



Northamptonshire County Council

Welcome to Governance

An easy guide for new school governors

Issued by Governor Services



June 2020

WELCOME TO BEING A GOVERNOR

You are joining a membership of nearly 4000 School Governors at LA maintained schools and Academies in Northamptonshire; governors who dedicate themselves to the important task of overseeing the provision of quality education for young people in the county. As a governor, you will be helping to ensure that those young people have the best opportunities available to them in schools.

Your commitment to your school(s) - the time and effort that you devote - is probably your greatest gift, one which will be greatly valued by fellow governors, by those who appointed or elected you and by Governor Services.

Being a governor is a rewarding occupation. Like all activities worth doing it is demanding and, at times, difficult. This guidance is designed to introduce you to the task of being a governor and to tell you where further support and advice are available when you need them. We hope that the information given here will not only help you to make a start on being a governor but will prove a useful reference document for the future.

As part of the Governing Board, or one of its committees, you will be able to voice your opinions and help the group to make majority decisions. Working as part of a team, towards a common goal, is something that most governors find very satisfying and rewarding. Governors have to be prepared to give and take and to be loyal to decisions taken by the Governing Board as a whole.

It could well be that you have been a school governor in the past, perhaps in another Local Authority or that you are already familiar with some of the contents of this pack. We have assumed that the reader has no prior knowledge of school governance but we would like to think that anyone reading this material will find something in it for them.

Please start by looking through this information so that you know what it contains but don't attempt to take it all in. When you come across an unfamiliar education term, you can look it up in the separate glossary and acronyms list provided. There is no need to learn everything by heart!

The Chair, or Clerk, of your Governing Board will know of the contents of this document, and will help you to feel welcome and to get to know your fellow governors. If you need any further information please contact Governor Services at governors@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk and one of the team will be pleased to talk to you.

With our best wishes

Governor Services

WHY DO WE HAVE SCHOOL GOVERNORS?

The short answer is "because the law says so". In England and Wales, State education is provided through the operation of a partnership between central and local government, voluntary interests (e.g. the Churches), and school governing bodies, headteachers and the staff. There have been school governing bodies in some form or another for hundreds of years but it is only since the mid-1980s that their members have been drawn to such an extent from the ordinary people who make up the school community.

Education in our state system is funded by the taxpayer and thus the public has the right to know what is happening in schools. The law requires each school to have a Governing Board. Latest legislation requires governing bodies to recruit governors using a skills based approach.

The role of the Governing Board has been shaped over many years by a series of Education Acts which have introduced great changes, both for the way our schools work and for the way governing bodies operate. School governance allows members of the public to volunteer to become involved in holding the school to account, providing support and challenge and bringing to that task fresh perspectives from ordinary life.

THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNANCE

The roles and responsibilities of governance outlined below are informed by regulations, guidance and expectations of such organisations as the DfE (Department for Education), NGA (National Governors Association) and Ofsted (School inspectorate). They are not definitive but do identify the key roles and responsibilities of governance. In addition, the roles and responsibilities will vary according to the category of school such as academies, free schools or schools within a MAT (Multi academy Trust) as well as community and faith schools. Governors should seek clarification of their roles and responsibilities as part of their induction.

The key **role** of governance is to:

- Establish, embed and review the school's aims/mission so that they are fit for purpose
- Provide strategic leadership through agreed priorities
- Facilitate continuous school improvement through effective performance management
- Ensure effective use of resources by providing value for money

To enable the governors to fulfil their role, governors have a very wide range of **responsibilities** which include:

- Ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Enabling all pupils to achieve their potential, based upon high expectations and ambitious aspirations for all pupils
- Ensuring the behaviour of pupils enables them to learn and achieve
- Ensuring the school has appropriate policies which are fit for purpose and effective
- Setting the school budget, based upon supporting continuous school improvement and agreed priorities
- Ensuring the Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and other external funding is effectively allocated
- Agreeing the school's staffing structure and appointing senior staff
- Holding the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance including agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
- Holding the school leadership to account through monitoring and reviewing the progress of all pupils using internal (school) and external (national) achievement information including the performance of specific groups of pupils such as disadvantaged, most able, Looked After Children, English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and additional needs, children with disabilities
- Holding the school leadership to account in providing effective teaching, learning and assessment
- Consulting with the school's stakeholders : pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers to inform the school's aims, mission, values, strategic development and existing policies and practice
- Ensuring the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs effectively including effective performance management, appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development),
- Ensuring the school premises provide a safe and appropriate environment to support teaching and learning and other aspects of school life, including safeguarding

THE WORK OF GOVERNORS

In order to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, governors need to undertake the following:

- Gain knowledge and understanding of the school
- Verify what the school does
- Monitor the work of the school
- Review the work of the school

To do this, a Governing Board needs to consider what **'tools'** they have available and decide how best to deploy these 'tools'

'Tools' a Governing Board might use include:

- Organisation of the Governing Board through the scheduling of the **governing board** and **committees**, based on agreed **terms of reference**
- Use of **'lead governors'** to undertake close monitoring of on-going and/or short term priorities through regular school visits
- Role of **'link governors'** attached to specific groups of children and staff
- Undertaking **surveys** and **questionnaires** to gain greater insight into aspects of the work of the school
- Setting up **'working parties or groups'** to undertake specified tasks and conduct research
- Undertaking **'learning walks'** as an individual or as a group of governors to enable specific monitoring of aspects of the life of the school and particularly school priorities
- **Panels** of governors to undertake specific responsibilities such as undertaking Headteacher performance management, capability, disciplinary and appeals procedures

➤ **CATEGORIES OF GOVERNOR**

The categories of governor are subject to DfE 'Regulations'. However, this only applies to community and faith schools controlled by the Local Authority. For schools which are academies, trusts, free schools and MATs, they are subject to the relevant organisation's scheme of delegation. Governors should seek clarification of the categories of governors in such school organisations.

