

Newsletter for Governors

Summer 2018

Dear Governors

Please find detailed in this newsletter, reminders of changes that have occurred throughout this academic year so far with links to useful guidance for governors.

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New Governance Handbook

The latest Governance Handbook was published on 12 January 2017.

Helpfully, pages 7 and 8 outline the changes to the guidance which includes a new summary description of the six key features of effective governance.

The six key features are:

Strategic Leadership - that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy

Accountability- that drives up educational standards and financial performance.

People - with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.

Structure - that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Compliance - with statutory and contractual requirements.

Evaluation - to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

These links closely with the new Competence Framework.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582868/Governance Handbook - January 2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582868/Governance_Handbook_-_January_2017.pdf)

Competency Framework

The non-statutory Competency Framework was also published on 12 January 2017. It sets out the competencies needed for effective governance. The framework is applicable to all boards in proportion to the scale and complexity of the organisation they are governing. Boards will need to consider which knowledge and skill areas outlined in the framework are most important for their context.

The framework may be useful for boards to support reviews of their effectiveness and identify areas of strength and further development; set out the expectations of the work they undertake and highlight training needs.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582869/Competency_framework_for_governance.pdf

DBS requirements – reminder

Any newly appointed or reappointed governor **has to have** applied for a certificate within 21 days of appointment.

All existing Governors **must** hold a DBS certificate.

Reporting requirements on Edubase - reminder

Under section 538 of the Education Act 1996, it is a requirement for schools to provide information for all maintained school governors which will be collected in Edubase and will be made publicly available:

- full name (including title)
- appointing body (e.g. board, foundation, parents etc.)
- date of appointment
- date term of office ends / ended if in last year
- for maintained schools whether they are the chair of governors or a member of the governing body

(This information should already be available on school/academy websites)

In addition, for all these individuals the DfE will collect within Edubase, but not publish, a range of information to help them to identify specific individuals:

- postcode
- date of birth
- previous names
- nationality
- direct email address for chair

This governance data, that is not publically available, will be encrypted within the system and access will be restricted to a small number of users who need it to fulfil their official responsibilities. The email address of the chair of the board will be made available to regional schools commissioner offices on request where they need direct contact with the chair.

General Data Protection Regulations – from 25th May 2018

Performance Progress data guidance

The new progress measures, introduced in 2016, are a type of value added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment.

This type of progress measure rewards schools for making progress with all of their pupils, whether they are low, middle or high attainers. Any increase in attainment achieved by each pupil will be reflected in the school's progress scores. They are fairer to schools in challenging circumstances, as they recognise a school that is doing a good job with an intake with poor prior attainment.

While the progress scores of individual pupils will be calculated they will not be reported; they will be used to construct a school's progress score which will be published.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/560969/Primary_school_accountability_summary.pdf.pdf

E-safety

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety Education Group has developed guidance for school governors to help governing boards support their school leaders to keep children safe online. Governors can use it to: gain a basic understanding of the school's current approach to keeping children safe online; learn how to improve this approach where appropriate; and find out about tools which can be used to improve the approach. The document includes examples of good and outstanding practice, as well as identifying when governors should be concerned.

This guidance is non-statutory and should be read alongside the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562876/Guidance_for_School_Governors_-_Question_list.pdf

Improving Governance – governance arrangements in complex and challenging circumstances

On December 15 Ofsted released a report on the challenges facing governing bodies in schools. Recruitment and retention of highly skilled people with the required expertise needed to hold school leaders to account in an increasingly complex system was a key finding as was a lack of clarity about lines of accountability, roles and responsibilities in terms of the expectations of their strategic leadership role.

The report can be accessed using the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-governance>

Website compliance 2016 Reminder

Please can we remind governors that part of their role is to monitor their school's compliance with the requirements for the school website www.holtoleclayschools.co.uk This is one of the first places that Ofsted will look before they visit the school. Keeping the website up to date is a simple way to give a good 'first impression' and assurance of the operational management of the establishment. The DfE has published further regulations in relation to website requirements:

The School Information (England) (amendment) Regulations 2016

The requirements are:

From September 2016 Governing bodies are required to publish for each governor **who has served at any point over the past 12 months**, as a minimum:

- their full name;
- their date of appointment; (and their date of stepping down, if applicable)
- their category of governor;
- which body appoints them;
- their term of office;
- the names of any committees the governor serves on; and
- details of any positions of responsibility such as chair or vice-chair of the governing body or a committee of the governing body
- a register of their business interests including governance roles in other educational institutions and any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)
- the same information for associate members, making it clear whether they have voting rights on any committees they serve on.

