

Scope and Ambition

This review is based on responses in the Governance section of the self-assessment questionnaires, completed by 15 schools, during May 2022 to March 2023. Responses were received from 4 secondary/all through schools and 11 primary schools, together with Schools’ Governor Support Team and the Chair of Governors.

The objective was to ensure that the school has established whether the Governors play an active role in managing the school and controlling its budgets. The specific aim of this thematic review is to summarise and highlight the key themes that were evident in responses.

Key Findings

	Regular Governing Body meetings are held and documented. The frequency of financial meetings held differs greatly between schools. Having regular financial meetings would provide greater visibility if there were any financial issues.
	The Governing Body has agreed to the relevant performance documents within the required timeframe. However, only half of the schools have a business continuity and disaster recovery plan in place.
	Most of the policies have been approved. However, there is a lack of visibility centrally regarding this. The Support Services stated that no policy checklists had been received. By sharing the policies new ideas may be identified and shared throughout Powys.
	There is good visibility over the budget, although it is noted that Governors are not always given enough time to fully scrutinise the information. This may cause important information to be missed.
	The responses indicated that training was being undertaken. However, there is limited visibility centrally over what training has been undertaken and by whom.
	There is confusion within school surrounding Fraud Risks. Further guidance needs to be provided as to the controls that should be in place, and what to look out for.
	Improvement is needed with the inter working relationships and level of engagement between the schools and central teams. Greater visibility and better communication will allow issues to be raised and resolved quicker.

Overview of Governance Assessments



- Assessed not to be in place/ operating ineffectively – requires significant improvement.
- Assessed to be partially in place – requires improvement.
- Assessed as in place/ operating effectively.

Gradients are used where there is a mixed assessment of the controls in place, for example when the majority of controls are in one area with a few important findings in another.

Governance- Schools Response		To ensure Governors play an active role in the management of the school and its budgets.	Inherent Risk
Control Assessment:	SSA Gov1	Findings in Support of the Assessment:	
All Governors have completed and signed a Declaration of Business and Personal Interests.		73% of the responses stated that the declaration of interests has been completed, the remaining 27% were mostly completed. No one stated that none of the declaration of interests had been completed.	

Control Assessment:	SSA Gov2	Findings in Support of the Assessment:																															
Appropriate sub-committees are in place and meet on a regular basis, whilst the Full Governors meetings take place on a half-termly basis. Minutes are taken of the meetings and approved by the Governing Body.		<p>How often do the following Committees or Sub-Committees meet?</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Meeting Frequency Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Committee</th> <th>Monthly</th> <th>Half Termly</th> <th>Termly</th> <th>Quarterly</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Disciplinary</td> <td>100%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Complaints</td> <td>100%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Full Governors</td> <td>0%</td> <td>75%</td> <td>15%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance</td> <td>0%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>55%</td> <td>25%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Finance committees should be undertaken regularly to ensure there is appropriate overview of the budget.</p>		Committee	Monthly	Half Termly	Termly	Quarterly	Other	Disciplinary	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Complaints	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Full Governors	0%	75%	15%	10%	0%	Finance	0%	20%	55%	25%	0%
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Control Assessment:	SSA Gov3	Findings in Support of the Assessment:	
The Headteachers' roles and responsibilities have been approved by the Governing Body and defined for the delegation and budget management in the last 12 months.		All schools confirmed that the Headteachers' roles and responsibilities have been approved by the Governing Body and defined for the delegation and budget management in the last 12 months.	

