**External Review of Governance**

**At**

**Stoneydelph Primary School Tamworth 8602374**

**September 16th 2014**

**Entrust Governor Services**

**Reviewer R Mary Gale**

# Contents

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Focus** | **Pages** |
|  |  |
| Context / reasons for the review. | 2 |
| Evidence base for the review. | 3 |
| Interviews with Governors. | 3 |
| The review process. | 4 |
| Review questions and summary of responses. | 5-11 |
| Review of documentation. | 11-13 |
| The findings (under 9 headings) and overall judgement. | 13-16 |
| Suggested next steps | 17 |

## Context:

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| This external review of governance at Stoneydelph Primary school was commissioned at the request of the school to support their journey towards being a good school. The school was inspected by Ofsted 26th-27th February 2013 when it was judged as Requiring Improvement. The inspection report stated under the section “The governance of the school”: *The Chair of Governors leads the governing body well. Governors are well informed about the progress being made in the school and the issues that still remain. They have a good understanding of recent improvement and how pupil progress information compares with all schools nationally. They are involved in the management of performance and are aware that there is still some inconsistency in all staff meeting nationally accepted teaching standards. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance. They do not presently check teaching to help the school to iron out these inconsistencies. The governing body oversees the arrangements for the spending of the pupil premium and is aware of the positive impact of this, and other spending, on pupils’ achievement.*   * This is a larger-than-average community primary school. * Below-average proportions of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. * The school currently receives the pupil premium for an above average proportion of the pupil population. This is additional funding for pupils in local authority care, pupils with a parent in the armed services and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. * The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action and school action plus is above average. The proportion supported with a statement of special educational needs is below average. * The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.   **Following a monitoring visit by HMI on May 19th 2014 the following judgements were made.**  *Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection*  *Members of the governing body have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. During meetings and visits to school, governors ask pertinent questions about pupils’ progress and the quality of teaching. Senior leaders’ reports to governors identify exactly where further improvements are needed. In contrast, these reports do not always identify improvements in pupils’ learning. For instance, the reports do not always specify which groups of pupils are now making accelerated progress or the extent to which gaps between pupils in the school and pupils nationally have closed.*  *Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.* |
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**Key strengths identified in the review for the GB to protect and develop**

* Governors have a loyalty to, and a pride in, the school. They are keen to undertake their responsibilities in a professional manner. They are now more focused on evaluation of their own performance and impact. They are very willing to carry out their roles effectively. They report that they are “doers” and are reflective about their intentions.
* The committee structure has been restructured to enable more effective communication, monitoring of school performance and the reviewing of the impact of sound financial management on pupil progress.

## Evidence Base:

The evidence base for the review included:

* The school website.
* The Ofsted report and recent communication
* Governing body minutes and associated paperwork
* Raise on line and data dashboard
* Discussions with four governors***.***
* Instrument of Governance.
* School Improvement plan/ the post OFSTED action plan.
* Headteacher reports to Governors.
* Information booklet for parents.

## Interviews with the Governors:

* Interviews took place with the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors, the SEN governor who is the LA governor and a staff governor.
* The interview focused on questions from the all-party parliamentary group’s paper published in June 2012.
* A summary of the key points is included on pages 5 -11

## Review of the documentation:

* Review of documentation including the school development plan is summarised on pages 11-13.



**Twenty Key questions for a school Governing Body to ask itself**

Summary of findings following discussions with Governors at

Stoneydelph Primary school, Tamworth.

**Right skills: *Do we have the right skills on the governing body?***

1. **Have we completed and analysed a skills audit of our governing body?**

A formal skills audit is carried out annually for members of the business committee who have responsibility for the monitoring of financial matters in school. A reference to this skills audit can be found in the business committee minutes on 25th February 2014. This financial audit will need updating in the Autumn Term as new governors take up their roles on this committee.

However a general skills audit (see NGA website for example) of other members of the GB has not been carried out for some time. This needs to be carried out annually preferably each Autumn term. It will identify any gaps in the GB skill set, both in terms of training and in terms of expertise. Governors understand the need for there to be a review of the allocation of roles according to skills and have carried out informal reviews. This now needs to be formalised.

