



Governor annual statement and impact report Brookfields School 2023-24

Introduction

The Full Governing Board (FGB) at Brookfields School has an important role to play in the work of the school. Every year the board completes a self-evaluation of its performance and how it has fulfilled its duties. The review covers the following:

1. Performance against the 3 core functions of the governing board
2. Performance against the 4 governing board objectives for the year 2023-24
3. Self assessment of the governing board of its performance against the National Governance Association (NGA) governance effectiveness criteria
4. Governing board objectives for 2024-25

Appendices

1. Summary of attendance
2. Summary of policies approved
3. Training completed by governors in 23/24
4. NGA governing board self-assessment questionnaire and evaluation

1) Performance against the 3 core functions of the governing board

Function	How was this achieved?
Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review and scrutiny of the School Development Plan by the governing board and link governor • Regular review of the School Improvement Plan and feedback from the School Improvement Partner • Joint work with the school senior team on key strategic initiatives such as joining a Multi Academy Trust • Regular governing board meetings with appropriate challenge • Approval of statutory policies which support the strategic and operational direction of the school • Improved governing board succession planning to ensure continuity of support for the school • Terms of reference and standing orders that reflect the work of the governing board
Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school including performance management of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly headteacher report presented to the governing board for review and challenge • Standards Committees meet termly to discuss Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Management and Wellbeing – Chaired by a non-staff governor to ensure independent scrutiny • Pupil premium performance reviewed at full governing board meetings to ensure that it is meeting its objectives • Key pupil data such as safeguarding, attendance and behaviour is monitored regularly via the headteacher report and governor visits • Link governors meet regularly with key members of staff to ensure effective monitoring e.g. Health and Safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff assessment and performance are monitored by governors with approval of salary increase levels for teaching staff • Regular one to one meetings between the Chair of Governors and headteacher • Regular review of the staff training programme at Standards Committee meetings • Effective performance management of the headteacher with an annual review in association with the School Improvement Partner
<p>Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Finance Standards Committee meetings (4 per academic year) – Chaired by a non-staff governor to ensure independent scrutiny • School budget reviewed in committee and full governing board meetings with challenge and scrutiny • Governors complete the SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard) on an annual basis to ensure the school's finances are being managed correctly • Regular review of the staffing cost and structure to ensure that it meets the needs of the school and is financially robust • Approval of the school's financial management policy and register of authorising officers • Scrutiny and approval of the school's budget

2) Performance against the 4 governing board objectives for the year 2023-24

Objectives for 23-24	Performance against objectives
<p>To work with the school to ensure the effective transition of the school from a maintained school to an academy as part of the Ascendancy Partnership Trust (APT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school did not join the APT due to external financial factors. However, governors continued to support the school team to keep the process on track for the next academic year • Governors supported the school with regular meetings to discuss academisation and agree key milestones • Governors commissioned an independent review of the proposed MAT to assess its suitability for Brookfields School • Governors challenged, where appropriate, to ensure that the MAT would meet the requirements of Brookfields School
<p>To monitor recruitment and retention of staff to ensure greater continuity for the pupils and staff team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors discussed and monitored recruitment and retention in full governing board and standards committee meetings • Governors offered to support the school with the appointment of additional staff to ease the burden on the staff team
<p>To work closely with the school to ensure it remains financially stable for the academic year and as part of the academy trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance committee scrutinised and challenged financial reports at every meeting to ensure that the school remained financially secure • Governors worked closely with the staff team to support the school in its discussions with the local authority regarding the claw back of the school's reserved
<p>To develop a training and development plan based on the outcome of the NGA effectiveness review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal plan was developed, this will be an area of focus for 2024 - 25

3) Self-assessment of the governing board of its performance against the NGA effectiveness criteria

The members of the governing board undertook self-assessment of their understanding of the effectiveness of the governing board and rated the board either red, amber or green (Appendix 4).

The key findings were as follows:

Green

Governance professional
Delegation
Accountability – financial oversight
Evaluation of impact

Red

Evaluation of impact (external evaluation)

Green/Amber

Accountability – quality of education
Evaluation of impact
Skills and diversity
Induction and ongoing development
Board size
Compliance – statutory requirements
Evaluation of board practice (self evaluation)

Amber

Governance culture
Leadership
Collaboration
Accountability – stakeholders
Values, ethics and culture

Green/amber/red

Strategy
Employer responsibilities

Amber/red

Compliance – reducing risk
Evaluation of individual contributions
Vision

4) Governing board objectives for 2024-25

The governing board has identified the following objectives:

- To work with the school to ensure the effective transition of the school from a maintained school to an academy as part of the Ascendancy Partnership Trust (A continuation from 23-24)
- To monitor recruitment and retention of staff to ensure greater continuity for the pupils and staff team
- To work closely with the school to ensure it remains financially stable for the academic year and as part of the academy trust
- To develop a training and development plan based on the outcome of the NGA effectiveness review (Carried forward from 23-24)

Conclusion

It has been a very challenging year for the governing board. Negotiations to join the APT were stalled due to an issue with the local authority regarding claw back of the school's reserves. This issue took up a significant amount of staff and governing board time. The school was unable to join the Trust as planned. In addition to negotiations to join the Trust, governors invested a significant amount of time in policy approval, financial oversight, safeguarding and supporting the SLT where needed.