Control Assessment:	SSA Gov4	Findings in Support of the Assessment:									
The school uses and has in place mandatory policies which are presented to the Governing Body on an annual basis for approval.		<p>Are policies presented to Governors for approval on a timely basis?</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Policy Presentation Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mostly</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Response	Percentage	Yes	65%	Mostly	35%	No	0%
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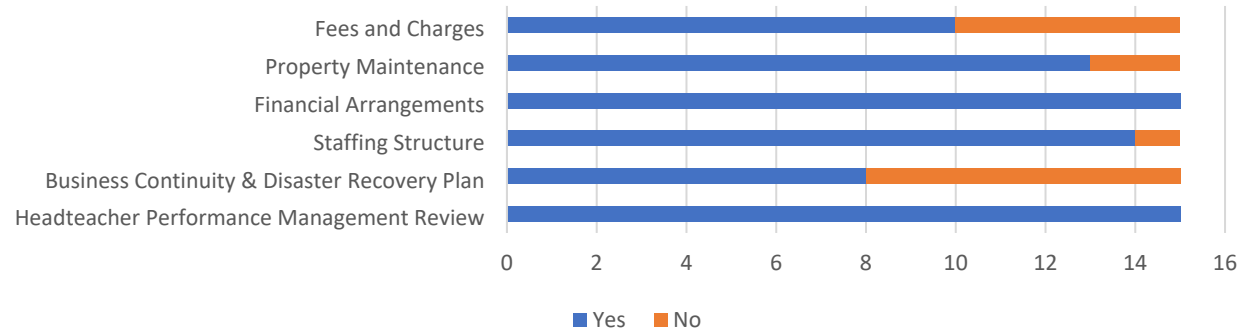
Control Assessment:

SSA Gov5

Findings in Support of the Assessment:

The Governing Body has agreed or performed the Headteachers review, Headteachers delegation, staff structure, Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Plan, Financial Arrangements, Property Maintenance and Fees & Charges on an annual basis.

Have the following been agreed/performed by the Governing Body in the last 12 months ?



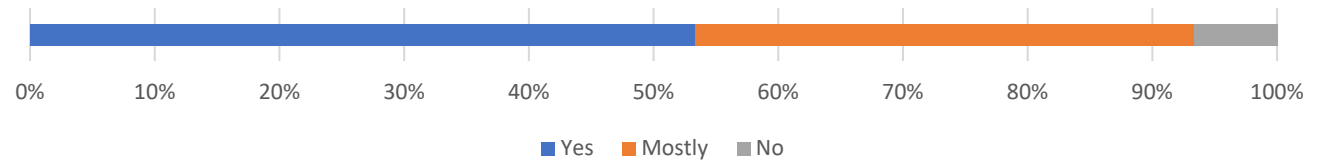
Control Assessment:

SSA Gov6

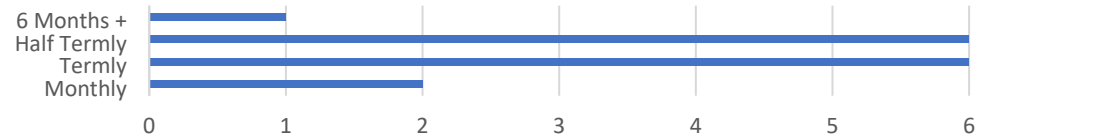
Findings in Support of the Assessment:

Detailed budget monitoring reports are seen by the Governing Body on a termly basis, ideally these should be reviewed by the Governing Body monthly.

Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the governing body to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?



How often does the Governing Body receive a detailed Budget Monitoring Report?



Control Assessment:	SSA Gov7	Findings in Support of the Assessment:																				
The Governors have attended the mandatory training within agreed timescales.		<p>The majority of training has been undertaken within the required timescales. The graph below displays the breakdown of training.</p> <p>Have Governors completed the mandatory training within the allotted timescales?</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Have Governors completed the mandatory training within the allotted timescales?</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> <th>Completed outside of timescales</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>All Governors - Data training within 12 months</td> <td>11</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Governors - Induction training within 12 months</td> <td>12</td> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clerk - Clerk training within 12 months</td> <td>14</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chairman (training within 6 months)</td> <td>14</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Yes	No	Completed outside of timescales	All Governors - Data training within 12 months	11	1	4	All Governors - Induction training within 12 months	12	1	3	Clerk - Clerk training within 12 months	14	1	1	Chairman (training within 6 months)	14	1	1
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Clerk - Clerk training within 12 months	14	1	1																			
Chairman (training within 6 months)	14	1	1																			

Control Assessment:	SSA Gov8	Findings in Support of the Assessment:
There are currently no Governor vacancies.		53% of the responses stated that there were governor vacancies.

