

## GOVERNOR MARK TRAINING TOOL 6:



### We've done the work...would we pass?

The governing body for whom this training tool is designed will be one that has been engaged with Governor Mark for some time. Whilst they may not have a fully complete application ready, they will be familiar with the framework, largely filled in the evidence grid, and will have written their impact statements.

The job of the trainer is to bring some guidance as to how well the application has been done, so may well feel like an assessment. It is best undertaken by an experienced Governor Mark assessor, although someone with a deep understanding and knowledge of governance could deliver it. Guidance on any specific aspects is available from GLM.

#### Before the session

If possible the following documents should be obtained by the trainer in advance of the session:

- Evidence grid
- Impact statements
- SEF
- RAISEonline report, or other data
- Ofsted report

These are all documents that a governing body would have to submit to GLM with their application. They provide a context for the evaluation of governance at the school

#### The Key to the Award

In spite of the appearance of the evidence grid, this is not a tick box exercise. The key to achieving Governor Mark is to be a governing body that makes a difference to the school. The reason why we see the context papers is to provide the agenda for assessment.

So if the RAISEonline report, say, shows boys' underachievement, the assessor needs to find evidence that governors are discussing how the school is fixing the problem of boys' underachievement. Access by governors to these reports is vital, and a good indicator of effective governance, but it is not as important as the next step, which is acting upon what they say.

#### At the session

This is a suggested outline – the trainer will adjust what they do according to the needs of the governing body.

1. **Start with the Impact Statements.** It is not always obvious to governors, that impact statements should be about impact.

Process statements – beg the question ‘so what?’, e.g. ‘we reorganised our committee structure’

Impact statements – raise the challenge ‘show me’, e.g. ‘We have brought more challenge into our meetings’

2. **Move to the evidence grid**, starting with sections 7 and 8. Good governance is about knowing the rules and proper processes, but is also about good relationships – the human behaviour. Whilst both are needed, these sections are about the human behaviour that makes governance work well.

3. Thirdly, **go through the evidence grid looking at the partially or non-compliant boxes.** Governing bodies often do not realise that they do cover many of these. If during their meetings they ask questions about, say improving writing, and the minutes show this, there may be a reticence to claim this is having an impact. It is a very good indicator, however of high quality governor engagement.

Specifically, in section 6 (statutory responsibilities) the governing body must be fully compliant in 6d(iv), in its duties regarding safeguarding. This must be more than having a child protection or safeguarding policy and delegating the headteacher to implement it.

4. The Judgement is the tricky part. An application is likely to fall into one of three types:

- a) **the governance is good, and the application is good;** this application should be submitted for assessment.
- b) **The governance is good but the application is not strong enough;** this might need sharper impact statements, or less focus on governing body processes in what is presented, and more on impact and engagement with school improvement.
- c) **Governance is not strong enough;** governors may have to do some things differently and develop new evidence to strengthen the application

These are not always easy judgements to make, and GLM is willing to provide any advice a local trainer or indeed the governing body might need.

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