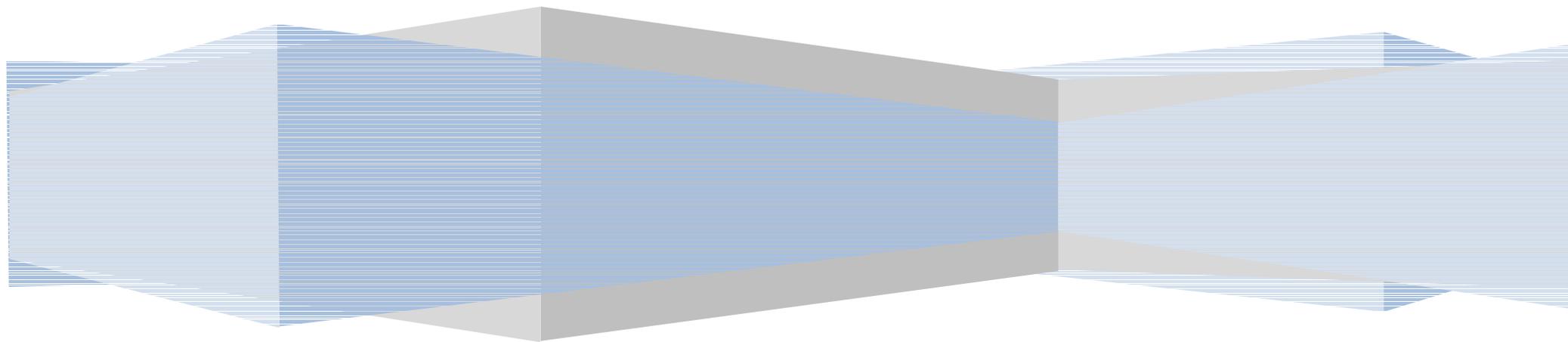




GLM Quality Mark for School Governance

Guidance to Governing Bodies



Guidance for Schools and Academies

Thank you for your interest in achieving the Governor Mark. This document will guide you through the process and help you understand what the Assessor will be looking for.

It may be that you are not yet ready to put in an application. You will nevertheless find useful guidance here as to how to go forward with the right sort of evidence that will strengthen your application when it is ready to be submitted.

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Step by Step Guide

Step 1 Preparing to apply for a Governor Mark assessment

Welcome to Governor Mark, which aims to celebrate good governance in schools and academies.

This is a rigorous assessment process and we would want governing bodies to know in advance that they will be asked to show evidence of school improvement, impact on pupil outcomes, records of the governing body supporting and challenging the school and evidence of shared strategic leadership.

When you have completed the evidence grid and impact statements you need to submit them together with the other documents listed on the application form to info@glmpartnership.org. All documentation should be provided electronically, and this will help the process happen more quickly.

Good governance does not exist in isolation. If governance is good there will be evidence of demonstrable impact of the governing body on school performance and outcomes for pupils. Your main objective in a successful Governor Mark application is to show this impact.

Most schools will follow **Routeway 1**, which is the standard application process. We aim to complete the whole process in three months from receipt of the application and first set of evidence, and the cost in the in 2012 is £645.

Schools who follow **Routeway 2** will be schools with a clear agenda for development. This process will include an initial assessment and a report to support the governing body to address areas of improvement. The process then allows time for the work of the governing body to impact on pupil performance and for this to be documented. This routeway includes a follow up assessment, and costs £1,050. This may be particularly useful for governing bodies of schools causing concern or in an Ofsted category, and we would expect costs to be spread over two financial years.

Step 2 Application

There are six documents you need to provide, and an assessment cannot be arranged until all this is received:

- Application/contact details
- Evidence Grid
- Impact statements
- RAISE online report (schools without RAISE should provide other external data where available)
- Self-Evaluation documentation (The SEF or whatever alternative is in use)
- Ofsted report (or date of inspection)

The key to good evidence is that it shows the impact of the governing body on the work of the school.

Step 3 Acknowledgement

After the application is received we will acknowledge receipt, and tell you the name of the assessor who will visit the school. We will also inform you of the date of the Assessment Panel meeting to which we plan to bring the report on your governing body.

Step 4 Assessor Contact

The Assessor will contact the school through the email address you provide and will arrange a date for the visit. They will almost certainly ask for further information to be sent. The precise list of further documents will vary from school to school, but you can expect to be asked for governing body minutes from the previous 12 months, reports from the Headteacher, external professional reports, such as from a school improvement partner or equivalent, and the school improvement plan if it can be sent as an attachment.

