

Governor Welcome Pack



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Main purpose of governance

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. All boards, no matter what type of schools or how many schools they govern, have three core functions:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- **Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.**

Source: *Governance Handbook. For academy trusts and maintained schools - October 2020*

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Governing boards are the key strategic decision-making body in every school. It is their job to set the school's strategic framework. This includes ensuring the school has a long-term strategic vision – including for the type of school that will offer them most opportunities. The governing board should agree the strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the school and sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them. They should check on progress and review regularly their strategic framework for the school in the light of that progress'.

Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

Governing boards should support and strengthen the school's leadership in the day-to-day running of the school, including the performance management of teachers. Governing boards should play a strategic role, focusing strongly on holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of its pupils, whilst avoiding being drawn into direct involvement in operational matters. It is essential to have skilled governors, but equally important to emphasise that the skills required are those to create robust accountability, not to do the school's job for it. They do this by:

- Asking the right questions
- Understanding the importance of objective data
- Using different sources of data – Ofsted Data dashboard, Performance Tables, RAISEonline, school's internal pupil data
- Visiting the school

Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Governing boards are responsible for making sure their school's money is well spent.

They should do this by making sure they have at least one governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters, and by asking questions such as:

- Are we allocating our resources in line with our strategic priorities?
- Are we making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?
- Are other schools buying things cheaper or getting better results with less spending per pupil?
- How can we get better value for money from our budget?

Features of effective governance



Source: *A Competency Framework for Governance*, January 2017

1. Working as a team

Building an effective team requires regular attendance and energetic commitment from all governors. It means making use of what each governor has to offer, sharing the work-load, give-and-take on individual issues, respect for colleagues and their differing opinions, and loyalty to final decisions.

2. Good relationship with headteacher

It is essential to establish a good working relationship between the governing board and the headteacher. Each party must have a clear understanding of their respective roles.

In broad terms, the governing board is responsible for deciding the framework for the conduct and development of the school. But within that framework, the governing board should respect the position of the headteacher as the professional leader of the school and as the person responsible for the day to day management and administration of the school.

3. Effective time management and delegation

Governing boards have a lot to do, and limited time. They should identify the priority issues in which they need to be directly involved - including decisions which in law must be taken by the full governing board - and delegate the rest to committees, working groups or individuals. It is important to set clear terms of reference for such delegation, so that everyone knows what they are expected to do, and how and when they should report back to the full governing board.

4. Effective meetings

To make best use of time at meetings, the governing board will need:

- carefully planned agendas which focus on the most important items;
- a clerk who can organise meetings and papers efficiently, and ideally provide information and procedural advice;
- purposeful chairing, bringing out the best in all governors, keeping a brisk pace, and ensuring that decisions are properly taken and clearly understood;
- clear minutes setting out points for action;
- participation by appropriate outsiders – to give advice (e.g. an local authority officer or consultant), to make a presentation (e.g. the teacher responsible for an issue), or to act as an observer (e.g. a senior pupil).

5. Knowing the school

Governors should get to know their school through visits organised in close co-operation with the headteacher, to talk to pupils and staff and possibly sit in on lessons.

6. Training and development

To help their schools most effectively, governing boards need to take their own development seriously. They should consider their training and support needs carefully, and be prepared to allocate funds for external courses, visits to other schools, or training for the whole governing board.

A Selection of Useful Contacts and Links

Department for Education Governance pages	www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance
Department for Education Publications	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-for-education
School Performance Tables	http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/
GIAS (Get information about schools)	https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/
NGA (National Governance Association)	www.nga.org.uk
Ofsted	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board	www.gscb.org.uk
GOV.UK	https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/school-life
Church of England Education Office	www.cofe.anglican.org/education.uk
Catholic Education Service	www.cesew.org.uk
QCA (Qualifications & Curriculum Authority)	www.qca.org.uk
BBC education news	www.bbc.co.uk/news/education

Checklist of Information for Members of Governing Boards

All members of governing boards should have the following information:

- The school's instrument of government as required by law (LA maintained schools).
- The most recent version of the [Maintained schools governance guide](#) or [Academy trust governance guide](#)

In addition, it is useful to have:

- A list of members of the governing board, giving name, category of governor (parent, staff, etc.), date of appointment and (if agreed) telephone number
- The governing board's agreed procedures or standing orders
- A list of the committees and working parties of the governing board, with membership and terms of reference
- A calendar of governing board and committee meetings; school terms and holidays: and major school events for the current school year
- A copy of the staffing structure of the school, showing names of teachers and other staff, subjects taught and other responsibilities
- The school's current prospectus
- The school's current development plan, or summary if one exists
- The most recent inspection reports on the school - Ofsted, SIAMS or Church inspections (Catholic schools)
- A list of statutory and non-statutory policies adopted by the governing board and information on how copies of these may be obtained

For New Governors

- The minutes of the two most recent meetings of the governing board
- A plan of the school, if available
- The name of a suggested 'mentor', if the governing board has adopted such a system of support for new governors
- [Information on the training courses available to governors](#)

