

National Governance Association

North West region

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## A starter for ten...

- 'Although the school has implemented strategies to improve ways in which pupils are taught letters and sounds (phonics), and develop broader reading and writing skills, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have diluted their .....
- 'On some occasions, pupils are not given sufficient time to consider teachers' written comments in their exercise books, or teachers fail to ensure that pupils act on their comments and suggestions. Where this is the case, the ..... of teachers' marking upon pupils' improved learning is weak.'
- 'All senior leaders recognise the need to improve pupils' achievement. However, they do not demonstrate a focused, united and consistent approach to their work. Consequently, these leaders are currently having a limited ..... on ensuring the school's improvement.'

## The big picture: some positive news...

- 'Schools are getting better. The proportion of schools that we judge to be good or better is going up year on year, despite the fact we are raising the bar and making our inspections more challenging. Compared to three years ago there are nearly half a million more pupils in good or outstanding schools, nearly 1,000 more outstanding schools, and nearly 1,000 fewer that are satisfactory or inadequate.'
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, speaking on the release of 'The report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2011/12'

## Variance of impact...

- However, despite this, there are huge variations in the performance of schools in different local authority areas. Why is it that a child living in Derby or Doncaster has only half the chance of attending a good or better primary or secondary school compared with a child living in Wigan or Darlington? It is certainly not a matter of deprivation. We see primary school children served well in some of our most deprived communities in contrast to more affluent places like Oxfordshire or the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, speaking on the release of 'The report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2011/12'

# How do inspectors evaluate the impact that leaders are making?

- **Achievement of pupils at the school**
  - The learning and progress across year groups of different groups of pupils currently on the roll of the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support.
  - Pupils' progress in the last three years
  - Pupils' attainment
- **Quality of teaching in the school**
- **The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school**
- **Leadership and management**

# How do schools know when they are making an impact?

- High quality school self-evaluation and action planning is critical.
- 'Governors are most effective when they are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and use the knowledge gained to challenge the school, understand its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to shaping its strategic direction. Where governance is weak the involvement of governors in monitoring the quality of provision is not well enough defined or sufficiently rigorous or challenging.'

'School Governance – Learning from the best', Ofsted May, 2012

# The impact of governance



# In the most effective schools, governors know the school well and provide robust challenge to senior leaders

**Main governance strengths identified in reports on outstanding schools, Sept-Nov 2012**



This analysis is based on what inspectors **chose** to comment on as particular strengths.

# The consequences of a failure to challenge undermine the running of the school

Governors fail to provide enough challenge to the headteacher

Improvement planning does not address the real priorities

Governors do not know what is needed to probe more closely and gather further insight

Governors do not know if their actions are having any impact or how good the school really is

Governors do not know what training they need or what additional governors to appoint

Performance management of the headteacher is weak because it cannot be based on any meaningful analysis

- Performance management of teachers is ineffective as it is not linked to achievement

The school is incapable of stopping its own decline

## In the best schools inspectors found that governors were very well informed



'Regular meetings with the headteacher and presentations from staff inform governors' **understanding** of the school and its work.'

'Governors have a **good awareness** of the school and a clear view of the **strategic direction** of the school through **regular visits**, including to lessons and focus groups.'

'Governors **carry out their own monitoring** and use this to evaluate how well all aspects are doing. They clearly **understand how well pupils are progressing**, making it their business to **quiz the school** about any concerns, should they arise.'

'Governors are closely involved in **self-evaluation** procedures, ask penetrating questions and expect and **receive regular reports** and presentations from staff to inform their strategic decision making.'

# Governance which has less impact on improved outcomes for learners

Common issues identified in recent inspection reports:

- not ambitious about expectations
- lack of a critical friend approach
- over-reliance on information from the headteacher
- lack of systematic visits to school
- lack of engagement with school development planning
- limited role in monitoring, and none of it 'independent'
- limited understanding

How can  
strong  
governance  
influence  
impact?



