preferred future.

If the governing body and the headteacher and staff do not share a vision, they may have different priorities and pull in different directions. Vision is what inspires people to keep working towards their goals even in times of difficulty.

Remember that the vision belongs to the whole school, not to an individual or one group within the school. Genuine governor involvement in the development of the school's vision statement is a good demonstration of strategic leadership.

A vision statement should encapsulate your aspirations for the future direction of the school. Here is an extract:

The chair's role in supporting strategic leadership

At School, we strive to provide a high quality education for every child, in a friendly, secure, caring, respectful and co-operative environment.

We promote high achievement by encouraging children to:

- *develop the highest possible levels of attainment in all curriculum areas*
- *have an enthusiastic approach to all aspects of school life*
- *become self-disciplined and to develop a genuine desire for learning*
- *work both independently and collaboratively*
- *be self-critical and respond to their individual targets for improvement*
- *try their very best in all they do*
- *see learning as worthwhile, intrinsically rewarding and a life-long process*

5.4 Keeping strategic: your role as chair

The word “strategic” is frequently used but its meaning is often unclear. Definitions of ‘strategic’ include: ‘Having a plan or technique for achieving an end’, ‘Identifying the way forward in a complex environment, referring constantly to a longer term vision for the organisation’. It is useful to stand back and consider what it means to act strategically within your school and what the governing body does that contributes to a strategic view. It will help to consider that:

- The governing body has a statutory responsibility to ‘conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement’: Education Act 2002.
- The governing body works with the headteacher to decide what it wants the school to achieve, where the impact needs to be, and sets the framework for getting there.
- The governing body agrees vision, values, plans, policies, budgets, targets and reviews progress in equal partnership with the headteacher.
- The head is the lead professional, responsible for the organisation and control of the school and leading and managing the staff team.

The chair leads the governing body in:

- Focusing its work on continually raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning, so that pupils achieve their potential.
- Ensuring that all those who have an interest in the success of the school contribute when the values and aims are being agreed.
- Deciding what they want the school to achieve, agreeing priorities for the improvement plan and ensuring resources are used wisely.
- Helping to set and keep under review the policies that provide a broad framework within which the headteacher and staff should run the school.
- Ensuring systems are in place to gather evidence of progress.

Don't allow your governing body to become complacent about children's potential on the basis of their socio-economic background.



Getting involved in school self-evaluation and improvement planning

Effective school improvement relies on school leaders and governors:

- Continually collecting accurate data and evidence of how the school is performing.
- Frequently analysing this data and evidence to maintain a clear understanding of the identified strengths and weaknesses.
- Intelligently identifying strategic priorities for further improvement.
- Formulating realistic and robust improvement plans to address these priorities.
- Setting challenging performance targets (staff and pupils).
- Deploying resources strategically and efficiently.
- Remaining resolute and focused in tackling areas of weakness or under-performance.
- Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation processes.

The chair's role in supporting strategic leadership

In other words, continually asking (and answering) these key questions:

- What do we need to do better?
- How do we know?
- What are our expectations?
- How are we going to get there and by when?
- How will we measure how well we are doing?

Effective School Self Evaluation underpins this process. Data and evidence gathered throughout the school year should ensure that the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which is logged online with Ofsted, is regularly updated to accurately reflect how the school is performing. The SEF should, in turn, inform the priorities identified within the School Improvement Plan. These should be viewed as the two halves of one coherent document. For more about the School Improvement Plan see section 4.7.

So how can you as chair ensure that the governing body are actively involved at all stages of this process?

Governors should be continually supporting and challenging school leaders by engaging in some or all of the following:

- Developing and sharing the values and vision.
- Seeking views from stakeholders (pupils, parents) and using these to inform improvement planning.
- Agreeing priorities and targets for improvement.
- Planning and working with school leaders to achieve improvement.
- Ensuring that the deployment of staffing and resources matches the school's priorities.
- Gathering data and evidence and using this to evaluate how well the school is doing.
- Reviewing progress and evaluating the impact of actions taken.

In order to share leadership and fulfil their strategic role, it is vital that the governors are fully involved in the range of school self-evaluation processes which provide evidence for the SEF. This engagement will ensure that they have a firm grasp of the schools strengths and weaknesses and fully understand how the process underpins school improvement planning. As chair you will need to agree with the headteacher how the governors can best fulfil this role. Allocating the

different sections of the SEF to each committee can work well. They can be very helpful in broadening the scope of established monitoring and evaluation processes within the school – extra pairs of hands and extra pairs of eyes and ears are always welcomed, but do bear in mind that the nature (including protocols) and purpose of these activities must always be agreed with school leaders in advance.

This active involvement by governors will enable them to undertake their ‘critical friend’ role more effectively. They will be far better informed about what the school is doing to improve (and why) and will therefore feel much more confident in raising challenging questions with school leaders. Many headteachers now structure their reports to governors in line with the sections of the SEF, to help this process.



School Improvement Process

The governing body is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school. The key document that forms the overall strategic plan is the School Improvement Plan.

As chair you will need to ensure that:

- The governing body is involved in helping to identify the priorities for the plan through school self-evaluation activities (see above).
- The actions and a timetable for monitoring and reporting on progress have been agreed and are specified in the plan.
- The plan includes suitably challenging targets.
- Governors use the plan to inform work in committees.

Through the year, the School Improvement Partner will undertake three ‘core visits’. (The extent to which they work with the school over and above these visits will be determined by how well the school is doing). These ‘core visits’ address each section of the SEF and are designed to ensure that:

- The school’s self-evaluation processes are robust and accurate.
- The correct priorities for improvement have been identified.
- The most effective actions/strategies are being used to tackle weaknesses and to evaluate the impact of these actions/strategies on securing improvement.

It is essential that you as chair (along with any relevant other governors – eg. committee chairs) attend these ‘core visits’. Do make sure that you are involved with the headteacher in agreeing the dates/times of these meetings with the School Improvement Partner.

The chair's role in supporting strategic leadership

The Autumn 'core visit' primarily focuses on pupil attainment (results) and achievement (progress). It is therefore recommended that the governing body devote the first appropriate committee meeting (eg Standards Committee) each year to a thorough review of standards ahead of the 'core visit', to ensure that the discussion with the School Improvement Partner is as well-informed and helpful as possible.

