

Extracts from recent Ofsted reports on governance

• In the past, the governing body was not provided with accurate information about the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, governors have only recently begun to challenge senior leaders. They recognise that the school has improved since last year but are overgenerous about the school's current strengths.
• Governance is not fully effective. Governors have not held leaders to account for the quality of education. Their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overgenerous.
• Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well. Over time, governors and leaders have not ensured that the additional funding for these pupils is spent effectively. For the past three years, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been below or significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
• Since the previous inspection, governors have not been effective in their strategic role. Over time, they have not held leaders to account effectively for pupils' outcomes. As a result, standards have not improved sufficiently.
• Governors do not demonstrate a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including pupils' outcomes. Their views on the school's effectiveness are too generous. Governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding is well spent. They have not checked the impact of leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
• Leaders and governors do not regularly or incisively analyse the impact of pupil premium funding on pupils' progress. Records related to behaviour are not monitored rigorously enough.
• Governors do not monitor logs relating to safeguarding or behaviour regularly or effectively. The logs lack consistency and organisation.
• Governors do not regularly monitor the impact of spending on the current pupils across the school. The assessment system is not fit for purpose in helping them to do this.
• Governors were unaware that the school's website was not compliant at the time of the inspection. They showed a good understanding of the impact that the sports funding has had even though this information was not available on the school's website.
• Scrutiny of governing body minutes reveals that, currently, governors do not hold leaders to account as well as they could. For example, they do not yet ask searching questions about pupils' attainment and progress.
• Until very recently, governors have not had an accurate view of the school's performance. This has limited their ability to check on the impact of leaders' work to improve the school.
• Strengthen the capacity of governors to provide the right degree of challenge to assure themselves that pupils from different groups and in different year groups are achieving as well as they should be.
• Most of the governors are new to the role and although they have regularly received information on the performance of the school, they do not yet have the skills they need to analyse this, or to use it to form their own views of the school's effectiveness.

Although governors are aware of some of the school's most important priorities, they have not ensured that leaders set clear and ambitious targets to improve outcomes for pupils. This has limited their ability to hold leaders to account for the impact of their work. As a result, some aspects of the school's performance have not improved quickly or consistently enough.
Next steps for the school leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that: procedures for recording information about safeguarding are reviewed to ensure that records are always maintained consistently, systematically and with the necessary detail
The role of the local advisory board, and how it operates alongside the trust board, is unclear. In the past, leaders have not been held fully accountable by the trust for securing improvement The role of the local advisory board (LAB), and how it operates alongside the trust board, is unclear. School leaders feel that the LAB is 'finding its way' in determining how it can support fully the school's improvement. The trust feels that the LAB is not charged with making important decisions. Inspectors' scrutiny of the minutes of recent LAB meetings shows that they are fully involved in the work of the school. The lack of clarity over this matter does not reflect well on the overall governance of the school. Inspectors' discussions with senior leaders confirmed that, generally, external funding for disadvantaged pupils and for physical education (PE) and sport is used effectively. However, they are unaware of how the impact of this funding is monitored routinely by those responsible for the school's governance. During the first day of the inspection, serious shortfalls were identified in the arrangements to safeguard pupils. Not all checks have been made or recorded when recruiting adults to work with children. Checks were not carried out to show that members of the LAB were suitable. During the inspection, leaders were given time to resolve these weaknesses. By the second day, they had confirmed with inspectors that all necessary checks and precautions were in place. The single central record and staff training are complete and up to date. clarifying the duties of the local advisory board and the trust board so that all those involved in the governance of the school contribute fully to its improvement. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
Governors are ambitious for the school to improve further and play an increasing hands-on role in holding leaders to account for pupils' progress. For example, they undertake 'deep dive' monitoring activities, such as mathematics learning walks, to check on the validity of information provided by leaders.
Governors understand how pupil premium funding is used to benefit disadvantaged pupils across the school.
Governors are skilled and committed. They have a good understanding of the challenges facing the school and of the diverse community which the school serves. Governors involve themselves fully in the leadership of the school. They provide good challenge to leaders through their committee structure.

