**Getting to know your school: questions for new local governors**

For the core functions of governance to be carried out effectively, local governors need a sound understanding of the school and its context. It is important for new local governors to have the opportunity to gain this understanding early in their role to enable them to carry out their strategic duties and to inform any monitoring activities that the local governing board have identified and planned.

Governors should ensure that they undertake any visit to the school in line with the school’s procedures or policy for local governor visits.

This template includes suggested questions for local governors to ask when getting to know the school. The questions could be asked during an informal visit with the headteacher, during their induction period, or during a full local governing board meeting or committee meeting. These questions are not intended as an exhaustive list and it is expected that further questions will arise as the new local governor becomes more familiar with their role and the school.

The table also includes a section for additional, relevant observations and to note any further questions that may arise.

Remember – questions are learning opportunities, and there are no stupid questions! It is recommended that the DGAT Acronym Buster is issued alongside this template.

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| **Suggested questions for new local governors to ask** | **Comments and observations** |
| **School context** | |
| How many pupils are currently on roll? |  |
| How does this compare to the published admission number (PAN)? |  |
| Are there any specific year groups for which the school is under its PAN? If so, are there any specific reasons for this and what is being done to address any issues? |  |
| What are the current strengths of the school? |  |
| What are the current priority areas for development in the school? Are these been identified in the current version of the school development plan (SDP)? |  |
| Has the school completed a recent self-evaluation exercise to inform the current school development plan priorities? How was the local governing board involved in this process? |  |
| What is the school’s current Ofsted judgement? What actions have been planned in response to this judgement? |  |
| What is the school’s current SIAMS judgement? What actions have been planned in response to this judgement? |  |
| Does the school provide any wraparound care for pupils? |  |
| **Staffing and personnel** | |
| How many members of staff are there in school? What is the breakdown of teachers, TAs, support staff? |  |
| What is the school’s current leadership structure? |  |
| Who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)? |  |
| How is the work-life balance of school staff supported? |  |
| **Pupils** | |
| How is pupil progress and attainment tracked and monitored? |  |
| How many pupils are there currently on roll who have SEND? What is this number as a percentage of the whole-school? |  |
| What is the spread of pupils with SEND across the school? Are numbers higher in specific year groups? |  |
| How many pupils with SEND have an Education Health Care plan in place? |  |
| How do number of pupils with SEND compare to national averages? |  |
| What specific provision is in place to support pupils with SEND? |  |
| Are there specific gaps in the attainment of pupils with SEND and pupils without SEND? |  |
| Are any identified gaps in attainment specific to certain year groups or is this a whole-school issue? |  |
| How many pupils are there currently on roll who are eligible for pupil premium funding? What is this number as a percentage of the whole- school? |  |
| How do numbers of disadvantaged pupils compare to national averages? |  |
| Have any generic barriers to learning been identified for disadvantaged pupils? |  |
| Are there significant gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils? Are there any identified gaps specific to certain year groups or is this a whole-school issue? |  |
| Are there any other vulnerable groups of pupils in the school, e.g. Looked After Children, or pupils with English as and Additional Language? |  |
| What specific provision is in place to support these vulnerable pupils? |  |
| What pastoral provision is in place for pupils? |  |
| **Governance** | |
| How does the local governing board engage with the central team and the Board of Trustees? |  |
| How does the local governing board ensure all governors understand and adhere to its responsibilities as set out in the Trust scheme of delegation? |  |
| How does the local governing board ensure the school’s Christian distinctiveness and vision are maintained? |  |
| How does the local governing board ensure the school’s vision reflects the Church of England’s vision for education? |  |
| What are the current strengths of the local governing board? |  |
| What are the development priorities for the local governing board? |  |
| How does the local governing board evaluate its own performance? |  |
| What are the local governing board’s monitoring priorities for the year ahead? |  |
| How are local governors’ monitoring priorities organised? |  |
| What training and CPD opportunities are available to local governors? |  |
| What is the process for arranging visits to school? |  |

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| **Supplementary questions** | |
| **[Record here any supplementary questions asked]** | **[Record here the responses given to any supplementary questions asked]** |
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