2. **Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?**

Yes. The GB ideally appoints to fill the gaps in skills following informal reviews in the current GB. Current roles and skills are matched to specific areas, e.g. a director of a local business supports the school business committee. Recent appointments include a retired school business manager who will support the business committee. The GB operates an informal buddy scheme so that new governors can work alongside more experienced governors in meetings. Parent governors are encouraged to support the GB and put themselves forward for appointment to utilise their recognised skills.

The GB is aware of the need to be precise when allocating members to committees to maximise their skills.

***Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?***

3. **Do we understand our roles and responsibilities and is this evident from minutes?**

Roles and responsibilities are identified throughterms of reference for the main GB and for two main committees ie the business committee which includes finance, premises and personnel issues and the curriculum and standards committee which manages teaching and learning including the scrutiny of data***.*** However they are out of date and need re-visiting to ensure they are fit for purpose, reflect the changing needs of the school and support current priorities.

The minutes reflect that governors understand their roles, but this evidence needs to be formalised through a review of these remits.

4. **Do we have a professional (properly trained) clerk, as opposed to a minuting secretary and do meetings run efficiently?**

Yes. The school has an agency clerk provided by the trading arm of the Local Authority (Entrust) to clerk the full GB minutes. She provides effective support for the GB due to her extensive skill set. She is efficient and effective in her role, producing comprehensive minutes with follow up action sheets. She regularly attendsgovernor clerk updates and briefings. The school has a member of staff who carries out the role of minute taker at committee meetings***.*** Meetings are run efficiently by the current chair of governors, committee chairs and the Headteacher supported by agency and school staff. Challenges are recorded clearly in main GB minutes.

5. **What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?**

The budget for governor training is included within the school’s main training budget. Governors are provided with information about relevant training and asked if they wish to attend and this is then booked; therefore governors attend training as and when required. A training grid for the GB is currently under development so that gaps can be identified and statutory training from a variety of providers undertaken as a result. Formal feedback from training courses is sometimes given to the GB as a whole but there is no consistent approach. Feedback also occurs informally.

The GB subscribes to the ***“***The Key” to support general school matters and is considering subscribing to the dedicated governor information service. The GB accesses “Optimus” resources and the chair of governors has accessed to the free resources on the NGA (National Governor Association) website. In the past, the GB have subscribed to the online “Modern Governor”. All of these sources of information support current approaches to governance and will inform future decisions. Members of the GB in the last three years have taken part in induction training, safer recruitment training, data training and in-house training. The majority of the GB have yet to access the NGA resources, many of which are available free of charge on the NGA website. They have researched national governor training.

6. **How do we keep informed about good practice from across the country and are we influenced by it?**

The school is part of the Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust. It has received accredited awards over the last few years for being a Dyslexia Friendly full status, UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools, Healthy Schools status, Active Mark and Basic Skills. Due to financial constraints some of these awards have not been renewed, but the principles remain evident both in policy and practice.

There is a formal networking and sharing of information with schools in the locality as part of the Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust. This is an active Trust which has commissioned external consultants to formulate peer to peer review materials and good practice guides. In addition support for the validation of teaching and learning and research on networking is well under way. Joint training days with local schools are organised where ideas are shared and issues discussed. The GB is influenced by the work of the Trust and recognises the impact the Trust has on the learning environment of their school.

The school receives regular updates through the governor LA information service. The Trust governor minutes are shared with the school GB to ensure priority actions are carried out. Members of the GB attend conferences where appropriate. Governors attend LA courses as the need arises eg the “Sharing good practice” conference. The Headteacher is an active member of the LA Primary Forum.

The information gained from all of the above influences subsequent decisions and actions.

7. **Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working? (Might we consider change in light of new flexibilities?)**

There are currently two committees- the business committee and the curriculum and standards committee- with additional sub committees which meet as the need arises eg the HTPM sub-committee and the Strategy sub-committee group. Previous committees have been rebranded and restructured into the two main committees resulting in a more streamlined GB. Consideration is being given to forming a new sub-committee- the Parent forum which would meet regularly to explore a variety of issues and feed into the Parent Forum connected to the Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust. The school committee structure is reviewed every October. The DfE has indicated that mandatory reconstitution under the 2012 regulations will be required by September 2015. The GB will be considering this in the Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 terms. They will seek advice from the LA on the reconstitution of the GB and act on recommendations. The current committee structure is fit for purpose.