For Local Authority controlled schools, the categories of governor are identified in the school's 'Instrument of Government' which has to fulfil the expectations within the DfE 'Regulations'.

The types of governors identified below will be different for some local authority schools if they are faith based. Again, governors should seek clarification from their Diocese or Clerk to Governors.

Parent Governors	Who can be elected and/or appointed (at least 2)
Staff Governors	Who can be elected (1 only)
Local Authority Governors	Nominated by the Local Authority (1 only) appointed by the Governing Board.
The Head Teacher	Who is automatically a governor and has a vote. The Head teacher may choose not to be a governor but retains the right to attend all governor meetings.
Co-Opted Governors	Who are appointed by the Governing Board.
Foundation Governors	Are at voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, and some foundation and foundation special schools. They are appointed by the body (mostly the Diocese) named in the Instrument of Government.
Partnership Governors	Will exist only at foundation and foundation special schools which do not have a foundation or trustees. Partnership governors are appointed by the Governing Board and must be members of the community served by the school who are committed to the good governance and success of the school.
Associate Members	Appointed by the governing board to serve on one or more Committees to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise. Associate members are not governors and they are not recorded in the Instrument of Government. They can attend full Governing Board meetings. They may be given voting rights on Committees but as they are not Governors have no voting rights on full governing meetings.

Governing Boards, in seeking to elect and/or appoint governors, should consider the skills they require to ensure they Governing Board has the capacity to support and challenge the school and hold it to account. Governing Boards can reconstitute at any time if they consider it is necessary to ensure effective governance.

GOVERNOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Governing Boards who are Local Authority controlled are accountable to the relevant Local Authority. In addition, faith schools will also be accountable to the local Diocese. For governing Boards within an academy, free school or trust, accountability is normally specified within the Articles of Association and the Scheme of Delegation. Again, governors should seek clarification about accountability as part of their induction.

Governing Boards are subject to Ofsted inspection. As part of an Ofsted inspection, the inspectors will gather evidence about the performance of the Governing Board and make a judgement about the effectiveness of the Governing Board. Ofsted expectations of governance are identified in the Ofsted Inspection Handbook
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE:

An Effective Governor:

- Demonstrates the seven principles of public office contained in the Nolan Principles: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; Leadership (See page 8 - Governing Board are part of the leadership team of the school; governance must always be transparent)
- Ensures confidentiality and abides by the Code of Conduct
- Knows the school well – takes time to visit the school, understand its context and gets to know the staff and pupils
- Is committed to training and development
- Has time to commit to the role
- Attends all meetings
- Prepares for meetings through active involvement and reading paperwork beforehand
- Takes on additional responsibilities within the Governing Board and its committees
- Demonstrates resilience
- Has the ability to ask challenging questions with respect
- Is reflective
- Can adopt a 'strategic view'

An effective Governing Board:

- Acts strategically and not operationally
- Has an effective Induction Policy and processes for new governors
- Works as a corporate team taking shared responsibility for GOVERNING BOARD decision making
- Uses Terms of Reference to inform their work
- Monitors school performance within and between committee meetings
- Establishes good working relationships with the school's parents, carers, pupils, staff and wider community
- Knows how well their school is doing compared to similar schools across the country, including pupil achievement
- Contributes to the School Self Evaluation and target setting and continuously monitors progress against priorities
- Ensures Safeguarding is robust across the school
- Is committed to governor improvement

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The seven principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- the civil service
- local government
- the police
- the courts and probation services
- non-departmental public bodies
- health, education, social and care services

The principles also apply to all those in other sectors that deliver public services.

They were first set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and they are included in the Ministerial code.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



YOUR INITIAL VISITS

It is good practice, and very helpful in terms of informing future participation, for every new governor to have an induction and familiarisation visit to school within the first few weeks of appointment. Even if you are a parent with a child in the school a familiarisation visit is a useful exercise to acquaint yourself with all aspects of the school, its staff and the built environment.

