



School governance: changing structures

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National Governors' Association



NGA is a membership organisation

- NGA is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees & clerks in maintained schools and academies in England
- Our aim is to improve the effectiveness of governing boards by providing expert and tailored information, guidance and advice, and challenge when appropriate



Governing board membership

- **STANDARD** governing board £79
- **GOLD** governing board £260

www.nga.org.uk/join



What isn't changing? : what makes good governance

8 elements of effective governance

1. The right people round the table
2. Understanding the role and 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 - & ensuring engagement with stakeholders
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

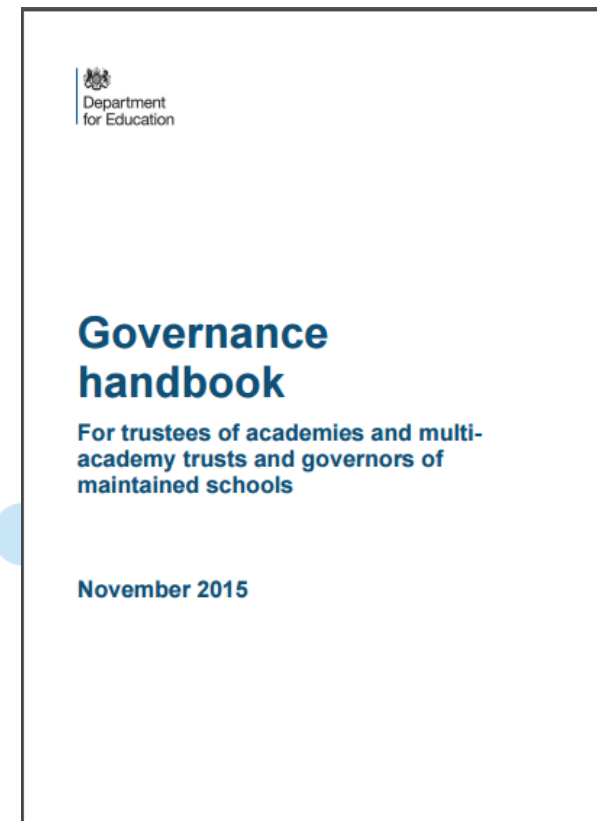


The core functions of school governance

In all types of schools, governing boards have three core functions:

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

In an academy the governing board is the board of trustees. **Big question:** in a multi academy trust (MAT) how much is delegated to the academy level?



Changing models of governance

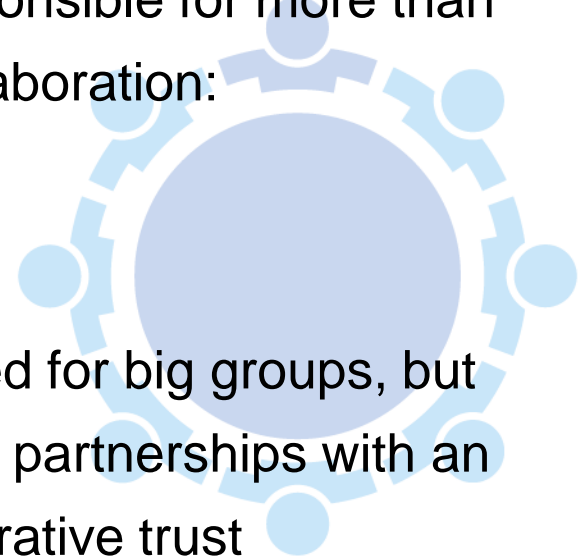
Governing a single school

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

Governing a group of schools: one board responsible for more than one school ie one organisation, not just a collaboration:

- A LA maintained federation
- Multi academy trust (MAT)

‘Chains’ of schools – not a legal term, often used for big groups, but they are almost always MATs. But here are some partnerships with an overarching trust e.g. an umbrella trust; a co-operative trust



Lots of challenges?

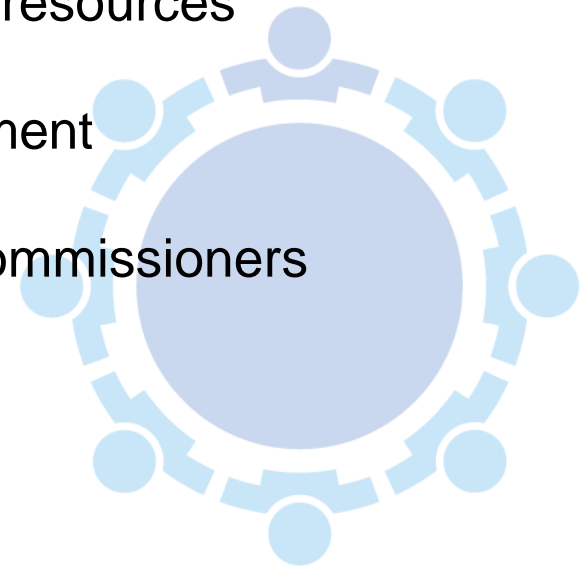
1. Finances: revenue & capital – staffing structure
2. Setting the vision and engaging with the strategic : deciding the priorities
3. Ensuring quality of teaching: recruiting, development & retention of staff
4. Measuring what we value & is our data meaningful?
5. ‘Triangulation’ - do you have more than one source of information?
6. Recruitment & performance management of the headteacher
7. Protecting the breadth and depth of the curriculum
8. Implications of Trojan Horse : British values, Prevent & safeguarding
9. Culture of wellbeing : eg adolescent mental health
10. Reviewing & improving GB effectiveness : finding new ways of working
11. Finding the time & finding the volunteers
12. Additional challenges for the chair: leading the GB
13. Joining & forming a group of schools