Control Assessment:	SSA Gov9	Findings in Support of the Assessment:								
The Governing Body has fully considered the risk of fraud at the school.		<p>Do you assess and report on the risk of fraud (in the school) to the Governors?</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Do you assess and report on the risk of fraud (in the school) to the Governors?</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Partially</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	20%	Partially	33%	No	47%
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Control Assessment:	SSA Gov10	Findings in Support of the Assessment:
The school has taken steps to protect against fraud risks in the form of:		There is disparity in the way fraud risks are approached. There seems to be some confusion about what classifies as a fraud risk and any actions that may need to be introduced by the school.

Governance – Chair of Governors

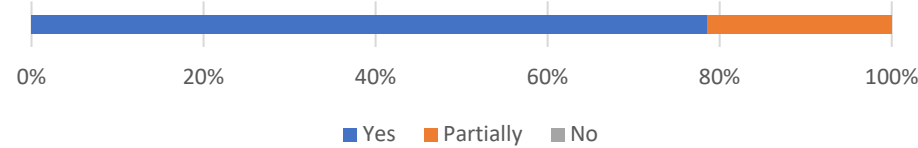
Control Assessment:

Ext CGov1

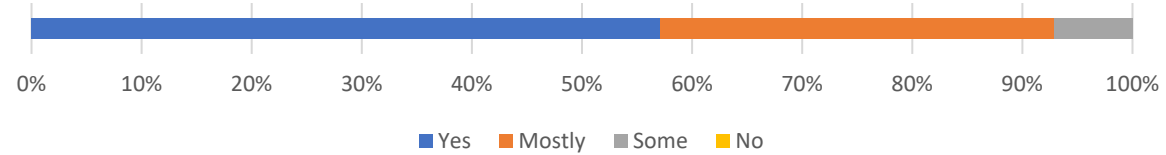
Findings in Support of the Assessment:

The school uses and has in place mandatory policies which are presented to the Governing Body on an annual basis for approval.

Do you have all of these Statutory Policies?



Does the Governing Body review the Statutory Policies within the appropriate time ?



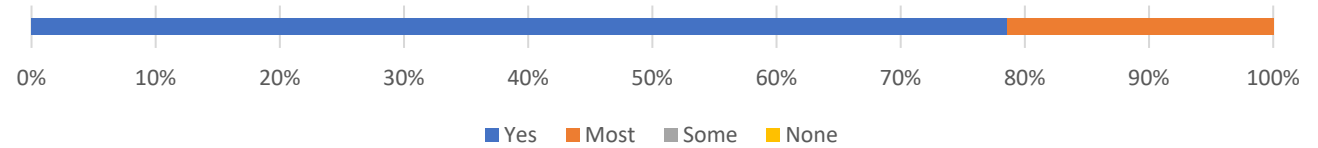
Control Assessment:

Ext CGov2

Findings in Support of the Assessment:

All Governors have completed and signed a declaration of Business and Personal interests.

Does the Governing Body understand conflicts of interest, and have you completed and signed a Declaration of Business Interest form within the last 12 months?



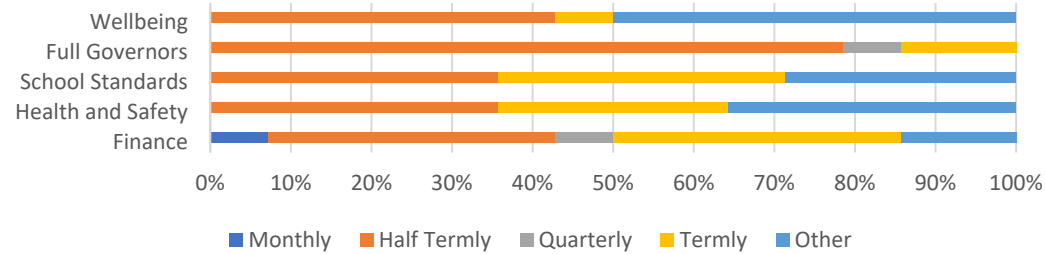
Control Assessment:

Ext CGov3

Findings in Support of the Assessment:

Appropriate sub-committees are in place and meet on a regular basis, whilst the Full Governors meetings take place on a half-termly basis. Minutes are taken of the meetings and approved by the Governing Body.

