



# Effective governors & future challenges

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# Governance in the spotlight

- The great & the good are taking an interest – and now the press
- The Sept 2012 Ofsted framework raised the expectations
- More autonomy brings more responsibility & more risks, but organisations with strong governance do not fail
- More decision-making is being devolved e.g. Academy conversion, performance related pay
- Limited resources requires more efficiency
- Different schools structures bring different governance structures, particularly when governing more than one school
- Learning from other sectors, especially on role of Trustees and Directors of limited companies
- Who governs the governors?

# Changing models of governance

## **Governing a single school**

- A LA maintained school
- A stand alone academy: a trust with members and directors of a limited company
- An interim executive board

## **Governing a group of schools:**

- A LA maintained federation
- Multi-academy trust or federation

## **‘Chains’ of schools**

e.g. with an umbrella trust; a co-operative trust

# 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 headteachers 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

*From DfE's Governors' Handbook*

Governing boards to operate as non-executive boards:  
this requires cultural change

# 8 Elements of 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, the quality of teaching
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

# The challenge for chairs

Chairing is a leadership role

Trusting relationship with the head

The time to make all this happen

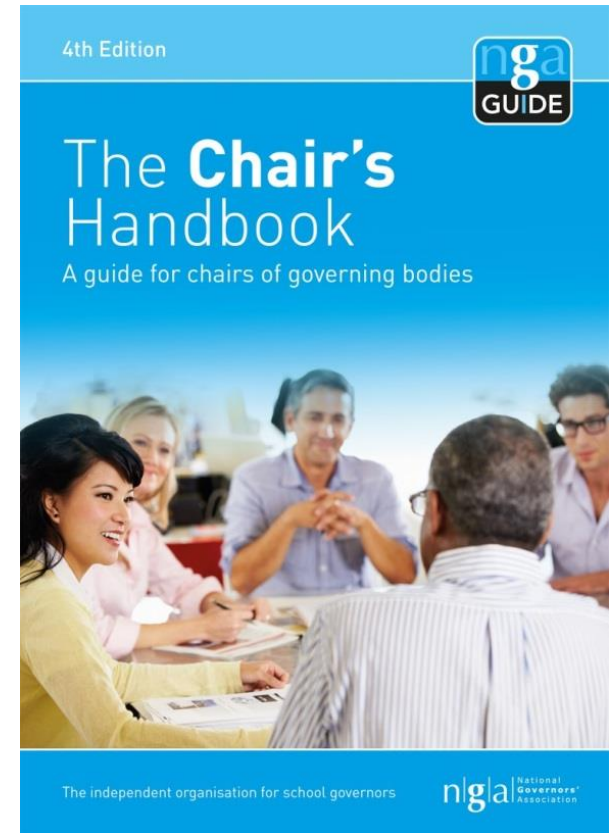
Join the Chairs' Development  
Programme: licensed by the  
National College

Share good practice with other chairs

Good practice: six years maximum

Succession planning

Review your own performance



# Challenge 1 for GBs

## People, governance structures & processes

- Recruitment and CPD for clerks
- Size & composition
- Recruitment and induction of governors
  - NGA has role description for governors: [www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk)
  - Be clear about time needed but use it well
  - Succession plan & limit terms of office to 2 x 4 years
- Become business- like in the interests of the pupils
  - Reduce the paperwork: streamline agendas
  - Maximum: two committee structure
- Review GB effectiveness: be honest

# The DfE is one of the Inspiring governors partnership





# Challenge 2

## Ensuring quality of teaching and good outcomes for children

- Higher aspirations & 'closing the gap'
- Understanding data
- 'triangulating' all possible sources
  - External validation of senior leaders' report
  - Listen to your stakeholders, including pupils
  - Visiting with a purpose, learning about the school but not doing the professionals' job for them
- Performance management of headteacher
- Staff performance management (& pay)
- Encourage, fund and monitor CPD

# Challenge 3

## Collaboration & school-to-school support

- A myriad of clusters & partnership – what's effective?
  - Some for school improvement, including support service
  - Others for procurement of a range of services
- Teaching school alliances
- NLEs, LLEs, SLEs and NLGs
- Governors must also invest in support & collaboration
- What ever type of school we govern we consider collaboration

# Challenge 4

## Governing groups of schools

- Will small schools be sustainable in the future?
- But this is not just about small schools ...
- Clear benefits for children (as well as governance);
- Opportunities for staff development = school improvement;
- Multi-academy trusts (MATs) or LA federations have one board governing a number of schools:
  - How many schools can be governed well in a group?
  - What is delegated to school level & what is kept at the centre?