Also, do make sure that at least two further meetings of this committee (eg January and April) analyse rates of pupil progress in all year groups in the key subject areas. This will make sure that the governors retain an accurate picture throughout the year, and can raise key questions (eg what is being done to accelerate progress amongst underachieving groups?) in a timely fashion.

The two further 'core visits' address the quality of provision (including the curriculum and teaching and learning) and the quality of leadership and management (including governance). Ongoing involvement in self-evaluation processes (probably through committees) will ensure that governors are well informed to contribute to these discussions, fully understand what the school needs to do to improve further and their role in this.

The School Improvement Partner will produce an Annual Report for governors. This document will summarise the outcomes of the 'core visits' (so it should not contain any surprises) and will reinforce the improvement priorities which the school needs to address the following year. If the school's self-evaluation processes are accurate, then these will already be known and will be the key priorities within the School Improvement Plan.



Bristol chairs say....

- Try to attend every core visit. It's worth it because it will enable you to build a relationship with your SIP, and get a real grasp of what the school's priorities should be.
- When you ask your governors to give their input on the SEF or School Improvement Plan, breaking the documents down into short 'chunks' makes them much less daunting to tackle.



∞ Planning for the School Improvement Cycle



Clearly, it is important that meeting agendas through the year reflect this School Improvement Cycle. The Year Planner included as Appendix 7 within this Handbook will help in this respect.

To enable governors to fulfil their role effectively, the following information should be made available to them through the year:

From the school:	From governors:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School vision statement/ statement of values and aims ● School improvement plan, including targets ● Self- Evaluation Form (SEF) ● Post-inspection action plan ● Headteacher’s report to the Governing Body ● Outcomes of school self-evaluation ● Other reports and presentations by staff to governors ● School prospectus ● Staffing structure ● Curriculum plans ● Reports of staff professional development and INSET days ● School policy documents ● Examples of pupils’ work ● Baseline assessment, teacher assessments, pupil progress data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reports of governors’ visits to school (including any monitoring/evaluation activities) <p>From the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents’ questionnaire results ● Views of pupils, other schools, neighbours and local businesses
	<p>From the LA:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benchmarking/Value Added data ● School Improvement Partners Notes of Visits and Annual Report
	<p>From the DCSF:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SATs and public examination results, league tables ● Financial benchmarking data
<p>From Ofsted:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inspection reports (approximately every 3 years) ● HMI monitoring reports ● RAISEonline 	

The chair's role in supporting strategic leadership

At Appendix 11, you will find a tool which will enable your governing body to evaluate its strategic effectiveness. Undertaking this exercise in a full governing body meeting will help you to identify areas you need to develop further.

This level of engagement in self-evaluation and improvement planning will enable you as chair to ensure that your annually updated on-line School Profile is an accurate reflection of your school's performance and achievements. The governing body have a statutory obligation to complete this document every year. Guidance is available at:

www.teacher.gov.uk/management/newrelationship/schoolprofile.



Bristol chairs say....

Keep focussed on one or two priorities. You can't look at everything and if you try then nothing will get done. Better to see real progress on the most important priority for the school than to have given lots of aspects a look and a nudge, only for them to fall back when you move on to others.



The strategic use of resources

Schools have a range of sources of income. (For more about funding and financial management see pages 24-25 of the Bristol Governors' Handbook). The governing body needs to be aware of a great many pressures to spend from within and from outside the school when deciding how the budget should be allocated.

Staff are the vital resource, without whom improvement and change cannot be implemented. There should be a commitment to train, develop and motivate all staff for the improvement of the individual school and the wider education community.

Guidance and background material available to support governing bodies in the strategic use of resources can be found on-line as follows:

The Financial Management in Schools Website (www.fmisinfo) provides a self-assessment tool, examples of completed assessments, a range of guidance documents and useful links to other sites.

The National College for School Leadership's website, www.ncsl.org.uk has pages dedicated to school financial management. The site contains top tips, interactive scenarios, case studies, references and useful links to other related sites.

Financial benchmarking

A financial benchmarking web site has been established and financial data on your school will have been supplied by your LA. The site can be found at:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/schoolfinance/>

Benchmarking your expenditure will help you to:

- Focus on planning and managing your budgets.
- Identify areas for improvements.
- Set targets for improvements.
- Achieve best value - quality v. costs.
- Improve the effectiveness of your spending to improve performances.
- Deliver educational services to a defined standard.



Bristol chairs say....

Gaining a thorough knowledge of school funding and the budget process will give you increased confidence.



The chair's role in ensuring accountability

This section deals with two aspects of accountability – the ways in which the governing Body acts as a critical friend and holds the school to account and the accountability of the governing body to its stakeholders for the performance of the school and the contribution it has made.

5.1 Aspects of Accountability

The governing body has a responsibility to provide information about standards in the school and whether targets have been met. If you or any members of your governing body are unsure about nationally expected standards and target setting, further information can be found in the Bristol Governor's handbook, on the Governor Development Service Website and in the Guide to the Law.

You will also need to encourage members of the governing body to:

- Attend training that will assist them to operate as critical friends in order to be effectively accountable.
- Be prepared to request information in their committees, analyse it and evaluate progress.
- Monitor the impact of agreed strategies in the school improvement plan.
- Ensure evidence is recorded in the minutes of all meetings.
- Report back to the full governing body as appropriate.
- Be prepared to contribute to the publication of the School Profile (or, for Nursery Schools only, annual report to parents).

5.2 Accountability to stakeholders

The governing body holds the school to account, but is also accountable itself to the school's stakeholders for the performance of the school and the contribution it makes.

The governing body receives and reviews information about how well the school is doing, and also needs to be able to answer questions from others. The chair has a role to play in ensuring that the governing body communicates effectively, and at appropriate times, with its stakeholders, and the chair is frequently the channel for that communication.

The development of Extended Schools will increase accountability to the community and place an increasing responsibility on the school to work with other agencies.

Your own commitment and development is part of your accountability to your fellow governors.