How often do the following Committees or Sub Committees meet?



It was stated within the questionnaires that all the governing body meetings were formally documented and approved. However, only 60% of the committee meetings were documented.

Control Assessment:

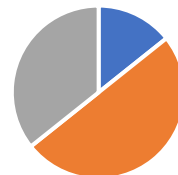
Ext CGov4

Findings in Support of the Assessment:

Detailed monthly budgets are presented to the Governing Body for scrutiny. There are controls in place to ensure that the Governors have oversight of the budgeting processes.

All the chair of governors that responded confirmed that the governors discuss the financial position of the school.

How often do the Governing Body receive a Budget Monitoring Report ?



- Monthly
- Half Termly
- Termly
- 6 Months +
- Never

Does the budget setting process allow sufficient time for the governing body to scrutinise and challenge the information provided?



- Yes
- Partly
- No
- Other

92% of the responses confirmed that they had seen and approved the latest 3-year balanced budget.

There were three common concerns that were raised within the questionnaire which were the increase in pupil numbers, staffing issues, and budget concerns.

Control Assessment:	Ext CGov5	Findings in Support of the Assessment:
<p>The Governors have attended the mandatory training within agreed timescales. The school has a training plan in place for the Governors to assess the school's needs. The governors have appropriate skills to fulfil their roles.</p>		<p>Have all governors attended their mandatory training within the agreed timescales?</p> <p>Do you have a training plan?</p> <p>One of the comments received by the Chair of Governors stated, 'Training is organised centrally by Powys, anything outstanding we should be told by them'.</p> <p>92% of responses displayed that the governing body felt they had adequate and up-to-date financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money</p>

Control Assessment:	Ext CGov6	Findings in Support of the Assessment:
<p>The Governing Body has fully considered the risk of fraud at the school.</p>		<p>Only two chairs of governors responded that the schools provided a report on the risk of fraud in the school. From the responses it was clear that there was some confusion over this area.</p>

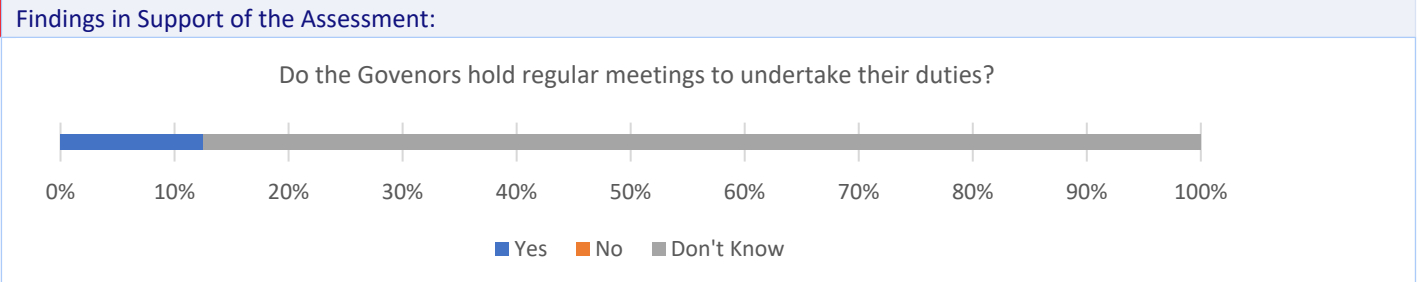
Control Assessment:	Ext CGov7	Findings in Support of the Assessment:
<p>The Headteachers' roles and responsibilities have been approved by the Governing Body and defined for the delegation and budget management in the last 12 months.</p>		<p>12 School Governors confirmed that their school had approved the Headteacher's roles and responsibilities within the 12 months.</p> <p>Have the following been agreed/performed by the Governing Body in the last 12 months?</p>

Governance- School Governance Support

Control Assessment: Ext SGov1
 The Governors have attended the mandatory training within agreed timescales. The school has a training plan in place for the Governors to assess the school needs.

