**The Hackney school improvement journey – for governors**

Within a context of increasing scrutiny, tightening budgets and growing global competition, effective school governors are seen as more vital than ever to school improvement. It is necessary for each governing body to have a relentless focus on improving the outcomes of all students, which in turn requires governors to be confident experts, committed to using both formal and informal opportunities for training and development. Only by keeping up with constantly changing legal and educational requirements can they support and challenge school leaders. This will also give governors a growing range of skills and experience, making their roles more rewarding.

Based on the McKinsey school system improvement framework, this document attempts to share the experiences of Hackney school governors, with a development journey specifically for governors. It is a generic framework to encourage self-reflection, and will only be effective to the extent that governors tailor it to their particular circumstances; regardless of; whether their governing body is constituted to 2012 or to 2007 regulations, its size, the school type, federation status, or if it’s a free school or within an Academy chain.

To use the framework governors should start by picking the development stage in the journey (one of the four columns) that they feel is most appropriate to them and their school, this may or may not relate to their current Ofsted judgement. There is an assumption that each stage incorporates all or most of the preceding stages e.g. if you’re using the final column then you are already doing all or most things from the preceding three columns. This journey is also intended to be aspirational, encouraging governing bodies to be constantly seeking to improve.

Please send all suggestions and additional resources to enquiries@hasga.org.uk. All files are online at <http://ow.ly/yPjy0>.

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| **Common across the journey** |  |
| * Understand all statutory obligations
* Know expected standards and how they are evidenced
* Constantly assessing GB effectiveness
* Understanding data and using it appropriately
 | * Carefully reviewing the budget and ensuring value for money
* Building governor skills through formal and informal training
* Actively embedding the school ethos
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| **Poor to fair** | **Fair to good** | **Good to great** | **Great to excellent** |
| ***Achieving the basics*** | ***Building strong foundations*** | ***Shaping a professional team*** | ***Constant-improvement with peers*** |
| ***Functional membership and structure**** Decide appropriate governance structure
* Ensure full membership
* Achieve attendance & contribution through monitoring & challenge
* Establish a simple shared vision
* Assign link governors
* Ensure all governors complete a basic induction
* Stable membership
* Invite external assessment of GB activities and weaknesses e.g. School Improvement Partner (SIP) or National Leader of Governance (NLG)

***Basic admin**** Develop & agree year planner, ensuring sufficient notice of meetings
* Agree on the structure, content and process for an *“Ideal”* Headteacher’s (HT’s) report
* Identify & train 3 best-qualified governors to conduct HT performance review in a well-organised & timely way
* Ensure GB agree all policies & follow them
* Draft agendas & minutes go to chair and HT at least 2 weeks before meeting. Sent to full governors 1 week before meeting
* GB is aware of existing resources & toolkits (e.g. NCTL, NGA, APPG, GLM etc.) & has expert support using them
* Meetings have trained clerks
 | ***Building the right team**** Skills audit of governors to identify gaps
* Strategic recruitment to fill gaps, against skills, representation & diversity criteria
* Good induction process for all governors
* All *‘Link Governors’* complete appropriate basic training in their area
* HT performance review panel all appropriately trained
* Understand that it’s a corporate body; all governors are equal & understand their roles & responsibilities – i.e. difference between delegating responsibility to one governor or committee and Chair’s action