They are reflective and forward thinking. They have used links with partnership schools effectively to improve the senior leadership and management team.
Governors are keen volunteers who are passionate about their role in the school and the role of the school in the local community. They devote time regularly to visit the school. They have a good understanding of the ethos of the school and the impact of the school's work in relation to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
Your supportive and effective governing body is rightly very proud of the progress the school has made in recent years. Governors are reflective and strengthen their skills through recruitment and training. They visit the school often and have an accurate understanding of the school's work and areas for development. They value the open and transparent relationship they share with you and the rest of the staff. Governors fund places in the breakfast club for disadvantaged pupils and attendance for the majority of pupils is now at least in line with national levels.
Governors are very aware of the previous dip in outcomes in 2016 and the need to sustain this journey of improvement.
Governors benefit from being able to draw upon their extensive experience of the school, gained over several years, and being able to apply their professional backgrounds to fulfilling their responsibilities. They attend training to fill any gaps in their expertise. They are knowledgeable about the day-to-day running of the school and apply this effectively to their strategic planning and regular meetings with leaders. They oversee how the pupil premium grant is allocated and regularly review this so that the difference it makes to individual pupils is clear. Governors are working hard to boost communications with parents and to recruit more parents on to the governing body. Regular refresher training ensures that staff and governors are aware of, and fulfil, their safeguarding responsibilities, and can apply their training to their day-to-day routines.
Governor training has improved and governors are more involved in the life of the school than in previous years. Their visits to the school are more frequent and focused. They meet with leaders and teachers to discuss the quality of teaching and are increasingly aware of what constitutes effective teaching and learning.
Leaders and governors understand the risks that pupils face in the local area and more broadly. Leaders and staff are vigilant and ensure that pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe inside and outside school.
No group of pupils underperforms compared to their peers. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are very well supported because all staff understand those pupils' needs and incorporate that understanding into their planning. Disadvantaged pupils do much better than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, and have done so for at least the past two years.
The areas for improvement which were highlighted in the previous report have all been fully addressed.
The headteacher, leadership team and governors have addressed the key priorities for improvement identified by the previous inspection. Governors carry out appropriate checks on safeguarding during the school year.

• Governors reflected on judgements made at the time of the last inspection and have improved their skills of governance. They continue to support the school and are beginning to ask leaders more challenging questions. For example, governors asked leaders about the difference that pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is making on pupils' progress. Governors visit the school more regularly and look at pupils' work alongside senior leaders to gain a better understanding of the school's work
• Thorough safeguarding checks are carried out when recruiting staff, governors and volunteers. The single central record of pre-recruitment checks for staff is up to date and checked regularly by school leaders and by the safeguarding governor.
• Governors are knowledgeable and are routinely involved in the work of the school. They offer you strong strategic support. You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are complete.
• The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. At the time of the inspection, the school did not have information about their sports funding on the website, but this was rectified during the inspection.
• Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children, and attendance.
• Inspectors reviewed a range of documents including safeguarding information, the school's pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and other school policies and documents.
• Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers (who are also the inclusion and the early years leaders), the year team achievement managers, subject leaders, newly qualified and trainee teachers, the school business manager, the personnel officer, the behaviour and safeguarding officer, the attendance and inclusion officer, the vice chair of the governing body, another governor and the local authority improvement adviser.
• Leaders provide high-quality support for pupils who join the school part-way through their secondary education, including the considerable numbers of pupils who join the school from overseas. Minutes from meetings of the governing body show that governors keep a close eye on the attendance, well-being and achievement of these pupils.
• Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.
• A culture of positive challenge is provided by the governing body, which supports and holds the senior leadership team to account. Governors have a clear understanding of areas of focus for the school and assist you and your senior team in your drive for improvement.
• Governors understand the school's priorities well and provide leaders with strong support. They recognise the improvements the school has made in