Findings in Support of the Assessment:
 The school Governance Support team had an unclear picture regarding training. Two schools were reported as mostly attending, however all other responses stated, 'Don't Know'. It was also unclear what training was still outstanding.

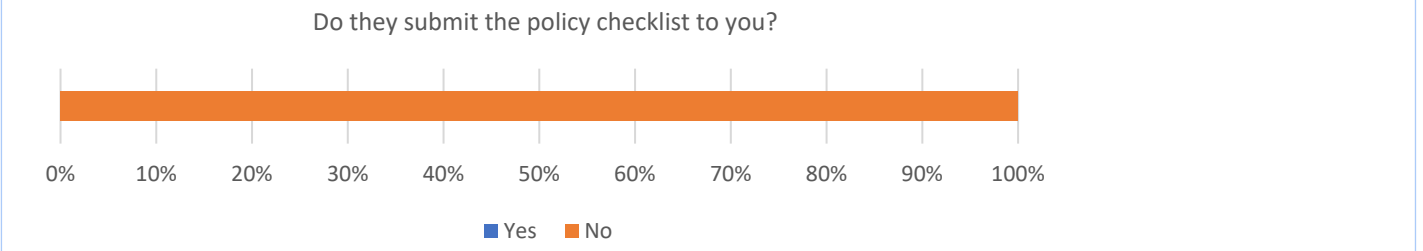
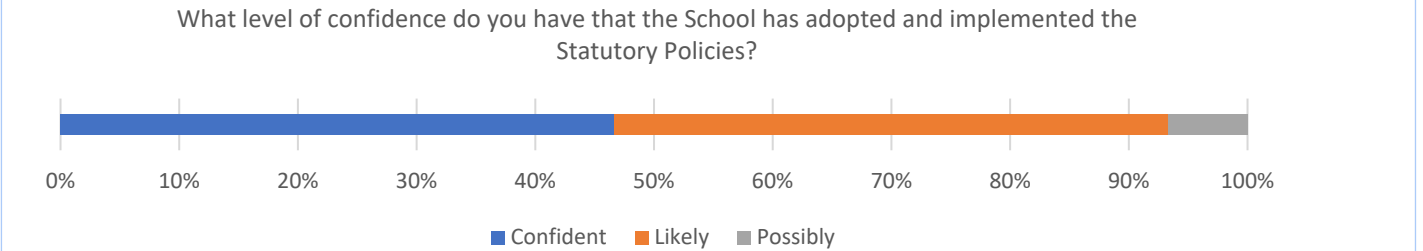
Control Assessment: Ext SGov2
 Appropriate sub-committees are in place and meet on a regular basis, whilst the Full Governors meetings take place on a half-termly basis. Minutes are taken of the meetings and approved by the Governing Body.



Governance- School Support

Control Assessment: Ext SS 1
 The school uses and has in place mandatory policies which are presented to the Governing Body on an annual basis for approval.

Findings in Support of the Assessment:
 Audit received a response from the school support team for all 15 schools.



Support & Engagement

Within the questionnaires that were sent, responders were asked whether they felt they were provided with enough support or engagement from the school and central teams. Below are the average scores given during the questionnaires.

Working Relationship	Responder	Average Score
School – Chair of Governors	Chair of Governors	4.65
Education Support Services- School	School	3.73
Chair of Governors – Finance Team	Chair of Governors	3.57
Chair of Governors – School Support	Chair of Governors	3.92
School Support Team– School	School Support Team	3.80
School Governor Support Services – School	School Governor Support Services	1.73

Further details, including the explanations of these scores can be found in School Thematic Review- Governance Support Reviews.

A good working relationship across all areas is important to ensure that both the council’s and school’s goals are achieved. Better collaboration will also help to share the skills and innovative ideas across both parties.

Average ratings of the working relationships, (1 being poor, 5 being excellent)