The significant operational issues around academisation did detract from the board's plans to develop the strategy and vision for the school. This work will resume in the new academic year, under the guidance of the MAT. Work will also start on the development of a board-wide training programme.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Summary of attendance in 2023/24

Governor	FGB meetings attended
Sam Jacob	5/6
Anne Murdoch	5/6
Catherine Bernie	6/6
Tom McAuslin	6/6
Megan Brown	6/6
Keith Shaw	1/1 (Joined October 2023 and left January 2024)
Christine McLean	4/6
Lesley Reed	4/4 (Joined January 2024)
Maddie Burr	4/6

Appendix 2

Summary of statutory policies approved in 2023/24

Child protection & safeguarding	Attendance	Health and safety
Whistleblowing	Admission arrangements	Children missing education
Teacher's pay	Careers guidance	Premises management
Capability of staff	Charging and remissions	Sex and relationships education
Behaviour	Looked after children	Governors' allowances
Equality information and objectives	EYFS	
SEND	Staff conduct and grievance	
Supporting pupils with medical conditions	School uniform	

Appendix 3

Governor training in 2023/24

Governor	Training attended
Sam Jacob	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Anne Murdoch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion• Good governance• SWALLS governor conference
Catherine Bernie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Tom McAuslin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headteacher performance management• Safer recruitment
Megan Brown	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A
Christine McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headteacher performance management
Lesley Reed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headteacher performance management• New to Governance 1&2• Finance for governors
Maddie Burr	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NGA Young Governors Network
Charlotte Wilshire (Clerk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• West Berkshire clerking seminars• Governorhub annual conference• Handling complaints• AI in governance• National Association for School and College Clerks – National Certificate in Clerking and Governance Practice

All governors completed Safeguarding and Prevent training as part of their statutory duties

Appendix 4

Governing board self-evaluation questions

RAG rating guidance

This guidance is designed to help governing boards respond to NGA's 20 self-evaluation questions.

- We recommend that boards use a red, amber or green (RAG) rating system to respond to the questions.
- Each member of the board should provide individual responses.
- Select the most appropriate RAG rating using the descriptors given below.

Board culture and practice

Self-evaluation questions	Descriptors	
1. Governance culture The governing board is a committed team that works well with senior leaders and the governance professional (clerk to the board).	Our board is a team which collaborates with senior leaders and the governance professional; we have the time required to carry out the role, our meetings are well attended, we undertake training and development and visit our school.	✓
	Our board is developing as a team and mostly manages to give the time required to carry out the role with most meetings being quorate; some of us undertake training and development and are able to visit the school.	
	Our board is not yet a team and can struggle to find the time to carry out the role with some meetings not being quorate, and few of us manage to undertake training and development or visit our school.	

<p>2. Leadership</p> <p>The chair is elected annually, leads with integrity, is supported by a vice chair and ensures the board stays strategic and does not shy away from making the right decisions for the school.</p>	<p>We elect our chair and vice chair annually following a nomination and election process which allows the board to consider if the nominee(s) have the right qualities to lead our board.</p>	
	<p>We elect our chair and vice chair annually but there are not usually other candidates.</p>	
	<p>We are grateful for anyone willing to take on the roles.</p>	
<p>3. Governance professional</p> <p>The school employs a dedicated governance professional with an up-to-date job description who supports the board with independent advice and guidance.</p>	<p>Our governance professional is qualified, is up to date with current legislation and practice, administers and advises the board with skill – we couldn't do without this.</p>	
	<p>Our governance professional schedules and minutes meetings with skill but does not advise our board.</p>	
	<p>Our governance professional has other roles within the school and would benefit from training and development.</p>	
<p>4. Skills and diversity</p> <p>Succession is planned, the recruitment process is designed to ensure new board members are recruited to fill skills gaps and ensure diversity of knowledge, experience, perspectives and approaches. (Equal split between green and amber)</p>	<p>We undertake a skills audit regularly and use the outcome to inform our succession planning, recruitment strategy and training and development; recently we have focused on diversifying our board.</p>	
	<p>We undertake a skills audit when we need to recruit but have yet to use it to inform succession planning, training and development; we struggle to find people to commit to the role but are thinking more about diversity.</p>	
	<p>We have not carried out a skills audit recently; our board is long-standing and stable and appointing more diverse people is not a priority.</p>	
<p>5. Induction and ongoing development</p> <p>There is a quality induction programme in place for new board members and a culture of ongoing governance training and development. (Equal split between green and amber)</p>	<p>All new board members get a comprehensive induction and can access quality training and development for areas where the board needs to learn and develop.</p>	
	<p>New board members are given information and meet the chair and headteacher; board members generally identify where they need training and development.</p>	
	<p>New board members learn on the job; our board knows what it is doing and doesn't need training and development.</p>	

