



governance, leadership and management

...achieving excellence in schools

Governor Mark

Recognising high quality school governance.

Short Guidance and Section 8 – **Support and Challenge**



Supported By the DCSF

Governor Mark – Short Guidance and Section 8

Governor Mark is a broad ranging governing body self-evaluation tool. It evaluates impact as well as systems. Early experience has shown that one of the issues facing governors of many successful schools is their confidence to provide challenge as well as support to the headteacher and leadership team.

Section 8, whose focus is support and challenge, is a good place to start if yours is a governing body of a highly performing school. This is not about finding minor criticisms or arguing about detail; this is about the development of a shared climate of self-evaluation. Many leadership teams are exceptionally reflective and able to explore how they can be 'even better'. Sometimes however, governors are outside of these discussions, perhaps seen by staff as an external group to whom the school must show its best face. To complete the form the governing body needs to evaluate its work within these four grades:

FC – Fully compliant with the standard

PC – Partly compliant with the standard

NC – Not compliant with the standard

BP – If you believe that you are not only compliant but exhibit a 'best practice' example.

Probably the most important aspect of the grid is the indication of evidence in support of any application. This might include minutes, headteacher reports, agendas, reports from local authority inspectors or advisers, any development plans, and so on.

The key to good evidence is that it shows the impact of the governing body on the work of the school. Yours may be an outstanding school, but if governors simply follow along the professionals in the school and rubber stamp school initiatives, you will find it hard to achieve this award. This section of Governor Mark is where the focus is less on the rules and procedures, and more on the quality of relationships, and behavioural elements of effective governance.

Governor Mark is a set of standards and a quality mark that is managed by a partnership of three local authority governor services teams – Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, under the name 'GLM' (Governance, Leadership and Management). All Governor Mark documentation as well as sources of advice and guidance are free and can be found at www.glmpartnership.org

Criterion 8: Support and Challenge

Sub criterion 8a The governing body and the head teacher create the climate whereby both support and challenge can be provided	BP	FC	PC	NC	Evidence reference
i) There is a high level of trust and respect between the head teacher and the governing body and the head teacher is open to questions and suggestions from the governing body					
ii) There are clear ground rules for discussions and decision making, including the required confidentiality following decisions					
Totals for 8a					You must have at least 50% BP or FC

Sub criterion 8b The governing body is skilled in asking relevant questions, which provide the evidence required for decision making					Evidence reference
i) The governing body acts as a sounding board for head teacher thinking through the use of appropriate questioning					
ii) Governors hold the headteacher and school leadership to account by robustly challenging underperformance. They do this by asking questions in a positive and constructive manner					
Totals for 8b					You must have at least 50% BP or FC

Sub criterion 8c There is an effective partnership between the governors and the school leadership	BP	FC	PC	NC	Evidence reference
i) Governors have a clear focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning and have a clear structure for engagement with the school's leadership					
ii) The governing body is able to discuss openly and frankly with the schools' strengths and weaknesses					
iii) The school's leadership team has the opportunity to work with governors on improvement issues and the implementation of policies					
Totals for 8c					You must have at least 50% BP or FC
TOTALS for CRITERION 8					You must have at least 6 BP /FC overall in criterion 8.