

FSD Skills Audit 2017-18

Key Characteristics of effective governing boards					
Characteristics put together by the NGA and Ofsted from 14 school visits					
1 = weak 5 = very strong	1	2	3	4	5
1. Positive relationships between governors and school leaders are based on trust, openness and transparency. Effective governing bodies systematically monitor their school's progress towards meeting agreed development targets. Information about what is going well and why, and what is not going well and why, is shared. Governors consistently ask for more information, explanation or clarification. This makes a strong contribution to robust planning for improvement.			**	*** *	*** *
2. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable because they are given high-quality, accurate information that is concise and focused on pupil achievement. This information is made accessible by being presented in a wide variety of formats, including charts and graphs.			**	*** ***	**
3. Outstanding governance enables the board to take and support hard decisions in the interests of pupils: to back the head teacher when they need to change staff, or to change the head teacher when absolutely necessary.		*	**	*** *	***
4. Outstanding governance supports honest, insightful self-evaluation by the school, recognising problems and supporting the steps needed to address them.			***	***	***
5. Absolute clarity about the different roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and governors underpins the most effective governance. Protocols, specific duties and terms of reference are made explicit in written documents.			*	*** **	*** *
6. Effective governing boards are driven by a core of key governors such as the chair and chairs of committees. They see themselves as part of a team and build strong relationships with the headteacher, senior leaders and other governors.				*** ***	***
7. In some schools governors attend lessons to gather information about the school at work. Clear protocols for visits ensure that the purpose is understood by school staff and governors alike. Alongside the information they are given about the school, these protocols help them to make informed decisions, ask searching questions and provide meaningful support.		*	*	*** **	***
8. School leaders and governors behave with integrity and are mutually supportive. School leaders recognise that governors provide them with a different perspective which contributes to strengthening leadership. The questions they ask challenge assumptions and support effective decision-making.				*** ***	*** *
9. Governors use the skills they bring, and the information they have about the school, to ask challenging questions, which are focused on improvement, and hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.			**	*** ***	**

10. Governors in the schools visited use their external networks and professional contacts to fill any identified gaps in the collective skills of the governing body.		**	***	*** *	*
	1	2	3	4	5
11. Time is used efficiently by governors because there are clear procedures for delegating tasks, for example to well organised committees. These committees have clear terms of reference, provide high levels of challenge and use governors' expertise to best effect. Systems are in place for sharing information and reporting back to the full governing body. This does not merely reiterate what has already been discussed in detail by the committee but focuses on the key points and decisions.			**	**	*** **
12. A detailed timeline of activities, maintained by the clerk and linked to the school development plan, provides a clear structure for the work of governors and ensures that their time is used appropriately.			**	**	*** *
13. There are clear induction procedures for new governors which help them to understand their roles and responsibilities and ensure that best use is made of their varied skills and expertise.		*	*	*** ***	**
14. The governing boards constantly reflect on their own effectiveness and readily make changes to improve. They consider their own training needs, as well as how they organise their work.			**	*** *	***
15. The role of the clerk to the governors is important to ensuring that statutory duties are met, meetings are well organised and governors receive the information they need in good time. Consequently, governors come to meetings well prepared and with pertinent questions ready so that they are able to provide constructive challenge.			**	***	*** **

Additional Comments from governors

In the light of these characteristics please comment on how effective you think the LGB has been this year and what we should do to improve our ways of working for next year.

How effective have we been this year?

- Relationships between governors and senior staff are much improved.
- Governors have challenged proposals more effectively.
- Good balance with level of challenge and support
- We do make hard decisions and we have backed the Headteacher on a range of issues this year.
- Improved governor induction
- We have been much more effective in following up on issues from one meeting to another and I have personally felt that there is more coherence to our activity.
- There has been much greater clarity over roles and responsibilities including working groups and link governor roles.
- Sub-committees are much better at focussing on key issues. Clear structures and protocols
- Governors reflecting on their effectiveness – improved hugely.
- I have been very impressed with the organisation, energy, commitment and clarity of purpose of the governing body.
- Good management of meetings.

Suggestions to improve our effectiveness as a governing board:-

- Improve the dissemination of information from governor training. How do we do this?
- Ensure there is sufficient focus on impact e.g. PP spending, STEP time.
- Could do better with alternative media – not sure how?
- More work and links needed with parents - How do we do this?
- Need to challenge results more effectively especially from key groups and under-performing subjects
- More links with industry needed.
- Governor training must be use to plug gaps in skills and knowledge.
- Link governors need more clarity about their roles.
- It would be helpful to have fewer papers tabled at meetings – this is particularly important where decisions are being made.
- Sometimes at meetings we have too much off-topic discussion that is not really relevant.
- We need to know what questions to ask. Our role is strategic but sometimes we find things out from parents and social media. We need to strike the right balance so that we are fully informed about developments in school.
- There are smaller numbers of governors on PDBW and B&C committees – would some governors be willing to attend two committees to avoid very small numbers at meetings?
- Sometimes issues have drifted eg evaluation of STEP.
- I appreciate that it is difficult to get the balance right between giving governors the information that they need to do their job and giving them too much. I think that we are getting most of the information that we need but we might benefit from having a better understanding of some of the less data driven/pastoral/community/enrichment areas of school and how they work too. I think it is some of these things that makes Fram special and it would be good to know more about them.
- I think we also need information about pupil progress and achievement across the school not just the results at the end of Y11 & 13. I know that this is in a transition phase from the old levels, via GCSE grades, to a new system, but I think it would be useful as it will allow governors to better understand progress over time.
- Some governor visits (in terms of purpose and outcome) could be improved.
- Dispassionate use of evidence/information to challenge the Head and inform change. This happens at times but at other times too much credence is given to the experience of individual children or parents known to/related to Governors
- Areas for improvement to consider, such as forward planning, timekeeping and identifying the expected outcomes for the governing body.