Ways in which the governing body exercises accountability to its stakeholders:

- Listening to the views of pupils, perhaps through a School Council, or by using a regular pupil survey.
- Knowing the views of staff – through regular meetings with the headteacher, senior teachers, surveys (including exit surveys) and through links with subject leaders.
- Ensuring that the performance management cycle for staff is being implemented through the headteacher’s reports to the governing body.
- Talking to parents, listening to and seeking their views (through a range of consultation routes) and being prepared to discuss weaknesses as well as strengths.
- Consulting with other stakeholders and valuing and respecting their ideas.
- Being innovative in establishing communication with stakeholders.
- Recognising that the school’s neighbours are stakeholders.
- Ensuring that the governing body addresses complaints fairly, quickly, appropriately and in accordance with the school’s established policy.
- Encouraging all members of the governing body to contribute to writing the School Profile to parents and take ownership of it.
- Seeking to empower parents through setting up a Parent Council or holding parent/governor meetings.
- Delivering an accurate picture of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and progress against key issues to the Ofsted Inspector.

The grid provided at Appendix 12 will help you record evidence of how your governing body is accountable to its stakeholders.



Bristol chairs say....

- Listen to your headteacher and the senior leadership team, listen to parents, and listen to the children.
- Have a discussion about accountability and why it's necessary.



Questions to ask yourself

- When did you last seek the views of pupils, parents or staff?
- Are any parental concerns dealt with effectively at an early stage to avoid them developing into formal complaints?

And finally.....

We hope you found this handbook helpful and informative and now feel equipped to undertake the role of chair with increased knowledge and confidence. We would urge you to find an opportunity to use the assessment tools provided in the appendices with your governors to evaluate your governing body's effectiveness.

Always remember that the Governor Development Service is available to help you in your role as chair or advise you where you can find the guidance or information you need. We would also like to encourage you to take up the opportunities available to engage with LA officers and governors from other schools to share good practice and help ensure your skills and knowledge stay up-to-date.

We wish you an enjoyable, fulfilling and highly successful time as chair of governors.

The templates, pro formas and model documents included in these appendices are also available to download from the governor development service website.
www.bristol-cyps.org.uk

Appendix 1a

Team Health Check

Governing bodies should explore their team effectiveness as part of their own self-evaluation (refer also SSE framework). Think of your governing body as a team of people who work together for a common purpose, with leadership provided by the chair, vice-chairs and chairs of committees. Does it share these characteristics of effective teams? What evidence do you have?

	Yes	Could be better	No
Purpose and Direction			
The team has a clear mission/purpose, known by all team members			
The team has a vision and success criteria which are challenging, meaningful and exciting to the team			
The team understands how their work fits into the whole school perspective			
Team Leadership (by chairs and vice-chairs)			
Leaders balance appropriate direction with support and openness			
Leaders discuss key issues with the team			
Leaders delegate responsibility and leadership to individuals in their area of expertise			
Understanding Differences			
Team members understand what their roles are, and where they overlap with other team members			
Team members are clear about what is expected of them individually by the rest of the team			
Team members are clear about what individual strengths each member of the team brings			

	Yes	Could be better	No
Processes			
Team meetings are effective			
The team has found and implemented better ways of working			
The team has an effective process to solve problems and take decisions			
The team has sufficient resources (people and time) to do its work			
Communication			
Everyone feels their ideas and input are listened to by the rest of the team			
Differences and conflicts are resolved openly and constructively			
Members' interaction is open and honest			
Relationships			
The team's different experiences and skills are accepted and used			
There is trust and openness between team members			
New members feel valued and quickly become productive members of the team			
The team takes responsibility for its successes and failures, and avoids blaming other people or groups			

Appendix 1b

Governance - Self Review

1: Embedded 2: Establishing 3: Emerging 4: Inadequate

A: Systems

(as appropriate)

	1	2	3	4
1 Agendas are efficiently and effectively set following consultation with all relevant people and include all recommended/required items				
2 All relevant papers are sent out to governors at least 7 days before every meeting				
3 Systems are in place to secure effective and efficient communications to and between governors				
4 Meetings and key agenda items are scheduled in advance within a regularly updated year planner which is shared with all governors				
5 Individual governors attend meetings regularly				
6 Meetings remain focused on improving outcomes for children/young people and rarely overrun				
7 There is an agreed Code of Conduct in place which ensures that there is a culture of mutual respect and an established team ethos within the governing body				
8 All governors are encouraged to contribute to meetings and all views are taken into account				
9 Protocols have been agreed and signed up to by all governors and these extend to include all visits to school				
10 All governors are loyal to collective decisions and abide by agreed protocols - especially confidentiality				
11 The appropriate committee structure is in place to address school priorities, with appropriate chair and clerking arrangements in place				
12 Each committee has appropriate Terms of Reference (which are annually reviewed), all committee meetings are effectively minuted and each committee reports to every full GB meeting				
13 All policies and other documents required by law are in place and are reviewed in accordance with guidelines				
14 All meetings are effectively minuted and, once agreed, draft minutes are promptly circulated to all governors				

B: Building Capacity

1 2 3 4

15 All new governors enjoy a welcoming and effective induction programme				
16 Our recruitment and retention systems ensure that there are no long-term vacancies (of more than 1 term)				
17 Membership of our governing body includes people from the business sector and appropriately reflects the community we serve				
18 We regularly conduct a skills audit amongst our governors and fully utilise their expertise				
19 Our clerk has been appropriately trained and fulfils their role effectively				
20 All governors read the Bristol Governor Newsletter (3x pa), the chair or clerk ensures that key items within the monthly Governors' Bulletin are promptly communicated to relevant governors and the chair frequently accesses their Groupwise email account.				
21 Governors attend training regularly and share their learning with other governors when appropriate				
22 Chair or their representative regularly attend LA Briefings or Forum meetings				
23 Our governing body engages effectively with other Locality partners – including through the ESP Governor Network				
24 Succession planning processes are in place to develop future chairs				

C: Roles and Responsibilities

1 2 3 4

25 The chair is confident and fully effective in their role				
26 There is an appropriate and effective relationship between the chair and headteacher				
27 The governing body all understand and effectively fulfil their roles and statutory responsibilities				
28 The governing body effectively fulfils its 'critical friend' role by appropriately challenging school leaders				
29 Effective Performance Management is in place throughout the school which secures improved staff performance				
30 As governors, we regularly visit and contribute to the life of the school, and celebrate achievement and offer praise and thanks to those concerned				