- Arrange with the Head Teacher and Chair or Vice-Chair or Governors
- Plan to spend a morning or afternoon in school if you can
- Read the school prospectus and view the school website before you visit so that you can plan any questions that arise beforehand
- Read the governor visits policy to ensure you are familiar with the purpose of your visit and governor/school expectations
- Visit and talk to staff and pupils when it is appropriate to do so
- Make a note of what you learn for future information and a note of any questions you have as you walk round
- Report back to the Head and Chair who will be able to answer your questions and queries
- Write a short report/summary for the FGOVERNING BOARD using the pro forma supplied by the Governing Board if they are using one
- Follow up any further queries with your Governor Mentor/Chair or Governors

In addition you should also:

- Ensure you have completed a DBS check
- Read and signed the Governor Code of Conduct
- Enquire and book onto Induction training for new governors

FURTHER VISITS INCLUDING LEARNING WALKS

Learning walks are one of the 'tools' governors can use to inform their work and monitor progress of school priorities. Your Governing Board may have a schedule of planned learning walks for the year aligned with the School Development Plan priorities. Learning Walks will be focused on monitoring a particular theme e.g. behaviour, health and safety, a new curriculum project, British Values across the school, Safeguarding, or may be used to inform governors' work and knowledge of the school e.g. understanding SEND provision, understanding the application of a Marking Policy or understanding how SSMC is incorporated into the curriculum.

- Read the Learning Walks Guidance or Policy provided by the GOVERNING BOARD before your visit
- Prepare for the learning walk by reading any associated policies and information that the relevant committee and/or the Head Teacher may send you beforehand
- Remember you are not in school to make judgements about the quality of teaching – the GOVERNING BOARD monitors this through the Head Teacher and Leadership Team
- Meet with the Head Teacher or Leadership Team member(s) to go over the format of the visit before you engage in the walk
- Speak with staff and pupils when it is convenient to do so without interrupting the learning
- Try not to take notes whilst you are observing as this can be disconcerting to staff and pupils. Make your notes discreetly at quiet moments between classrooms
- At the end of the walk meet as a group with the governors who have conducted the visit with you (if you have walked as a group rather than as an individual) to agree perceptions and observations then report back to the Head Teacher or Leadership Team to discuss these
- After the visit write up a report using the pro-forma supplied by the Governing Board and circulate to the Chair of the relevant committee and the Head Teacher before presenting it to the committee or GOVERNING BOARD
- Remember to thank the staff and pupils for the visit
- You might like to include a short report of your activities in a parent/governor newsletter to keep the school community informed of your work

TRAINING, SUPPORT AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The quality of governance at a school is integral to its success and governors have a vital role that requires skill and professionalism.

Governing Boards should continually evaluate the performance of individual governors, the GOVERNING BOARD as a team and undertake any training that is required to be effective in their role. Every GOVERNING BOARD should identify its priorities for training and development, ensure that the training/development has been arranged and funding allocated in the budget.

Northamptonshire County Council expects all governors to receive induction training as soon as is reasonably practicable following their appointment. It is essential to ensure that all governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This reflects the model Code of Conduct for governors issued by the NGA

As a governor you should develop your knowledge of:

- responsibilities of the Governing Board
- the Governing Board itself
- the school and its context

NCC Governor Services are committed to providing advice, guidance and support to all maintained schools, governors and clerks and can be contacted on governor@childrenfirstnorthamptonshire.co.uk

Clerks should inform Governor Services of any changes to their Governing Board by clicking on the link below:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/governors-and-clerks/Pages/information-for-clerks.aspx>

Information on Training for Governors can be found on the LGSS iLearn portal.

If you have any issues accessing the portal please contact LGSSLearning@northamptonshire.gov.uk where someone from the business team will be happy to deal with your query.

GET TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL

How you go about obtaining information really depends upon you. By far the best way of finding out what makes a school 'tick' is to visit it during working hours. Whether you are at work or have a home to run, it may be difficult to visit during school hours but with careful planning it should be possible to visit on a regular basis. Governors are entitled to a 'reasonable amount of time off work' in order to carry out a 'public duty' (please see "The Governors' Handbook"

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582868/Governance_Handbook_-_January_2017.pdf)

Schools have changed greatly in the last few years so they will be different from the memory you may have of them!

Useful documents:

- the School Development Plan or Improvement Plan – this might be called the SDP/SIP
- the latest OfSTED inspection report or Ofsted monitoring report (or download from the Ofsted website)
- copies of the agenda, minutes and related papers from previous governors' meeting, especially Headteacher's reports and reports of any governors' visits
- a copy of the school brochure, prospectus or profile
- any information sent to new pupils and their parents
- the staff handbook, if your school produces one
- a calendar of school events for the coming year
- copies of school magazines, newsletters to parents etc

All necessary information should be provided to you before attending your first meeting and should be part of the induction provided to you by your school. Talk to your Chair of Governors, Headteacher or Clerk to obtain any relevant documentation.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT GOVERNANCE?

The more you become involved in the life and work of the school the more it will help you as a governor. You should:

- attend all relevant meetings
- read all the necessary papers
- make visits to the school
- ask questions whenever you require clarification
- keep in touch with parents
- talk to other governors whenever you can
- attend a selection of governor training courses

If you would like to improve upon what you do and make sure that you keep up-to-date, here are a few suggestions:

- If you cannot visit the school regularly during the working day, try to attend as many evening/weekend events as possible and use those opportunities to talk with staff, children and parents
- You could become involved with one or more of the Governing Board's committees or working groups and along with fellow governors take on extra responsibilities
- Attend other development activities, workshops and/or conferences which are run by the Leadership and Governance Team and report back to your next meeting any ideas or information you may have gained.
- Read education articles in the newspapers and in magazines – try the school or local library for specialist publications such as the Times Educational Supplement.
- There are governors' resources available in some libraries. Find out if there is something similar in your school.
- Your Governing Board may have a member of a national organisation that supports governors e.g. the National Governors Association (NGA)