***Effective meetings**** 5 meetings a year and at least 2 visits a term (once outside meetings)
* 3 well-attended, formally-minuted & high-performing sub-committees (finance, personnel, curriculum)
* Clear Terms of Reference for full GB and all committees, re-visited each year
* All papers sent with agenda 7 working days before meeting
* Draft minutes distributed within 5 working days of meetings
* Performance data given to Curriculum Committee in a clear format
* Policies & procedures understood, followed & regularly reviewed on a rotating schedule using the latest DfE list of statutory & non-statutory policies & timetable for review
 | ***Developing a stronger team*** * All governors visiting school regularly for learning walks, classroom & link visits
* Bespoke training programmes for individual governors & whole GB
* Strong self-assessment of GB activities, priorities & weaknesses
* Regular external assessment of GB activities, good practice & weaknesses e.g. SIP, mock Ofsted, external governor or other expert
* GB members can articulate how they challenges & supports school leadership
* School middle-management present to GB regularly
* Annual rotation of at least one member of the performance management panel.
* Build tier of middle leaders within school
* Proactively test policy into practice
* Succession planning for both GB & school leaders
* GB adapts & customises existing resources & toolkits for itself
* Governors known to staff, parents & children, both in-school & online
* GB works in partnership with the LA & others to improve educational provision for the most disadvantaged & at-risk groups
 | ***Self-improving*** * Ambitious & holistic vision that all stakeholders buy into, & help drive forward
* Governors are self-motivated learners, seeking out training & information to share with GB, peer learning is common
* Membership & structure reviewed regularly
* GB can obtain relevant evidence (from the school, RAISEOnline, Fischer Family Trust, employers, parents & learners etc.) about its impact
* Every member of the GB trained & confident in the HT performance review process
* SMART targets for the HT align with SDP
* Consider rotating roles and responsibilities every 3 years

***Outward-facing**** Governors help improve other schools e.g. going for National Leaders of Governance, sharing best practice, visiting other schools & GBs
* Support SLT/SMT in working to improve other schools
* All appropriate minutes available on school website
* Support other schools; mentoring, training, interacting with other school GBs
* Clear understanding of GB strengths & weaknesses. Help improve governance across the system
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***Supporting documents and further reading***

The below index links to series of online folders (within this online folder <http://ow.ly/yPjy0>). Each folder contains relevant documents under each category listed. This is just the start, over time this is intended to become a comprehensive, curated and usable repository for all governors.

You can navigate around the documents either using the index / links to online folders below, or by searching for key words.

Please do not edit or remove any documents, but do please send us both feedback and any relevant additional resources you think might be missing. If sending a document please put the file name in this format: ‘Category – Title – Source – Year’ e.g. Self evaluation – 10 key questions – DfE – 2010.

Note that some documents appear in more than one category.

* [**MAIN FOLDER**](http://ow.ly/yPjy0)
* [Chairs](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1522pwgkz8ma1t5/AAC4RC6oypvwJZBIi4yVv4Toa)
* [Code of Practice / conduct](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/m0qsmn54cqn2izu/AAAt1DXGJGhpK60frJeU1n5Ja)
* [Data](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/m0qsmn54cqn2izu/AAAt1DXGJGhpK60frJeU1n5Ja)
* [Exclusions](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/36h44x0ezucub5l/AABhnb800mleWgWM1lo5vRWda)
* [Finance](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ppe6ik5vfcxwefh/AABX4XgX6qzWzyA4KuX_CrVna)
* [Induction](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sxns5h4mxn0ckxf/AAD7jl8J5Ea81QymDB-ei8Y7a)
* [Non-statutory](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qozmidtpe4gzj6t/AADqyxL7Sw_v8hChqKqdAzGGa)
* [Ofsted](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wf4av9dhp1w8cfs/AACTzhM_Q0HoeW2fA8QeI-V2a)
* [Parents](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kbfzwh5zqjn4nw7/AACtD81CS9wghxNHnsj3NOgma)
* [Performance management / appraisal](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f74xtz26kyxsz6t/AADaXWJ5qHEMCI5r40Bzk6pxa)
* [Personnel issues (disciplinary, capability or absence)](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ytqo422rd01phqk/AAAmhl4qfo41oDbPGlr98YJPa)
* [Pupil Premium](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4qy5c5rbyfgd9fg/AAC5fKzVpgWzVQfmUABCzdwga)
* [Self-evaluation](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1p31ywmhnqqpn3s/AABv0-1zImIIx7mBp7QDPc6ja)
* [Senior leader recruitment](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bwamm7ma1ktunnz/AABYTM1NRnrPXfL4dD8P6s9Pa)
* [Skills audit](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4lwq0mnwq8rh2hk/AABXt7dvQaVSk6EUA2mejrp-a)
* [Statutory policies and documents](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wehvboh8kltvibe/AACHErJ37zIB1FlAeZCMGIhYa)
* [Terms of reference (ToRs)](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jqx0d7jk487vywm/AABfV6BoOnYDLQK4Q3JcItVpa)

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