

# Research, Reflection and Practice

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# Seeing into the Crystal Ball

- Research enables forward thinking
- Can identify trends, patterns
- Informs future planning
- Triangulate a range of information
- Better decisions
- Safer, more robust decisions



# Research – what does it tell us?

## *National Themes*

- Ongoing financial pressure
- Leadership pay and hubris
- Recruitment – Leaders, governors, teachers
- Teacher Workload
- Ofsted
- Safeguarding
- MATS –diversity
- Governance – workload and status, recruitment, stakeholder engagement, marketing, income generation

# How do we build a Sustainable Improvement System? *Sir David Carter – National School Commissioner 2017*

## Improving Our Weaker Schools

- Analysis – what do we do first?
- Evidence – Who has done this better?
- Capacity – Internal or External

Leads to **Improvement**

## Sustaining Improvements

- Improvement – maintaining what already works
- Consistency – strategy and delivery
- Research – how the best schools internationally succeed

**Leads to**

**Sustained Performance**

# Research – what does it tell us?

## *Local – Hertfordshire County/Districts*

What will affect my school/academy/MAT – and what can I do about it?

- Housing developments
- Free schools, Local MATs, Expansion of local schools
- Birth rates
- Transport – buses, trains
- Highway plans
- Transient populations
- Financial sustainability
- Ofsted Outcomes

# Reflection – How does it affect my school?

- Financial planning and management – management of buildings and land.
- Any collaborative arrangement must seek to improve the resources of the school.
- Further clarification of our role with staff as pressure builds
- Governor recruitment, retention and workload – differing skill sets for governance and school leaders
- Improve local liaison and local information

# External Review of Governance

## **Based on Five Core Areas**

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to Account for the Educational Performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- Effective Governance Practice
- Safeguarding

# External Review of Governance – *the local picture*

- External review should be a helpful/positive process as far as possible, but has to deliver difficult messages, particular if an Ofsted recommendation.
- An ER can also be requested via the LA, HfL, or Diocese.
- Or you can request your own. Ofsted like them.
- Focuses on areas for development
- Recommendations for change will be High, Medium, Low or none
- Progress Impact Review 4 – 6 months later
- We are currently reviewing the process to make it more specific to your requirements, thus more effective.

# September 2017 – August 2018

Ensuring clarity of vision	Holding the Headteacher to account	Financial Performance	Effective Governance Practice	Safeguarding
9 High	6 High	2 High	4 High	4 High

# Quote from CoG primary - evaluation

‘It has definitely been a journey for us... but a good one...we started off thinking we were all useless – some of us were ready to resign. However, the review showed us that anything is possible once you put your mind to it – when I think back to that the Ofsted judgement, it was devastating, but it helped us do what we needed to do. The review was a good experience – we are definitely stronger as a board now.’

# Reflection – How does it affect me?

- Being aware of the national/local picture and planning ahead
- Change Management
- Risk Management
- Being Visionary / Strategic / Planning for the Future
- Reviewing the performance of governance
- ✓ Individuals
- ✓ Self evaluations
- ✓ External Reviews

# Practice – Leading/Managing the Board

“The chairman’s job is to hold everything together and champion the role of the board. Think of the conductor of an orchestra, who has many players contributing individual skills – each with specialised perspectives, knowledge and concerns, required to participate at times and volumes that only he sees in the full score. Just like a conductor, the chairman dictates the tempo, the mood, and the energy of his board by balancing and prioritising the input of its members. Much of this will be dictated by his personality and style. *That’s your key role.*”

Financial Times

# Making the Chair Role Manageable

- NO other link roles
- Lead, manage and co-ordinate the team
- Interview governors – formulise the process
- Induction/Mentor
- Hold the board to account/ hold eachother to account
- Encourage individuals to self evaluate – plus an opportunity to meet with the Chair/Vice Chair annually
- Lead on strategy, vision and school improvement inc. Finance
- Being the ‘face’ of the board/school

# The Role of the Chair

‘The chair, with support from the vice chair, is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the board. It is the chair’s role to give the board clear leadership and direction, keeping it focused on its core functions.’

Regulations January 2014

# Relationship with the Headteacher

- Is professional, trusting, objective and impartial
- Should be formally agreed, setting out expectations on both sides
- Both sides understanding the boundaries, but also being mindful that;  
*“...since the board is responsible in law for the school(s), it may need to intervene in operational matters if a circumstance arises where, because of the actions or inactions of executive leaders, the school may be in breach of a duty...” DfE Governance Handbook 2017*
- The Headteacher must understand that the Chair leads in all matters relating to him or her (HR)
- The relationship may be tested in difficult times – honesty and transparency is vital

# Finding the Time Now

**Must Do**  
**Statutory Responsibilities**

**Should do...**  
**Because it is Really Good Practice**

**Could Do**  
**If we have the time...**

**Isn't it Nice to Do**  
**(Probably voluntary work...)**

# Finding Time for the Future

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

**Opportunities**

**Threats**

# The Great School Framework



# Next Steps...

- What support do you need to move things forward and make changes where you need to change?
- What training?
- What else?

# **A good chair will ensure its focus is on the strategic...**

**‘It is only when you become aware of the range, scope, and incredible responsibility of the job that you realise there is almost limitless opportunity to be ineffective, unless you are totally clear about how you are going to set about it.’**

Sir John Harvey Jones The Chairs Handbook NGA 2018