## By raising expectations of pupils and teachers

In the twelve improving schools visited by inspectors one of the first steps taken by headteachers was to raise expectations of pupils and teachers

- In seven schools the headteacher introduced pupil progress meetings to hold staff to account for progress
- In seven schools written guidelines for teaching and learning were produced. These were described as 'non-negotiables' and set the standard for good teaching
- In eight schools headteachers described themselves as visible in order to set an example and model the behaviour that they wanted staff to adopt
- In three schools a non-negotiable behaviour policy for pupils was established
- In six schools, headteachers invested in the physical environment
- In all schools staff were subject to challenging conversations and in seven of them it resulted in teachers leaving the school
- In eight schools the headteacher quickly strengthened the senior leadership team

## By raising expectations via performance management and professional development



### **Performance management and professional development were described as crucial to school improvement in all schools visited**

- Headteachers' views of importance of performance management
- Coaching and mentoring procedures
- Highly effective programmes of peer collaboration
- Continuing professional development tailored to staff
- Staff meetings focus on teaching and learning
- Recruitment and induction were described as crucial
- Reinforcement that the teacher was responsible for their own performance management.

## Role of governors...the health check

- Important that governors have an overview of how performance management systems operate within the school
- Important for governors to know how closely the achievement (or non-achievement) of performance targets influence progression up the payscale.
- Also, how closely do performance management targets link to the impact they will make on improved pupil outcomes?"

## Improved impact: schools and parents

- Parental engagement can be a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools and there is much research to show the value of schools and parents working together to support pupils' learning.
- A point to think about: Does your governing body sometimes miss opportunities to engage with parents and carers?

# Communicating with parents and carers



■ Governors' visits to the school are described in posts on the school website.

■ On **Wednesday 21 November** I was in school twice. Firstly to see my mentee for half an hour. This always proves to be very worthwhile and I thoroughly enjoy the time spent with her.

■ The afternoon saw me back in school for the Performance and Standards meeting. I was delighted to be asked to Chair this panel again. Two hours were very well spent ensuring students' progress is well monitored. The attendance, punctuality and exclusion figures scrutinised by Governors were all showing very positive trends.

■ **Friday 30 November** was spent meeting all the Senior Leadership Group with a small group of governors reviewing their performance and remuneration. We also were given a very good lunch!

■ **15 October 2012:** I attended two 'learning walks' with Ann Rickard and two visitors from a School in Birmingham on Monday. I was particularly impressed with the assessment and marking standards as evidenced in the randomly selected exercise books seen by me. The teachers comments were constructive and pointed the student towards achievable targets; in all instances the students had responded with the additional information required.

# Inspectors' descriptions...

## Successful governance:

Focus; sharp focus; raise achievement; improve teaching; robustly focussed; proactive; **raised expectations**; determined; active.

Positive impact; drive; strive; **ambitious vision**; more **strategic**; provide clear direction; rigorously drives improvement; steer through change; increasingly effective

Strong team; work together; communicates; corporate; supports; unity of purpose; **partnership** with senior leaders; effective critical friends; **shared purpose**.

Effective **challenge**; -pursue further improvements; **monitoring**; evaluating; better informed; constantly review performance; clear systems; monitor closely; collect own information on performance; regular visitors.

**Skilled**; knowledgeable; **understanding** of strengths and weaknesses; financial management; planning.

Analysis of key phrases in references to governance from 'improved to good' school reports, Jan – July 2012

# Key strengthening

September 2013



# Achievement of pupils at the school



- A greater focus on progress made by different prior attainment groups in mathematics and English
- Consistency of the progress made by all groups
- The achievement of the most able
- The achievement of those who receive pupil premium funds

## Quality of teaching in the school

- Inspectors will take greater account of how well younger children are taught and prepared for their next stage of learning. So for example, how well EYFS prepares children in terms of communication, language and literacy for KS1
- Inspectors will not expect staff to teach in any specific way
- Teaching which is engaging with work that is challenging enough to meet individual needs, including the most able
- Assessment in nursery, reception and KS1 must be accurate and used to set relevant work

# The behaviour and safety of pupils

- How well the school keeps students safe, whether within school or during external activities, through effective risk assessments, e-safety arrangements and action in response to any serious safeguarding incidents
- Attitudes to learning and school will be explored in more depth
- Good manners and courtesy towards each other and adults
- Rates, patterns and reasons for permanent and fixed term exclusions



# Quality of leadership and management



- If the Parent View return is low, inspectors will take steps during inspection, to gather further evidence of the views of parents
- The use of additional Primary school funding and the impact it is having on raising achievement and pupils' physical wellbeing
- The delivery of PE and school sport and participation in lunchtime and after-school sport
- The curriculum providing timely independent information, advice and guidance
- Inspectors will pay particular attention to the contribution made by the headteacher

