

Foreword

The department's vision is to see robust and effective of governance in every school and trust. As the first line of accountability, the department recognises that high quality effective and ethical governance is key to success in our school system and for the future of children and young people.

I am pleased to have been asked to write this foreword for what is the latest Governance Handbook update, as it provides me with an opportunity to say thank you for the work that you do to support schools and academies. I truly believe that no school can perform well over a sustained period of time without effective governance.

This latest version of the handbook is mainly a policy and legislative update, but it also intends to clarify some of the areas that you have raised with us directly.

The key features of effective governance – strategic leadership, accountability, people, structures, compliance and evaluation – are embedded into this handbook and the competency framework for governance. They also underpin the DfE-funded governance training programmes, which the Secretary of State has provided funding for in recognition of the important role of the army of volunteers who undertake this work. I encourage every board and clerk to take-up one of the training offers.

As an ex-trustee, I recognise that the foundation of effective governance is based on the commitment, skills, knowledge and behaviours of a group of volunteers. However, I also believe that for a board to be effective it will need to consist of a diverse group of volunteers, from a variety of backgrounds, who each bring with them different perspectives and experience but who are there for the same purpose, to ensure they can provide the best education to their students.

I understand that many of you involved in governance do so because you want to give something back to the community, using the skills you have acquired in your professional careers and putting them to good use. But, being a governor or trustee is also about learning new skills and obtaining wider knowledge. Undertaking a governance role can provide you with these additional skills and can have a positive impact on your own development, which in turn can have a beneficial impact on your self-development, in your workplace or on the wider community. It can also build confidence and provide volunteers with the opportunity to increase their capability in a professional role.



Lord Theodore Agnew

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools