Pupil Assessment – A Link Governors’ Role

Overview

Although not a statutory requirement, governing bodies often distribute some of their key duties to an individual member of the governing body for a more specific focus on a particular matter. These governors are linked with a specific area of school life and are known as ‘link governors’.

Where a governing body creates a role for a link governor, they must provide an expectation of what the role will entail and what duties are delegated to the link governor. The link governor then has a responsibility to report back to the governing body on a frequent basis about what they have learnt in their link area, and discuss what strategies could be considered to strengthen any areas of concern. They should also draw attention to any areas of success and good practice, and champion what the school does well.

What is assessment?

The term ‘assessment’ is generally used to refer to all activities teachers use to help pupils learn and to gauge pupil progress. Assessments, examinations, tests help the teachers find out what the pupils can and can’t do.

Effective assessment is an important aspect of high-quality teaching, and pupils’ achievement reflects the quality of teaching in a school. The achievement of all groups of pupils should be considered to ensure that no child is left behind.

Schools should track pupils’ performance and benchmark it, where possible, against previous years’ results, national performance data and across different groups of pupils.

Assessment and Governing Bodies

Governing bodies have a legal duty to know, and continually monitor, the educational performance of the school and its pupils to ensure the best possible education and opportunities for the children.

School governors should understand school leaders’ plans for assessment of pupil progress throughout their school years – including how it is moderated and how the data is used. They need to be confident that these assessment systems are robust and provide accurate information about pupil’s progress which is effectively communicated to parents.

They should also receive internal data from teacher assessments throughout the year, and use this to monitor how well pupils are progressing. If pupils are not making expected progress, governors should ask the headteacher why this is, and what is being done about it.

What does the Link Governor role entail?

Below are some examples of what the governing body can delegate to the Assessment Link Governor.

• Have a clear picture of how assessment is carried out at your school.
• To know and monitor how effective the schools assessment system is.
• To ensure that CPD and resources are provided to staff on carrying out assessment.
• Undertake relevant data training and become informed about relevant documents and legislation regarding assessment.
• Understand local and national issues impacting upon assessment.
• Know how OfSTED will view the school’s assessment of pupils.
• Ensure the GB are well briefed on key areas of assessment prior to inspection meetings.
• Liaise with the Key Subject Coordinators and/or Assessment Data Officer to become informed about: curriculum and assessment arrangements, references to the school development plan, and any school policies and strategies concerning assessment.

• Establish and maintain effective lines of communication between the Key Subject Coordinators or Assessment Data Officer, and the governing body.

• Provide a termly report to the Curriculum Committee or full governing body.

• Help to ensure parents are kept informed about assessment in simple terms via the school’s website and newsletter (statutory duty to publish information on school website).

• To attend, where possible and appropriate, relevant staff training to keep updated on matters.

• To review information from assessment statistics in order to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of standards.

• Ask searching questions of the school’s data for the good of school improvement.

• Ensure all groups of children are monitored and data included in relevant reports and quoted at GB meetings.

• Ensure that you are aware of the gaps in attainment and monitor what strategies are being used and being effective in narrowing the gaps.

• Ask questions about the school’s abilities to ensure assessment is accurate and that the data is used to inform policies and plans.

• Ensure that Headteacher and senior leadership reports to governors include relevant data for the GB to be able to fulfil its statutory functions concerning the educational performance of the school.

Training and Resources

_Fischer Family Trust (FFT)_ – The FFT Governor Dashboard clearly displays information about results and pupil progress, subject performance, progress of pupil groups, school context, and attendance and highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, making it the ideal overview for planning towards inspections. Governors can access free webinars and model materials from this website. Each school can provide governors with a login to FFT to access specific governor dashboards for their school. [http://www.fft.org.uk/fft-aspire/governor-dashboard.aspx](http://www.fft.org.uk/fft-aspire/governor-dashboard.aspx).

_RAISEonline (Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through school Self-Evaluation)_ - RAISEonline provides interactive analysis of school and pupil performance data. It enables schools to analyse performance data in greater depth as part of the self-evaluation process. It provides a common set of analyses for schools, local authorities, inspectors, dioceses, academy trusts and governors. Each school can provide governors with a login to RAISEonline to access specific data for governors. Governors can access guidance, example data and FAQs from this website. [https://www.raiseonline.org/documentlibrary/ViewDocumentLibrary.aspx](https://www.raiseonline.org/documentlibrary/ViewDocumentLibrary.aspx)

_School Performance Tables_ - Compare school and college performance in a variety of ways, locally and nationally. [https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/](https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/)


_Ofsted – School Inspection Handbook 2015_  

_Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)_  
The EEF is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their
talents. EEF invests in evidence-based projects which focus on tackling the attainment gap. The EEF reports all the results of independent evaluations and includes them in a Teaching and Learning Toolkit so that schools have the best possible evidence on which to base their own professional judgements. Families of Schools database is a tool to help facilitate collaboration between schools facing similar challenges to help them learn from one another. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/

**Asking the right questions**

Effective governing bodies hold their headteacher and other senior school leaders to account for improving school performance by asking the right questions. Examples are given below.

