



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish,
and Christ is made known to all.”*

Are you expecting the Ofsted phone call?

The judgement on governance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of Leadership and Management. In making this judgement, inspectors will consider the criteria set out in the [Education Inspection Framework](#) (EIF). This includes how effectively governors work with school leaders to communicate their vision and ambition for the school to stakeholders.

Inspectors will always take into account how well learners are [helped and protected so that they are kept safe](#) and make a written judgement under ‘leadership and management’ about whether the arrangements for safeguarding learners are effective.

Inspectors will seek to meet those directly responsible for exercising the governance of the school and overseeing its performance during the inspection. This will usually include maintained school governors or academy trustees. As with the meetings between inspectors and pupils or staff, meetings with those responsible for governance will take place without the headteacher or senior staff.

An inspector is unlikely to be able to dedicate more than an hour to talking to the governors. They will want to hear from governors but they will also corroborate what they are being told by looking at evidence such as minutes of meetings, visit notes, data and parental feedback. This is also an opportunity to tell inspectors what you really want them to know about. Celebrate successes!

Inspectors will invite as many governors as possible to attend the final feedback meeting.

Remember that there is no inspection of RE by Ofsted in Catholic schools but the inspectors can look at SMSC, personal development, and/or behaviour and attendance.

Key Lines of Enquiry

There is no ‘one size fits all’ checklist of questions the inspectors will ask. The ‘key lines of enquiry’ will be shaped, in large part, by the impression of the school they have gained through a desktop analysis, though one will most certainly be around safeguarding.

Every inspector is expected to look at a school’s website before an inspection, as well as do a media search on the school, headteacher and chair of governors. They will also look at [Parent View](#) to see the views of parents, form an impression of pupil progress through any attainment data and look at the last Ofsted report.

Ofsted will be testing out the ‘key lines of enquiry’ – if governors carried out a similar exercise, what would their ‘key lines of enquiry’ be?

Tips for preparing for the meeting

Is key evidence readily accessible?

Key documents include:

- minutes of recent governing body meetings, including any committees
- recent headteachers' reports
- reports of governor visits
- records of governor training
- feedback from parents
- school self-evaluation
- school development plan
- parental, pupil or staff surveys

Top Tip: Highlight the evidence and cross-reference it. Do minutes show evidence of governor challenge?

Have you agreed which governors will meet the inspector?

Inspectors will either request a face-to-face meeting or a telephone call with the chair of the governing board, or where appropriate the chair of the multi-academy trust, and as many governors as possible.

What picture of the school will the inspector have already gained?

Make sure you are familiar with all the publically available information about the school and the story it tells. Inspectors will have seen the last Ofsted report and reports of any monitoring visits. They will have scrutinised Parent View and looked at whether your website is [legally compliant](#). As a result of what this information is telling them, they will have decided on 'lines of enquiry' for the inspection.

Future tip: How could you make it easier for Ofsted to access key information on your school website? For example, how about a section on the School Development Plan – evidence of progress for key areas for improvement?

Are governors clear about their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding?

Make sure governors know about safeguarding/child protection procedures at the school and how effectively they work. In judging the effectiveness of leadership and management, inspectors **must** judge whether those responsible for governance ensure that these arrangements are effective.

- Are governors confident that the school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding? How do they know this?
- Do governors know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is, and whether their training is up-to-date?

- Has your policy been updated in line with the publication of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)?
- How do governors know that the Single Central Record is complete and up-to-date?
- How often do governors review safeguarding/child protection policies? Are these on the school website?
- Are governors confident that all staff can recognise signs of abuse, including sexual harassment and online sexual abuse. Do they know how to report these?
- Do you have a governor with responsibility for safeguarding? When did they last have safeguarding training? Where is evidence of their monitoring?
- Do children feel safe in school? How do you know?

Be able to talk about strengths and areas for improvement

How well do governors understand school data and assessment information? Is there evidence that governors ask probing questions about outcomes for pupils?

It is very likely that you will be asked to identify strengths and weaknesses, and it is important to be able to back up what you say. For instance, if you say that the quality of teaching is a strength, you will need to explain how you know this (For example: you have monitored the effectiveness of marking in pupils' books, you have spoken to pupils who can explain their learning objectives, progress data is showing improvements during the year).

Does the data indicate that some groups of pupils are not performing as well as others? For example, if disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND are not progressing as well as their peers, explain why you think this is and actions to improve. What about more able pupils? **Be honest**, but clear about the actions that are being taken. The inspector will be keen to see that you know what is going on and are being proactive about making improvements.

Be able to demonstrate robust performance management

Be able to demonstrate how the governing body performance manages the headteacher rigorously and how objectives fit with whole-school objectives. How do governors agree on these objectives? Be prepared to talk about performance management procedures of all staff – how are decisions made about teachers' salary progression and performance? How do staff access professional development?

Be able to talk about staff wellbeing and workload

Be able to demonstrate how the governing body has monitored whether employees can balance their working lives with their personal needs. Is staff wellbeing a regular agenda item at your meetings? The Diocese of Brentwood has a [model policy on staff wellbeing](#) you can use or adapt.