STEPPING UP & TAKING THE LEAD

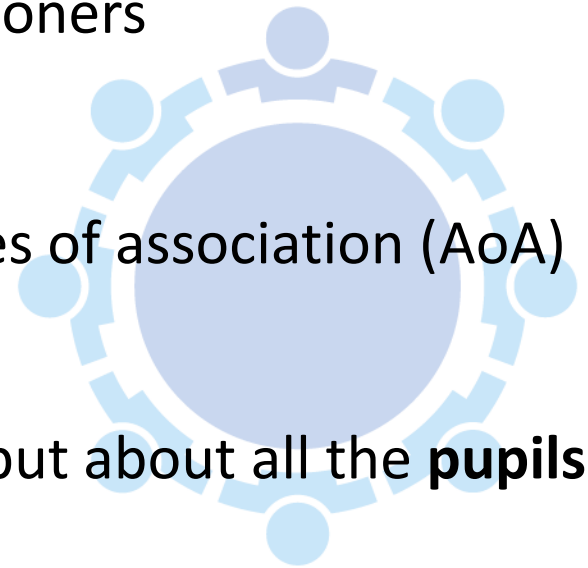
Education White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere

- All schools to become academies by 2022
- Schools to join or form a multi academy trust (with only a few exceptions)
- New funding formula: making the best use of resources
- Governance, parents, competency & recruitment
- Role of local authorities & regional schools commissioners
- School improvement support
- Teacher training, supply & recruitment



What is a MAT?

- A multi academy trust is an charitable trust & a company limited by guarantee which has responsibility for more than one academy
- Exempt charity: regulated by DfE
- Accountable to the Secretary of State, via the Education Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioners
- It may have a sponsor, but doesn't have to
- It is one organisation with one set of articles of association (AoA) and one vision and ethos
- Culture change: it is not about one school but about all the **pupils** of all the schools in the trust



Who are the players in MAT governance?

For definitive answer for a particular MAT see its AoA

Members: usually a small group who ensure the trustees are doing their job properly; eg. appoint some trustees, approve AoA, receive audited accounts

Trustees / directors: make up the governing board

Chief Executive Officer: appointed by the trust board to deliver its vision, run the trust and line manage other executives

Governors: do not exist in the same way as in LA maintained schools

Committees of the board: eg. resources, standards, and academy committees

Why the scheme of delegation is so important

- Each MAT board of trustees must agree a scheme of delegation (SoD)
- The SoD should have been published from September 2015
- Clarity, clarity, clarity; understanding roles & responsibilities
- **If you are thinking of joining a MAT**, ask to see their SoD before you decide BUT remember the board of trustees can change it
- **If you are growing your own MAT**, develop the SoD with partners
- **If you are already part of a MAT**, you might want to review the SoD as many are flawed, confusing & over complicated: e.g they don't include delegation to the executive, they duplicate functions; they are unclear what they are delegating, often may have many layers of governance

Schemes of delegation

Last week we published 4 model schemes of delegation (see www.nga.org.uk)

- with academy governing committees
- with academy councils
- with cluster governing committees
- with 'earned autonomy'