Maintained schools must also include the following:

Key Stage 2 (KS2) results

From December 2016 you must publish the following details from your school's most recent KS2 results:

- percentage of pupils who've achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths
- average progress that pupils have made in reading between KS1 and KS2
- average progress that pupils have made in writing between KS1 and KS2
- average progress that pupils have made in maths between KS1 and KS2
- percentage of pupils who've achieved a higher standard in reading, writing and maths
- your pupils' average score in the reading test
- your pupils' average score in the maths test

You must include a link to the [DfE school performance tables website](#)

Curriculum

You must publish the following information about your school's curriculum:

- the content of the curriculum your school follows in each academic year for every subject
- the names of any phonics or reading schemes you are using in KS1
- a list of the courses available to pupils at KS4, including GCSEs
- how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum your school is following

Academies must also publish:

- your approach to the curriculum
- how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum your school is following

Behaviour policy

You should publish details of your school's behaviour policy.

The policy must comply with [section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

[Advice on developing and publishing your school's behaviour policy](#) is available.

Pupil premium

Maintained schools must publish details of how it spends its [pupil premium funding](#) and the effect this has had on the attainment of the pupils who attract the funding.

You must include the following:

- a. for the previous academic year—
 - i. how the pupil premium allocation was spent; and
 - ii. the impact of that expenditure on eligible and other pupils.

- b. a statement as to the school's strategy in respect of the pupil premium allocation for the current academic year ("pupil premium strategy")—
 - i. the amount of the school's pupil premium allocation;
 - ii. a summary of the main barriers to educational achievement faced by eligible pupils of the school;
 - iii. how the pupil premium allocation is to be spent to address those barriers and the reasons for that approach;
 - iv. how the school is to measure the impact and effect of its expenditure of the pupil premium allocation; and
 - v. the date of the school's next review of its pupil premium strategy."

Academies are also recommended to publish this information.

Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium

If your school receives [year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium funding](#), you must publish details of how your school spends this funding and the effect this has had on the attainment of the pupils who attract it.

You must include the following:

- your year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium allocation for the current academic year
- details of how you intend to spend your allocation
- details of how you spent your previous academic year's allocation
- how it made a difference to the attainment of the pupils who attract the funding

PE and sport premium for primary schools

If your school receives [PE and sport premium funding](#), you must publish details of how your school spends this funding and the effect it has had on pupils' PE and sport participation and attainment.

You must include the following:

- your PE and sport premium allocation for the current academic year
- details of how you intend to spend your allocation
- details of how you spent your previous academic year's allocation
- how it made a difference to the PE and sport participation and attainment of the pupils who attract the funding

Special educational needs (SEN) report

If your school is a maintained school, then your governing body must publish a report on the school's policy for pupils with SEN.

The report must comply with:

- [section 69\(2\) of the Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [regulation 51](#) and [schedule 1 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#)

The report must include details of:

- your school's admission arrangements for pupils with SEN or disabilities
- the steps you have taken to prevent pupils with SEN from being treated less favourably than other pupils
- access facilities for pupils with SEN
- the accessibility plan your governing body has written in compliance with [paragraph 3 of schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010](#)

Academies, as public bodies, must comply with the [public sector equality duty](#). This means you have to:

- publish details of how your school is complying with the [public sector equality duty](#) - you should update this every year
- publish your school's equality objectives - you should update this at least once every 4 years

You need to include details of how your school is:

- eliminating discrimination (see the [Equalities Act 2010](#))
- improving equality of opportunity for people with [protected characteristics](#)
- consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions your school or college takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community)

Complaint policy

Schools will be required, and academies are recommended by the DfE, to publish their complaint policy online.

Annual reports and accounts

Academies should publish certain financial information about your school:

- annual report
- annual audited accounts
- memorandum of association

- articles of association
- names of charity trustees and members
- funding agreement

Charging and remissions policies

You must publish your school's charging and remissions policies. The policies must include details of:

- the activities or cases for which your school will charge pupils' parents
- the circumstances where your school will make an exception on a payment you would normally expect to receive under your charging policy

Values and ethos

Your website should include a statement of your school's ethos and values.

It should also be noted that if a parent requests a paper copy of the information on your school's website the school must provide this free of charge.

Further information on website requirements for academies and schools can be found on the links below:

Academies:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

Maintained schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

Ofsted preparation – maintained schools and academies – reminder – (no apology)

At the start of a new academic year, Ofsted once again updated their handbook. Although these are essentially minor updates, two of particular note for governors are:

"the effectiveness of governors in discharging their core statutory functions and how committed they are to their own development as governors in order to improve their performance" (section 141-effectiveness of leadership and management)

and

"ensure that the school's finances are properly managed and can evaluate how the school is using the pupil premium, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, primary PE and sport premium, and special educational needs funding" (section 148 -Governance)

Links to the handbooks are below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-short-monitoring-and-unannounced-behaviour-school-inspections>

A leaflet outlining which school documents inspectors will wish to see is available.