8. **Does every member of the governing body make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the governing body’s performance?**

No. This is due to time constraints for some governors but this has improved. The current GB is becoming stronger and more effective. They report that they are “vocal and active”. It is composed of a number of members who have extensive skills, experience and knowledge. The majority of governors make valuable and useful contributions. They understand the importance of sharing responsibilities. At present the GB does not review its own performance formally on an annual basis. Informal reviews take place regularly but these are not evidenced. However they reflect on their actions and record these in “matters arising” and also take note of external validation and advice.

Future contributions from recently appointed governors are keenly anticipated.

***Strategy: does the school have a clear vision?***

9. **Have we developed long-term aims for the school with clear priorities in an ambitious school development plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed?**

The GB understands that a clear vision, consistent values and long term aims should be prioritised above everything to secure improvements. They acknowledge that a full formal and up to date review of the school vision and its aims is required so that all members including new members are clear about the long term vision for the school. This review has been informal up to this point. The GB is currently examining carefully the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which will contribute to a clearer vision for the school. They know that the vision needs to include a reference to maximising learning experiences for their pupils with an emphasis on happiness and security.

As the school currently is judged as “Inadequate” (moving swiftly to good) it is following a post Ofsted action plan/ SDP. The GB’s actions are included in this plan. This acknowledges the impact they have in reviewing this plan. They report that this plan is a “fluid, working” document. Through formal and informal discussions they contribute to the review of this plan. The decisions they make are influenced by the needs of the plan. All committees and their members are committed to driving forward the actions in these action plans and reviewing the impact of their actions. These informal actions are not always evidenced through a sound evidence base. The GB does not have their own action plan at present but they are keen to move forward with this and produce a plan that is ambitious with clear review dates.

Governors understand that in the past there has been a lack of evidence of the challenges they have made and a lack of evidence regarding how they have held the school to account. The current picture is very different with challenge and monitoring evidence being apparent in all main GB minutes.

10. **Does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing body’s activities and agenda setting?**

The GB has been fully involved in strategic planning and is now developing a long term matrix to produce a calendar of monitoring activities for the full GB and committees. Regular meetings will be scheduled into this calendar to address key issues for improvement. This matrix will support regular attendance by members of the GB at all meetings and visits to school for monitoring and challenge purposes. As the post Ofsted action plan is reviewed and further developed the monitoring activities, reviews and governor visits will be expanded.

There have been recent examples of challenge to inform financial decisions from the GB, these have included challenges with regard to the purchase of a new phonics scheme (Read write inc) and the “Numicon” maths resources and challenges over the staffing structure. The data set has also been modified as a result of challenge and advice from HMI to ensure that consistency and relevant accurate information is provided. This has result in changes in summary data being provided for the full GB in the Headteacher’s report to governors and the more detailed data reports provided for the curriculum and standards committee with particular reference to underperforming groups and the reasons for their success or otherwise.

***Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?***

11. **Do we understand the school’s performance data well enough to properly hold school leaders to account and is this evident in the minutes?**

Minutes of the main GB meetings now consistently reflect effective evidence of questioning or challenge by governors. They are aware of Raise-on line, the data dash board and the schools own internal data, but evaluation and comparisons with national results in the past have been discussed with the GB. In the past the detailed reports on data especially internal data and school matters received from the Headteacher have not been sufficiently scrutinised as there has been too much data provided and some members of the GB have felt overwhelmed. The data set has now been modified as a result of challenge from the GB and advice from HMI to ensure that consistency and relevant accurate information is provided. This has resulted in changes to summary data being provided for the full GB in the Headteacher’s report. The more detailed data reports are provided for the curriculum and standards committee with particular reference to underperforming groups and the reasons for their success or otherwise. This supports the growing body of knowledge of the GB in identifying improvements in pupils learning.

The Headteacher’s report to governors is extensive and comprehensive. It contains information on a range of school events including information on data; the GB know there needs to be more emphasis on reporting on teaching and learning outcomes. The DfE Governors handbook (January 2014) advises that “governing bodies, not head teachers, should determine the scope and format of the termly report. This will mean that they receive the information they need in a format that enables them to stay focussed on their core strategic functions” The GB has followed this advice to some extent and could give concrete examples where they had influenced the content of the Headteacher’s report.