Step 5 School Visit

The on-site visit should take place within three months of your application, and lasts for three hours. The Assessor will indicate who they would like speak to during the visit. This may include:

- Chair of governors
- Headteacher
- Clerk
- Chair of committees, particularly those who deal with school improvement
- One or two relatively new governors
- The clerk
- Governor (or a representative from the committee) linked to safeguarding

The assessor will be willing to meet any other governors who would like to contribute.

Step 5 Outcome

After the visit the assessor will report back to the Governor mark Assessment Panel, which meets six times a year, towards the end of each half term.

You will be notified of outcome of the process following the next meeting of the awarding body, and you will know the date of this when the visit is arranged. The assessor will not be able to confirm the outcome, nor his or her recommendation, on the day of the site visit.

Part 1 – Evidence Grid

Probably the most important aspect of the grid is the indication of evidence in support of your application. Please try to indicate on the grid itself what the evidence is, e.g. minutes, headteacher reports, agendas, reports from local authority inspectors or advisers, any development plans, and so on. A list of reference codes in the evidence grid makes the assessment much harder and time consuming

You should submit one pieces of evidence to validate each sub criterion judgment, although in many cases you will have more than one example. Experience shows that most governing bodies do too much work, producing more evidence than is needed. The Assessor will ask for more if necessary, and their task is to help you focus on what you should provide. Pieces of evidence can be duplicated for different sub criteria and will need to be referenced carefully to ensure clarity for the assessor. It is important to help the assessor to understand how the evidence is relevant to the judgment being made.

Instructions for completing the grid.

There are two sets of criteria, 'Ethos and Working Practice' (1-3) and 'The inspection Framework' (4-7). All eight criteria can be used as the basis of governing body self evaluation, but for a Governor Mark assessment it is important that you follow the following guidance.

A Governor Mark application only needs sections 4-7 of the evidence grid to be completed. Sections 1-3 remain available for use as a self-evaluation tool for governing bodies.

You need to provide evidence against each of the sub-criteria assessing whether you are:

FC – Fully Compliant with the standard

PC – Partially Compliant with the standard

NC – Not Compliant with the standard

BP – If you believe that you are not only compliant but exhibit a Best Practice example

- **You should aim to achieve full compliance in the majority of criteria to meet the standard.**
- **Some sections require more evidence than others.**