List of Education Acronyms

A-level	Advanced level	CPD	Continuing professional development
Academy	Publicly funded independent school (run by an academy trust which employs the staff)	CTF	Common transfer file
Access to Higher Education Diploma	Courses designed to prepare those without traditional qualifications for study at university	D&T	Design and technology
ADD	Attention deficit disorder	DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau)
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	DFC	Devolved formula capital
AfL	Assessment for Learning	DfE	Department for Education
All-through school	Provides both primary and secondary education	DHT	Deputy Headteacher
APS	Average point score	DPA	Data Protection Act 1988
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance	DSBM	Diploma of School Business Management
AS-level	Advanced subsidiary level	DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders	EAL	English as an additional language
ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder	EBacc	English baccalaureate
ASP	Analyse School Performance Service (replaced RAISEonline in April 2017)	EBD	Emotional and behavioural disorder
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers	EBITT	Employment-based initial teacher training provider
BME	Black and minority ethnic	EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
BSL	British sign language	ELCI	Employers' liability (compulsory) insurance
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	EMAS	Ethnic minority achievement service
CAT	Cognitive ability test	EPS	Education psychology service
CFR	Consistent financial reporting	ESG	Education Services Grant
Cluster	Group of schools that come together for a particular purpose	ESFA	Education & Skills Funding Agency
Community schools	State schools in England & Wales that are wholly owned and maintained by the local authority. The LA has main responsibility for deciding arrangements for admitting pupils	Extended school	A school that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community
Community special schools	The special school equivalent of community schools which cater wholly or mainly for children with statutory statements of special educational needs	EWO	Education welfare officer
COSHH	Control of substances hazardous to health	EWS	Education welfare service
		EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
		EYP	Early years practitioner
		EYPS	Early years professional status

FE	Further education	KS1/2/3/4/5	Key Stages 1/2/3/4/5
Federation	A formal agreement by which up to 5 schools share a single governing board	LA	Local authority
FFT	Fischer Family Trust	Leadership group	Headteachers, deputy heads, assistant heads, bursars and others as decided by the headteachers and/or the governors
FGB	Full governing board	LGA	Local government association
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	LM	Learning mentor
FOIA	Federation of Information Act	LSA	Learning support assistant
Foundation school	A state-funded school in which the GB has greater freedom than a community school in the running of the school	LSCB	Local safeguarding children board
Foundation special school	A foundation school that caters wholly or mainly for children with statutory statements of special educational needs	LSU	Learning support unit
Free school	All-ability, state-funded school set up following local demand, not controlled by the LA	MFL	Modern foreign languages
FSM	Free school meals	Middle school	A school with KS2 and KS3 pupils. Depending on the age balance of those pupils, the school can be deemed primary or secondary
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education	MIS	Management information system
GRT	Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils	MLE	Managed learning environment
G&T	Gifted & talented	MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
HLTA	High level teaching assistant	MPS	Main pay scale
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools	NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate	NAPTA	The National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants
HND	Higher national diploma	NASBM	The National Association of School Business Management
HoD	Head of department	NASUWT	Teachers' union
HoY	Head of year	NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership (also known as National College)
HSE	Health and Safety Executive	NC	National Curriculum
ICT	Information and communication technology	NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
IEB	Interim executive board	NGA	National Governance Association
IEP	Individual education plan	NLE	National Leaders of Education
IP	Investors in People	NLG	National Leaders of Governance
INSET	In-service education and training	NOR	Number on roll
ITE	Initial teacher education		
ITT	Initial teacher training		

NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship	SACRE	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
NQT	Newly qualified teacher	SCITT	School-centred initial teacher training
NSS	National support school	SDP	School development plan
NUT	National Union of Teachers	SEAL	Social and emotional aspects of learning
OCR	Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations	SEF	Self-evaluation framework/form
OEAP	Outdoor education advisers' panel	SEN	Special educational needs
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills	SENCO	Special educational needs co-ordinator
OTTP	Overseas trained teacher programme	SEND	Special educational needs and disability
PAN	Published admission number	SES	Socio-economic status
PE	Physical education	SGOSS	School Governors' One Stop Shop
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education	SIP	School improvement plan
PM	Performance management	SLCN	Speech, language and communication needs
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning disabilities	SLD	Severe learning difficulties
PPA	Preparation, planning and assessment (time)	SLT	Senior leadership team
PPP	Public private partnership	SMSC	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural
Prevent Duty	Guidance for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism.	SMT	Senior management team
PRP	Performance-related pay	STPCD	School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document
PRU	Pupil referral unit	STRB	School teachers' review body
PSED	Public sector equality duty	TA	Teaching assistant
PSHE	Personal, social and health education	Teaching school	Outstanding school that works with other schools to provide high-quality training and development to new and experienced school staff
PSHEE	Personal, social, health and economic education	TESS	Traveller education service
PSVE	Personal, social and vocational education	TLR	Teaching and learning responsibility
PSP	Pastoral support programme	TNA	Training needs analysis
PTA	Parent-teacher association	TOIL	Time off in lieu
QCF	Qualifications & Credit Framework	VA	Value added
QTS	Qualified teacher status	VA school	Voluntary aided school maintained by the LA
RAISEonline	Replaced by ASP April 2017	VC school	Voluntary controlled school, maintained by the LA
RAP	Raising attainment programme	VfM	Value for money
		VLE	Virtual learning environment
		WRL	Work-related learning