Links with school staff are apparent eg the SEN link governors meets with the SENCO regularly to receive updates and query actions. This good practice is replicated in Maths, ICT, Literacy and safeguarding and child protection matters. School staff are invited on a systematic basis to GB meetings to report on their leadership responsibilities and are questioned by governors on a range of topics.

The roles and responsibilities of link governors are clearly defined. They gather information which supports their growing knowledge of the school they are able to update the GB and support new governors who are less clear of this role and need guidance and support.

This information is always shared formally with the full governing body on a regular basis through the minutes.

12. **How effectively do we manage the performance of the headteacher?**

The school has a Headteacher performance management committee and uses an external advisor to guide them in the process. There is one mid-year review meeting to evaluate the on-going performance of the HT. The current objectives are challenging and SMART. The process demonstrates rigour. Future objectives will continue to be challenging and driven by the SDP/post Ofsted action plan priorities. Governors know that performance management reviews for staff have been carried out and the impact of these reviews on teaching and learning.

The Appraisal policy (informed by the Education (School Teachers’ Appraisal) (England) 2012 has been adopted by the GB. The teacher career stages section. (Appendix 1) has been discussed and recorded.

The current Pay policy is fit for purpose and has been accepted by the school staff.

The updated model SCC Pay policy, provided on 5th May 2014 in the school e bag, available on the Entrust web portal 2014, has been adopted.

13. **Are our financial management systems robust and do we ensure best value for money that is linked to progress of pupils? (For example, are we involved in discussions about the impact of pupil premium spending and its impact?)**

Financial management is very effective. There is a balanced budget with a small surplus to address future priorities. There is an effective business committee that makes decisions about spending and reports regularly to the full GB. The GB is fully involved in discussions about the use of targeted funding and is clear about the importance of measuring the precise impact this spending has on eligible pupils. Money has been ring fenced to address the Post Ofsted action plan.

SFVS and the 3 year budget modeller have been completed with clear governor involvement. Scheduling of these meetings reflects key priorities where essential information is presented for discussion. Information on Benchmarking comparisons filters through to the GB but is not discussed in any great detail. This in depth discussion takes place in the business committee meetings. Information on the Sutton trust and the impact of Teaching Assistants and other support staff has been discussed.

The chair of the business committee meets with the school office manager to discuss finance issues. The school office manager is always happy to add detail and discuss the implications with governors. Information on Pupil Premium is gathered by the Pupil Premium governor. This information is then presented to the members of the full GB and discussed. Sports Premium funding is presented in a similar manner. Challenges with regard to best value for money are evidenced fully especially with regard to swimming provision. Procurement decisions are made using information provided by the Trust procurement group.

***Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?***

14. **How do we listen to and understand our pupils, parents and staff?**

Information on the school web page about the GB needs developing. It is good practice for names, photos, roles and aims of the GB to be available for all. There needs to be more communication with pupils. In future it is intended that Governors will attend school council meetings. Governors provide questionnaires for parents and review these and respond accordingly to queries. The resulting information is shared and feedback given to the full GB so that this information can be evaluated. Parent View is under-utilised. There have been formal and informal meetings with teaching staff and support staff allowing the governors to have a better understanding of the views of stakeholders. A staff well-being survey will be carried out in the near future

Informal conversations also take place with parents and queries responded to but the impact of this informal communication is not measured. It is acknowledged that community school events such as musical performances and assemblies are enhanced by governor involvement.

Links with the local church called St Martin’s are strong. There are also effective links with the

“turnaround team”, Families First and social services. Vulnerable pupils are well supported.

There are strong links with the Tame Cooperative Learning Trust- these will be further developed when the Trust Pupil School Council is fully established. Links with the school PTA called FOSS are currently being re-established. Support for parents has been provided in the past by South Staffordshire College through work-shops.

