

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Virtual governor training

18th June 2020

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Siân Mathias

Leadership and governance consultant

- Working with MATS and Local Authorities (LA's) across London as an independent trainer and consultant
- Currently Chair of the Trust Board of a multi-academy trust (MAT)
- Chaired two maintained schools governing boards
- Worked as head of governor services in a successful LA school improvement team
- Worked on numerous task groups supporting schools causing concern

Aims of the evening

1. What is the governance strategic role? Is there a shared understanding of school effectiveness and future direction?
2. The accountability role - educational and financial. What is the difference between strategic and operational?
3. What is the impact of the partial closing of our schools on the governance role?
4. How can Governing Boards ensure they are effective – what self evaluating models are there?

Who is in our virtual room?

Type of school – maintained, academy

Phase – nursery, primary, secondary, special

Governor experience – length of service, particular responsibilities

Etiquette



We will take it in turns to speak and when not speaking we will keep ourselves on **mute**.



It is good to see colleagues but you can turn your **camera** off if you wish.



You can use the **chat** feature to make comments or ask questions.



Department
for Education

Governance handbook

**For academies, multi-academy trusts
and maintained schools**

March 2019



Department
for Education

A Competency Framework for Governance

**The knowledge, skills and behaviours
needed for effective governance in
maintained schools, academies and
multi-academy trusts**

January 2017

3 Core Functions of governance

the purpose of governance

1. Setting the vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of the staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance Handbook, January 2019

The role of the headteacher

One of the key characteristics expected within the **National standards of excellence for headteachers**, is that they should welcome strong governance and actively support their board to understand its role and deliver its core functions effectively. Executive leaders should welcome and enable appropriately robust challenge by providing any data the board requests and responding positively to searching questions.

Governance handbook 2019

What is effective governance?



Department
for Education

1. Strategic leadership
2. Accountability
3. People
4. Structures
5. Compliance
6. Evaluation

Knowledge, skills and effective behaviours

Effective governance

What we do - core pillars of the board's role and purpose

1. Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy

2. Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance

How we do it - the way in which governance is organised

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

4. Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Are we doing it well enough - ensuring and improving the quality of governance.

5. Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements

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

1. Strategic leadership

- a clear and explicit **vision for the future** set by the board, in collaboration with executive leaders, which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart and is communicated to the whole organisation;
- strong and clear **values and ethos** which are defined and modelled by the board, embedded across the organisation and adhered to by all that work in it, or on behalf of it;
- strategic planning that defines medium to long-term **strategic goals**, and development and improvement priorities which are understood by all in the organisation.

**For future reference – you should have a handout that outlines the full strategic role as stated in the Governance Handbook.*

Can you answer the following?

1. What is the **vision** for your school? What would the governing board like to see in 5 years time?
2. Can you name one key **value** your governing board agrees on that informs the decisions you make.
3. Name one **strategic goal** – a development or improvement priority – that the whole school community would recognise.

The competency framework for governance:

'Everyone on the board can articulate the organisation's strategic priorities and explain how these inform goals'.

My Trust Board

Vision

In 5 years time to be the go-to MAT in South London

To create a community of outstanding schools with the highest expectations of all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or starting points

Values

A firm commitment to the belief that **every child** should be given every opportunity to fulfill their potential

To develop a **learning culture** where bold and innovative teachers can make a difference

Strategic goal

To deliver high quality professional development for all members of staff

To maintain Ofsted outstanding judgements and move all schools to this judgement

 Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Understanding your data

**A guide for school governors and
academy trustees**

June 2018

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/
understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees/
understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees)

Key themes

- Pupil numbers, attendance and exclusions
- Attainment and progress
- Curriculum planning - staffing and class sizes
- Financial management and governance
- Quality assurance
- Safeguarding and wellbeing
- The school community – staff, pupils and parents

2. Accountability a) driving up educational standards

Competency framework - everyone should understand the importance of:

- *high-quality teaching*
- *a broad and balanced curriculum*
- *principled assessment*
- *school improvement*
- *behaviour for promoting learning*



Department
for Education

Educational standards

Analyse school performance (ASP)

Secure access approver in each school

Progress score in reading, writing and maths ?