“Schools are not expected to prepare anything extra for inspectors, but should make the following documents available at the start of the inspection:

- a summary of any school self-evaluation or equivalent
- the current school improvement plan or equivalent, including any strategic planning that sets out the longer term vision for the school
- school timetable, current staff list and times for the school day
- any information about pre-planned interruptions to normal school routines during the inspection
- the single central record of the checks and vetting of all staff working with pupils
- records and analysis of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour, any use of internal isolation
- records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, disability and homophobic bullying and use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and those that were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the resolution
- a list of all pupils who are open cases with children’s services/social care and for whom there is a multi-agency plan
- up-to-date attendance analysis for all groups of pupils
- records of the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- information about the school’s performance management arrangements, including the most recent performance management outcomes and their relationship to salary progression, in an anonymised format
- documented evidence of the work of governors and their priorities, including any written scheme of delegation for an academy in a multi-academy trust
- any reports of external evaluation of the school, including any review of governance or use of the pupil premium funding.”

For a copy of the full leaflet please use the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/456871/Inspections_of_maintained_schools_and_academies_including_short_inspections_leaflet.pdf

There are some things that Governors can do in preparation for an Ofsted inspection. One such action is to ensure that an up to date Governor file is kept in school, which would contain most of the information that a Governor, when meeting an inspector, might need. This includes the following:

1. Class information - breakdown groups and teacher/teaching assistant
2. Current data - attainment and progress for all/gender/FSM
3. Current year's minutes, Full GB and committees
4. Last year's Governor RAISE – annotated
5. Internal assessment issues/priorities/action plan
6. Finance- general statement and issues, including Pupil Premium and sports money spent and impact document
7. School Development Plan
8. SEF
9. Performance management of staff, linked to school development
10. Links for quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils
11. List of governors and their responsibilities
12. Governors audit and issues/CPD to be addressed
13. CPD taken by the governors
14. Any impact case studies from the governors
15. Governor visits

The file needs to be kept up to date and has been found to be useful in supporting Governors in preparation for Ofsted. The list is not exhaustive and Governing Bodies can ask for any other pertinent information to be included. As it is not always the Chair that speaks to inspectors; having the file to hand saves individual Governors from having to locate/request the latest documents from the school, at what is a busy (and stressful) time.

Governors' Services Team

As ever, your Governors' Service team is here to offer advice and support. Our contact details are as follows:

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Given the current focus on budgets we have kept the top tips in the newsletter for this term.

Schools financial efficiency: top 10 planning checks for governors

The term governor is used for school governors and academy trust members and trustees.

The following top 10 planning checks are to support school and academy governors by providing information to help governors understand effective financial management. Governors can then use this information to make sure their school is efficient in managing its resources.

Governors should use these checks early in the annual budget planning cycle and when looking ahead at the 3 to 5 year position.

Senior staff in schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs), including finance directors and business managers, will also find this guide useful.

1. Staff pay as percentage of total expenditure

Staff pay is the single most expensive item in the school budget, representing typically over 70% of expenditure.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- how much of the budget is spent on staffing compared to other similar schools?
- how does the percentage for teaching staff, for curriculum support staff and for other support staff expenditure lines compare to other similar schools?
- how does your school's pupil outcomes – such as value added – compare to other similar schools relative to spend on staffing?
- what are staff costs as a percentage of total expenditure compared to similar schools? [Financial benchmarking](#) tools help with this
- what are staff cost as a percentage of total income? Staffing costs over 80% of total income are considered high. (Costs as a percentage of total expenditure can appear artificially low when a school is overspending and expenditure is higher than income, hence this question in addition to the one above).
- if teaching costs are relatively high, is this due to the number of teachers or a relatively high proportion of high paid staff?

2. Average teacher cost

This measure is calculated by dividing the total teaching cost by the full time equivalent (FTE) number of teachers.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- if the average teacher cost is high in comparison to other similar schools; is this due to the staffing grade profile, such as a high number of staff on the upper pay scale, or is it due to the responsibilities structure in the school, such as the Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) scale, or another reason?
- how far is your school utilising its pay flexibilities – for example, to differentiate pay by teachers' performance?

3. Pupil to teacher ratio (PTR)

This measure is calculated by dividing the number of FTE pupils on roll by the total number of FTE teachers. A relatively low PTR suggests small class sizes. In addition to benchmarking the PTR schools may want to review the average PTR and pupil to adult ratios in state funded schools by type by looking at the [national school workforce statistics](#).

The ratio of pupils to all curriculum adults is also relevant, especially in primaries where the use of teaching assistants in place of teachers can skew the PTR. The Education Endowment Fund has published [advice on effective use of support staff](#). Their survey of current evidence found that teaching assistants are a 'high cost' intervention with a 'low impact' on pupil outcomes.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- what is the PTR for different educational levels within their schools?
- how does the school's PTR compare with other similar schools? If it is significantly different, what is the rationale for this?
- how does the ratio of pupils to adults (teachers and support staff) compare to similar schools?