<p>6. Collaboration Those governing are committed to collaboration and the sharing of best practice.</p>	Our board is well informed, attends network meetings and other relevant events so it is aware of new developments; we have learned from others and shared our practice.	Green
	Our board does its best to keep up with best practice and tries to get to meetings and events that would enable collaboration.	Yellow
	Our board is experienced and has decided to focus solely on our school.	Red

Board structure

<p>7. Size The governing board is the right size with a proportionate committee structure. (Equal split between green and amber)</p>	We have the right number of people around the table for the board to undertake its strategic functions and to enable delegation to the committees we need.	Green
	We have not yet got the right number of people around the table: there are not enough people to delegate responsibilities effectively OR there are too many people and so some are not making a meaningful contribution.	Yellow
	We have not yet made time to review the size of our board and evaluate our committee structure.	Red
<p>8. Delegation Committee terms of reference are up to date, are comprehensive and the work undertaken is not duplicated.</p>	We review and revise our committee terms of reference annually to ensure that we are working as efficiently as we can.	Green
	There is some duplication of our work and we have yet to ensure our terms of reference are constructed in a way that means this does not happen.	Yellow
	We have not reviewed our terms of reference properly for some time and they do not reflect the work we undertake at committee level.	Red

Core functions

<p>9. Values, ethics and culture The governing board and headteacher have agreed the school's values which are evident in policies and practice, ensure ethical behaviours and underpin a healthy culture across the school.</p>	We have worked with the headteacher to review our values and regularly test that they drive ethical behaviour and a healthy culture.	Green
	Our values are long-established and we believe that they drive ethical behaviour and a healthy culture.	Yellow
	Our headteacher sets the values and we trust that they drive ethical behaviour and a healthy culture.	Red

<p>10.Vision The governing board and headteacher have established a clear and ambitious vision which describes what the school should look like in three to five years and what pupils will achieve. (one amber/red)</p>	Our board has worked with the headteacher and has consulted with stakeholders in establishing our ambitious vision for the next three to five years.	
	Our headteacher has a clear vision and we agree with it.	
	Our board has yet to look forward three to five years and think about what we would like our school to look like then.	
<p>11.Strategy Those governing have agreed with the headteacher a limited number of measurable strategic aims which need to be met in order for the school to achieve its vision; these aims drive the board's business. (one amber/red and one green)</p>	Our board has agreed a limited number of measurable strategic aims and progress with meeting these is reported to our board termly meetings.	
	Our aims are known but do not align with the school improvement plan and so it is not straightforward for the board to track progress being made.	
	Our board focuses on the school improvement plan; there is too much uncertainty to look further ahead than this.	
<p>12.Employer responsibilities The governing board acknowledges its employer responsibilities and ensures the development and wellbeing of the headteacher. (one green, one green/amber, one red)</p>	Staff wellbeing and development is a priority for our board; we engage with staff and use surveys and other data to monitor the effectiveness of our policies.	
	We are introducing staff surveys and other mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of our policies.	
	Our board relies on the headteacher to keep us informed about staff wellbeing and development; we trust them to inform us of any issues.	
<p>13.Accountability – quality of education Those governing hold the headteacher to account for the quality of education, ensuring school leaders develop, implement and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum which is taught effectively.</p>	We have had training on curriculum matters and have a good understanding of the principles that underpin our curriculum, its implementation and impact.	
	Our board is beginning to understand the principles that underpin our curriculum, its implementation and impact.	
	Our board has yet to build an understanding of the principles that underpin our curriculum, its implementation and impact.	