<p>31 Budget planning, monitoring and management systems are efficient and effective and all governors have an accurate understanding of the school's financial position through regular updates/reviews</p>				
<p>32 There are named governors for Looked After Children, H&S, Child Protection, Special Needs and Extended School Partnerships and they fulfil these roles effectively, regularly reporting to all governors</p>				

D: Strategic

1 2 3 4

	1	2	3	4
<p>33 The governing body is legally constituted with procedures in place to ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled</p>				
<p>34 The governing body has been fully involved in shaping the vision for the school</p>				
<p>35 The governing body is fully involved in determining the school's priorities for improvement within its strategic plan, understand what key actions the school is taking to improve outcomes, and monitor and evaluate progress</p>				
<p>36 The governing body regularly evaluate our own effectiveness which informs the annual governor development plan</p>				
<p>37 The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through regular scrutiny of pupils' achievement, progress towards targets and the quality of provision</p>				
<p>38 The governing body is involved in ongoing review of the effectiveness of the school through contributing to the school's self evaluation processes (eg frequent focused visits/activities) and discussions with the School Improvement Partner</p>				
<p>39 Governors understand and effectively use performance data (eg RAISEonline, year group progress assessments etc) to identify areas of strength and weakness, and work with school leaders to help accelerate rates of progress amongst underachieving groups</p>				
<p>40 The governors know what the children/pupils, parents/carers and staff feel about the school by regularly seeking their views and use these to inform strategic planning</p>				

Appendix 2

Leadership styles

Understanding leadership styles helps in analysing the way in which people work together. You need to be aware of your style and how it affects your team of governors. Some styles work in some situations and with some people, others don't. Most people use a combination of styles. On the following pages you will find an analysis of the main leadership styles. You will notice that some appear to have a negative impact on elements of the team. This does not mean that the style should never be used; it may be a necessary one on occasions. Remember, however, that the chair is an equal member of the governing body, which is made up of volunteers, and a chair that is over-assertive is unlikely to be wholly effective.

Below are examples of leadership styles identified by Daniel Goleman ('The New Leaders: Transforming the Art of Leadership into the Science of Results', Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, Little Brown 2002).

Visionary leadership style

What the leader wants:	To take people with them towards a vision
What the leader says:	"Come with me"
Leaders characteristics:	Self-confidence, empathy, catalyst for change
When the style works best:	When changes require a new vision or a clear direction is needed
Overall impact on others:	Strongly positive

Coaching leadership style

What the leader wants:	To develop people for the future
What the leader says:	"Try this"
Leaders characteristics:	Develops others, has empathy, is self-aware
When the style works best:	To help others improve performance or to develop long-term strengths
Overall impact on others:	Positive

Affiliative leadership style

What the leader wants:	To create harmony and build bonds between people
What the leader says:	“People come first”
Leaders characteristics:	Empathy, good at building relationships and communication
When the style works best:	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances
Overall impact on others:	Positive

Democratic leadership style

What the leader wants:	To create agreement through participation in decision making
What the leader says:	“What do you think”
Leaders characteristics:	Collaborative, a team leader, good communicator
When the style works best:	To build agreement and commitment, to get an input from team members
Overall impact on others:	Positive

Pacesetting leadership style

What the leader wants:	To set high standards of performance
What the leader says:	“Do as I do, now”
Leaders characteristics:	Conscientious, driven to achieve, take the initiative
When the style works best:	To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent group
Overall impact on others:	Negative

Commanding leadership style

What the leader wants:	To give clear direction and stimulate action
What the leader says:	“Do what I tell you”
Leaders characteristics:	Drive to achieve, get things going, be in control
When the style works best:	In a crisis, when something needs to be done without argument, when someone is difficult
Overall impact on others:	Negative, because often misused

Appendix 3

Governing Body Skills Audit

The purpose of this audit is to discover the range of skills and experience already existing on our governing body, so that we can make the most of everyone's abilities and plan for future development. Please answer each question as fully as possible and return the sheets to the chair two weeks before the next full meeting of the governing body. Thank you for your help.

1. Why did you join this governing body?

2. From your background, experience and interests, what are the particular skills you bring?

3. Which aspects of your work as a governor have been:

● Most rewarding?

● Most frustrating?

● Most demanding?

4. What opportunities can you see for individual governors to take on new roles?

5. Are there any particular skills or experience that you feel the governing body lacks at the moment?

6. What do you see as the key tasks for the coming year to support the school's improvement plan?

7. What do you consider will be the key development priorities for the whole governing body over the next 12 months?

8. What aspects of the work of the school are you most interested becoming involved in?

9. Have you any specific ideas about how you could support the work of the governing body?

10. What further training, information or support would you welcome in order to become even more effective?

Appendix 4

Model Governor Induction policy

Purpose

The governing body and headteacher believe it is essential that all new governors receive a comprehensive induction package covering a broad range of issues and topics. There is a commitment to ensure that all new governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. The process is seen as an investment, leading to more effective governance and retention of governors.

Aims of policy;

- To welcome new governors to the governing body and enable them to meet other members.
- To encourage new governors to visit the school to experience its atmosphere and understand its ethos.
- To enable new governors to meet the headteacher, staff and children.
- To explain the partnership between the headteacher, School and governing body.
- To explain the role and responsibilities of governors and clerk to governors.
- To give background material on the school and current issues.
- To give new governors the opportunity to ask questions about their role and/or the school and explain how the governing body and its committees work.
- To establish which committee(s) it may be appropriate for the new governor to join.

New governors will:

- Be contacted by the chair or headteacher before attending their first meeting.
- Be welcomed to the governing body by the chair at their first meeting.
- Have the opportunity to tour the school and meet staff and children.
- Receive an informal briefing on the school from the headteacher (see note 1).
- Have the opportunity to meet informally with an existing governor who will then act as their mentor (see note 2).
- Be accompanied by their mentor to their first full governing body meeting (if required).
- Have the opportunity to review their first meeting with the mentor.
- Liaise with the clerk regarding completion of necessary paperwork (likely to include CRB disclosure form, pecuniary interest declaration, code of conduct and “skills audit”).

