



A changing landscape: Challenges for Governance

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THANK YOU

Who are we?

- A membership organisation representing the voice of school governors in England for all state funded schools, both LA maintained schools and academies
- We aim to improve the effectiveness of governing bodies by providing expert and tailored information and advice, and challenge when appropriate

Our vision

All schools will be good schools or better



Department
for Education

The School Governance Constitution Regulations 2012

**Statutory guidance for leaders and
governing bodies of maintained schools
and local authorities**

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Effective governance

1. The right people round the table
2. Understanding role & responsibilities
3. Good chairing
4. Professional clerking
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

The Government believes

That high quality governance in all types of schools is characterised by a relentless focus on the three core strategic functions:

- a. Setting vision, ethos and strategic direction
- b. Holding head teachers to account for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety, and challenging and strengthening their leadership
- c. Ensuring finances are managed well leading to probity, solvency and effective use of resources

They want all GBs to operate as non-executive boards

DfE's policy for governance

The DfE has a range of policy ambitions to underpin this vision of more 'professionalised' school governance:

1. Inform: Improve information, data and guidance for governors
2. Re-model: Create greater freedom for more effective models of governance
3. Recruit: Attract more higher-quality governors with the skills GBs need
4. Build capacity: Improve training and support to increase GBs' effectiveness
5. Sharpen accountability: Inspect and intervene to judge and improve performance

Three core functions

Core Function

Ofsted criteria for effective governance

Setting strategic direction

- clarity of vision and ethos
- meeting statutory duties
- engaging stakeholders

Creating robust accountability

- for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety
- strengthening school leadership
- performance managing the head teacher
- contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity

- solvency and effective financial management
- use of Pupil Premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning

Forthcoming changes

- National curriculum changes
- Future qualification changes & raising the participation age
- Assessment without set levels
- Changes to performance measures
- Need to prepare for possible pay appeals
- SEN
- A national funding formula?
- Changes to leadership pay scales
- Pupil premium is going up, especially for primary pupils
- Free school meals for infants

Challenges for all governors

A whole range, including :

- Revenue finances and capital
- Performance related pay
- Finding the time for new responsibilities and finding new ways of working to engage with the 'strategic'
- Ensuring support and the need to collaborate
- Federation & governing more than one school
- Leading the governing body & succession planning
- Recruiting school leaders
- Ensuring quality of teaching and good outcomes for children – measuring what we value

Challenge 1

Governance structures & processes

- Size & composition
- Stakeholder verses business- model
 - Legitimacy: ownership of schools
 - Do we know what our stakeholders think? Parents, pupils, staff , neighbours, employers & other services
 - Hard nosed verses valuing the important
- Recruitment and induction of governors
- Be clear about time needed but use it well. For instance reduce the level of paperwork

Challenge 2

Governing groups of schools

- Will small schools be sustainable in the future?
- Clear benefits for children (as well as governance);
- Multi-academies or LA federations take a range of forms:
 - Sponsored or school-led groups
 - Umbrella trusts or MATs/MACs
 - What is delegated to school level what is kept at the centre?
- Members, Trustees & Directors
 - Executive and non-executive
 - Involvement of staff, the Executive Head and/or CEO
- How many schools can be governed well in a group?

Challenge 3

Review GB performance

- Review GB structure and practice
 - e.g two committee structure; streamline agendas
 - How robust is our business planning cycle?
- Review GB effectiveness
 - external review , 20 questions, GovernorMark, Target Tracker's GSET, *Stronger Governance* material
- Innovation from the charity sector: performance reviews for governors
- Be honest and not defensive

Challenge 4

Support and collaboration

- Fewer quangos & national support programmes and often reduced LA funding support services
- London Challenge and City Challenge: clear benefits
- More chains & federations - but governors of stand alone schools must consider collaboration including converting academies supporting another school
- Variety of partnerships for school improvement, and/or procurement or support services
- Teaching school alliances
- NLEs, LLEs, SLEs and NLGs
- Governors must invest in support & collaboration