pupils' attendance, including the greater involvement of parents. Governors understand challenges that remain around pupils' achievement in reading, and the progress of the most able pupils. Governors visit the school regularly to check leaders' actions for themselves. For example, a link safeguarding governor scrutinises documents related to staff suitability checks and discusses additional support to vulnerable pupils. Link governors work alongside external health and safety auditors to ensure that the site is safe for pupils. Governors recognise the need for additional external validation to help them develop a precise understanding of the school's strengths and next steps.	
Governors hold leaders to account effectively. They bring skills and expertise to the school, including from financial and educational backgrounds. They work together well to make sure that the school provides a good standard of education. Governors are a visible presence in school, and visit regularly. Their visits to the school focus on different aspects of the school development plan. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Members of the trust ensure that governance is strong. Governors attend training and other events organised by the trust. They share ideas, learn from the expertise of others and use these partnerships to moderate their work. Consequently, governors keep up to date with current legislation and have a clear understanding of how to fulfil their role.	
Governors and members of the trust collaborate well to support the school. The trust provides hands-on support to leaders and provides strength to the new leadership team. The governing body understands well the information presented to it by leaders. Governors provide a broad range of expertise and are committed to helping the school to deliver effective provision. Governors visit the school regularly and question leaders about the effectiveness of new strategies.	
Governors receive and scrutinise timely and relevant reports from the school, which they use strategically to support improvement. Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors challenge school leaders at an appropriate level. They expect leaders to secure pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils. Governors understand clearly their responsibility for monitoring the use of the pupil premium funding. They receive regular reports on the impact of this funding on pupils' progress and attainment.	
Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They are competent and well-informed. They have a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses in the school. In meetings, they provide support and challenge to school leaders. Governors ensure that they are appropriately trained. They regularly check recruitment processes for staff. All governors visit the school and talk to pupils to ensure that they feel safe in school.	
Governance is extremely effective in securing the school's continuous development. Trustees and members of the local advisory body are committed and aspirational for the school to be a centre of educational excellence. Trustees and members perform their defined roles extremely well. Trustees are highly skilled and provide excellent strategic direction for the school. The local advisory body offers school leaders guidance that contributes to school	

improvement. Consequently, leaders at all levels are held accountable for their areas of responsibility, and this drives this successful school. Trustees meticulously check all aspects of the school's work and seek the views of pupils, parents and staff to inform them of the school's effectiveness. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and offer school leaders constructive advice to ensure that high standards are maintained. They are well informed and so hold school leaders to account with the utmost rigour. Plans are underway to further develop parents' engagement with the school. The school benefits from a wealth of expertise from members of the local advisory board. This has facilitated improvements, such as enhancing the teaching and learning of science at the school.

- Trustees have overall responsibility for governance. They delegate day-to-day monitoring functions, mainly around standards, teaching and pupils' behaviour and attendance, to the local governing body (LGB).

Governors check on the quality of teaching and analyse pupils' progress information. They invite middle leaders to report at committee meetings, in addition to the headteacher and senior leaders who regularly report on their work.

Twice a year, members of the LGB and some trustees spend a day in the school. They attend lessons, speak with leaders, other staff and pupils. In addition, some visit the school regularly to check on different aspects of the school's work. As a result, they know the school well and hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding, governors and staff are aware that there are changes happening in the local area. They are alert to these and report any signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk.

- The governing body is well informed about the school and shares leaders' ambitions for pupils' success. Governors bring a broad range of skills and experience to their roles and are committed to improving the school. Governors understand the school's strengths and areas for further development well. They have good professional knowledge of leaders' work and the actions they are taking to make the required improvements. Governors provide leaders with challenge and support.

Governors discharge their statutory duties with diligence. They have a good understanding of safeguarding. Meeting notes show that leaders give comprehensive information about safeguarding to governors so that they can be assured that the school's work to keep pupils safe is effective.

- Governors and leaders work effectively together. They are ambitious and determined to make sure that the school continues to improve. Governance has significantly improved since the previous inspection. New governors bring a range of expertise to support their work as well as extensive experience of school governance.

Governors visit the school frequently. Assigned governors check on the various aspects of the school's work and leaders' progress in meeting school improvement targets. They meet with leaders, staff and pupils, and scrutinise documentation. Through these checking processes, and scrutinising leaders' and local authority adviser reports, governors gain a thorough understanding of the school's effectiveness.

Governors play a key role in securing improvements. They provide leaders with a good balance of challenge and support. They made excellent strategic

decisions in appointing a strong senior leadership team that has the necessary capacity to improve the school.

- Governors and leaders ensure that the impact of additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is measured against their outcomes.

- Governors hold leaders to account and ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are checked regularly. Any recommendations are routinely followed up. You work productively with outside agencies to offer additional support for pupils and families, as necessary. There are secure processes in place for dealing with pupils who leave the school. This ensures that they are safe and information is passed on. You follow up concerns, and there is a well-established culture of safety in the school.

Safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements. Staff are trained through a comprehensive induction programme, and have regular ongoing training. The checks you carry out when recruiting new staff are in line with legislation. These ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. The single central record of staff is comprehensive, and is checked by leaders and governors. Pupils said that they feel safe, settled and happy in school. They report that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that when problems arise, adults help them sort these out quickly. Parents and carers reported through the online survey, Parent View, that their children are well looked after and safe at school. You have ensured that designated safeguarding leaders are trained to the highest level. You are mindful of local risks, and have delivered workshops for parents. These are designed to help parents understand and prevent potential risks to their children's welfare.