



Asking the Right Questions

7th March 2024



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Aims of this session:



to clarify the expectations on governance to monitor the performance of our schools;



to reflect on why questions are a key element of our accountability role;



to explore what constitutes a 'good' question, for those in governance, to ask.

The Statutory role (Core functions)

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The Monitoring role:

Core Function

holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;

detail

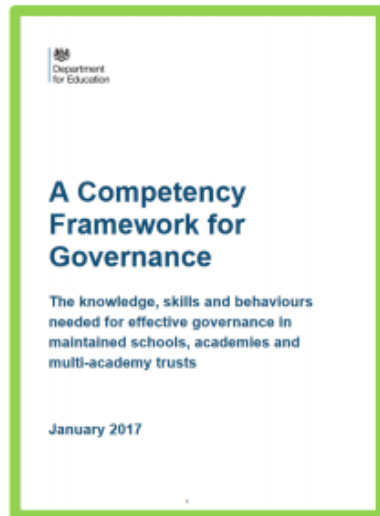
clear processes for overseeing and monitoring school improvement and financial health, providing constructive challenge to executive leaders;

In action

receiving reports, feedback, progress updates, conducting effective visits and ensuring external validation.

All enhanced by asking questions

Why effective questioning matters



Personal attributes

- Committed
- Confident
- Curious
- Challenging
- Collaborative
- Critical
- Creative



- **Confident**
able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations
- **Curious**
understanding the value of meaningful questioning
- **Challenging**
Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo
- **Critical**
both challenge and support
- **Creative**
Able to challenge conventional wisdom

Asking the right questions





What?

not why?

Opportunities for 'good' questions:

- Headteacher reports;
- subject Leader/Head of Dept. reports;
- designated Safeguarding Lead report;
- health & safety reports
- financial monitoring reports;
- governor visits;
- more?

Attendance

Attendance last term was impacted by illness. We currently have 14 children meeting the threshold for PA. However, I am delighted to say that overall attendance is at 96.2%.

To improve strategic overview:

- What does PA stand for?
- How does the 96.2% compare to last year, term, & the target?
- What factors are impacting on good attendance?
- What are the reasons behind the rise in PA?
- What actions are being taken to address PA?
- How does our attendance compare to other local schools?

Maths

Tables check practice is having a positive impact in Y3 and 4. AoE is disappointing again this year and indications are problem solving needs to be a key focus.

What questions would you ask?

Question trails

- use questions to develop and deepen knowledge on specific themes;
- listen to the response to the last question and use this to inform the next;
- the more questions we ask the more we deepen our knowledge;
- better informed, more knowledgeable governors make better quality decisions, and have greater impact on outcomes.

Question trails – an example:

Headteacher reports that behavioural incidents have increased since January

Question/next question	Response
1. What type of incidents are we talking about?	Mainly defiance but some social media-inspired bullying.
2. Is this any particular year group?	Y8 has been particularly challenging.
3. What do you think has led to this?	We are not sure; possibly the increased media attention on social media, high-profile individuals such as Andrew Tate sadly seem to have inspired some boys.
4. What has the school done in response?	We have held assemblies for each year group, re-sharing our expectations, focusing on being kind, considerate and thinking about others.
5. Has this led to a reduction?	Yes, but it's slow going at present but we have increased staff numbers on duty too and we are encouraging reporting

Questions on data

- What are the (three) key messages governors should take away from this data?
- What were the reasons for results falling short of predictions?
- What changes in terms of curriculum or interventions will be put in place next year?
- How have different groups of pupils performed?
- What more should/could we be doing?

Good questions when visiting the school:

Subject Lead	Teacher	Pupil
How much time do you get to 'lead' your subject?	How do ability levels in your class this year, compare to last year?	What are you learning today?
What do you use that time for?	Have you seen gaps widening or emerging during the pandemic?	Are you enjoying it?
What are the strengths in the teaching of your subject across the school?	If so how have you had to flex the curriculum that you are teaching?	What have you learnt that you didn't know last week?
What would make the biggest difference to improving pupil performance in x?	How do you decide deployment of teaching assistants?	Can you explain how you have done that?

ONLY at appropriate times

Any questions



Further information:

- DfE Handbook & Competency Framework

[Governance handbook and competency framework - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook-and-competency-framework)
www.gov.uk

Thank you

- Join us again next term.
- Enjoy the remainder of your day.