15. **How do we report to our parents and local community regularly?**

There are school newsletters on the school webpage, but no governor newsletters evidencing their impact of holding the school to account in the Governor section of this webpage.The school web page has a wealth of information for parents including curriculum information. There are press releases from time to time showcasing events at the school and celebrating success in sports or the arts. There are references to the local community in committee reports and in full GB min. In future this will also feature in summary form in the Headteacher’e report to Governnors.

Governors are keen to raise their profile and expand the range of information about their roles within school and the community.

16. **What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?**

The Headteacher attends meetings and takes part in a variety of networking opportunities with Tamworth Headteachers and with colleagues on the Primary Heads Forum.Joint training has been undertaken with other schools. There is close collaboration with the local council. A future proposed activity is for pupils to take part in November 11th Remembrance celebrations. Pupils take part in charity events supported by the GB.

Governors meet with other governors when they attend local training. This collaboration is further strengthened by links with the National Co-operative network through online web contact. In the past the school has also taken part in networking opportunities with the NCSL and supported leaders through schemes such as “Leadership Pathways”

***Role of Chair: Does our chair show strong and effective leadership?***

17. **Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair’s performance?**

No, but she is open to taking part in such a review.

18. **Do we engage in good succession planning?**

Discussions around succession planning have taken place and are formally recorded. The GB feels that the chairs of committee could step up to take fuller responsibilities if required. The future review of roles and responsibilities will further support succession planning. The GB is fully aware of the need to future proof sound practice. There is an informal buddy system where new governors are supported by more experienced members in meetings. They acknowledge that it takes time and patience to increase the knowledge base of new governors.There is an “open door” policy where members of the GB are able to speak to the Headteacher as the need arise. There is also regular and effective email contact.

19. ***Are the chair and committee chairs re-elected each year*?**

The Chair of Governors is re-elected every two years and the chairs of committees are re-elected annually. The GB is aware of the need to have robust processes in place

***Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?***

20. **How much has the school improved over the last three years and what has the governing body’s contribution been to this?**

The GB recognises that they are having a positive impact on pupil outcomes; this is evidenced through their reviews over time. They understand that that there needs to be a more formalised approach through a dedicated action plan and a schedule of monitoring and review activities over the school year.

There have been improvements over three years in how the school is held to account by governors. This journey was commenced prior to the Ofsted inspection. In addition there have been improvements in the school environment, the premises, ICT, reading, maths and the pastoral aspects of the school. Governors have identified, with the help of the SLT, future priority areas for improvements such as improving standards in writing. Members of the GB recognise that the Pupil Premium funding is having a positive impact on outcomes for vulnerable groups of pupils and disadvantaged pupils. There are dedicated clubs for these pupils eg the “one o’clock club” for KS 2 pupils who need support at the close of lunch time supported by well trained staff.

The GB has challenged the staffing structure and this was changed as a result. The outcomes of these changes are having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.

The pupil intake over the years has remained stable. (Sept 2014, 295-300) Some classes are up to or exceeded the PAN. Support for the school within the local community is positive.

It was reported that the Headteacher is very welcoming and actively encourages the support of the GB, and is keen to receive feedback. Communication is effective but not cosy. The GB and staff have ownership of the school. They are very proactive and are passionate about bringing about further improvements in teaching and learning able led by the GB and the SLT.

## Review of the documentation:

**Web-site**

The school has a website which is not compliant with the regulations in terms of the information required. There is a dedicated governor page which includes information on policies. In line with good practice this needs to be further expanded with roles, responsibilities, reports, aims and vision.

There is no up to date report on the Sports Premium or the Pupil premium.

The comprehensive description of the school’s curriculum enables parents to know what their children are learning term by term. The school reports on its KS 2 results. There is a full list of the school’s policies some of which are easily accessible. However some of these policies are out of date or lack review dates.

There are links to Ofsted which include the most recent Ofsted report (February 2013) and monitoring visit information (May 2014). There is a link to the most recent Data Dashboard information and additional school performance data.

