

## **Governance Self Evaluation Process: Review of Chair's Performance**

As Chair of Governors of a local primary school, I have been asked to share our experience of conducting a 360 Review of the Chair's Performance.

In the context of a change of Head teacher and leadership of our GB in 2013, we have been pursuing an intensive strategy for self improvement. Due to actions in place which demonstrated the capacity to improve we were not 'stood down', but clearly it was necessary to transform governance at the school.

We began a rigorous programme of self evaluation and set up Governor Development sessions to ensure that all members of the GB would be fully informed about all aspects of the school. These are continuing and the required changes to the level of commitment expected of colleagues have had to be managed appropriately. The Chair's Role in this is of central importance, so it was considered that any ongoing self evaluation should include a performance review of the Chair's work.

We were able to source a useful document from 'The Key for Governors' website (an incredibly useful source of up to date information on every aspect of governance which we use regularly and find invaluable). Colleagues are asked to provide a judgement against 11 statements regarding the Chair's performance, choosing to 'Strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree'. There is a 'comments' box for each statement for further qualification of the choices made.

The document was sent to Governors electronically and completed forms returned to our school Finance Officer, who agreed to manage this on a confidential basis. The confidentiality of responses was important, since we were seeking honest judgements. The results were then collated and reported to the Governing Body as percentages. Any comments were summarised and formed part of the report back.

The outcome of our review was very positive. However, it did focus our attention on the different needs of colleagues. One example was a previous decision to streamline meetings in order to make them more effective in terms of time management. This had left some feeling that Ordinary Meetings in particular were becoming rushed, whilst others welcomed it. The ensuing discussion led us to be more conscious of the need to strike a balance in this regard.

As Chair I found this exercise to be extremely useful in that it helped sharpen my own thinking as to what the expectations of the Chair's role should be. I believe that it was a good way of providing the opportunity for colleagues to express a view which they might feel less able to put forward in a different context.

The Chair's Performance Review was very useful supporting information for our external Review of Governance, which we commissioned in October 2015 and we found it to be a very positive self evaluation tool. I am not certain that it is necessary to use it on an annual basis and I will be suggesting that we complete it bi-annually. Of course this choice would depend on the individual context and it could be most helpful to conduct it at an appropriate point where there has been a change of leadership, for whatever reason.