<p>14.Accountability – financial oversight Those governing have sufficient understanding of how the school’s funds are managed to hold the headteacher to account for the efficiency, sustainability and impact of the school’s financial planning and management.</p>	<p>Our board has a good understanding of how schools are funded and how our school manages its budget; several of our board members have detailed knowledge of budget planning and monitoring.</p>	Green
	<p>Our board has just enough people with an understanding of school funding, budget planning and monitoring.</p>	Yellow
	<p>Our board focuses on pupil outcomes and believes that financial sustainability should be of secondary concern.</p>	Red
<p>15.Accountability – stakeholders Those governing know their school, engage with its stakeholders and take into account their views when making key decisions and report on their work each year.</p>	<p>Our board knows the school well, actively engages with stakeholders and takes into account their views when making key decisions; we report on our work each year.</p>	Green
	<p>Some of our board members know the school and like going to events but systematic engagement with stakeholders is largely via the school’s leaders.</p>	Yellow
	<p>Our board finds it hard to find time to get to know the school well and relies on the headteacher to report what stakeholders think.</p>	Red

Compliance

<p>16.Statutory requirements Those governing are confident that the school meets all legal requirements and takes into account statutory guidance.</p>	<p>We are aware of our statutory responsibilities, take into account statutory guidance and are compliant with policies and procedures.</p>	Green
	<p>We think we meet most statutory requirements, aim to take into account statutory guidance and think we comply with policies and procedures.</p>	Yellow
	<p>There are so many requirements that it is hard to know if we are compliant or not.</p>	Red
<p>17.Managing risk Those governing are involved in the identification and assessment of key strategic risks. (one amber/green, one amber, one red)</p>	<p>We identify and review annually risks which may prevent us from achieving our strategic aims or of non-compliance.</p>	Green
	<p>We are in the process of understanding our role in managing risk.</p>	Yellow
	<p>Our school leaders manage operational risks; we have not made any assessment of strategic risks.</p>	Red

Evaluation and impact

<p>18. Evaluation of individual contributions A 360° appraisal process is used to evaluate the chair's effectiveness, and the chair or vice chair reviews board members' individual contributions and effectiveness each year.</p>	The chair undertakes a 360° appraisal, and the vice chair speaks to all board members individually about how they have contributed to the work of the board each year.	Green
	The chair is going to undertake a 360° appraisal this year and it has been agreed that they will speak to all board members individually about how they have contributed to the work of the board.	Amber
	Our chair and vice chair don't perceive a need to undertake appraisal or are too busy.	Red
<p>19. Evaluation of board practice The governing board undertakes annual self-evaluation and commissions an external evaluation every three years. (two green for self evaluation, one amber, one red for external evaluation)</p>	We self-evaluate annually and commission an external review every three years.	Green
	We self-evaluate most years and have discussed commissioning an external review of governance.	Amber
	This is the first time we have self-evaluated, and we have not yet commissioned an external review of governance.	Red
<p>20. Evaluation of impact Those governing are confident that the decisions the governing board makes have led to both improved outcomes for pupils and ongoing financial stability for the school.</p>	Our pupils' outcomes continue to improve and meet the highest expectations and our school's budget is balanced with a reasonable contingency.	Green
	Our pupils' outcomes are generally improving, and our school's budget is tight with minimal contingency.	Amber
	Our pupils' outcomes are not improving as much as we would like, and our school's current budget position needs to be more secure.	Red
<p>Summary Governance culture – Amber Leadership – Amber Governance professional – Green Skills and diversity – Green/Amber Induction and ongoing development – Green/Amber Collaboration – Amber</p>	<p>Summary Green Governance professional Delegation Accountability – financial oversight Evaluation of impact</p>	

Board size – Green/Amber
 Delegation – Green
 Values, ethics and culture –Amber
 Vision – Amber/Red
 Strategy – Green/amber/red
 Employer responsibilities – Green/amber/red
 Accountability – quality of education – Green/amber
 Accountability – financial oversight – Green
 Accountability – stakeholders – Amber
 Compliance – statutory requirements – Green/amber
 Compliance – reducing risk – Amber/red
 Evaluation of individual contributions – Amber/red
 Evaluation of board practice – Green/amber (self evaluation),
 Red for external evaluation
 Evaluation of impact – Green/amber

**NB: Due to governing board changes only 4 governors
 completed the evaluation**

Amber
 Governance culture
 Leadership
 Collaboration
 Accountability – stakeholders
 Values, ethics and culture

Green/amber/red
 Strategy
 Employer responsibilities

Green/Amber
 Accountability – quality of education
 Evaluation of impact
 Skills and diversity
 Induction and ongoing development
 Board size
 Compliance – statutory requirements
 Evaluation of board practice (self evaluation)

Red
 Evaluation of impact (external evaluation)

Amber/Red
 Compliance – reducing risk
 Evaluation of individual contributions
 Vision