

# Effective Challenge & Support in School Governance

...but what does effective challenge actually look like?



# Aims & Objectives

- Focus on the different ways that Governors can provide Challenge & Support
- Provide practical advice & examples of good practice
- Allow opportunity for you to discuss issues with your peers and ask questions



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# **The Governing Body has the collective and legal responsibility for the strategic management of the school.**

Governing bodies have a range of legal responsibilities and powers, including:

- Ensure the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners & staff
- Being accountable for the general conduct of the school
- Promoting high standards of educational achievement
- Setting appropriate internal school targets for pupil progress,
- Managing the school's budget,
- Making sure that the curriculum for the school is balanced and broadly based, whilst also ensuring the school's preparation for Curriculum for Wales 2022
- Appointing the head teacher, deputy head teacher and regulating staff conduct,
- Agreeing and overseeing the implementation of School Policies *Governors Guide to the Law*

*....but what does this look like and how does it work?*

# Common Inspection Framework



**Will there still be a new inspection framework for schools and PRUs from September 2021?**

We are working with our headteacher reference group and other stakeholders to develop our inspection arrangements for maintained schools and PRUs from September 2021. We will share more information with you during the next few months.

**IA 1**

**Standards**

**IA 2**

**Wellbeing and attitudes to learning**

**IA 3**

**Teaching and learning experiences**

**IA 4**

**Care, support and guidance**

**IA 5**

**Leadership and management**



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# Evidence of Impact - Governors should:

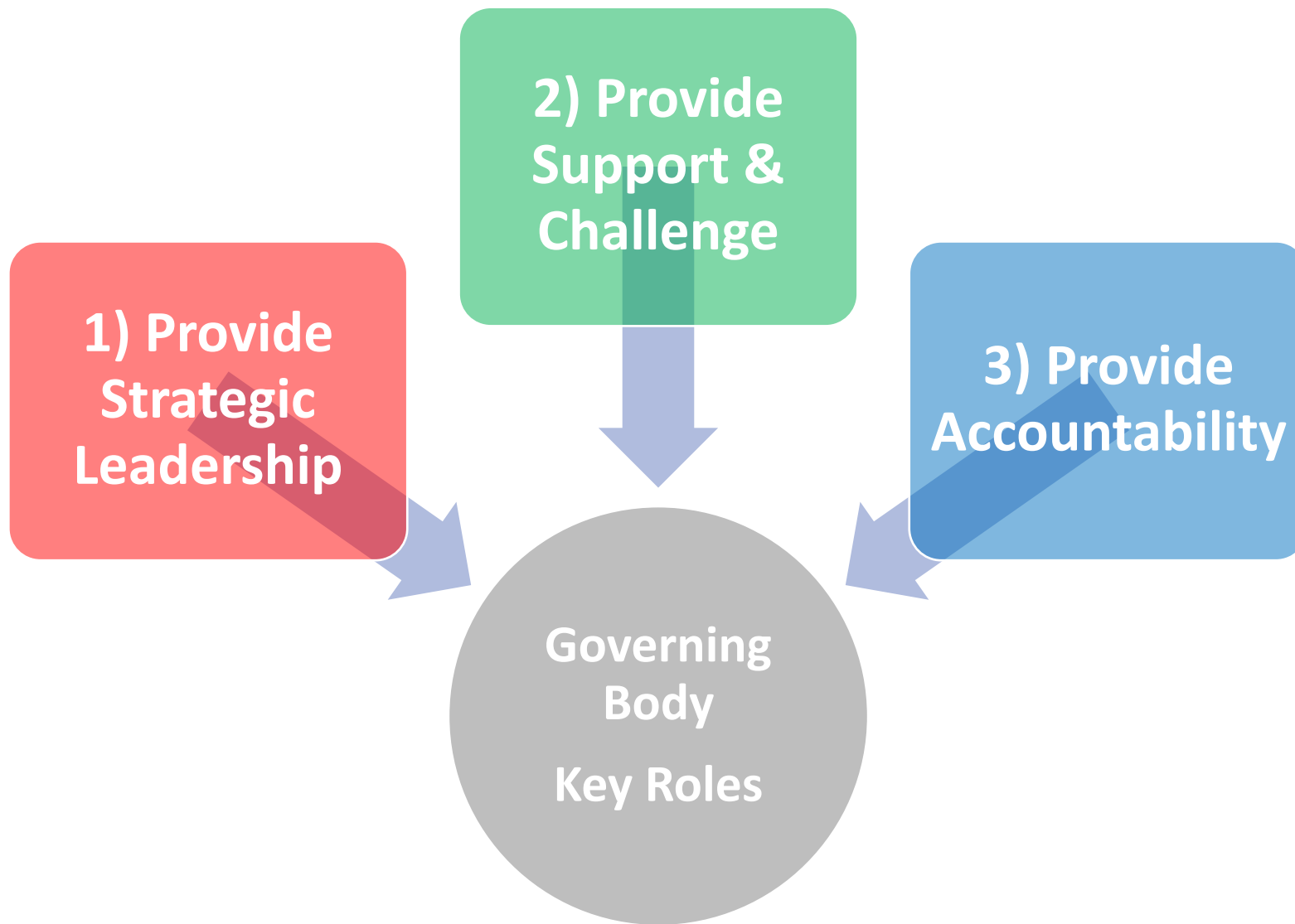
- Understand their roles
- Be informed about the performance of the school and issues that affect it
- Provide a sense of direction for the work of the school
- Support the school as a critical friend
- Hold the school to account for the standards and quality it achieves
- Take reasonable steps to inform pupils, members of staff, parents/guardians or any other person of the procedures if they wish to make a complaint or appeal
- Make sure that the complaints are dealt with promptly by disinterested parties