The clerk to governors will ensure the new governor receives an induction pack which should include:

- The “Bristol Governors’ Handbook”.
- A copy of the governing body’s code of conduct or protocols.
- Any handbook or notes produced for governors by the school .
- The DCSF “Guide to the Law for Governors”.
- The school prospectus.
- The Local Authority’s governor training programme (set out in the latest edition of the ‘Bristol Governor’).
- Details of the governing body committees including their terms of reference.
- Dates for future governors’ meetings including committees.
- Details of how to contact the other governors, the clerk and the school.
- A calendar of school events and recent school newsletters.
- Copies of the minutes of the last two full governing body meetings.

The chair or head will explain the purpose of the following documents and ensure copies are available for new governors to read:

- The School Improvement Plan.
- The latest Ofsted report and action plan.
- The on-line Ofsted Self Evaluation Form (SEF).
- The latest annual report from the School Improvement Partner.
- Policy documents relevant to committee membership.
- The latest on-line School Profile or, for Nursery Schools, Annual Report to parents.
- The monitoring performance and evaluation policy.
- The school visits policy.

Note 1; Areas that the headteacher will cover include:

- Background to the school.
- Current issues facing the school.
- Arrangements for visiting the school.
- The relationship between the headteacher and governing body.

Note 2; Areas that the mentor will cover include:

- An overview of the governor’s role.
- An overview of the role of the clerk.
- How the full governing body and committee meetings are conducted.
- How to propose agenda items.
- Governor training.

Appendix 5

Supporting Governor Development: Checklist

Tick the box if you feel you are successful in supporting governor development in the following ways:

- I encourage governors to attend, as a minimum, the courses identified as 'essential' in the Governor Development Service training programme.
- I have succeeded in making attendance at training the norm.
- We sometimes have school-based training which is attended by most governors.
- We sometimes attend training and development with school leaders.
- I create opportunities for feeding back from training to enable others to benefit.
- I ensure the governing body regularly reviews its development needs.
- We have appointed a governor responsible for training and development.
- I ensure that at least one governor attends briefings on new initiatives.
- I keep myself well informed to act as a role model for others.
- I encourage others to share responsibility for briefing the governing body.
- I know the skills and expertise of the governing body and when we need external advice.
- I use my awareness of people's knowledge and expertise to draw them out at meetings.
- I ensure that newly appointed chairs of committees are well briefed.
- Governors, including new governors, feel well supported.

I also:

-
-
-

Actions: based on my responses to these statements I will:

Appendix 6

Governing Body Minutes Audit

Do your governing body minutes provide evidence of its support for school improvement?

Evidence	Comment
The agenda and discussion make clear links to priorities in the School Improvement Plan.	
There is evidence of an explicit focus on pupil achievement.	
The RAISEonline and other sources of data are used by the Governing body to monitor and evaluate performance.	
Governors are aware of the progress made by different groups of children.	
Governors are aware of performance within key stages and within curriculum areas.	
The governing body is fully involved in formulating, promoting, monitoring and evaluating policies.	
Discussions about the budget are referenced to the school's strategic priorities.	
Governors acknowledge and celebrate success.	
Reports are presented to the governing body by members of the Senior Leadership Team or subject leaders.	
The governing body demonstrates a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.	
The meeting was clearly focused, action points were agreed and recorded.	

Appendix 7

Governing Body Year Planner

Below is an example of a plan that incorporates the major items of business that the governing body is likely to need to deal with during a typical year. It is available electronically on the GDS website at www.bristol-cyps.org.uk and can be adapted to suit individual governing body requirements. Another example of an electronic year planner appears on the DCSF website and www.governor.net.co.uk. A rolling programme for policy reviews (e.g. 3 year cycle) should be established for the full GB/each committee as appropriate.

	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
Every Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headteacher's report, addressing each area of the SEF, including progress within each year group towards end of year targets, progress towards securing the Every Child Matters core offer as well as numbers on roll, attendance, exclusions and racist incident reporting Declarations of Pecuniary Interest Clerk's report, including progress on filling vacancies, forthcoming vacancies, correspondence Reports from committees Reports from governors following monitoring visits to school and training Reports from named governors (e.g. SEN, Health & Safety, Children in Care, Extended Schools etc) Review governor training needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate impact of key actions addressing SEF Section 3, 4 and 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on staffing arrangements Report on staff absence levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider expenditure requests in line with internal finance policy Report of progress towards achieving the Financial Management in Schools Standard

TERM 1	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elect chair and vice chair • Confirm clerking arrangements • Review effectiveness, and agree powers delegated to committees, Expenses Policy, Code of Conduct/Protocol, Terms of Reference and membership of committees • Appoint named governors (e.g. Child Protection, SEN, Children in Care, Health and Safety, Extended Schools etc) • Agree arrangements to complete Headteacher's performance review with SIP by end of term 2 • Review evidence in order to determine a corporate judgement on achievement and standards, personal development and wellbeing in preparation for School Self Evaluation Core visit • Presentation of School Improvement Plan • Receive report on judgements on leadership, management and governance following visit of SIP in Term 6 - agree updates to the self-evaluation form and determine future priorities • Receive provisional report on standards achieved at end of previous academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse data and other evidence in order to inform evaluation on achievement and standards, personal development and wellbeing • Agree interventions to address needs of underachieving groups • Agree role of governors in monitoring and evaluation processes • Establish pupil tracking systems • Agree programme of extra curricular activities and planned visits/visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm arrangements are in place for Performance Management of teaching and support staff • Review personnel policies in line with rolling programme • Confirmation of staffing arrangements, including provision for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time, Dedicated Headship time and cover arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget monitoring • Health & Safety monitoring, including outcome of fire drill 	

	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
TERM 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree statutory targets (including attendance) and submit to LA by deadline • Summary report from SEN governor and review of SEN policy • Review behaviour/discipline policy • Receive report on implementation of Performance Management policy, the agreed performance objectives for the HT and how these link to the School Improvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review target setting procedures in line with LA guidance, and agree recommended targets for following year for ratification by full GB • Review judgements on standards and achievement in light of RAISE Online data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review headteacher's performance (selected governors) with SIP and review pay • Review pay of teachers and support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget monitoring • Review charging and remissions policy • Review pay of teachers and support staff

