



**Cumberland
Council**

Governing Board Health Check

Governor Support Team

01/09/2024

Governing Board Health Check

This health check is a best practice tool, which can be used to support boards in the process of self-evaluation: one of the six key features of effective governance in the [Maintained schools governance guide](#). The aim of the health check is to help boards review their governance arrangements, check that they have appropriate systems in place and identify areas where they could improve.

Using the governing board health check

The health check should not be overly burdensome; however, it is strongly recommended that an appropriate amount of time is set aside for the board to use this tool for it to be effective. It is also important that board members should not feel inhibited about answering the questions honestly, as this will help to provide a realistic self-evaluation of the board's effectiveness. It would also be beneficial to appoint at least one board member to lead the process to collate documents and to ensure any actions are carried forward including organising any training identified.

We suggest the following process:

- Board member identified as lead
- Deadline for responses set
- Date of board meeting to discuss responses agreed
- Each board member completes the health check, it may encourage board members to answer questions honestly if responses remain anonymous, only known to the lead. When completing, it is important to consider what evidence is known/available to determine the response on the scale as outlined below:
 - Secure: you are confident that the practice/procedure is actively in place, and you have the evidence to support it
 - Partially: you partially carry out the practice/procedure and you have some evidence to support it
 - Not secure: You do not carry out the practice and you have little or no evidence
- Lead collates summary of responses
- Summary shared with board members seven days prior to meeting

The health check will help to identify areas that are working well and areas in need of development. Areas in need of development should form the basis of the board's action plan (example, see page 6) and professional development.

Governing Board Health Check

Core area 1: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction				
Question	Secure	Partially	Not secure	Evidence
1.1 Have governors set and reviewed the vision following consultation with a range of stakeholders i.e. pupils, parents, staff, wider community, Diocese?				
1.2 Has the board agreed a strategy that contains priorities with key performance indicators; do governors regularly monitor and review the strategy?				
1.3 Does the board's strategic planning cycle drive its activities and agenda setting?				
1.4 Does the board ensure decisions are made in line with the school's vision and strategic priorities, and monitor the impact of these decisions?				
1.5 Do governors monitor how effectively policies and related practices support the ethos of the school?				
1.6 Do governors know what their statutory responsibilities are and how they are fulfilled?				
1.7 Does the board ensure that the school's curriculum, extra-curricular activities and ethos are preparing pupils for life in modern Britain?				

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Core area 2: holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils				
Question	Secure	Partially	Not secure	Evidence
2.1 Do governors access a range of performance information about the school, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) • Analyse School Performance (ASP) • The Fischer Family Trust (FFT) governor dashboard (if the school subscribes) • In-year progress tracking from the school • Secondary Schools, Destination data and guide • External reports including notes of visits from school improvement partners or equivalent • Information from governor visits to school 				
2.2 Do governors understand the performance data in a way that enables them to properly hold school leaders to account?				
2.3 Is the board confident that performance management for all staff is conducted effectively and that this contributes to improving outcomes for pupils?				
2.4 Is performance management of the headteacher/principle conducted effectively supported by an independent external adviser, ensuring performance objectives contribute to improving outcomes and including mid-year review?				
2.5 Does the board have a clear understanding of how pay decisions are reached for all teaching staff in line with statutory and contractual requirements?				

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Core area 3: overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent				
Question	Secure	Partially	Not secure	Evidence
3.1 Is the board confident that the school's financial management systems are robust?				
3.2 Does the board access financial benchmarking information and use this to ensure the school is achieving value for money?				
3.3 Does the board regularly review the staffing structure to ensure that its meets the needs of the school and ensures good value for money?				
3.4 Have all the standards within the schools financial value standard been met?				
3.5 Does the board ensure that all available resources are allocated to school development priorities effectively?				
3.6 Is the pupil premium being used effectively, so that the school is diminishing the difference in achievement between pupil premium pupils and their peers?				

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Core area 4: effective governance				
Question	Secure	Partially	Not secure	Evidence
4.1 Does the board keep its size and structure under regular review to ensure it supports effective and efficient working?				
4.2 Does the board conduct a regular skills audit and use the analysis to inform governor recruitment and development?				
4.3 Are governors able to clearly evidence the impact of governor training and development on the quality of governance in the school?				
4.4 Is clerking (governing board and committee meetings) managed effectively?				
4.5 Does the board have plans in place to ensure effective succession, including leadership succession for the board?				
4.6 Has the chair recently accessed training?				
4.7 Does the board have effective mechanisms in place to hear from and inform pupils, staff, parents and the wider community?				
4.8 Is the school engaged in cluster working (supporting and drawing support) with other schools and do governors have an understanding of and involvement in these collaborations?				
4.9 Is the board having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils and are governors able to articulate this?				

Governing Board Health Check Action Plan

Following completion of the Governing Board Health Check, boards may find it useful to complete the action plan below. It is suggested that, for each Core area, actions are created that link to the questions on the Governing Board Health Check document that the board assessed as *Partially* or *Not secure*.

Core area 1 objective: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction			
Action (link to question numbers assessed as <i>Partially</i> or <i>Not secure</i> on GB Health Check)	Success criteria (how we will know the action is complete)	Governor(s) responsible	Expected completion date / RAG
<p>Examples</p> <p>1.8 Set and review the vision following consultation with a range of stakeholders i.e. pupils, parents, staff, wider community, Diocese</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult stakeholders regarding the vision: what makes our school unique; what are our values and ethos; where do we want the school to be in 3-5 years' time? • Develop a working vision as a GB then ask pupils, parents, staff and community for feedback • Share and celebrate new vision through open event ('Summer Garden Party') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of engagement from pupils, parents, staff and the community in vision consultation (evidenced through pupil, staff and parent surveys) • Vision encompasses the uniqueness of the school and our values and ethos • All pupils and staff understand and are able to articulate the vision 	PP & BK	Final version complete by March.
<p>4.1 Does the board keep its size and structure under regular review to ensure it supports effective and efficient working?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the board consider alternative leadership/school structure models as part of developing or sustaining the future of the school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Executive Headteacher ○ Federation ○ Amalgamation ○ Multi Academy Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater opportunities for pupils • School leadership is secured, succession planning • Development opportunities for staff • Stronger leadership and management • Shared expertise and collaboration • Strengthened governance • Efficiencies leading to cost savings 	FM & JL	Review annually

Core area 2 objective: holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils			
Action (link to question numbers assessed as <i>Partially</i> or <i>Not secure</i> on GB Health Check)	Success criteria (how we will know the action is complete)	Governor(s) responsible	Expected completion date / RAG

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