Be able to talk about the effectiveness of the governing board

Have a record of training you have undertaken as a governing body. This will demonstrate that governors are taking their responsibilities seriously. What impact has this had?

How often does the governing body review its effectiveness? If you have recently carried out a skills audit or had a Review of Governance, what have you done as a result?

Can you talk about succession planning?

Are governors familiar with the [Competency Framework for Governance](#)?

Do all governors sign a [Code of Conduct](#) annually?

Be ready to demonstrate how governors ensure the school's finances are properly managed.

Have governors carried out a risk assessment?

Can governors talk about how the pupil premium funding (and Primary PE and sport premium if you are a governor at a primary school) was spent and its impact? You should be able to point to evidence in minutes of governor meetings where this has been discussed, and talk about what the data is saying about closing the gap.

Be able to talk about how you communicate with key stakeholders

This includes parents, staff, pupils and the wider community. This might be in the form of a survey, letters, or meetings, but inspectors will want to know how you have listened to suggestions and what difference this has made.

Have you looked at the [Ofsted Parent View results](#) for your school? (a school's results are available if there is a minimum of 10 responses from parents/carers). Inspectors weigh the views of parents and carers alongside first-hand evidence gathered during an inspection when coming to a view about the overall effectiveness of a school.

If you have Early Years provision...

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) is crucial to a child's development since it lays the foundation for future learning and development. The standards that reception year teaching in England must meet are set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage framework](#).

Ofsted states that reading is at the [heart of the curriculum](#) for successful reception classes with early mathematical concepts another key element of teaching and learning in this foundation stage. Are governors able to talk about how they have monitored the early years provision?

If you have a sixth form...

Be able to talk about the progress and achievement of learners and how high expectations are set. Can governors talk about the careers advice learners receive to prepare them for their chosen next steps? Do you have a governor with a careers lead?

Finally make sure you mention anything that you really want inspectors to know about. Celebrate successes!

There is no ‘one size fits all’ checklist of questions the inspectors will ask.

This quick checklist is not exhaustive, but outlines key areas that will help you prepare for Ofsted.

Checklist	Y/N
The time of the governing board meeting/phone call with the inspector(s) has been agreed.	
Governors have been identified to be available to speak to inspectors, with alternative arrangements in the event of unavailability.	
The school’s website is up-to-date and complies with the School Information Regulations for maintained schools or academies	
The school’s statutory policies are up-to-date and published on the school website, especially the Child Protection/Safeguarding policy and Equalities Policy	
Child protection training is up-to-date for the designated person(s) and staff.	
The Single Central Record is complete and up-to-date and is regularly monitored by the governing board.	
Governors can explain how the school handles allegations and instances of sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence.	
Governors can talk to inspectors about pupil behaviour. They can explain how the school creates an environment where bullying, peer-on-peer abuse or discrimination are not tolerated.	
Governor minutes clearly show how the headteacher and senior leaders are challenged and supported.	
<p>Governors can speak confidently about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how any weaknesses are being addressed.</p> <p>What are the school’s 3 greatest strengths and 3 crucial areas for development? What is the story here? (ie Tell me about.....why you are saying you are good/this area needs improvement?)</p>	

<p>Governors can explain how the curriculum is broad and balanced.</p> <p>Is it planned and sequenced towards cumulative knowledge and skills for all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?</p> <p>Do pupils enjoy their learning? How do you know?</p> <p>How does the school give pupils with SEND the support they need to succeed?</p>	
<p>Governors can talk about the opportunities learners have for broader development, including after-school clubs and activities</p>	
<p>Governors can give examples of how the school prepares learners for life in modern Britain by equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society</p>	
<p>The headlines of in-school assessment data are understood by governors. Governors can tell the story of the school's performance for different groups of pupils including SEND, disadvantaged and more-able pupils and how the school is addressing any gaps in learning due to Covid-19</p>	
<p>Attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. How does the school promote good pupil attendance? If asked, are governors able to talk about 'gaming' and off - rolling of pupils?</p>	
<p>Governors are actively involved in monitoring all aspects of the school development plan. Governor visit reports evidence monitoring against school improvement priorities.</p>	
<p>Governors have detailed understanding of the school's performance management systems and can explain how differential pay is used to reward good teachers.</p>	
<p>Governors can articulate how they monitor staff wellbeing and the work life balance of staff</p>	
<p>Governors can articulate how the Pupil Premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils and the impact of any interventions. Is this published on the school website?</p> <p>Can you tell inspectors about the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils? Where has this funding had the biggest impact? How do you know?</p>	

Governors in primary schools can explain how the PE and Sports Premium Grant is spent and the impact of these decisions. Is this published on the school website?	
Governors can demonstrate how well they keep up to date with national and local initiatives and good practice, and the impact this has had on their effectiveness. They have evidence that they take their development seriously.	
Governors can demonstrate how they have reviewed the effectiveness of the governing board, and actions taken as a result.	
Governors can demonstrate how the governing board holds school leaders to account for the financial performance of the school. How is effective use made of resources?	
Governors can talk about how the school communicates effectively with parents and carers, including parents of children with SEND.	

Debbi Botham

Diocesan Governance Development Officer

December 2021