TERM 3	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report by governor with responsibility for Children In Care and submit to LA by deadline • Review progress against priorities on School Improvement Plan • Receive report on outcomes from Monitoring and Evaluation processes including the quality of teaching and learning • Evaluate evidence and determine a corporate judgement on quality of provision, in preparation for SIP core visit • Receive report on outcomes of visit of SIP on achievement and standards, personal development and well being in Term 2, update SEF and determine future priorities for development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and agree curriculum plans and models • Receive report on predicted outcomes for cohorts, pupil groups and subjects • Receive report on impact of intervention programmes and agree any adjustments necessary • Receive monitoring report on progress against curriculum targets in School Improvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and interrogate data and other evidence (teaching & learning) in order to inform evaluation of quality of provision • Consider staffing models for next academic year • Monitor progress against staffing priorities in School Development Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review possible budget models in light of curriculum and staffing priorities • Health & Safety monitoring • Budget monitoring/including outturn statement • Monitor progress against premises priorities in School Improvement Plan, and determine future priorities

TERM 3 (Cont)	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare commentary on data in School Profile • Approve staffing structure 2008/9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and interrogate data and other evidence (curriculum and other activities) in order to inform evaluation of quality of provision • Agree arrangements for distribution and analysis of pupil and parent questionnaires and the subsequent updating of SEF 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive report on implementation of Performance Management policy and provision for Professional Development 	

	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
TERM 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree updates and key priorities for development to the quality of provision section of the school self-evaluation form • Review training/development needs and decide whether to subscribe to Governor Development Service • Agree arrangements to update/publish school prospectus (ensuring it fulfils statutory requirements) • Agree arrangements to update/submit School Profile • Agree arrangements to update/publish Annual Report to Parents (Nursery Schools only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy review, amendments and adoption, in line with rolling programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and recommend staffing structure for following year • Review personnel policies in line with rolling programme • Report on implementation of Performance Management policy and receive report on provision for Professional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review outturn statement and agree provisional budget to be recommended to full governing body • Health and Safety monitoring, including outcomes of fire drill practice

TERM 5	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate evidence in order to determine a corporate judgement on leadership, management, including governance to input into the SIP core visit • Review progress against SIP key outcomes and identify priorities for future school improvement planning • Agree arrangements for consultation/formulation of new School Improvement Plan • Report from the Health and Safety governor • Review/monitor procedures for provision of information to parents and others including publication scheme (Freedom of Information Act), progress on gender equality scheme and annual publication of complaints procedures and discipline (including anti-bullying) policy • Report judgement on the quality of provision following visit of SIP in Term 4, agree update to appropriate sections of the SEF and determine future actions • Ratify budget for next financial year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy review amendments and adoption • Receive monitoring report on progress against curriculum targets in School Improvement Plan, and consider priorities for next academic year • Receive updated report on impact of intervention programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor progress on staffing arrangements for next academic year • Review of personnel policies, in line with rolling programme • Produce statement on progress of implementation of gender equality scheme • Receive monitoring report on progress against staffing targets in the School Improvement Plan and consider priorities for next academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Annual Health & Safety Report for full GB • Health & Safety monitoring • Finalise budget for next financial year for recommendation to FGB • Draft statement(s) on implementation of duties under Disability Discrimination Act for inclusion in the School Prospectus • Review charges to be made in connection with Freedom of Information publication scheme

TERM 6	FULL GOVERNING BODY	STANDARDS/CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	STAFFING COMMITTEE	PREMISES & FINANCE COMMITTEE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review effectiveness of governance and propose/make any structural/procedural changes for next year • Consider adjustments to School Improvement Plan in light of reports received, and approve for implementation • Set dates for the following year with main agenda items and objectives for FGB and committees • Receive report from governor responsible for Child Protection • Receive annual report on race equality monitoring • Receive Annual Report from School Improvement Partner • Update the School Profile, and approve for publication • Appoint governors to carry out Performance Management of the headteacher by 31 December • Approve Annual Report to Parents (Nursery Schools only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review unvalidated data on KS1 assessments, Foundation Stage Profiles, KS2 outcomes and KS3 Maths/Science (if available) • Review progress of pupil groups in non statutory assessments, including progress towards targets • Review expected outcomes for KS3 (Eng), KS4 and 5 compared with targets • Review curriculum development priorities for next year in light of outcomes • Receive report on quality of teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Personnel policies in line with rolling programme • Review Performance Management Policy • Consider staffing adjustments for next year in the light of pupil needs, based on outcomes of statutory and other assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget monitoring • Review Pay Policy

Appendix 8

How effective are your meetings? You may find it useful to consider the following checklist;

Circle the number which most applies:

1 = Always 2 = Often or usually 3 = Sometimes 4 = Never

1	Before a meeting I make sure that I know how a formal meeting should be run	1	2	3	4
2	I make sure I am well prepared for the meeting	1	2	3	4
3	I begin the meeting at its scheduled start time	1	2	3	4
4	I make sure governors understand the minutes of the previous meeting	1	2	3	4
5	I explain the purpose of the meeting clearly to all the participants especially new governors	1	2	3	4
6	I follow the agenda for the meeting	1	2	3	4
7	I make sure that governors always speak through the chair even if informally	1	2	3	4
8	I know what each governor's motives and hidden agenda are	1	2	3	4
9	I make sure all governors are fully involved in the meeting	1	2	3	4
10	I allow all points of view to have a fair hearing	1	2	3	4
11	I encourage respect for the professional views of the headteacher and staff	1	2	3	4
12	I make sure those attending don't ramble or adopt aggressive attitudes during discussions	1	2	3	4
13	I don't express my own views until the end of a discussion	1	2	3	4
14	I enable the clerk to take accurate minutes of the meeting	1	2	3	4
15	I make sure all governors know what action to take before the next meeting	1	2	3	4
16	I make sure the date, time and place of the next meeting is known to all	1	2	3	4
Total score:					

What does your total score suggest?

16-26 Your meetings are effective and probably enjoyable!

27-40 You run quite effective meetings

41-48 You could run more effective meetings

49-64 You are finding this difficult and need more support. We suggest you contact GDS for advice.