[NCTL report: The governance of federations](#)

[Leadership of more than one school](#)

[The Road to Federation](#)

# Challenge 5

## Making the best use of resources

- Invest in business management staff
- Ensure good human resource processes
- Benchmark
- Procure jointly where possible: collaborate & federate
- Consider other sources of income
- Connect the pupil offer & the budget
- Draw on Pupil premium resources
- Do not put your head in the sand: plan ahead

# Challenge 6: The school strategy

## Where do we want the school to be in 3-5 years time?

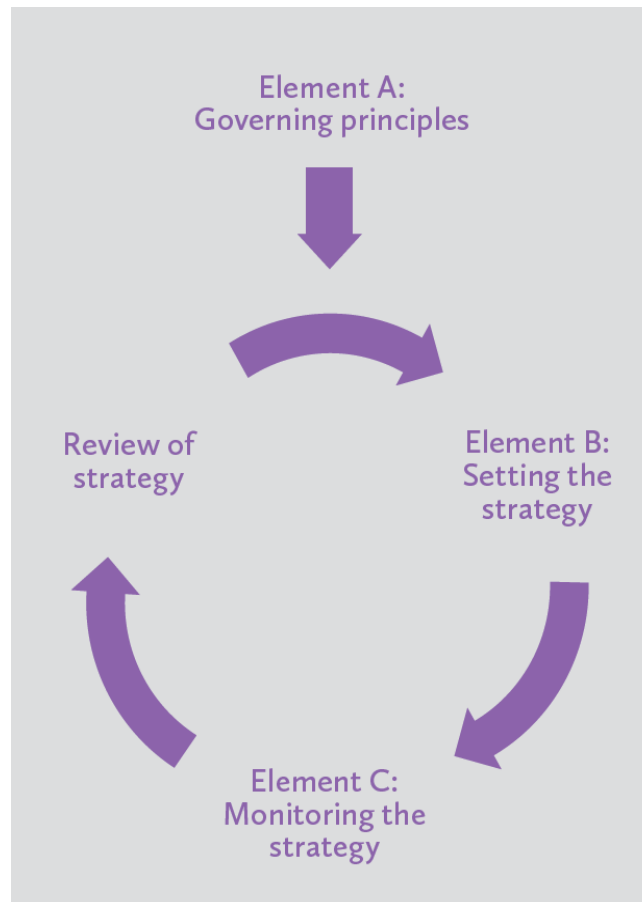
To achieve that, how do we:

- position the school to succeed,
- take advantage of opportunity,
- minimise risks and
- use resources?

## How do we get there?

- having decided the vision, the GB must set goals and agree the school's development priorities (between 4 and 6)
- each of these priorities needs a target for the short & longer term
- most of the GB business is monitoring progress against these, and
- at the end of the year formally review