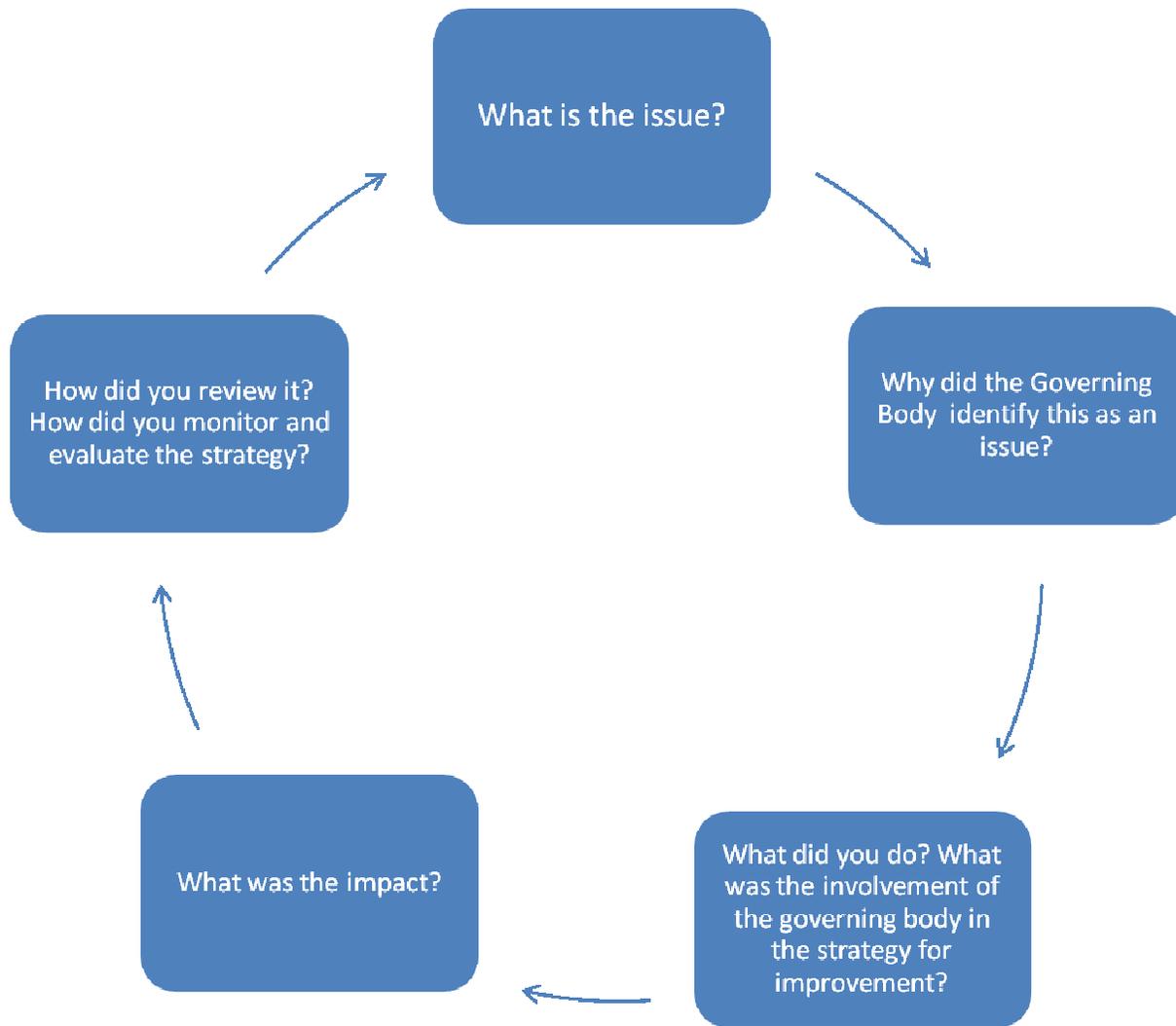
Part 2 – The influence of the governing body

This part of the assessment requires the governing body to identify how they have influenced achievement in the school.

You will need to write an impact statement for each of the 3 areas listed on page 10. Each statement should be limited to a maximum of 1000 words.

Guidance:

The assessor will be following the audit trail shown below.



Guidance on completion of Impact Statements

The evidence against the sub and main criteria provide the first indication of the quality of governance. However it will be the governing body statements on its contribution to school improvement and outcomes in the Areas of Impact that are likely to be decisive. It is necessary to have a good body of evidence for each of the three areas (see the Standards Document for more detail) of impact demonstrating that the work of the governing body makes a difference in terms of outcomes.

Assessors will use the following factors to assess impact:

- Whether there are positive trends leading to sustained good performance
- Whether targets (objectives or goals) have been set and have been achieved
- The number of areas for consideration that have been addressed and where achievement has been made
- Whether the school is benchmarking its outcomes with other schools.

Plus:

- The quality of the audit trail between governing body activity and results.
- The extent to which the governing body works with and supports other schools in their locality.

This is particularly important. **Avoid descriptive narrative.** If the question raised in the assessor's mind is 'so what?' it is likely that the evidence trail is weak. Examples of weak impact statements would include those that focus on governing body organisation ('we revised the terms of reference for the Curriculum Committee...') rather than outcomes for children ('we decided that maths was a priority...').

A good impact statement will focus examples of governing body work that has made a difference in their school.

The assessor will consider the outcome and track the audit trail to the work of the governing body and the evidence suggested in sections 4-7 of the evidence grid.

Impact statements

The three impact statements required are:

1. School Improvement

Assessors will start their work by using RAISE, the Ofsted report and any self-evaluation documents to identify the key improvement priorities for the school. Your impact statement should focus on an improvement priority (or priorities) and show how the work of the governing body has supported the raising of pupil performance standards in the school.

2. Pupil Safety and Wellbeing

The safety and wellbeing of pupils is a very important aspect of the work of the governing body. You should write about governor engagement with the life of the school and the wellbeing of pupils. You should include the way the governing body meets its obligations for child protection and safeguarding.

3. Partnership and Community Engagement

The connections between the school and its community, as well as growing partnerships and collaborations between schools are a growing feature of the education world. You should aim to show in the statement the way your governing body engages with these links and partnerships, and the impact this has on the quality of both yours and partner schools.