4. Class sizes

The smaller the class size the greater the cost of delivery per pupil. Governors should ensure that class size plans are affordable whilst supporting the best outcomes for pupils.

You may find it helpful to look at the Education Endowment Foundation's [evidence on the impact and costs of reducing class size](#)

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- what are the average class sizes by key stage, and by options at key stages 4 and 5?
- what class sizes does your school aim to achieve – and what is the educational rationale for this?

- are there any small classes where the funding generated by the pupils does not cover the cost of delivery? This can be especially important at key stage 4 and 5 where class sizes for some subjects can fall.
- do you know the maximum average class size that the school can operate at within the context of the pupil admissions, the structure of the building, the numbers in different year groups and the need for intervention strategies?

5. Teacher contact ratio

This measure is calculated by taking the total number of teaching periods timetabled for all teachers in the school and dividing that by the total possible number of teaching periods (the number of teaching periods in the timetable cycle multiplied by the FTE teachers). All teachers should have a guaranteed minimum of 10% timetabled planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. Therefore the teacher contact ratio will always be lower than 1.0.

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) advocates 0.78 as an aspirational target for the ratio, on the basis that that represents approximately 10% of all teacher time in planning and preparation, 10% in management activity and allows 2% margin. You can view the [ASCL model](#).

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- how does the school's teacher contact ratio compare to other schools?
- how does the utilization of curriculum staff impact the overall budget efficiency? The higher the ratio the more efficient the curriculum planning is.
- how does your school compare against the ASCL aspirational target? What is the rationale for any difference?
- are teaching staff undertaking roles that could be deployed to support staff?

6. Proportion of budget spent on the leadership team

Schools have many different leadership and management structures and comparisons are not straight forward. The total number of teachers in the leadership group (FTE) is collected in the Workforce Census annually and each school's underlying data is included in [published school workforce statistics](#).

Some schools calculate the cost of non-class based leadership time as a percentage of total expenditure and compare to similar schools by collaborative exchanges of summary information. Likewise, multi academy trusts can compare across their member schools where they are similar.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- how does this compare to similar schools taking into account any contact time the leadership staff have?

- if there is more than one school in your trust/federation are the leadership structures proportionally the same?
- how has your school made decisions on the proportion of its budget to be spent on the leadership team?
- if this is relatively high or low compared to similar schools, is this because of the size of the leadership team, or their pay?

7. 3 to 5 year budget projections

Governors will want to see 3 to 5 year financial projections and the assumptions made to cost them. Assumptions you may want to review include projected pupil numbers, free school meal numbers, likely pupil premium income and projections of the staffing that will be necessary in these years. Schools should plan their staffing based on multi-year projections of curriculum needs.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- how confident are you that pupil number projections are realistic? If there is uncertainty then Boards should be given three scenarios: cautious, likely, and optimistic. This applies to all key assumptions but especially pupil number projections and funding rate assumptions.
- if the optimistic scenario indicates financial difficulties is the school addressing a recovery plan now?
- if the cautious budget indicates potential financial difficulties do you know what contingency plans the school has to overcome them?
- are there any issues in the medium term that should be addressed now?
- how will current decisions impact medium term budgets?
- what do we need to put in place now to ensure we have the necessary funding in the future?

8. Spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines compared to similar schools

MAT trustees may want to compare their level of top slice to other MATs, what it is used for, and how it provides value for money (VFM) for member academies

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- what is the spend per pupil for catering, ICT, estates management, business administration, energy and curriculum supplies?
- if benchmarking indicates a relatively high spend on a particular expenditure line do you know why?
- are the reasons unavoidable or are further efficiencies possible?
- if the cost of energy seems high compared to similar schools, are there opportunities for investment in energy-saving devices to reduce the cost?

- if spend on learning resources seems high compared to similar schools, are there opportunities for collaborating with other local schools to bring costs down?
-

9. School improvement plan priorities and the relative cost of options

The budgetary process sits firmly within the strategic leadership framework and should link into the overall management and planning cycle rather than being seen as an additional activity that is the sole responsibility of the finance manager.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- are school improvement initiatives prioritised and costed and linked to the budget?
- are all new initiatives fully costed before the school is committed to the proposal?

10. List of contracts with costs and renewal dates

Each year your school will need to review its contracts across all of its services to determine which ones are due for renewal. It is important that contract renewal is planned for and aligned with school requirements.

Questions governors might want to ask include:

- are all contracts due for renewal re-tendered/reviewed for VFM before renewal?
- are there any regular payments for services that are an invoice only contract?
- are these included on the contracts list and reviewed for VFM too?

You can find out about schools and other organisations offering support with financial management and efficiency on the [schools financial efficiency: sharing best practice](#) page.