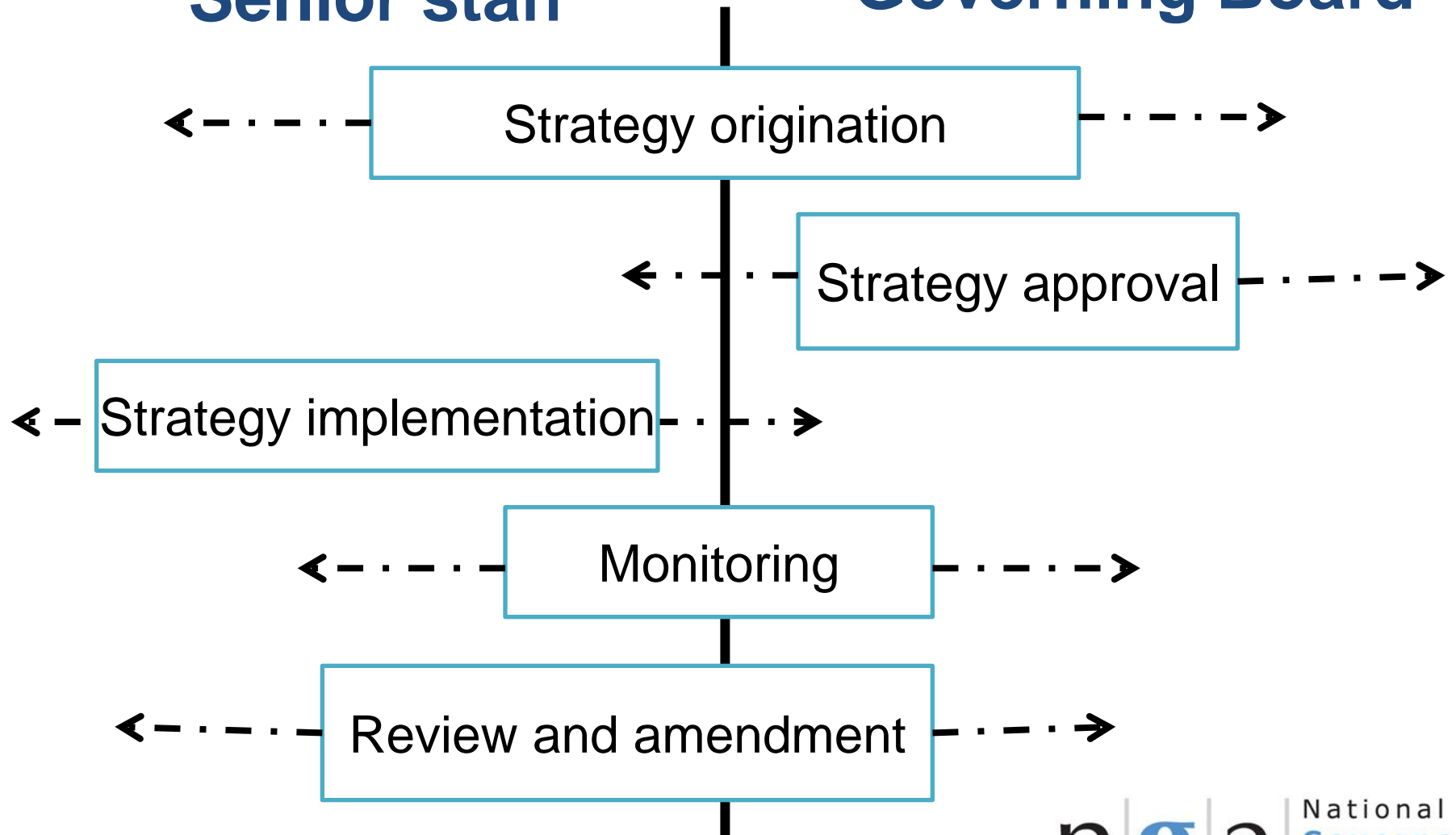
# Framework for governance



# Framework for strategy development

**Senior staff**

**Governing Board**



Strategic ie governance	Operational/management
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



# Staying strategic

- Do you have a short sharp school strategy with priorities which you monitor & use for HT performance management
- Using time to best effect: don't get swamped by compliance and 'policies': differentiate 'principle' from 'procedures'
- Distinguish when you are governing from when you are volunteering in another capacity
- Do not do someone else's job: joint statement with ASCL & NAHT: *"What governing boards should expect from school leaders and what school leaders should expect from governing boards"*
- Are school leaders equipped to do their jobs (including HR, procurement) without operational support from governors?
- **Change the culture:** zero tolerance for interference

# Issues raised for school governance by Trojan Horse

1. Conduct according to the principles of public life
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Avoiding cliques & group think
4. Review appointment & re-appointment
5. Reflecting the community & listening to parents
6. Staying strategic & not becoming operational
7. Broad & balanced curriculum
8. Relationships with Headteachers & CPD for leaders
9. Review HR processes
10. Safety of pupils: the GB role

# Issues raised for the school system by Trojan Horse

- Faith in our schools: collective worship, assemblies & RE
- British values:

From HM Government (2011) The Prevent Strategy: Extremism is defined as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

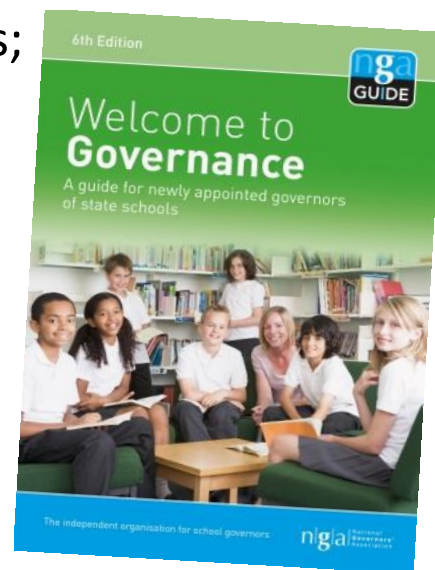
- Who owns our schools?
- Who ensures oversight of schools:
  - both LA maintained and academies
- Who governs the governors?
- Courage: standing up for what we value

# Join us: **GOLD** membership

**n|g|a|GOLDline**  
The NGA Advice Service

As a **GOLD** member of NGA for £260 the school is entitled to:

- Access to the guidance centre on NGA's website for all governors & the clerk;
- the bi-monthly 40 page NGA members' magazine *Governing Matters* for all;
- A weekly e-newsletter for all governors/trustees & clerks;
- Access to NGA's advice line and legal advice;
- free places at NGA regional and national conferences;
- *A Chair's Handbook*, and *Welcome to Governance* induction guides for all new governors/trustees



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