Challenge 5

Ensuring quality of teaching and good outcomes for children

- Higher aspirations & 'closing the gap'
- Understanding data and using other information: 'triangulating':
 - Report of senior leaders' observations
 - External validation
 - Listen to your stakeholders, including pupils
 - Visiting with a purpose, learning about the school but not doing the professionals' job for them
- Performance management (& pay)
- Encourage, fund and monitor CPD

The big challenge: making an impact

- Set the ethos, including curriculum
- Stay strategic & focussed on improvement priorities: leave the operational to school leaders, and delegate
- Recruit good school leaders (a future challenge) and trust them to recruit good staff
 - Ensure school leaders are equipped to do their jobs, including HR aspects, procurement
- Don't get overwhelmed by compliance & reviewing policies: focus on principles & delegate procedures
- Don't be afraid of the big ideas & debates

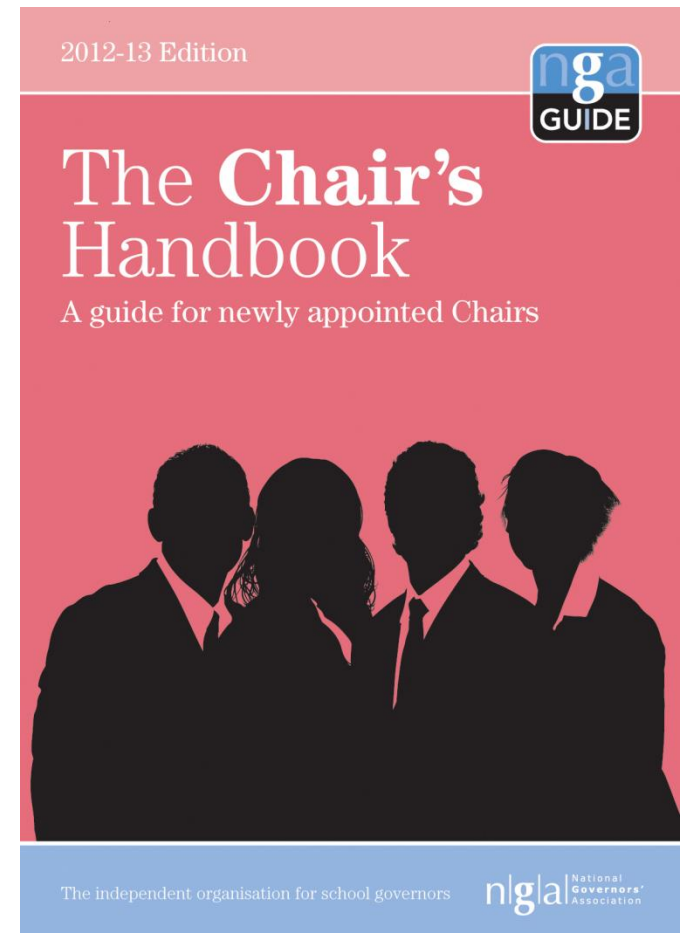
Strategic i.e. governance	Operational
Monitoring reports on quality of teaching against pupils' outcomes	Making judgements about quality of teaching
Receiving financial audit report	Governor coming into school to supervise book-keeper
Ensuring necessary audits have been carried out by qualified professionals	Governors undertaking audits eg. Health & safety
Interviewing senior leaders	Interviewing teachers
Agreeing to invest in school buses	Organising the bus routes
Agreeing to a building project	Obtaining quotes for cost
Ensuring school is marketed well	Writing school prospectus

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The challenge for chairs

Succession planning
Chairing is a leadership role
Join the Chairs' Development
Programme: licensed by
the National College
Share good practice with
other chairs
Make all this happen



- **What are the biggest challenges in your school?**
- **And what would you like NGA to be saying to the Department for Education on your behalf?**