# Quality of leadership and management



- How well leaders and managers demonstrate a track record of improvements and/or maintenance of high levels of achievement, with particular reference to pupil premium pupils
- How well the school provides guidance and prepares pupils for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society, and to prevent extremist behaviour
- How effective the school works in partnership to improve the school, extend the curriculum and increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for pupils
- The quality of middle leadership in the school and the extent to which schools are adequately developing their middle leadership
- Succession planning and the development of future leaders

- How well governors measure the *impact of their own work*
- How well the governing body support and strengthen the school leadership *including by developing their own skills*
- How well governors provide challenge and hold the HT and other senior leaders to account... *by using the data dashboard, other progress data, examination outcomes and test results*
- How well governors...(sic) *encourage the use of Parent View*
- The effectiveness of safeguarding... *This includes action taken following any serious incident*

# The pupil premium report



# The Pupil Premium report



- carefully ring-fenced the funding so that they always spent it on the target group of pupils
- never confused eligibility for the Pupil Premium with low ability, and focused on supporting their disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest levels
- thoroughly analysed which pupils were underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics, and why
- drew on research evidence and evidence from their own and others' experience to allocate the funding to the activities that were most likely to have an impact on improving achievement
- understood the importance of ensuring that all day-to-day teaching meets the needs of each learner, rather than relying on interventions to compensate for teaching that is less than good

# Where it went well schools...



- allocated their best teachers to teach intervention groups to improve mathematics and English, or employed new teachers who had a good track record in raising attainment in those subjects
- used achievement data frequently to check whether interventions or techniques were working and made adjustments accordingly, rather than just using the data retrospectively to see if something had worked
- made sure that support staff, particularly teaching assistants, were highly trained and understood their role in helping pupils to achieve

# When it went well schools...



- systematically focused on giving pupils clear, useful feedback about their work, and ways that they could improve it
- ensured that a designated senior leader had a clear overview of how the funding was being allocated and the difference it was making to the outcomes for pupils
- ensured that class and subject teachers knew which pupils were eligible for the Pupil Premium so that they could take responsibility for accelerating their progress
- had a clear policy on spending the Pupil Premium, agreed by **governors** and publicised on the school website

# When it went well schools...



- provided well-targeted support to improve attendance, behaviour or links with families where these were barriers to a pupil's learning
- had a clear and robust performance management system for all staff, and included discussions about pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium in performance management meetings
- thoroughly involved governors in the decision making and evaluation process
- were able, through careful monitoring and evaluation, to demonstrate the impact of each aspect of their spending on the outcomes for pupils

# Where pupil premium had little impact schools...



- had a lack of clarity about the intended impact of the spending
- spent the funding indiscriminately on teaching assistants, with little impact
- did not monitor the quality and impact of interventions well enough, even where other monitoring was effective
- did not have a good performance management system for teaching assistants and other support staff
- did not have a clear audit trail for where the funding had been spent

# Where pupil premium had little impact schools...



- focused on pupils attaining the nationally expected level at the end of the key stage (Level 4, five A\* to C grades at GCSE) but did not to go beyond these expectations, so some more able eligible pupils underachieved
- planned their Pupil Premium spending in isolation to their other planning, for example, it was not part of the school development plan
- compared their performance to local rather than national data, which suppressed expectations if they were in a low-performing local authority

# Where pupil premium had little impact schools...



- compared the performance of their pupils who were eligible for free school meals with other eligible pupils nationally, rather than all pupils, again lowering expectations
- did not focus their pastoral work on the desired outcomes for pupils and did not have any evidence to show themselves whether the work had or had not been effective
- did not have **governors** involved in making decisions about the Pupil Premium, or challenging the way in which it was allocated.

## Further information:

- **Getting to Good: how headteachers achieve success, Ofsted, 2012;**  
**[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120167](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120167).**
- **School Governance : learning from the best, Ofsted, 2011;** **[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100238](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100238).**
- **The report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2011/12;**  
**[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1112](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1112).**

# Narrowing the Gap

- **Data view - Regional, local authority level - % good schools**
- **<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/statistics/data-view>**
- **<http://dataview.ofsted.gov.uk/>**
  
- **Data dashboard – individual school level**
- **<http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/>**

Thank you

Any questions?