LIST OF ACRONYMS (not exhaustive)

ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder
AfL	Assessment for Learning
AGOG	Advisory Group on Governance
AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
AP	Alternative Provision (eg a PRU)
APP	Assessing Pupil Progress
APS	Average points score
ASP	Analyse School Performance (replaces Raiseonline)
AR	Annual review
ARE	Age-related expectations
ASIP	Additional Support & Intervention Plan
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
BESD	Behavioural Emotional & Social Difficulties
BPPE	Basic Per Pupil Entitlement
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CDT	Craft, Design and Technology
CFF	Common Funding Formula
CFR	Consistent Financial Reporting
CIRT	Critical Incident Response Team
CP	Child Protection
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPR	Child Protection Register
CYPP	Children and Young Peoples Plan
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DfE	Department for Education (since May 2010)
DFC	Devolved Formula Capital
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
DMS	Data management system
DO	Designated Officer (previously known as LADO-Local authority designated officer)
DPO	Data Protection Officer
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DT	Design and Technology
E2L	English as a Second Language
EAL	English as an additional language
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
ECAR	Every Child A Reader
ECAT	Every Child A Talker
ECAW	Every Child a Writer
ECM	Every Child Matters
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plans
EHE	Electively home educated
EHT	Executive Headteacher
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership
EFA	Education Funding Agency
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
EY	Early Years
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYDP	Early Years Development Plan
FE	Further Education
FFT	Fischer Family Trust
FG	Full Governing Board
FOI	Freedom of Information
FS	Foundation Stage
FSM	Free School Meals
FT	Full-time
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
G&T	Gifted and Talented
GAG	General Annual Grant – Main funding per pupil for academies
GB	Governing Board
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education

GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
H & S	Health and Safety
HE	Higher Education
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HoD	Head of Department
HoS	Head of School
HoY	Head of Year
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health, Safety and Environment.
HT	Head Teacher
IAP	Individual Action Plan
IBP	Individual Behaviour Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
iip	Investors in People
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ISR	Individual School Range (of salaries)
IT	Information Technology
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS1, 2, 3, 4	Key Stage 1, 2, 3, 4 (<i>KS1 age 5 – 7 "Infants", KS2 age 7 – 11 "Juniors", KS3 age 11- 14, KS4 age 14-16</i>)
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked after Children (also known as Cared for Children, or Children in Care)
LACSEG	Local Authority Special Equivalent Grant – paid to academies to cover equivalent LA maintained schools general shared costs.
LGB	Local Governing Board – within a Trust.
LMS	Local Management of Schools
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children's Board
MAT	Multi- Academy Trust
MFA	Master Funding Agreement – General agreement between EFA and Academy/Trust
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
MIFP	Manual of Internal Financial Procedures
NC	National Curriculum
NCTL	National College for Teaching & Leadership
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGA	National Governors Association
NGfL	National Grid for Learning
NOR	Number (of pupils) on Roll
NPQH	National Professional Qualifications for Headship
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PAN	Published Admission Number
PE	Physical Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PICSI	Pre-Inspection Context and School Indicators
PM	Performance Management (or Provision map)
POAP	Post Ofsted Action Plan
PP	Pupil premium
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment
PRP	Performance Related Pay
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSCHE	Personal, Social, Citizenship & Health Education
PSE	Personal and Social Education
PSHE	Personal Social Health Education (also PSCHE including citizenship)
PT	Part-time
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil/Teacher Ratio
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
QDD	Quality Development Dialogue
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
R&R	Recruitment and retention
RAP	Raising Attainment Plan

RC	Roman Catholic
RE	Religious Education
ROV	Record of Visit (by SIP or external adviser)
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner
RSE	Relationship and Sex Education
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
SBM	School business manager
SBSA	Schools' Business Support Agreement (see also SLA)
SDP	School Development Plan (See also SSDP and SIP)
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disability
SENSS	SEN specialist services
SFA	Supplementary Funding Agreement – Specifics of agreement between EFA and individual Academy/Trust.
SFVS	Schools Financial Value Standard
SIC	Statement of Internal Control
SIP	School Improvement Partner
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLA	Service Level Agreement (See also SBSA)
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SMT	Senior Management Team
SMSC	Spiritual moral social and cultural
SOD	Scheme of Delegation
SPAG	Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
SS	Social Services
SSDP	Strategic School Development Plan (See also SDP and SIP)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STPDC	School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document
TA	Teaching Assistant
TDA	Training and Development Agency
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TLG	Training Liaison Governor, also known in some LAs as Link Governors for Training and Development
TUPE	Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment
UPN	Unique Pupil Number
UT	Umbrella Trust
VAK	Visual Auditory and Kinesthetic (theory of 'learning styles' – NB: not universally accepted as valid)
VA	Voluntary Aided
VC	Voluntary Controlled
VI	Visually Impaired
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
YOT	Youth Offending Team

GLOSSARY (not exhaustive)

A

Absence and Attendance Codes – A list of codes used by the Department for Education (DfE), which schools that are on the School Census are required to use when recording attendance and absence.