The school’s statement on ethos is available prominently on polices but not as prominent as it could be on the home page of the school website. It is a however once acessed a clear statement. The school prides itself on being part of the community where pupils are encouraged to “Learn Together – Achieve Together” and that “Stoneydelph Primary School is a learning community that provides all children with the opportunity to develop as independent, confident, effective and responsible learners through an enriched, real and vivid curriculum”

**The Ofsted inspection report**

The school was inspected 26-27th February 2013

**Inspection judgements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overall effectiveness** | **3** |
| **Achievement of pupils** | **3** |
| **Quality of teaching** | **3** |
| **Behaviour and safety of pupils** | **2** |
| **Leadership and management** | **3** |

**The governance of the school:**

The GB has a number of confident and experienced members, who have a sound knowledge of the school and the local community. GB members are developing a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils’ subsequent achievement. They liaise with SLT to acknowledge the depth of debate and the clarity of information required in order to move the school forward on this issue. Some governors know the pupils individually. The majority of the governors understand how well the Pupil Premium funds are allocate. They have recently gained up to date information to enable them to have a clear picture of its impact on the outcomes for those targeted pupils. They ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures meet national requirements. This was recognised by Ofsted.

**Strategic planning**

This is a focus for development. Governors are becoming clearer about arranging meetings, and the scheduling of monitoring visits and calendaring them in advance in order to monitor priorities in the school development plan. Some dates and times of future meetings are confirmed at full GB meetings. The school is developing a matrix to produce a calendar of activities for the full GB and committees.

Minutes of meetings show that the GB has been involved with the SLT in the production of the SDP but evidence of effective monitoring and evaluation of the plan through a dedicated action plan with a review schedule is less clear. The Governors state that they need to formally review the school vision with all stakeholders in order to move the school on.

**Policies**

Statutory and many other policies are all available on the school’s website. Most are dated and information about when the policy was approved and future review dates are included on the majority of policies. Some policies are not current eg, the behaviour policy should have been reviewed in Autumn 2013; the Learning and Teaching policy was due for review in Autumn 2012, the Charges and Remissions policy is two years out of date- this policy needs to be reviewed on an annual basis. There is a consistency of approach to the formatting of these policies but it is unclear when each policy was approved and /or reviewed by the governors and school staff. GB minutes reflect a more up-to date picture of policy development than the web site.

**Instrument**

The current Instrument of government is held by the local authority and dated 30th July 2012 which came into effect on 31st August 2012. A copy of the instrument must be supplied to every member of the GB on appointment.

**Instrument of Governance:**

6 parent governors

3 LA governors

4 staff governors

3 community governors

2 foundation governors

The school has a trust entitled the Tame Valley Co-operative Learning Trust.

The body entitled to appoint foundation governors is the Tame Valley Co-operative Learning Trust. They are advised by school on suitable candidates.

**Attendance**

Attendance at meetings is generally good. Apologies are recorded in main governors’ minutes but not in all committee minutes. They are not recorded as ‘received’ and ‘accepted’ in line with best practice in committee minutes.

**Minutes**

There are records of meetings of the GB and committees. Minutes of the full GB consistently reflect due process. Apologies are recorded as received and accepted. The full GB minutes are consistently signed by the Chair of Governors. Committee minutes also need to show evidence of being signed off by the chairs of committees. Sometimes committee minutes do not always record formal acceptance of apologies or of these minutes being accepted as a true record. In the examples evaluated therefore minutes of committee meetings do not always reflect due process. Where meetings have been cancelled or rescheduled this needs to be recorded in the main GB minutes.

It is apparent that there have been a number of challenges during main GB meetings and the evidence of challenges and questioning is easily apparent in the minutes and related documentation. These are shown in italics. There is an action column in the main GB minutes and also an action sheet which shows what needs to be followed up. It is not clear whether governors participate actively in challenge discussions in committee meetings and in the smaller task groups that the school uses to keep momentum.

The governors report that they are becoming better informed about school improvement data and that they are becoming effective in using this knowledge to bring about improvements but this is not always evidenced in the minutes of committee meetings.

**Involvement in key developments**

The GB is now more proactive. There is now a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities of carrying out their task of providing strategic support and leadership for the school and most importantly holding the school to account for the progress and attainment of pupils.

## The Findings:

Comments are grouped under 9 headings. Links between the 20 questions used in the review and the 9 headings are shown in brackets. Findings from the review of documentation feed into the overall comments. It would be expected that sound governance will also ensure that sound clerking arrangements are in place for full GB and committee meetings. Where meeting minutes provide insufficient evidence there may be action points which arise associated with the clerking of these meetings.

