

# TWENTY QUESTIONS



At its summer reception on 9 July, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Education Governance & Leadership, together with NGA and Ten Governor support, published 20 key questions for governing bodies

**The questions had** been consulted on at the very well-attended meeting of the APPG in May. The aim of this one page of questions is to prompt every governing body to challenge its own practice and, if the answers derive from a genuine discussion based on the evidence available, decide when and how improvements can be made.

Governing bodies, especially those which are struggling, can be overwhelmed by too much irrelevant information, and we did not want this to become a great big handbook on how to be effective that would be overlooked. The questions do NOT attempt to cover every aspect of effective governance, give the answers, or replace existing good guidance. Of course governing bodies have to use their limited time efficiently, and we offer these 20 questions to that end; there are other resources available to help governing bodies improve their practice, and NGA members seeking more support are encouraged to contact us.

## Twenty key questions for a governing body to ask itself

### Right skills

Do we have the right skills on the governing body?

1. Have we completed a skills audit of our governing body?
2. Do we appoint governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?

### Effectiveness

Are we as effective as we could be?

3. Do we understand our roles and responsibilities?
4. Do we have a professional clerk and run meetings efficiently?
5. What is our training and development budget and does every governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?
6. Do we know about good practice from across the country?
7. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing body conducive to effective working?
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?

### 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?

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

### 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?
12. How effective is our performance management of the headteacher?
13. Are our financial management systems robust and do we ensure best value for money?

### 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?
15. How do we report to our parents and local community regularly?
16. What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

### 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?
18. Do we engage in good succession planning?
19. Are the chair and committee chairs re-elected each year?

### 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? 📖

Below: Members of the group celebrate publication. Emma Knights, NGA chief executive; Janet Tomlinson, managing director of services at Tribal (who sponsored the reception); Neil Carmichael MP, chair of the APPG for school governance and leadership; Sir Michael Wilshaw HMCI, guest speaker