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## How do Governors Provide Strategic Leadership

**School governing bodies play a key role in improving standards within schools, they:**

- **have a duty to promote the highest standards of educational achievement, ensuring all pupils make at least good progress;**
- **must establish the strategic vision & goals for the school; and**
- **must regularly review the targets and improvements made.**

# How do Governors Provide Strategic Leadership

A strategic role means the governing body decides what they want the school to achieve and set the strategic framework for getting there.

It should establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school;
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives;
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives; and
- reviewing progress towards achieving the aims and objectives.

Governing bodies will need to monitor progress and regularly review the framework for the school in the light of that progress.

*Governors Guide to the Law*



## How do Governors Provide Challenge & Support

**The governing body shall act as ‘critical friend’ to the head teacher.**

*A critical friend can be defined as a trusted person who asks thought provoking questions and offers constructive critiques of a person’s work as a friend.*

*A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward.*

***The friend is an advocate for the success of that work.***

Monitoring the effectiveness and impact of these strategies over time.

Recognising and celebrating the achievements of the school.

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ASK QUESTIONS**

Agree strategies to bring about school improvement in these areas.

Recognising & questioning where the school is not achieving as it should.



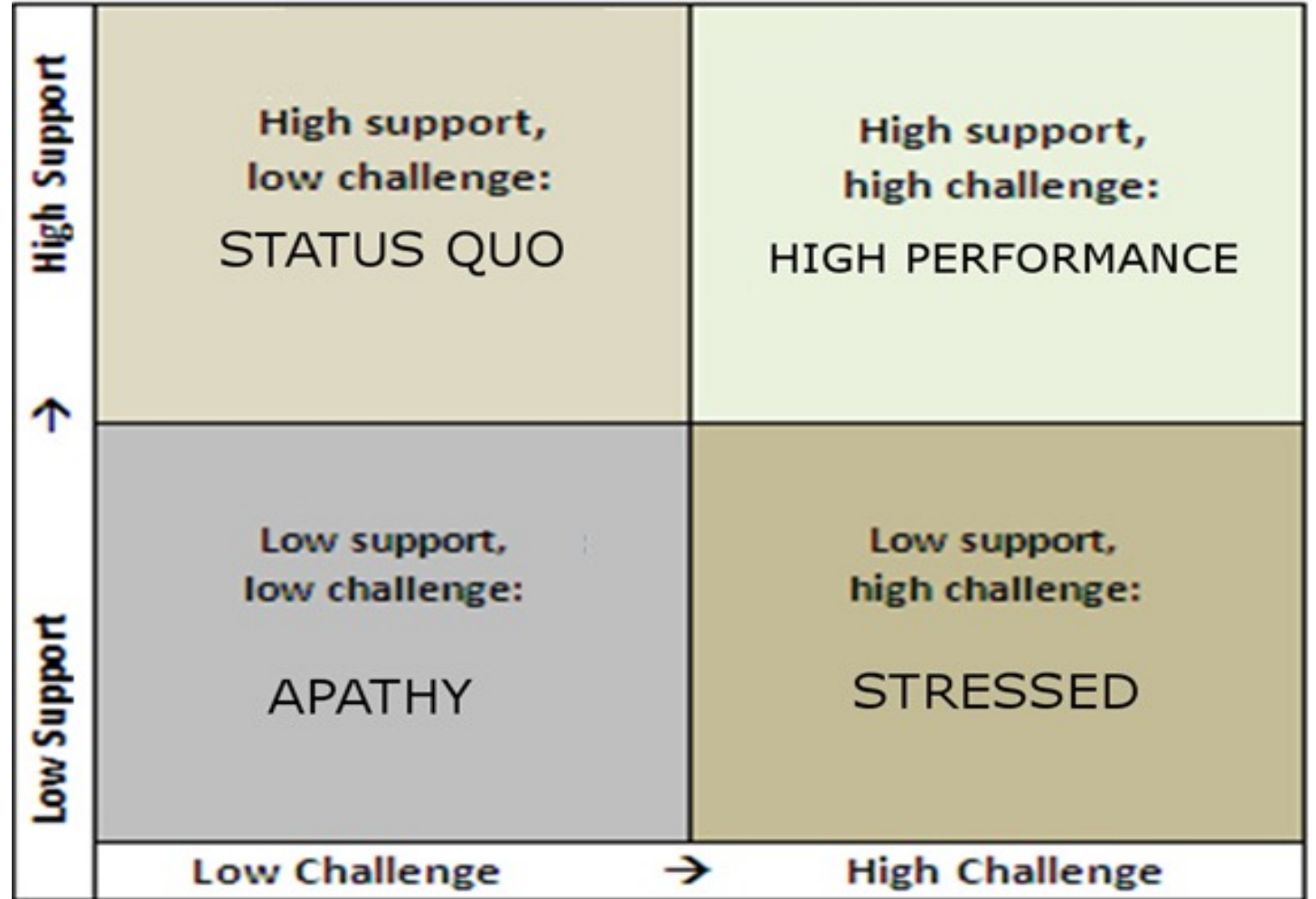
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# How do Governors provide Challenge & Support?

Where do you think a Governing Body should sit on the Support & Challenge?



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## How do Governors Provide Accountability

The headteacher is accountable to the Governing Body, both for the functions performed as part of the headteacher's normal role and for powers delegated by the governing body.

**The Governing Body is responsible for the school.**

To provide this accountability, governors need to ask challenging questions on the basis of robust objective data. Governors should not just rely on information provided by the headteacher, they should also:

- Scrutinise school progress data,
- Gather first hand evidence to verify what they are told,
- Ensure that reports provide appropriate and sufficiently detailed information, including explanation and justification of proposals and actions.

## How do Governors Provide Accountability

- **Set aims and objectives for the school,**
- **Agree priorities for improvement**
- **Set policies for the school for achieving the aims and objectives**
- **Set targets for achieving the aims and objectives**
- **Understand progress towards the targets**

**The governing body is accountable for any decisions and actions taken and shall be prepared to explain its decisions and actions to interested persons.**

# Addressing issues of under-performance

Governors must evidence that they:

“use relevant management information about performance to address underperformance and to set objectives and targets that are strategic priorities”

How do we know  
about  
underperformance?

If its teaching that  
needs to be  
improved, how can  
governors bring about  
improvements?

If it's the headteacher  
that needs to  
improve, what can  
governors do?



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# What structures do we need to ensure we are effective?

## Full Governing Body Meetings

Complaints Committee

Performance Management Committee

Link Governors

Finance Committee

Health & Safety / Premises Committee

Standards & Curriculum Committee

What is missing?



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## Keeping learners safe

The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002



## Guidance

Guidance document no: 272/2021  
Date of issue: April 2021  
Replaces guidance document no: 270/2021

# SAFEGUARDING

2.7 Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the well-being of children in accordance with this guidance, and for monitoring compliance with them.

2.8 Governing bodies of maintained schools, governing bodies (corporations) of colleges, and proprietors of independent schools must ensure their respective organisations:  
have effective safeguarding (including child protection) policies and procedures in place...

They should also ensure that the DSP, the designated governor and the chair of governors undertake training in inter-agency working that is provided by or to standards agreed by the SCB, as well as refresher training to keep their knowledge and skills up to date, in addition to basic safeguarding training.