Judgements for each of the 9 categories are WEAK, SOUND or STRONG.

1. **How well governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.** (Q 9&10)

Governance in this area is **Sound with some areas for development.**

Some governors can articulate the vision for the school. Some governors know the school’s main priorities for improvement.

Governors are aware of the ethos that they wish the school to promote and are passionate that this is recognised by all.

The GB as a whole is beginning to provide a strategic direction for the school as a result of their improved understanding of their roles and greater engagement in the decision making processes.

Governance would be even stronger if:

All governors can articulate and evidence how they effectively monitor the work of the school and its practices including policies to support the ethos of the school.

GB had an opportunity to explore the longer term vision for the school and evidence this.

**2. How well governors contribute to the school’s self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses.** (Q 7.8 &14)

Governance in this area is **Sound with areas for development**

The HT provides the GB with a range of information including external views and performance data to enable the governors to have confidence in the school’s evaluation of its performance.

Although governors do not always formally record the evaluation of their own effectiveness, they understand their school and can articulate their evaluations

Governors have a balanced view of the school’s main strengths and priorities for improvement.

Governors understand the importance of measuring impact and can evidence this through the main GB minutes.

Processes are in place to systematically monitor and evaluate the post Ofsted Action Plan.

Governance would be stronger if:

All Governors systematically and regularly record when they visit school to update their knowledge of the school and the impact of the visit.

Governors are able to articulate and evidence the impact of their work on outcomes for pupils.

Governors regularly evaluated their performance/ effectiveness and evidenced this in their minutes.

**3. How well governors support and strengthen school leadership including developing their own skills.** (Q 7, 16 & 18)

Governance in this area is **Sound.**

Governors have supported the Headteacher over staffing issues and the restructuring of the staffing team.

There is an effective and trusting relationship between the senior leadership team and the GB.

Governors are clear how leadership and management responsibilities are divided among the SLT and middle-leaders.

There is evidence of support for a wide range of professional development for all staff.

There are clear and robust procedures in place for recruitment.

Governance would be stronger if:

Governors had a monitoring schedule which would articulate their high expectations for the school.

Governance structures are kept under review to ensure they reflect school and national priorities.

Governors were tracking the training they have undertaken on a matrix and evaluating the impact of their training and the skills that need enhancing/developing.

**4. How well governors provide challenge and hold the Headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils’ achievement and pupils’ behaviour and safety.** (Q 11)

Governance in this area is **Sound**

Governors receive a range of data from the Headteacher.

Governors are familiar with the data dashboard and Raise-on–line and have an understanding of them. This is reflected in GB discussions.

Governors understand that the school uses a range of interventions and can make reference to the most significant.

Governors are able to effectively discuss pupils’ behaviour and safety but this would be even more effective if this was evidenced through impact reports.

Governance would be even stronger if:

Governors evidenced the challenges they make on the quality of the monitoring evidence available on teaching and the impact quality teaching has on disadvantaged groups of pupils.

5. **How well governors use appraisal systems, including the appraisal of the Headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management.** (Q 12)

Governance in this area is **Sound.**

Governance in this area is sound because governors manage the process of appraisal with rigour.

Governors understand the connection between Continuous Professional Development and teaching & learning. They select the external adviser.

Appraisal objectives of all teachers contribute towards school development plan priorities.

Governors are have reviewed the updated Appraisal and Pay policies.

Governance would be even stronger if:

Governors could clearly evidence their clear and consistent monitoring of the impact of appraisal systems through a governor monitoring schedule.

6. **How well governors ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively.** (Q 13)

Governance in this area is **Strong**

The school has a balanced budget.

Numbers on roll and projections inform future planning for at least 3 years. Governors regularly monitor control mechanisms.

There are explicit links between school improvement priorities and the budget which are openly discussed.

The minutes reflect monitoring of the impact of major spending decisions.

Governance would be even stronger if -

The GB evidenced more Benchmarking challenge in the minutes.

7. **How well governors operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved.** (Q 3, 4 & 5)

Governance in this area is **Sound with areas for development.**

FGB and committee agendas reflect statutory responsibilities. The agency clerk ensures agendas reflect statutory compliance in full GB meetings.

