External review of governance – review tool

The review is based on the nine criteria for the effectiveness of governance as laid out in the School Inspection Handbook, Ofsted, September 2013.
It would be expected that sound governance will also ensure that sound clerking arrangements are in place for Full Governing Body and committee meetings. Where meeting minutes provide insufficient evidence there may be action points which arise associated with the clerking of these meetings.
Individual reviews would be unlikely to cover all 9 areas but should focus on the issues identified during the Ofsted inspection.

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	1. How well governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction	
	Characteristics	**Evidence to be sought**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of* *'sound' governance* *plus the following:*	• Governors play a significant role in creating a vision that is shared by all members of the school community and is based on input from, and consultation with, a range of stakeholders. • The Governing Body (GB) is influential in setting the strategic direction of the school in partnership with senior leaders. • **The GB ensures decisions are made in line with the school's vision and strategic priorities** and monitors the impact of these decisions.	• Ofsted report • School prospectus • GB agendas • Governance structures, committee work programmes and terms of reference
Sound Governance	• Governors can articulate the vision of the school, which is consistently set out in relevant school documents. • **Governors know the school's main priorities for improvement.** • The work of **the GB is focused on and driven by the school's strategic priorities.** • The GB monitors progress against school development plan priorities. • Governors monitor how effectively the policy framework and its practices support the ethos of the school.	• GB and committee minutes • School Development Plan • School website • **Headteacher's report** to GB
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	• School self-evaluation documentation • Discussion with Headteacher • Discussion with governors
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q9.** Have we developed long term aims for the school with clear priorities in an ambitious school development plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed? **Q10.** Does our strategic planning cycle drive the GB's activities and agenda setting?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	2. How well governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the impact of their own work	
	Characteristics	**Evidence to be sought**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of 'sound' governance plus the following:*	• Governors have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's overall performance. • Governors have an understanding of the data which they use to cross reference and challenge what they are told by school leaders. • Governors regularly evaluate their own effectiveness and this informs the evaluation of school leadership.	• Ofsted report • School Development Plan • Self Evaluation Summary • Governor skills/experience audit • Governor visit reports • Discussion with Headteacher • Discussion with governors
Sound Governance	• The Headteacher provides the GB with a range of information including external views and performance data to enable the governors to have confidence in the school's evaluation of its performance. • Governors have a balanced and accurate view of the school's main strengths and priorities for improvement. • The GB includes members with appropriate skills and understanding who have the ability to engage in self evaluation. • Governors' visits inform their knowledge of the school. • The School Development Plan (SDP) is clearly aligned to school self-evaluation and addresses any improvement priorities that have been identified. • The SDP indicates governor monitoring of progress in achieving key improvement priorities. • Minutes and discussions demonstrate that governors are using their time effectively to engage with school self-evaluation. • Governors are able to articulate the impact of their work on outcomes for children.	
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q7.** Is the size, composition and committee structure of our Gov. Body conducive to effective working? **Q8.** Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the governing body's performance? **Q14.** How do we listen to and understand our pupils, parents and staff? **Q20.** How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing body's contribution been to this?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	3. How well governors support and strengthen school leadership, including by developing their own skills	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of 'sound' governance plus the following:*	• Governors can articulate high expectations for their school and these are reflected in the way they plan their monitoring, are present in school and encourage/support collaboration. • Governors ensure the performance management of the Headteacher and other staff is focused on the school's strategic priorities and on improving the quality of teaching/pupil outcomes. • Governance structures are kept under review to ensure they reflect school and national priorities. • Governors are able to clearly evidence the impact of governor training and development on the quality of governance in the school.	• Ofsted report • Committee structures, terms of reference and work programmes • Governing Body/committee minutes • Reports of governor visits • School organisation structure • School Development Plan • Discussion with Headteacher • Discussion with governors
Sound Governance	• Full GB meetings are efficient and effective, with a clear focus on school improvement priorities. • GB structures/working practices are focussed on standards. • There is a strong/trusting relationship between the senior leadership team (SLT) and GB. • Governors understand how leadership and management responsibilities are divided among SLT and middle leaders. • Robust succession planning is in place, for senior/middle leaders *and* the Governing Body. • There is evidence of support/funding for a wide range of professional development for all staff including SLT and also for governors, and monitoring of its impact. • There are clear and robust procedures in place for senior leadership recruitment and governor involvement in this is clear. • Governors regularly evaluate their own effectiveness and the skills on the GB, and this informs training and recruitment decisions.	