<https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>

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# Additional Reading & Support

## **Welsh Government: Education & Skills** [www.gov.wales/education-skills](http://www.gov.wales/education-skills)

- Education in Wales: Our National Mission [www.gov.wales/our-national-mission-0](http://www.gov.wales/our-national-mission-0)
- School Governance Resources, Welsh Government [www.gov.wales/school-governance](http://www.gov.wales/school-governance)
- Governors Guide to the Law [www.gov.wales/school-governors-guide-law](http://www.gov.wales/school-governors-guide-law)
- HWB: Learning & Teaching for Wales [www.hwb.gov.wales](http://www.hwb.gov.wales)
- My Local School: Publically available School Data [www.myllocalschool.gov.wales](http://www.myllocalschool.gov.wales)
- ESTYN [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

## **Central South Consortium** [www.cscjes.org.uk](http://www.cscjes.org.uk)

- Governors: [www.cscjes.org.uk/governors](http://www.cscjes.org.uk/governors)
- Knowledge Bank: A repository regional education resources [www.cscjes.org.uk/resources](http://www.cscjes.org.uk/resources)
- Weekly Bulletin / Termly Newsletter / Social Media [www.cscjes.org.uk/communications](http://www.cscjes.org.uk/communications)

## **Local Authority**

- Website, Newsletters & Social Media
- Governor Support Team
- Governor Associations

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dysgwr***

***Empowering schools to  
improve outcomes for  
all learners***



[www.cscjes.org.uk](http://www.cscjes.org.uk)



<http://bit.ly/CSCbulletin>



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# Any Questions?

Contact your LA Governor Support

Contact us at:

[CSCGovernor@cscjes.org.uk](mailto:CSCGovernor@cscjes.org.uk)

[www.cscjes.org.uk/governors](http://www.cscjes.org.uk/governors)



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# WORKBOOK TASKS

## Intro & Information



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# WORKBOOK TASKS

## Self Review



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Warm  
Up  
Task

As a governing body, how do you  
improve the quality of the work of your  
school?  
How do you know if you are successful?



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## Provide Strategic Leadership

How would you and your governing body answer the following questions?

1. How well do you consider the school is doing? What are standards like?
2. How frequently is the School Improvement Plan discussed? What are the current priorities in the SIP?
3. If standards are good, what evidence do you have that they are good?
4. How do you monitor progress in attainment?
5. Does the governing body ever challenge the progress that's being made with the SIP?
6. Does the governing body ever evaluate the impact that SIP priorities have on learners?
7. Does the governing body consider these to be the right priorities?
8. How well do different groups of pupils achieve? (e.g. MAT, eFSM, EAL, ALN, boys v girls)
9. What impact have the governors had on improving outcomes for pupils and how do you know?
10. How have you challenged under achievement?



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**Provide Support & Challenge**  
**How would you and your governing body answer the following questions?**

1. How supportive are the governing body - attendance at meetings, classroom visits (with SLT), learning walks (with SLT), school trips, concerts, fairs, fund raising
2. What training has the governing body received to ensure it is able to carry out its statutory duties effectively and in line with current policies?
3. How does it carry out its role of challenging the school? What has the impact been of any challenge? How do they know?
4. How do the governors find out the views of all stakeholders? What have they done as a result?



