

Using minutes to demonstrate the Governing Board's effectiveness

Minutes are notes taken during the meeting as a summary of what was discussed and agreed. They don't need to be long or complicated and they do not need to contain perfect grammar. They do need to record clearly and simply what decisions were made at the meeting and who is going to carry them out. Minutes should be concise and easy to follow and should not stipulate 'who said what'. It is important that the minutes don't contain any personal opinions or observations. It is important however to record challenge to demonstrate that the board is fulfilling its statutory duties.

Minutes (as well as other sources of evidence such as the board's schedule of work, visit reports, monitoring calendars, action plans, training plans, documentation relating to governors' stakeholder engagement and checklist / systems for ensuring that the information being provided by school leaders is correct) can be used to **demonstrate the effectiveness** of the governing board and may be requested during an Ofsted inspection.

The Governance Handbook says these are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Use the right language and tone.

When taking the minutes in the meeting, remember that minutes **should**:

Paraphrase. You need to capture the key points, **not every single thing that was said**

- Be an **objective record of what was discussed** and the agreed actions – **stick to the facts**
- Be concise and easy to understand
- Be written in the past tense
- Clearly show the questions that governors asked – you could mark them out with a 'Q' at the start, use bold or a different colour, or write them in a clearly marked section of a template you're using
- **Clearly show the agreed action points** – you could mark them out with an A at the start, use bold or a different colour or write them in a clearly marked section of a template you're using

Highlight the questions asked

Look out for whether the question is actually providing challenge, or whether it's just clarification or a request for further information.

Use 'impact statements'

You could also include 'impact statements' to describe the impact of a decision the school has taken, or the impact of a development within the school. For example:

- Following questions on the headteacher's report, you could state: "The governing board has held the headteacher to account"
- Following a discussion of before and after-school provision: "Governors ensured the provision of extended services meets the needs of parents and pupils"
- Following a discussion of the school's values: "Governors ensured the school's values are central to day-to-day activities"
- Following a discussion of the pupil premium: "Governors understand the impact of pupil premium funding on pupil performance and held the headteacher to account for its use"

Process for agreeing the draft minutes

1. Within 7 days of the meeting, the Clerk sends the draft minutes to the Headteacher and Chair of the FGB / Chair of Sub-committee
2. The Headteacher / Chair responds with any proposed changes
3. Within 7 days of receiving the changes, the Clerk updates and circulates / uploads the agreed draft minutes
4. At the next meeting, the draft minutes are formally approved. All governors can propose changes to accuracy at this stage but any amendments are to be agreed by those present.