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q5.** What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively? **Q7.** Is the size, composition and committee structure of our Governing Body conducive to effective working? **Q16.** What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally? **Q18.** Do we engage in succession planning?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	4. How well governors provide challenge and hold the Headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety, including by using the data dashboard, other progress data, examination outcomes and test results	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of 'sound' governance plus the following:*	• Governor questions demonstrate a relentless drive for improvement, e.g. what more can be done to improve quality of teaching and pupil achievement? • Governors monitor the impact of a range of interventions and bring robust challenge where these are not successful.	• Ofsted report • Governing Body agendas and minutes • Headteacher's reports • appropriate policies
Sound Governance	• Governors receive a range of data, which is understood/questioned. • Governors systematically challenge Headteacher/SLT so that the quality of teaching and **pupils' achievement has improved, or previous** good performance in these areas has been consolidated. • Governors monitor the quality of teaching and improvement. • **Governors receive a full range of data on pupils' behaviour and safety and challenge the** school to bring about further improvement. • Governors know outcomes for groups of children, e.g. those with Special Educational Needs. • Where applicable governors have an understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage/Sixth Form data. • Governors understand the school uses a range of interventions and can make reference to the most significant. • Governors have an understanding of national expectations of pupil performance and how their school compares. • Governors are familiar with their data dashboard and understand what this tells them about the school; this is reflected in GB discussions.	• Discussion with Headteacher • Discussion with Chair/governors
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q11.** Do governors understand the school's performance well enough to properly hold school leaders to account?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	5. How well governors use performance management systems, including the performance management of the Headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of 'sound' governance plus the following:*	• Governors can clearly articulate the link between self evaluation, school development planning and the appraisal/performance management process. • Clear and consistent monitoring of the impact of the appraisal process demonstrates the impact of CPD on quality of teaching, leadership and management and pupil progress. • Governors understand the process for performance management of all staff. • Whole school objectives are linked to school development priorities and governors have opportunity to input into the process.	• Ofsted report • Governing Body agendas and minutes • Copy of Headteacher Appraisal • Headteacher's reports • Appraisal policy • Discussion with Headteacher, chair, and other governors
Sound Governance	• Governors select the external adviser for the Headteacher's appraisal meeting, with clear understanding of what the role involves and what would constitute an appropriate individual. • The Headteacher's appraisal panel is appointed on the basis of appropriately trained/experienced panel members. • Headteacher's performance monitoring meetings are held at least termly. • Appraisal policy is in place and governors monitor its effectiveness. • The Headteacher's report shares evidence that performance management is robust, including explicit information about threshold and leadership progression and links to pay. • Challenging objectives are set for the Headteacher & SLT, which are consistent with school development priorities • Appraisal objectives of all teachers contribute towards school development plan priorities. • Clear links exist between appraisal, professional development activities, and their impact on the quality of teaching. • The governors on the pay committee (or equivalent) understand how evidence for performance management is collected.	
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q12.** How effective is our performance management of the Headteacher?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	6. How well governors ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of 'sound' governance plus the following:*	• The school budget is consistently balanced with no significant carry forward balance. • Numbers on roll and projections inform future planning for at least 3 years. • **Governors routinely monitor the school's financial control mechanisms and know through** evidence that financial probity exists. • Governors lead the SFVS/FMGE process and follow up on identified improvements. • Governors routinely engage in benchmarking and are able to articulate how the school has acted on findings.	• Scheme of Delegation (poss. within Terms of Reference Resources/Finance Committee) • Finance Reports from Bursar
Sound Governance	• The school has a balanced budget. • Governors share a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and delegated **authority relating to school's finances.** • There are explicit links between school improvement priorities and the budget, which are openly discussed and reflected in minutes. • Minutes reflect monitoring of the impact of major spending decisions. • Minutes reflect appropriate challenge on financial issues. • Governors can articulate the controls in place to ensure probity (e.g. annual review of delegation of tasks and evidence of compliance). • SFVS/FMGE has been completed/is in progress with clear governor involvement and understanding of the process. • Scheduling of meetings reflects key priorities/ need for appropriate monitoring (e.g. approval of budget and key monitoring i.e. September).	• Work Programmes/Terms of Reference of Resources/Finance Committee • FGB, Finance/Resources Committee minutes • Audit requirements (where appropriate) met • Register of Business Interests