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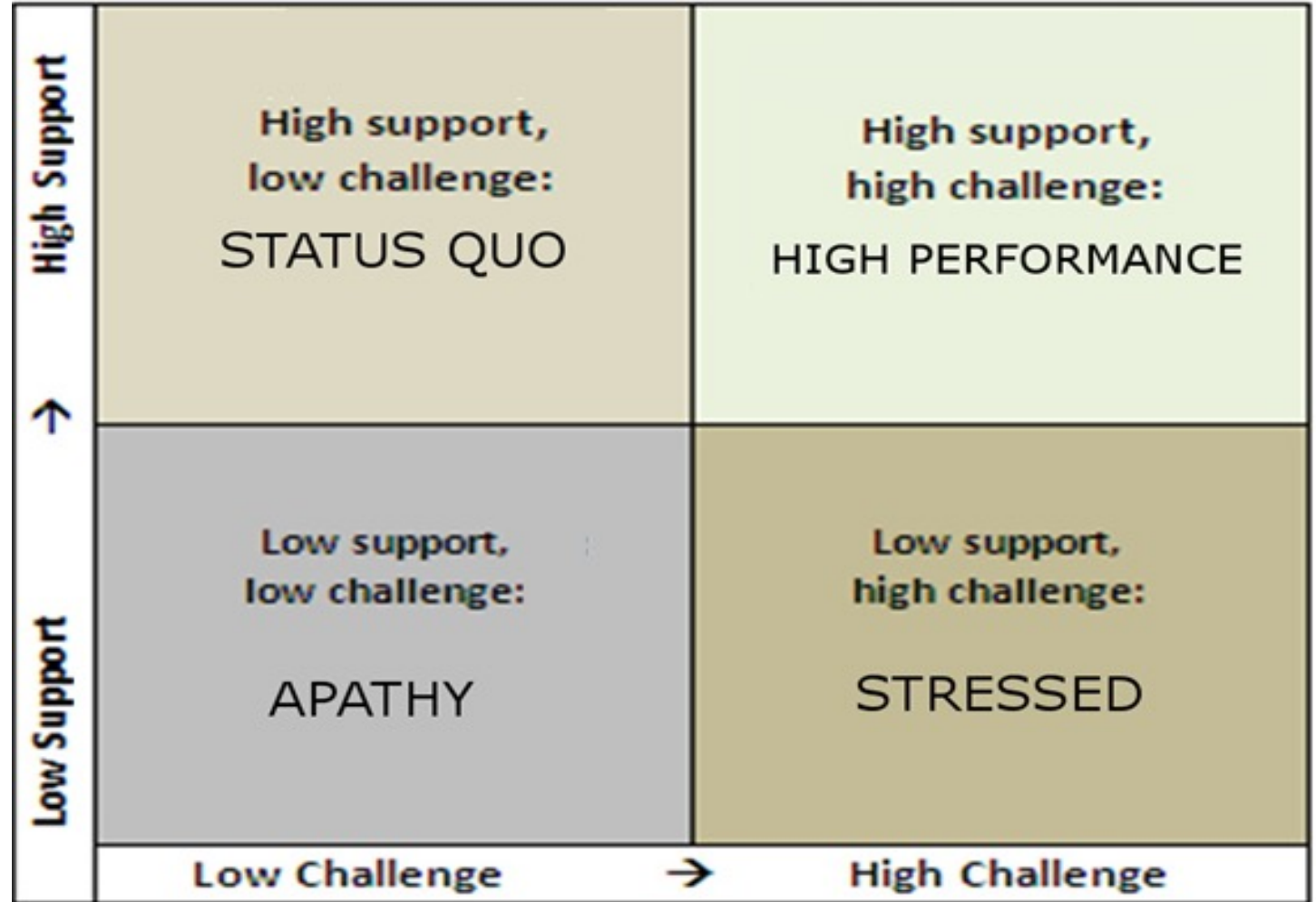
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# How do Governors provide Support & Challenge?



Where do you think your Governing Body currently sits on the Challenge & Support grid?



## Provide Accountability

How would you and your governing body answer the following questions?

1. How often does the governing body review policies?
2. What's the role of the finance committee?
3. What are the priorities for spending? How are these priorities decided?
4. What progress has the school made towards achieving its targets for improvement?
5. How do the governors find out the views of all stakeholders? What have they done as a result?
6. Does the clerk give governors appropriate and timely updates on any statutory changes to the role of governance to ensure they are meeting all statutory requirements?
7. How do the governors support or challenge the judgments made in the school self evaluation document?
8. How do you know the school's money has been well spent?
9. How has the PDG been spent and what impact has it had?



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# Evidence of Impact: ESTYN, Local Authorities & Improvement Partners will want to know that governors...

- understand their roles and discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- know the school's strengths and areas for development and the degree to which they have participated in setting the school's strategic priorities.
- provide a sense of direction for the work of the school
- support the school as a critical friend, ensuring effective provision for standards, staff and pupil wellbeing.
- are informed about the progress that all learners make and hold the school to account for the standards and quality it achieves
- take reasonable steps to inform pupils, members of staff, parents/guardians or any other person of the procedures if they wish to make a complaint or appeal
- make sure that the complaints are dealt with promptly by disinterested parties
- are aware of and understand their responsibilities as outlined in the [Keeping Learners Safe](#) guidance. (April 2021)
- how is the school preparing for the implementation of Curriculum for Wales 2022?

# As a result of this session I will...

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for participants to write their learning objectives.



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