

## 1. Introduction

Why is the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) strengthening its inspection of governance?

The ETI values the work undertaken on a voluntary basis by the governing bodies of all of the educational institutions we inspect. In his 'Putting Pupils First: Shaping Our Future' speech of September 26, 2011 the Minister outlined his support for governors who set high standards for themselves and for their schools; who are not afraid to challenge; and who put the interests and education of pupils first. He stated his intention 'to broaden and strengthen the existing inspection process to enable the effectiveness of boards of governors to be assessed, so that governors can have feedback on how they are doing and so that good practice can be identified and shared.'

While governors are volunteers, unlike many other types of volunteers, they have statutory responsibilities. The governors' handbook states:

*The role of the board of governors is to fulfil its statutory functions in relation to the school and to be accountable for ensuring that its decisions support the best interests of the school and its pupils.*

Inspection is part of that accountability. Significant contact is already made with governors during inspection and the new process is an extension of current practice.

From January 2013, the ETI implemented a phased approach to developing the evaluation of governance. It contains a strong self-evaluation element on the part of the governing body. These arrangements apply to standard inspections in post-primary, focused inspections in primary and special schools at this stage.

## 2. Purpose of this guidance note

This note is to support governors in:

- understanding the strengthened approach ETI is taking; and
- making their own evaluation of the effectiveness of their governance arrangements, particularly the impact of their work in supporting and ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching in their school.

This guidance for governors should be used along with the:

- Pre-inspection questionnaire for boards of governors; and
- Quality indicators for use in the self-evaluation of governance.

All of these governance documents are available on the ETI website [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk) (Direct Link <http://tinyurl.com/ETI-Governance> )

## 3. Background

The strengthened evaluation of the effectiveness of governance arrangements is now part of the inspections of post-primary, primary (focused inspections only) and special schools.

From January 2013, schools will provide the reporting inspector with a self-evaluation document, completed by the board of governors, as part of the evaluation of governance. The school may use the document 'Pre-inspection questionnaire for boards of governors'. Additionally, the governors may find the quality indicators for governance helpful for completing their self-evaluation.

#### **4. What happens during the inspection?**

During the inspection, the reporting inspector will be available in the school to meet with the governors at an appointed time. At the meeting with the governors and during the inspection, the ETI will evaluate the quality and accuracy of the evidence provided and use the inspection evidence normally gathered, to verify and quality assure externally the internal self-evaluation of the governors.

The pre-inspection questionnaire completed by the Board of Governors will be used as the basis for the discussion with Inspectors. In this questionnaire governors will self-evaluate the effectiveness of their work against the quality indicators provided by ETI set out under the five key headings below.

1. Strategic leadership

How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging constructively the school/organization to provide the highest quality of education for all learners?

2. Action to promote improvement

How effective are we in monitoring and evaluating the school's/organisation's performance and its development plan (including consultation with users<sup>1</sup>) to set/adjust priorities for improvement?

3. Resources

How effective are we in ensuring the efficient use of all available personnel, financial and physical resources in improving the outcomes for learners?

4. Quality of the provision for learning

How effective are we in leading, supporting and challenging the management to ensure the best possible quality of learning, teaching, and assessment, and that the curriculum provision meets the needs of all the learners?

5. Achievement and standards

Do we have sufficient knowledge about the achievements of the learners? Do we use this knowledge effectively to lead, challenge and support the school/organisation to ensure that the learners achieve their full potential?

During the meeting with the governors and during the inspection, the ETI will evaluate the quality and accuracy of the evidence provided and use the inspection evidence normally gathered, to verify and quality assure externally the internal self-evaluation of the governors.

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<sup>1</sup> Users include pupils/children, parents, teachers, staff and members of the community.

## 5. Reporting on governance

At the conclusion of the inspection, the ETI will report one of three confidence levels for governance along with main strengths and any areas for improvement.

The ETI's evaluation is that there can be:

- a **high degree of confidence** in the aspects of governance evaluated;
- **confidence** in the aspects of governance evaluated;
- **limited confidence** in the aspects of governance evaluated.

Evidence gathered throughout the inspection will be used for the evaluation of the effectiveness of governance arrangements and is relevant to making other judgements; other evidence collected elsewhere (e.g. benchmarked data from DE) is relevant to the inspection of governance also.

If relevant, for any subsequent follow up inspection activity the confidence levels will be re-evaluated and reported on.

## 6. SUMMARY

### **Before the inspection**

Be familiar with the documents:  
Pre-inspection questionnaire for boards of governors  
Quality indicators for use in the self-evaluation of governance  
Guidance for governors

### **During the inspection**

ETI collect self -evaluation from governors on the first morning  
ETI meets with governors  
ETI uses normal opportunities during inspection to secure a robust evidence

### **End of the inspection**

ETI report back confidence level and associated bullet points  
Statement confidence level on governance will be included in inspection reports.

### ***Relevant Website***

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/school-governance>