Academies – Publicly funded independent schools established under Section 482 of the Education Act 1996.

Achievement – NB Ofsted's definition of achievement was revised in September 2009. **Achievement** now takes into account the standards of **attainment** reached by pupils and the **progress** they have made to reach those standards. **Attainment**: this is the standard of academic attainment, typically shown by test and examination results. **Progress**: this is the extent to which pupils have progressed in their learning given their starting points and capabilities.

Achievement and attainment tables (now known again as performance tables) – The DfE publishes tables that provide a reliable and easily accessible source of comparative information. The tables report achievements for primary school pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The secondary (Key Stage 4) tables report the GCSE (and equivalent) achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. The post-16 tables report A/AS level (and equivalent) achievements at Level 3 for schools and colleges.

Admission authority – Local Authorities (LAs) are admission authorities with responsibility for admissions to community and voluntary controlled schools.

The Governing Board of an Academy, foundation or voluntary aided school is the admission authority for the school.

Admission forum – Section 85A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires all LA areas to have an Admission Forum. Admission Forums are groups of local admission stakeholders, independent of the LA, which scrutinise admission arrangements and discuss their effectiveness, consider how to deal with difficult admission issues and advise admission authorities on the ways in which their arrangements can be improved. Forums have an important power to publish an annual fair access report on admissions and may exercise their statutory right of objection to admission arrangements.

Admissions register – The details, in alphabetical order, of all pupils that attend a school.

Agreed syllabus – A syllabus of religious education that is not specific to one religion, adopted by an LA for teaching in community and controlled schools. The syllabus will be determined and written by an Agreed Syllabus Conference and recommended by the local body that advises the LA on religious education and collective worship (see SACRE, below).

Appraisal – The process of assessing how well a member of staff is carrying out his or her job. (previously known as performance management)

Approved educational activity – An activity that takes place outside the school premises and which has been approved by a person authorised to do so by the proprietor of the school. The activity is of an educational nature, including work experience, and is supervised by a person authorised on that behalf by the proprietor of the school.

Associate member – A person who is appointed by the Governing Board as a member of a committee established by it, but who is not a governor.

Attainment targets – The knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of differing ability and maturity are expected to attain by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum, i.e. assessed at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16.

Attendance register – A register is called at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon. It must contain the names of all the pupils that attend a school.

Attendance Targets – Overall targets for reducing absence set by governing bodies (*No longer statutory*)

Authorised absence – Where the absence of a pupil has been agreed by the person authorised on their behalf by the proprietor of the school.

B

Ballot – A method of voting, normally secret.

Behaviour support plan – A statement that sets out local arrangements for schools and other service providers for the education of children with behavioural difficulties.

C

Capital expenditure – Spending on building projects and large items of equipment.

Catchment area – A defined geographical area from which a school takes its pupils.

Casting vote – An additional vote to be used by the chair of governors if an equal number of votes are cast for and against a motion.

Children's Trust – A broad coalition of all those interested locally in the wellbeing of children, including schools. The Children's Trust partnership arrangements are underpinned by Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the duty to co-operate.

Circular – A policy statement issued by a government department, which does not have the status of law, but which gives guidance on interpretation and implementation of the law.

City Technology College (CTC) – Independent, all ability, non-fee-paying schools for pupils aged 11 to 18.

Clerk to the Governing Board – A person appointed to carry out administrative duties for the Governing Board such as preparing an agenda, minuting meetings and dealing with correspondence. The clerk advises the Governing Board on legal and procedural matters.

Collaboration – Where two or more governing bodies may arrange for any of their functions to be discharged jointly by holding joint meetings and/or having joint committees.

Common transfer file – Information which must be transferred when a pupil moves from a maintained school to another school (whether or not a maintained school).

Community cohesion – Working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

Community school – A state school in England and Wales that is wholly owned and maintained by the LA.

Community special school – A state school in England and Wales that is wholly owned and maintained by the LA providing for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

Contingency fund – Money set aside for unexpected costs.

Co-opted Governor – A governor appointed by the GOVERNING BOARD, under 2012 Constitution regulations.

Core subjects – English, mathematics and science are the subjects that must be studied by all pupils at every key stage. Progress in Key Stage 1 is assessed through statutory tests and tasks which are used to inform teacher assessment. Progress in Key Stage 2 is assessed through national curriculum tests and teacher assessment. Progress in Key Stage 3 is assessed through teacher assessment.

Current expenditure – Spending on the day-to-day running of schools, including staff costs, heating and lighting, consumables and so on; sometimes called recurrent expenditure.

D

DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service are responsible for making decisions as to who should be added to the list of those barred from working with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Delegation – A process where one body or person gives another body or person authority to take decisions on a particular matter.

Deletion from the school roll – When a pupil's name is removed from the admissions register.

Department for Education (DfE) formerly *Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)*, and the *Department for Education and Skills (DfES)* – The central government department with responsibility for education.

Designated teacher – An advocate who liaises with other services on behalf of young people in care.

Devolved Formula Capital – Funds provided by the Local Authority for projects such as building work.

Diocese – The area over which a bishop has jurisdiction.

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead. A senior member of the school's management team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues, providing advice and support to staff and liaising with LA and other agencies involved in safeguarding children.