Some members of the GB have engaged in relevant training and development when appropriate to support the school’s priorities.

Governance would be stronger if-

The GB developed an annual cycle of timely discussion, reviews, monitoring and approval of key compliance requirements.

Terms of reference were reviewed annually.

The school web site was updated and the GB monitors this for compliance.

A GB training matrix was developed to maximise training opportunities.

8. **How well governors engage with key stakeholders.** (Q 14, 15 & 16)

Governance in this area is **Sound with areas for development.**

Surveys of parents and pupils are undertaken. The school website has a range of useful information for parents and carers. There is evidence of informal engagement with parents.

There have been recent meetings with teaching staff and support staff allowing the governors to have a better understanding of the views of stakeholders..

Governance would be stronger if-

Governors met regularly with pupils and reported the impact of these meetings to the full governing body.

Governors contributed to the school web page with newsletters and information on their roles to raise their profile.

9. **How well governors use the Pupil Premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.** (Q 20)

Governance in this area is **Sound.**

Use of Pupil Premium is reported to the GB and to the data sub-committee.

There is a Pupil Premium governor.

The GB recognises that the Pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on outcomes for vulnerable groups of pupils.

Governors understand the aim of Pupil Premium and can point to examples of how it is spent in their school.

It would be even stronger if:

The website provided an updated clear outline of how the money is being spent.

Governors had a clear, timely and consistent view of where attainment and progress gaps exist using external and informal data and what the school is doing to close these gaps.

**Based on the above findings, it appears that governance at Stoneydelph Primary school Tamworth is Sound overall with areas for development.**

The GB has demonstrated an increased level of commitment and support for the school over the past three years. Key governors work hard to support the school. They are determined that Stoneydelph Primary school will become a better school, not only because of the achievement of its pupils but as a result of the nurturing and caring ethos of the school. Governors are keen to ensure that they improve their skills, knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities through further training and development.They acknowledge that they should seek ways to demonstrate and evidence how their work impacts on raising pupil achievement and attainment. They seek to move forward- evidencing the answers to questions/ challenges they have set/made.

## Suggested next steps

The Governing Body of Stoneydelph Primary school, Tamworth, in order to address areas for development needs to carry out following actions:-

1. Revisit the instrument of governors and consider whether it is appropriate, given that new flexibilities allow for this to be varied.
2. Use the analysis of the skills audit of the full GB to plan further relevant training and as a succession-planning tool.
3. Carry out a formal annual review of the governing body’s performance and include points for improvement in a governor development/action plan (Include formal review dates on the matrix)
4. Revisit terms of reference for each committee to ensure they are fit for purpose and evidence this review
5. All meetings regardless of status must have an agenda, be dated accurately, minuted accurately in line with accepted protocols following the example of the main GB minutes.
6. Formalise when policies are accepted and record dates for future reviews.
7. Review the school web site termly to ensure it meets statutory requirements; consider expanding the governor information page.
8. To aid strategic planning, revisit the school vision and long term aims and evidence this review and its impact on governor engagement.
9. Carry out an annual completion of a 360 degree review of the Chair’s performance and act upon the findings.
10. Engage formally with stakeholders through increased visits to school to meet with the school council at least termly/, improving the governor information webpage/ school governor notice board, carry out a staff well-being survey and then evidence the impact of this increased formal engagement.
11. Complete a date matrix for governor involvement/monitoring showing activities, meetings, school monitoring visits and reviews through-out the year.
12. Determine what specific information, through this governor monitoring schedule, eg at the end of each term or half-termly progress and attainment data, end of year data in July- both external and internal, is required from the Headteacher and class teachers in order for governors to evidence holding the school to account.
13. Be rigorous in asking questions during all meetings so that all governors fully understand the context, the rationale for and the impact of their actions.
14. Evidence governor challenge and questions in **all** minutes not just in main GB minutes.
15. Evidence governor contributions towards the school’s self-assessment
16. Explore the resources on the NGA website and consider becoming official members to enable access to further resources and training.

R Mary Gale Sept 2014

We would like to extend our thanks to the Headteacher and members of the GB for their contribution and openness during the review interview process.