**Examples of monitoring and assessment questions (challenge) for the school leadership**

- What issues are in the school’s Self Evaluation that apply particularly to this Key Stage and what plans do we have to address them?
- What progress are we making towards implementing plans and how will we assess the impact?
- In what particular ways does the Key Stage contribute to achieving statutory and other targets?
- What areas of staff development are currently being addressed through Continuing Professional Development?
- How are we communicating with and involving parents on assessment?
- How is pupil progress monitored and assessed and how well do pupils know their individual targets?
- How do teachers assess the progress of their pupils in science and maths?
- How well do pupils achieve in science and maths and what is the trend over time for achievement?
- Do different groups of pupils make equally good progress in science and maths?
- Governors may like to ask what tracking systems are in place to monitor pupils’ progression across Key Stages.
- School leaders should consider how pupils’ progress is tracked across the main transitions and what is done to make sure that these transitions occur smoothly.

**Improving school performance**

- Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing, and why?
- Does the governing body have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress?
- How will the governing body know that things are improving?
- Which year groups or subjects get the best and worst results and why? How does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school?
- What is the strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?
- How is the school going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving?
- Have governing body decisions been made with reference to external evidence, for example, has the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Toolkit been used to determine Pupil Premium spending decisions?
- How will the governing body know if its approach is working?
- Will the impact of decisions and interventions be monitored and supported, using appropriate tools such as the EEF DIY Evaluation Guide?
- Does the school have the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements?
- What is the school’s approach to implementation of pay reform and performance related pay?
- If appropriate, is it compliant with the most up to date version of the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document?
- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
- What is the school’s record on attendance, behaviour and bullying?
- Are safeguarding procedures securely in place?
• What is the governing body doing to address any current issues, and how will it know if it is working?

*Extract from DfE School Governors’ Handbook 2015*

**Finance and resources**

• Are we allocating our resources in line with our strategic priorities?
• Are we making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?
• Are other schools buying things cheaper or getting better results with less spending per pupil?
• How can we get better value for money from our budget?
• If the cost of energy seems high compared to similar schools, are there opportunities for investment in energy-saving devices to reduce the cost?
• If spend on learning resources seems high compared to similar schools, are there opportunities for collaborating with other local schools to bring costs down?

**Teaching and Learning**

• How does the school promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society?
• How does the school prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life?
• How does the school ensure enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the national curriculum and other statutory requirements?
• How does the school ensure the relevant assessment arrangements are implemented?
• How does the school ensure all courses provided for all pupils below the age of 19 which lead to qualifications such as GCSEs and A levels are approved by the Secretary of State?
• Has the school a written statement of the policy they adopt on sex education and do they make it available to parents?

**How well is the school performing?**

• How well is the school doing against a range of performance measures – including each of our ‘floor standard’ measures on attainment and progress?
• How well is the school (primary) doing at key stage 2 in English, and mathematics (reading; writing; grammar, punctuation and spelling, and mathematics)?
• How well is the school (secondary) doing at key stage 4 in terms of the number of pupils achieving 5A*-C (or equivalents) including English and mathematics GCSEs, and percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-G grade GCSEs (or equivalent)?
• How well a sixth-form is doing in A levels and other level 3 qualifications?
• How does attainment and progress compare between different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and ‘non-mobile’ pupils (i.e. those who have been in the school throughout each of the last two years)?
• How does the school spend its money, shown as £ per pupil to allow comparison between schools of different size?
• What staffing information do we need from the Headteacher (including the number of teachers, teaching assistants, support workers; their average salaries; and the ratio of teachers to pupils)?
• What is the attainment of different groups of pupils and in different subjects, and how this compares to national ‘floor standards’ for key stage 2 and key stage 4?
• What is the progress made by different groups of pupils and in different subjects, and how this compares to ‘expected progress’ measures?
• What is the progress made by pupils compared to all pupils nationally and pupils with similar prior attainment?

*Extract from DfE School Governors’ Handbook 2014 (earlier version)*