E

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – The regulatory and quality framework for the provision of learning, development and care for children between birth and the academic year in which they turn five (0–5).

Education Welfare Officers – Also known as education social workers or attendance advisers, these officers are employed by LAs to resolve problems of children and young people regularly missing school.

English Baccalaureate: This is not a qualification but a measure of achieving five good GCSEs.

Exclusion – Banning a pupil officially from school by the headteacher, either temporarily or permanently, on disciplinary grounds.

Ex officio governor – Someone who is automatically a governor or able to attend meetings of a Governing Board by virtue of the office they hold, for example a headteacher, parish priest or vicar, i.e. the position of governor comes with the job.

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.

F

Fair Processing Notice – An oral or written statement that an organization should give to individuals whose personal information they have collected. The statement is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998 and should inform the individual about the information collected, the purpose for its collection and how an individual may request access to it.

Federation of governing bodies – The arrangement whereby several schools join together under a single Governing Board. The schools remain separate schools but are governed by one body.

Formula funding – The method by which funds for school budgets are calculated. The most important factor is the number of pupils.

Foundation governor – A person appointed to be a member of a school's Governing Board, otherwise than by the LA, to ensure that the school preserves its particular religious character, or that it is conducted in accordance with the terms of a trust deed.

Foundation school – A type of state school introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which has more freedom than community schools in how it is managed and with its admissions procedures. At foundation schools, the Governing Board is the employer and the admission authority. The school's land and buildings are owned by either the Governing Board or a charitable foundation. Funding comes from the LA, which also pays for any building work.

Foundation special school – A type of state school which has more freedom than community schools in how it is managed. It differs from a foundation school, in that it caters for children with special educational needs (SEN). At foundation special schools the Governing Board is the employer and admission to the school is through a statement, except in cases of emergency placements, which are described in Chapter 8 of the SEN Code of Practice. The school's land and buildings are either owned by the Governing Board or by a charitable foundation. Funding comes from the LA which also pays for any building work.

Free School – A new state-funded school which is to be set up by (for example) a charity, business, community, group of teachers or parents, and which has the same legal structure as an academy.

G

General Annual Grant – The funding for academies comes primarily in the form of a grant, known as the General Annual Grant (GAG), paid by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

H

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) – Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is the head of Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills).

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) – These are appointed by the Chief Inspector to support him or her in his or her statutory duties.

Home-school agreement – All state schools were required to have written home-school agreements, drawn up in consultation with parents. They are non-binding statements explaining the school's aims and values, the responsibilities of both school and parents, and what the school expects of its pupils. Parents were invited to sign a parental declaration indicating that they understand and accept the contents of the agreement. *They are no longer a statutory requirement but considered good practice.*

I

Inclusion statement – A statutory statement in the national curriculum to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils through the school curriculum. Teachers can modify (as necessary) the national curriculum programme of study to set suitable learning challenges, respond to pupils' diverse learning needs, and address potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Independent school – Any school that provides full-time education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age, which is not maintained by an LA and is not a non-maintained special school. As these are schools that are not funded by the state, they obtain most of their finances from fees paid by parents and income from investments. Some of the larger independent schools are known as public schools, while most boarding schools are independent. Further information is available from the Independent Schools Council information Service (ISCiS).

Information Commissioner – The independent office holder set up to oversee and enforce the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act. More information can be found at www.ico.gov.uk

In-service Education and Training (INSET) – The professional training and development of teachers working in schools, generally taken as short courses or day conferences.

Instrument of government – A legal document detailing the composition of a Governing Board of a school.

K

Key stages – The four stages of pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge and skills as set out in the national curriculum. Key Stage 1, where the majority of pupils are aged 5 to 7; Key Stage 2, where the majority of pupils are aged 7 to 11; Key Stage 3, where the majority of children are aged 11 to 14; and Key Stage 4, where the majority of pupils are aged 14 to 16.

L

Lay member – A member appointed to a panel hearing appeals against non-admission or exclusion, being a person without personal experience in managing or providing education in any school (other than as a governor or on a voluntary basis). He or she must not have, or have had, any connection with the school, or any person who is a member of, or employed by, the Governing Board, if that might raise doubts about his or her ability to act fairly.

LA – Local Authority (formerly Local Education Authority).

LA governor – A person appointed as a governor by the LA

List 99 – A list maintained by the Department for Children, Schools and Families of those people who are barred from working in schools and further education establishments. A number of people on the List are also barred from working with children across the children's workforce.

LAC (Looked-after child) – A child who, as defined in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, is cared for by the LA or is provided with accommodation by an LA for more than 24 hours under a voluntary agreement with his or her parents, or who is the subject of a care order.

M

Maintained nursery school (MNS) – A school providing education for children aged from three to five, maintained by the LA.

Maintained school – A school for which an LA has financial and administrative responsibility.

Maintained special school – A special school that caters wholly or mainly for children with statutory statements of SEN, for which an LA has financial and administrative responsibility.

N

National curriculum – The national curriculum provides a broad and balanced education for all children, covering 12 subjects overall, and is divided into four key stages according to age. It includes statutory assessments, consisting of tests and teacher assessments, at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3.

