

## GOVERNOR MARK TRAINING TOOL 5:



### Writing a Good Impact Statement

Although this training tool focuses on the first impact statement, the one on School Improvement, there is one example (ABC Primary School) which shows all four statements. The key to the Governor Mark award lies with the impact statement relating to School Improvement. The other impact statements are important, but lessons learned here can be applied across all four.

Impact on school improvement is the governing body's strategic purpose. They raise two different questions in the minds of assessors.

- **'So what?'** This is often prompted by an impact statement that largely describes internal governing body activity – restructuring committees, organising timetables of meetings, revising policies, etc.
- **'Show me'** – the better statements prompt this question. They will be focused on the right things, and the assessor will be looking for evidence supporting the statement.

Three examples are provided, along with a cribsheet for each. None are presented as perfect examples, and the best are 'fit for purpose'. All raise questions to be explored by the assessment process.

The impact statement case studies should be provided to delegates, and their task is to decide what the assessors will be following up. Use the cribsheets to guide the feedback.

Ideally this session will be run with governors who have also drawn up their own impact statement on school improvement. This may mean that the trainer will not use all three provided here. Guidance cannot be provided here on specific governing body impact statements, but GLM is willing to offer advice if needed. If a local school impact statement is forwarded to GLM, it may be possible to offer some cribsheet type feedback beforehand.

For further help contact [info@glmpartnership.org](mailto:info@glmpartnership.org)

Cribsheets for the case study impact statements are below.

# Case Study Impact Statements – Cribsheet

## St Cross Infant School

This impact statement is more than fit for purpose. It covers a wide range of issues and seeks to provide evidence against each one. It prompts the assessor to say 'show me', i.e. the evidence needs to be produced to back up the assertions in the statement.

There are a couple of areas that the assessor will seek more information about:

- In the first bullet point they say that the governors 'receive reports from the headteacher half termly relating to the SIP and challenge the progress towards achieving improvement' Assessors will want to see whether any sign of the challenge can be found in the minutes of meetings.
- Do the visits actually take place in the way described in the second bullet point?
- What evidence is there to show governor activity in monitoring the issue raised in bullet point 3? Is it more than coming to meetings and receiving reports?
- The last bullet point lists a number of standards and awards achieved by the school in recent years. Assessors may want some evidence of governor involvement – i.e. it is not just the headteacher driving all this.

## High Mountain School

This impact statement definitely raises the question 'so what?' in the mind of an assessor.

For High Mountain, there is evidence of lots of governor activity, busy committees, etc. Processes in themselves are not the same as impact. Examples of good activity by this governing body are:

- changing the committee structure;
- doing GB self evaluation;
- reflecting on the grade given to governance by Ofsted;
- establishing link governors;
- having a Governance Development Plan;
- using the SEF in meetings;
- considering Every Child Matters outcomes;
- having a governor handbook;
- joining the NGA.

In taking feedback from delegates on what assessors will be looking for, give top marks and a prize to the person who says that assessors will be looking to see **what the governing body are doing to improve standards in Maths**. All the activities mentioned are means to an end, and this is what they are actually for.

Some of the activities look great on paper, but assessors will test them, first for any substance, and secondly for impact.

Activities tested for substance could be the establishment of link governors – many governing bodies do this, but it is rare for every link to work effectively, especially if everyone is expected to sign up. Assessors will in this case be interested in the link with Maths, because Maths is an improvement issue in the school.

Activities tested for impact could be the way the SEF is covered through the year. Governors only really need to focus on section A7, where the overall strategic improvement issues are recorded. Of course there will be oversight of other sections, not least section A3 (standards), section A4 (ECM), section A6 (leadership – governors should contribute to this), and section C, the delivery of statutory duties. But Section A7 of the SEF will articulate the key issues for improvement, and this should inform governor agendas more than the process of reviewing the SEF as a document.

The way the governors deal with the RAISEonline report is also important. Assessors will want to know if anything further happened following the head's presentation of the RAISEonline report in March 2008. Governors will normally need this to be interpreted to them, but they also need to have access to it (i.e. their own copy?), and most important, the issues for improvement shown by RAISEonline should prompt sharp questioning and discussion, shown in minutes, and governors should be talking about how they can ensure that the necessary improvements are being made.

### **ABC Primary School**

These notes focus largely on the School Improvement Impact Statement, although the other three are provided for information.

Overall these are the expected length. The School Improvement and ECM statements are longer than the other two and cover the main issues. Like St Cross Infant, assessors will be saying 'show me' rather than 'so what?', since the school improvement statement effectively covers the main issues. Particular aspects that assessors will explore are:

- There is clearly high achievement – how have governors contributed to that or is it really only the headteacher and staff?
- How has a better understanding of tracking strengthened governor monitoring?
- How do the governor links work and what do the visits forms say?
- How does the meshing together of the governing body work schedule, and the planning cycle of the school actually work?
- How does the governing body manage its involvement with the key issues of teaching and learning?
- In what ways does the governing body bring challenge to the school?