But there are not just 4 ways of delegating – adapt

What you choose will depend on your MAT: its ethos, size, geography & capability

Review: it will change over time, including if you grow

Challenge: knowing what you are governing

Listening & involving parents & the wider community

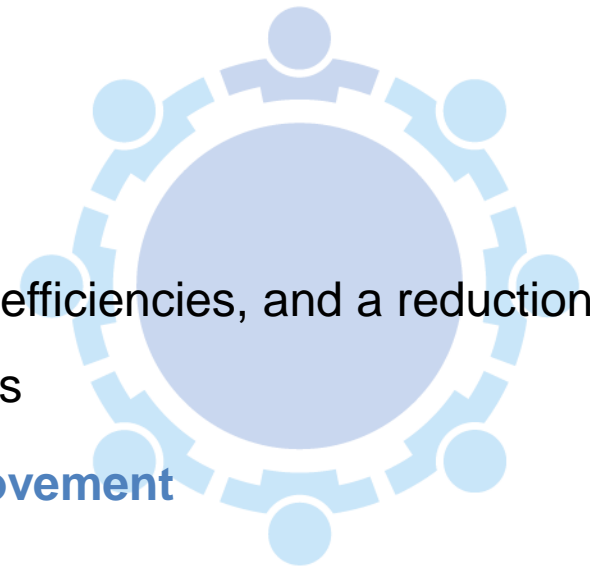
Advantages of groups of schools

- Better & wider offer for pupils, curricula & extra curricula
- Sharing of staff: more specialist teachers, business staff & SEND expertise
- Opportunities for staff development
- Better staff recruitment & retention
- Moderating & benchmarking : same systems of assessment, data & finances
- Learning from each other
- More capacity for innovation
- Cross phase: better transition

Plus encourages better strategic governance, financial efficiencies, and a reduction in bureaucracy, such as central determination of policies

All this = better outcome for pupils = school improvement

Works best when schools are easy to travel between



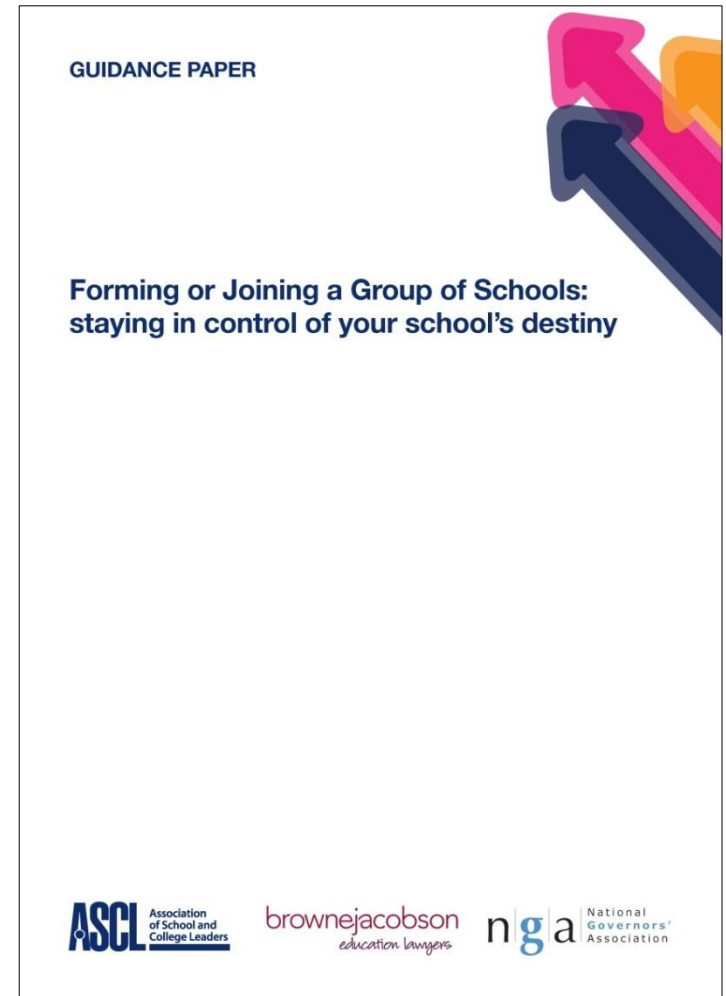
Stay in control of your school's destiny

Guidance on forming or joining a group of schools

The benefits and types of groups, and the steps to take to form a group of schools accountable to one governing board.

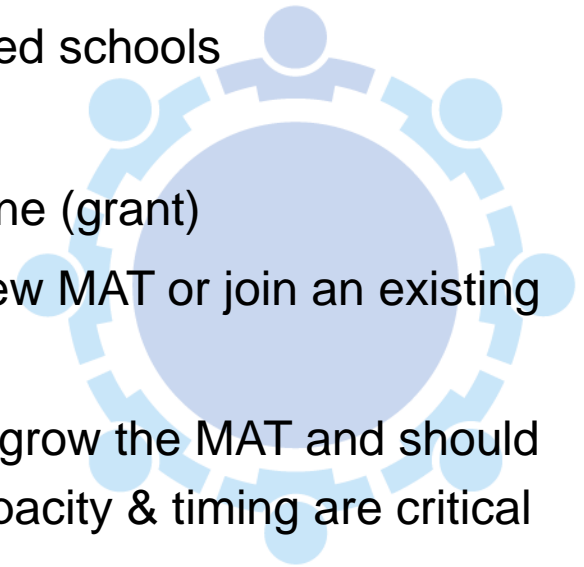
For senior leaders, governors and trustees

Available at
nga.org.uk/destiny



Staying in control of your school's destiny

- Under performing schools will be converted to join MATs or swop MATs, brokered by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)
- What future is there for stand alone schools?: probably only those which are over 1000 pupils will be allowed to remain stand alone; the RSC will decide if the school is sustainable on its own
- If you form a group now, you can choose your own partners
- If you are an LA maintained school, you have more options eg:
 - Form or join a federation with other LA maintained schools
 - The federation could then convert to be a MAT
 - Convert to join an existing MAT or form a new one (grant)
- If you are a stand-alone academy you can form a new MAT or join an existing one: undertake due diligence
- If you are part of a MAT, the Trustees can decide to grow the MAT and should have a strategic approach to this: Due diligence, capacity & timing are critical



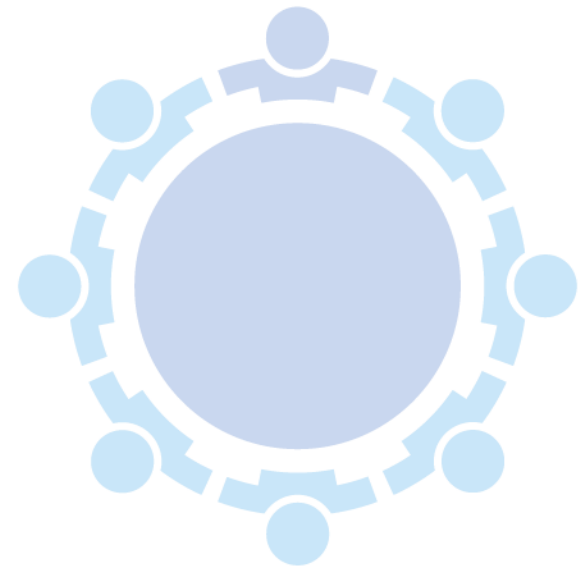
The lesser known option: closing no doors

Federation First

NGA Federation Champions

Federations@nga.org.uk

www.nga.org.uk



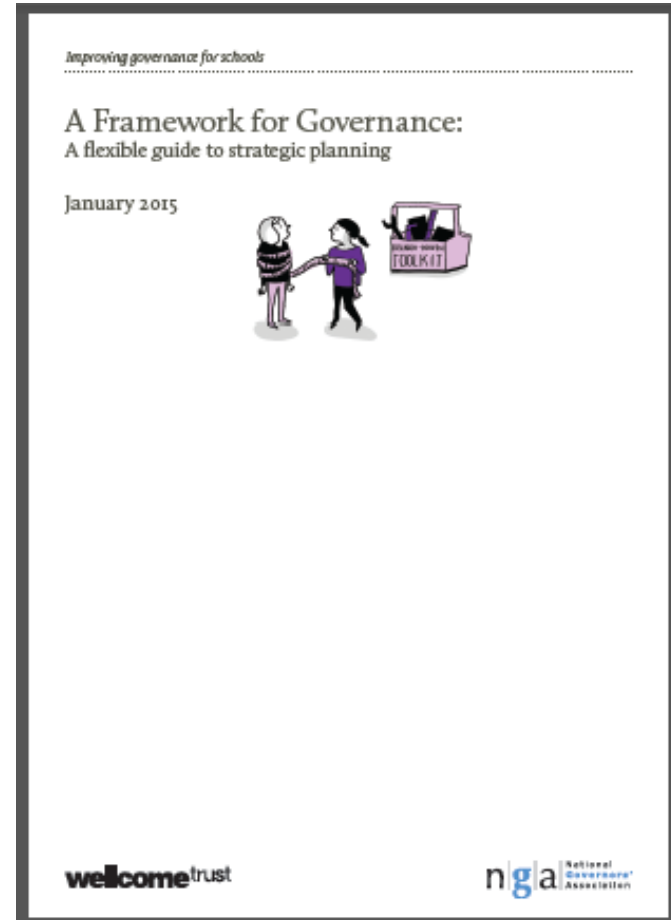
Turning vision into reality

Core function of the
Governing Board:

Setting vision, ethos and
strategic direction

But are we good at it?
How do we do that?

Published in January 2015





“ Why not host a Growing Governance event at your school? ”

www.nga.org.uk/growinggovernance

Bespoke consultancy and training including for multi academy trusts

- **Evalu8ing your MAT governing board:** An online self evaluation tool
- **Chairs' 360 online appraisal:** Valuable insights into leadership
- **External support on forming a MAT & establishing the governance of a new MAT**
- **Training on Governance in MATs**
- **External support with developing a SoD**
- **External support with developing a vision and a strategy**
- **An external review of governance:** clare.collins@nga.org.uk
- **Chairing in a MAT:** Developing a chair's understanding & practice of leading governance
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