National curriculum tests (commonly referred to as SATs) – Statutory national tasks or tests set by the National Assessment Agency (NAA) and taken by pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

Non-teaching staff – Members of school staff employed by the governors to provide services in a school other than teaching, such as classroom assistants, cleaners and school secretaries.

NQT – A newly qualified teacher.

Nursery classes – A class in any school comprising children aged three and those who have their fourth birthday during the school year, and any other children whom it is appropriate to educate within that age group. This is usually the year before children attend reception class.

O

Ofqual – Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator, the organisation responsible for regulating qualifications, examinations and national curriculum tests in England.

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. It brings together the regulation and inspection of day care and children’s social care and the inspection of LA children’s services, schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning, adult education and more.

Open enrolment – All schools must admit pupils up to their Published Admission Number (see Published Admission Number, below), which is calculated according to the physical capacity of the school to accommodate pupils.

Outturn – A statement prepared annually by an LA showing its incurred expenditure, and the schools that it maintains, during the financial year. The statement is in a form prescribed by Regulations and must be published and sent to the Secretary of State for Education.

P

Parent – Any person having parental responsibility for a child or who has care of a child, including an LA. Therefore, depending on the circumstances, a “parent” may include not only the child’s natural parents but also others such as step-parents, relatives and co-habitees of either natural parent and foster parents.

Parent Champion – A person appointed where a school is causing concern (particularly when the school is in special measures or requiring significant improvement) to ensure good communication with parents and to help them influence decisions about the future of the school.

Parent governor – A parent elected by other parents of children at a school to serve on the Governing Board.

Parental responsibility – This means all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. More than one person may have parental responsibility for the same child at the same time, and a person does not cease to have such responsibility solely because some other person subsequently also acquires it. Both parents have parental responsibility if they were married to each other at the time of the child’s birth, although they may have since separated or divorced. If the child’s parents were not married at the time of the birth, the mother has parental responsibility for the child, and the father is able to acquire parental responsibility for the child if he: marries the mother of the child; enters into a parental responsibility agreement with the mother; registers the child’s birth jointly with the mother (effective from 1 December 2003, but not retrospective); or applies to the court for a parental responsibility order. A residence order confers parental responsibility on the holder for the duration of the order. Parental responsibility passes to the adopter when an adoption order is made. Although a care order confers parental responsibility on an LA, the LA will not be treated as a parent for certain purposes under the Education Acts.

Parenting contract – A formal, voluntary, written agreement between a parent and either the LA or the Governing Board of a school. Parenting contracts require the party entering into the contract to fund any cost of the “supportive” element of the contract. In the context of a school, this will be the Governing Board (which has control of the school budget under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). Parenting contracts can be used in cases of misbehaviour or irregular attendance at school or alternative provision.

Partnership governor – Where a school does not have a foundation or equivalent body, foundation governors are replaced by partnership governors who are appointed by the Governing Board after a nomination process.

Parent Council – A body of parents which represents parents and provides a forum for them to put forward their views to the headteacher and the Governing Board of their children’s school. LA Foundation Schools must establish a Parent Council.

Parenting orders – Schools or LAs can apply to the Magistrates Court for a civil parenting order against a parent where their child has seriously misbehaved or is excluded from school. Parenting orders are also available as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order. The order places requirements on the parent to attend a parenting programme. The order will last up to 12 months and any breaches could lead to a fine of £1,000.

Parent Support Advisors – PSAs will continue to be rolled out nationally in the context of the extended school core offer for parenting support. They offer support for parents in a school context with a particular focus on improving pupil attendance, behaviour and attainment.

Penalty notice – Headteachers wishing to issue, or authorise their staff to issue, penalty notices must first gain the agreement of the Governing Board. The penalty is a fine and is an alternative to the parent being prosecuted in court. The school behaviour and attendance policies (where applicable) must be revised accordingly. Headteachers and deputy and assistant heads must comply with the local code of conduct issued by their LA when issuing penalty notices and provide to the LA a copy of any notice issued.

Peripatetic teacher – One who gives specialist instruction in a number of schools, for example, in music.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) – A record of what needs to happen so that looked-after children can fulfill their potential, reflecting any existing educational plans. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which secures good basic skills, stretches aspirations and builds life chances.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) – A procurement route established in 1995, and more widely adopted since 1997. PFI requires private sector consortia to raise private finance to fund the project, which must involve investment in assets, and the long-term delivery of services to the public sector.

Protection of Children Act List – A list maintained by the Department for Children, Schools and Families of those people who are barred from working with children across the children’s workforce.

Published Admission Number (PAN) – The fixed number of children which a school must admit if sufficient applications are received, as published by the admission authority for the school. The PAN may be less than the indicated admission number, but the admission authority would need to publish a notice to enable parents to object to the Schools Adjudicator.

Pupil referral unit (PRU) – An establishment maintained by an LA which is specially organised to provide education for children who are excluded, sick or otherwise unable to attend mainstream school, and is not a community or special school.

Pupil reports – it is a requirement for headteachers of maintained schools to provide an annual written report on pupils’ educational achievements for every registered pupil at their school.

Pupils on roll – Pupils registered at a school.

Q

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) – Maintains and develops the national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and examinations.

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) – The professional status required to teach in state-maintained schools in England and Wales. QTS is normally awarded after successful completion of an Initial Teacher Training course.