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	• SFVS or FMGE (academies) • Schedule/calendar of meetings
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**13.** Are our financial management systems robust and do we ensure best value for money.	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	7. How well governors operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence**
Strong Governance: *all characteristics of* *'sound' governance* *plus the following:*	• FGB documentation demonstrates a clear and consistent approach to fulfilling a wide range of statutory duties and the GB's determination to keep abreast of new initiatives and any changes in legislation. • Agendas/work programmes reflect a clear commitment to an annual cycle of timely discussion, review and approval of key compliance requirements e.g. Child Protection Policy. • The Headteacher, Chair and Clerk jointly agree the agenda for each FGB meeting to ensure it reflects statutory requirements and school priorities. • GB plans its training and development to reflect SDP priorities and latest government initiatives/requirements e.g. Pupil Premium, SFVS.	• School website • Governing Body/committee minutes • Scheme of delegation /terms of reference/work programmes for committees • Ofsted report (e.g. safeguarding) • Discussion with Chair/other governors • Discussion with Clerk • Parental Concerns Policy
Sound Governance	• Governors understand their statutory role and responsibilities. • Terms of reference clearly outline which policies require annual review. • FGB and committee agendas reflect statutory responsibilities. • The clerk ensures agendas reflect statutory compliance issues. • **Minutes reflect governors' review and approval of statutory policies.** • Governors know their responsibilities relating to safeguarding. • Governors know what information is required on the school website. • There are no references in Ofsted report to failure to meet statutory requirements. • Any parental concerns are effectively addressed in line with school policy.	
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q3.** Do we understand our roles and responsibilities? **Q4.** Do we have a professional clerk and run meetings efficiently? **Q5.** What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	8. How well governors engage with key stakeholders	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence**
Strong Governance all characteristics of 'sound governance' plus the following:	• Home-School Agreement is reviewed each year and governors know the school takes reasonable steps to ensure all parents/carers sign it. • Parents, pupils and staff are surveyed regularly and their views impact GB decisions. • Governors closely monitor parental engagement using a range of indicators, including **how school engages with "hard to reach" parents.** • Governors know that effective links with other schools, the local and wider community have a positive impact on pupil outcomes. • Governors actively take advantage of a wide range of opportunities to engage with all key stakeholder groups. • The website includes a range of information about the GB including who the governors are, the activity and impact of the GB and non-confidential meeting minutes.	• % of signed home-school agreements • **Attendance at parents'** evenings, curriculum events • Pupil/parental/staff surveys • **Parents' forum/council** • Website **– parents'** portal • Accessibility of policies
Sound Governance	• Surveys of parents and pupils are undertaken and reported to governors. • **Attendance at parents' events is monitored.** • **A parents' forum with clear terms of reference has structured meetings.** • Links with other schools are known and their impact discussed. • Website **–** regularly maintained, has a range of useful info for parents. • Governors know the school has effective community/business links. • There is evidence of governors engaging with parents.	• Cluster/partnership arrangements • Community links • Engagement with local employers • Engagement with hard to reach parents
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	• Communications to parents from GB
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q14.** How do we listen to and understand our parents, pupils and staff? **Q15.** How do we report to our parents and local community regularly? **Q16.** What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?	

Ofsted Evaluation Criterion	9. How well governors use the pupil premium (PP) and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.	
	Characteristics	**Sources of Evidence :**
Strong Governance *all characteristics of 'sound' governance plus the following:*	• Governors have discussed in detail, including intended outcomes/impact, how Pupil Premium (PP) funding is used. • Governors have regularly monitored the outcomes of PP and know gaps are being reduced/removed. • Governors have a clear understanding of where gaps exist, both within the school *and* against national performance data. • Value for money (in terms of impact on pupil outcomes) is regularly discussed and challenged by governors (e.g. is PP having the impact we anticipated?). • The school's website provides parents with a clear understanding of the amount of funding, how it is spent and what difference it makes to pupil outcomes.	• Minutes of FGB and/or relevant committee e.g. Standards committee • Headteacher Reports (or other SLT member) to FGB or committees • Report on school website (statutory) • Discussions with governors
Sound Governance	• Use of PP is reported to GB or relevant committee and questions are asked relating to the broad impact of spend. • Governors understand the aim of PP and can point to at least one example of how it is spent in their school. • Governors know where gaps in attainment exist in their school. • The school website meets the statutory requirements regarding PP info.	
Weak Governance	Governance in this area is weak if all of the characteristics of *sound governance* are not evident.	
Relevant All-Party Parliamentary Group 20 questions	**Q20.** How much has the school improved over the last 3 years and what has the GB's contribution been to this?	