Appendix 9

The Empathetic Model for Conflict Resolution

Stage/skill	Behaviour	Outcome
1. Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't interrupt or talk over them • Listen actively • Maintain eye contact appropriately 	Shows respect and a desire to co-operate Gains control
2. Show understanding and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model the behaviour you want to see • Apologise if you're in the wrong • Stay calm • Use their names • Paraphrase to show you have understood. • Acknowledge their feelings 'I can see you're angry'. • Look as if you mean what you say - take care re body language 	Shows you care
3. Ask supportive questions and open questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can see this causes difficulty for you, would it help if.... • What can we do to improve matters? • How would you feel if...? 	Ensures you have all the information you need before moving to a solution Enables you to be assertive Shows that you wish to co-operate Gains control
4. Explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care with tone of voice • Stick to the issue 	Encourages understanding
5. Seek joint agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a sense of making a choice. Invite ideas solutions/ways forward. • Say 'Yes and', rather than 'yes but'. • Avoid value-laden statements e.g. - 'I'm being very fair with you'. • Seek win/win outcome. 	Shows co-operation, and willingness to negotiate. Gains control
6. Take action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do what you say you will do in the timescale agreed 	Fulfils obligation. Inspires trust and confidence
7. Monitor action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check plan is working or amend. 	

This is most effective if you repeat the first 3 stages until the tension reduces sufficiently to be able to move on to explain your perspective.

'Seek first to understand, then to be understood', Stephen Covey

Appendix 10

Evidence of values in action: examples

Values	Evidence
<p>There are high expectations of all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School vision and aims displayed • School targets displayed • Staff follow up students who are not adhering to the school's standards - uniform, behaviour etc • Staff handbook describes standards for performance, behaviour etc. • School rules are in evidence • 'We can do...' • The governing body has agreed a code of practice to underpin its work
<p>Mutual respect is evident in the way that staff and pupils relate to each other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils work without disturbing others • Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively on group tasks • Pupils do not interrupt each other or staff • Staff do not interrupt each other or pupils • Pupils do not intimidate or belittle each other • Teachers maintain control without the use of threats, humiliation etc • The behaviour policy emphasises 'catch them being good' • Teachers are courteous when they speak to pupils and the reverse is true • All staff have access to appropriate accommodation and facilities – staff rooms, work rooms, offices etc • 'What do you think?' • Governors make every effort to understand and complement the professional role of the headteacher and staff
<p>The school promotes positive attitudes to ethnic and cultural diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and pupils adhere to the school's Race Equality policy • The school uses the expertise, skills and knowledge of people from ethnic minority communities • Pupils are encouraged to recognise and respect social, ethnic and cultural differences and similarities • Signs and home-school communications are in languages befitting the pupil population • Positive images of people from various ethnic groups and their cultural backgrounds are displayed in the school and in its documentation • Celebrations of festivals of different cultures and religious beliefs • School diary/calendar shows full range of ethnic religious festivals • Ethnic and cultural diversity in the staff and the governing body are commonplace • Special dietary needs are catered for • Curriculum content and resources reflect ethnic and cultural diversity

Values	Evidence
<p>Pupils' achievements are celebrated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of pupils of all abilities is on display • Displays are up to date and in good condition • Press cuttings books in reception area • Displays, photos cover a range of achievements – academic, social, cultural, sporting, both in and out of school • Display in entrance area shows destinations of most recent cohort of leavers • Positive and public appreciation of effort as well as success - awards, assemblies, badges, stickers, certificates etc • Staff and governors show pride in pupils' work • Pupils show pride in each other's work • Prefects chosen for their personal qualities regardless of their academic achievements • Regular home-school communication about pupils' efforts and successes • Behaviour credit cards
<p>The school environment is looked after by all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and staff show respect for people, living things property and the environment • Litter free, clean, tidy corridors, reception area, classrooms, toilets • Tidy classroom award • Interactive wall displays are used, not damaged • Displays are up to date • Equipment all in good working order
<p>Teaching and learning are enjoyable for adults and pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laughter, enthusiasm, energy, active participation are evident in learning situations • A variety of teaching styles are employed to maintain pupils' interest • Pupils are encouraged to explore, to enquire and to become confident, independent learners • Low rates of absenteeism – pupils and staff • Some staff turnover due to promotion • Pupils keen to display and talk about their work • High involvement in extra curricular activities • Nobody is left out • School is over subscribed • Governors welcome the opportunity to develop their skills and increase their knowledge and understanding • Governors evaluate training before making recommendations to colleagues
<p>The school environment is a safe' place - emotional and physical security are prioritised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules displayed and being followed • Physical security is effective but not oppressive • All visitors wear badges • There are no voices raised in anger • Pupils and staff move around the site in an orderly manner • Pupils are given opportunities to understand human feelings and emotions and the way they impact on people • Anti-bullying policy is well publicised to staff, pupils and parents and applied fairly and consistently by all staff

Values	Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named person to go to • Buddying scheme and pupil counsellors • Pupils feel safe when offering their opinions • Everyone is 'Health and Safety' conscious • The governing body plays an effective part in monitoring and evaluating policies on behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety
<p>The role of parents as partners in the learning process is recognised and valued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting around the school is effective • When parents visit by appointment they are seen promptly • Home school agreements are treated seriously by all partners • Parents' newsletters and notice boards are informative and well set out. • The views of parents on the school's performance are actively sought. • Parents assist learning in a variety of ways • Parent and Family Learning workshops and training sessions are regularly held

Appendix 11

Evaluating the strategic effectiveness of the governing body

Acting Strategically		Score: 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = priority for improvement
Areas of strategic activity	Score	Evidence we can produce
1. Our work is clearly focused on school improvement.		
2. We have a shared vision for the school's future.		
3. We regularly review the aims and objectives that will help us achieve our vision.		
4. We know our school's strengths and weaknesses		
5. We are actively involved in setting the priorities of the school improvement plan.		
6. We check that the school's budget supports the improvement plan.		
7. We are confident that the school is effectively led and managed.		
8. We ensure that we have a staffing structure and personnel policies that create the professional team to meet our school's needs.		
9. We ensure that our performance management process supports the improvement plan.		
10. We are involved in setting targets and checking evidence that milestones are being reached.		
11. We ensure that policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are current and are effective in supporting the school's aims and values.		
12. We have a programme in place for evaluating the impact of our strategic decisions.		
13. We have a strategic view of how our governing body will develop.		