Quorum – The number of governors who must be present to validate the proceedings of a governors' meeting.

R

Reception classes – Defined by Section 142 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1988. An entry class to primary schools for children who have their fifth birthday during the school year and for children who are younger or older than five with whom it is appropriate to educate them.

Regulations – Subordinate legislation deriving its authority from an Act of Parliament, legally binding on governing bodies and others (see also Statutory Instrument, below).

Resolution – A proposal made formally at a meeting that has been voted on and agreed.

S

SACRE – see Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

SATs – Statutory national tasks or tests set by the National Assessment Agency (NAA) and taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

School Company – A company set up by schools to provide goods and services for schools in the company and other schools.

School curriculum – All learning and other experiences that schools provide for pupils. For maintained schools this must include the national curriculum, religious education, collective worship, sex and relationship education and careers education.

Scheme for Financing Schools – A document which must be prepared and maintained by each LA under Section 48(1) SSFA, dealing with those matters connected with the financing of schools maintained by the LA which are set out in Schedule 5 to the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.

Schools Forum – A body which must be established by each LA under Section 47A(1) SSFA, which represents the governing bodies and headteachers of schools maintained by the LA and Academies as well as the interests of other persons, whose purpose is to advise the LA on matters relating to the schools budget and carry out certain functions. The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2002 prescribe various matters relating to the establishment and functions of schools forums and require LAs to consult the Schools Forum on certain matters relating to the schools budget. Note that schools members (i.e. representatives from schools and governing bodies) on the Schools Forum are elected by their peers.

School Improvement Partner (SIP) – *Someone who acted as a conduit between central government, the LA and the school, helping to set targets and priorities and identify support needed. The duty of the LA to appoint a SIP has ended, though GOVERNING BOARDS still have a statutory need to have an "external adviser" to help them with their Headteacher Performance Management.*

School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) – A body appointed by the prime minister to examine and report on such matters relating to the statutory conditions of employment of school teachers, including teachers' pay.

Self Evaluation Form (SEF) – This was a non-statutory document, containing judgements about the school. The official SEF document was withdrawn in July 2011, though Ofsted still expect schools to carry out self evaluation, so the document used for this is still sometimes referred to as the SEF.

Significant improvement – A school requiring significant improvement is one that, although it does not require special measures, is performing significantly less well than it might be expected to perform. It receives a monitoring visit after six to eight months and a full re-inspection after a year. It is expected to have improved significantly by then but if it hasn't the school may be placed in special measures.

Special educational needs (SEN) – Learning difficulties for which a child needs special educational help.

Special measures – A school that requires special measures is one that is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and whose leadership, management or governance does not demonstrate the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Schools will receive termly monitoring visits commencing about five to six months after the date of inspection.

Staff governors – The headteacher and/or people working at the school who are elected as a governor by people who are paid to work at the school.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – A local body advising an LA on matters connected with religious education and collective worship in schools. Faith groups and teachers are represented.

Statement of Internal Control (SIC) – an annual document required by SFVS. It is a factual statement setting out the processes that are in place to ensure effective management of the school's resources.

Statement of special educational needs – A written statement of a child's special educational needs and all the extra help that he or she should receive. The arrangements are made by the LA.

Statutory Instrument (SI) – Subordinate legislation made under the authority of an Act of Parliament, usually authorised by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or one of his or her ministerial team, and which is normally laid before Parliament. It has the same force in law as an Act of Parliament.

Sure Start Children's Centre – Usually based at a school or within a Sure Start Local Programme, it provides integrated services to the families of children under five in the local area.

Suspension – A process where a member of staff is told to stop working at the school temporarily, usually while a problem involving him or her is being investigated.

T

Training Liaison Governor – a governor with responsibility for monitoring and coordinating, but not providing, the professional development of the Governing Board. Also known as CPD or Link Governor.

Trust – A charitable organisation that supports one or more schools by holding land on trust and appointing governors. It must be an incorporated organisation, either a charitable company or a body incorporated by Royal Charter.

Trustee – Usually a named individual (although can be a corporate body) responsible for the day-to-day management of the Trust, which is likely to include identifying and appointing governors for the school(s) that the Trust supports.

Trust members – Individuals or organisations who take decisions about the organisation of the Trust, including how trustees are elected or appointed. They also hold the trustees to account, for example at a general meeting.

U

Unauthorised absence – This occurs when the school has not given permission for the absence of a pupil. Where the reason for it cannot be established at registration, the absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. Any subsequent correction to the register recording absence as authorized shall be made in such a manner that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.

V

Voluntary aided school – A school set up and owned by a voluntary body, usually a church body, largely financed by an LA. The Governing Board employs the staff and controls pupil admissions and religious education. The school's land and buildings (apart from playing fields, which are normally vested in the LA) will normally be owned by a charitable foundation.

Voluntary controlled school – A school set up by a voluntary body, often a church body (generally Church of England). These schools are totally funded by an LA, which employs the staff. Normally the school's land and buildings (apart from the playing fields, which are normally vested in the LA) will be owned by a charitable foundation.

W

Warning notice– A notice by which an LA may notify the Governing Board of any of its concerns relating to school performance, a breakdown in leadership and management, or pupil or staff safety. This is sometimes referred to as a “formal warning”.