Appendix 12

Showing evidence of accountability

What evidence could you produce to show that the governing body helps to shape the vision and direction for the school?		
Prompts	Evidence that could be produced	Action Points
When was the last time the governing body discussed and developed the school's values and vision? What was the outcome? Who else was involved?		
How does the School Improvement Plan relate to the values and vision?		
What part does the governing body play in the production of the School Improvement Plan?		
What links are there between the priorities in the School Improvement Plan and the agendas of governing body meetings?		
What links are there between priorities in the School Improvement Plan and governors' visits to the school?		
To what extent does the body reflect on performance, promote change and capitalise on links with the local community?		
What evidence could you produce to show that the governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities?		
Prompts	Evidence that could be produced	Action Points
When establishing policies, what links does the governing body make with the school's values and vision?		
What part does the governing body, or its committees, play in monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of policies?		
What is the impact of the policy for Special Needs Provision?		
What is the impact of the policy for Race Equality?		
What is the impact of the policy for Disability Provision?		
What is the impact of the policy for Sex and relationships education?		

What evidence could you produce to show that the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school?		
Prompts	Evidence that could be produced	Action Points
What data do the governing body, or its committees, study to identify strengths and weaknesses? Think widely – not just the tangibles such as attainment and progress.		
What are the key issues that it has identified? Where and how are they recorded?		
Who do you consult when trying to identify strengths and weaknesses?		
How do you use the SEF?		
If governors are able to spend time in the school, how do they gather evaluative information that would inform the whole governing body? What do they do with it?		
What evidence could you produce to show that the governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities?		
Prompts	Evidence that could be produced	Action Points
How effective is the implementation of the performance management policy?		
Which members of staff give reports to the governing body, or its committees, what are the reports about and how often are they provided?		
What structured links exist between the governing body and departments/ curriculum areas etc?		
What evidence could you produce of open and frank discussion between the governing body and the Senior Leadership Team?		

Appendix 13

More useful information and where to find it....

Acronyms and initials	Bristol Governors' Handbook Appendix 5.3
Agenda for Governing Body Meetings	'Agenda Essentials' issued to chair and clerk by e-mail and 'Recommended Agendas' included in 'Bristol Governor Newsletter'
Associate Members	Guide to the Law Chapter 2 www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index The Governor Development Service >> Governor roles
Child Protection guidance	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Child Protection in schools
Children in Care guidance	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Children looked after (ECLAS)
Clerks Job Description (Bristol Standard)	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Clerking the Governing Body
Code of conduct protocol for governing bodies (Example)	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Governor roles
Committees	Bristol Governors' Handbook Section 1.2
Complaints procedure	CYPS intranet >> A to Z index >> Complaints, Comments and Compliments
Community Cohesion	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Equalities and Inclusion team
Constitution of the Governing Body	Guide to the Law Chapter 2 Changing your constitution? Contact GDS
Data Protection Act	CYPS intranet >> A to Z >> Data Protection Act 1998.
Delegated Powers (Decision Planner)	www.governornet.co.uk >> search "decision planner" Bristol Governor Handbook Appendix 5.1
Directory of Local Authority Services	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> Services >> LA Services
Disability equality guidance	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> Disability Equality Scheme.
Exclusion guidance	www.teachernet.gov.uk >> search "exclusions guidance"

Expenses Policy	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Policies and Procedures
Extended Schools Partnerships	Your schools' ESP manager www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> Extended Schools
Federation of schools guidance	www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations
Financial management (FMSiS)	www.fmsis.info
Financial procedures	Your schools' finance officer www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> Financial Services
Freedom of Information Act	CYPS intranet >> A to Z index "Freedom of information act: Guidance for schools"
Gender equality guidance	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> Gender Equality Scheme
Governors' Forum	www.bristolgovernors.org.uk
Headteachers Performance Management	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> HR Services >> Performance management: Schools
Health and Safety Guidance	CYPS intranet >> A to Z index >> Health, Safety and Well-being
Human Resources/personnel advice	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> HR Services Your School's HR Officer
Meetings – law and practice	Guide to the Law Chapter 3
New governors – induction and checklist	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> Governor Development Service >> Policies and Procedures
News and latest information	Bristol Governor Newsletter and Bulletin www.governornet.co.uk
Ofsted Inspections and Reports	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Parent Councils	www.governornet.co.uk - Search "Setting up a Parent Council"
Parent governor election	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z >> Governor Development Service >> Appointing and electing new governors
Polices – list of required policies	Bristol Governors' Handbook Appendix 5.2
Polices – model policies	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service www.teachernet.gov.uk >> search "Model policies"

Policy review	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Policies and Procedures
Prospectus; statutory content	Guide to the Law Chapter 25
RAISEonline and other performance data	www.raiseonline.org Your School's Data Pack Your Headteacher
School Profile	www.teachernet.gov.uk >> search "School Profile"
Staff governor elections	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Appointing and electing new governors
Standing orders for the governing body	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Governor Roles
Statutory Duties and Responsibilities	Guide to the Law
Succession planning	www.NCSL.org.uk
Training for governors	Bristol Governor Newsletter
Visits to Schools	www.bristol.cyps.org.uk >> A to Z index >> Governor Development Service >> Policies and Procedures
Year planner for governing body	Summer Bristol Governor Newsletter

Acknowledgements

This handbook is based on the DCSF 'Taking the Chair' development programme for chairs, vice-chairs and chairs of committees of school governing bodies, adapted to the context of governance in Bristol and edited by:

Chair of Governors: Adrian Smith, Headley Park Primary School

Local Authority Officers: Ian Caskie, Adviser, Leadership and Governance
Claire Foxwell, Co-ordinator, Governor Development Service

Our sincere thanks to the many Chairs of Governors from across Bristol who contributed their views and experiences, and the Clerks to Governors who shared their views through the Bristol Clerks' Network.



Governor Development Service
Bristol Education Centre
Sheridan Road
Horfield
Bristol BS7 0PU
Tel 0117 903 1396
E-mail GDS@bristol-city.gov.uk

© This document is copyright of Bristol City Council
Published January 2009

Designed and produced by The Creative Dept Ltd 01275 394 999