Reading

Above average

1.9

[More score details ?](#)

Writing

Above average

2.4

[More score details ?](#)

Maths

Above average

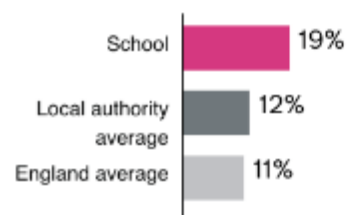
2.3

[More score details ?](#)

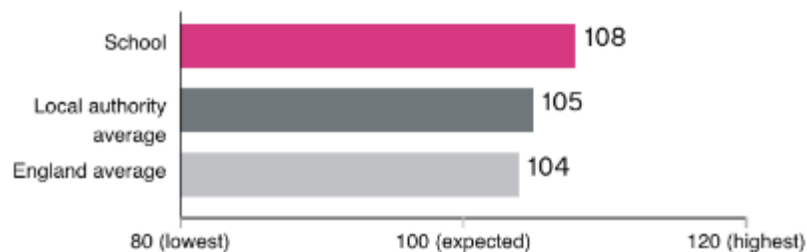
Pupils meeting expected standard in reading, writing and maths ?



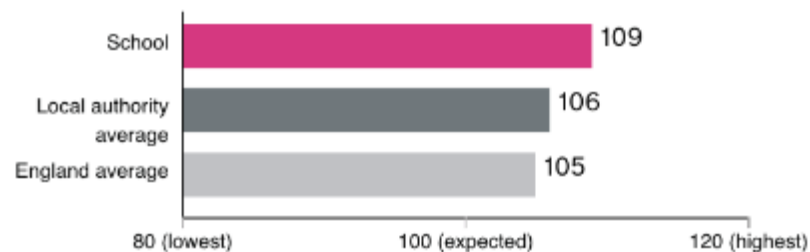
Pupils achieving at a higher standard in reading, writing and maths ?



Average score in reading ?



Average score in maths ?



Progress 8 score ?

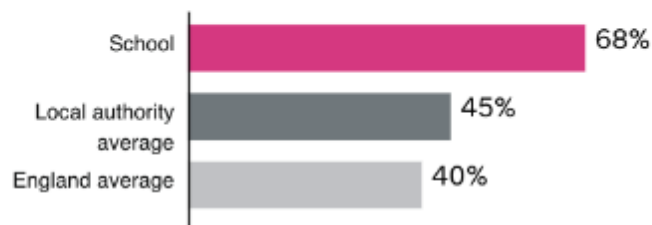
Of the 105 pupils at the end of key stage 4 in this school, 92 are included in this measure.

Well above average

0.96

[More score details](#) ?

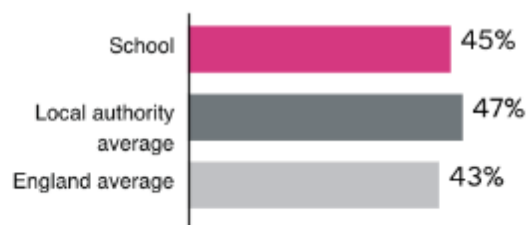
Entering EBacc ?



Staying in education or entering employment ?



Grade 5 or above in English & maths GCSEs ?



Attainment 8 score ?



EBacc average point score ?



But in the years of Covid.....?

Caution around this year's performance data.

New questions?

The impact of the lockdown on:

- Pupils' learning – different groups?
- What knowledge and progress gaps are there?
- Pupils' health and wellbeing?
- Staffs' confidence and emotional wellbeing?
- The new normal of split classes and social distancing

What questions do we need to ask

?

Adapted plans?

How are pupils being reintegrated?

- How are pupils been supported in re-engaging with learning?
- How is the curriculum being adapted to start to bridge gaps?
- What are the curriculum priorities in the short-term?
- Which pupils have been most disadvantaged and how will we address inequalities?
- How are staff being supported with the recovery plans?
- How will we know what good outcomes next year look like?
- What have we learnt about on-line/home learning?
- How will be use on-line support in the future and during staged reintegration?
- How can we support our senior leaders and the wider school community with this challenge?

2. Accountability b) ensuring sustained **financial** health and efficiency

Competency framework - everyone should understand the organisations:

- *financial policies, funding streams and mechanisms for financial accountability*
- *Internal control processes*
- *Financial health compared to similar organisations*

b) Schools Financial Health

Financial data:

- Budgets
- Audits
- SFVS (maintained schools)
- ESFA (Academies and MATs)
- compare-schools-performance.service.gov.uk

Compare Schools - Finance

Expenditure

£2.21m

2018 - 2019

Income

£2.28m

2018 - 2019

In-year balance

£62.1k

2018 - 2019

Expenditure

[Income](#)

[Balance](#)

[Workforce](#)

Show grouping

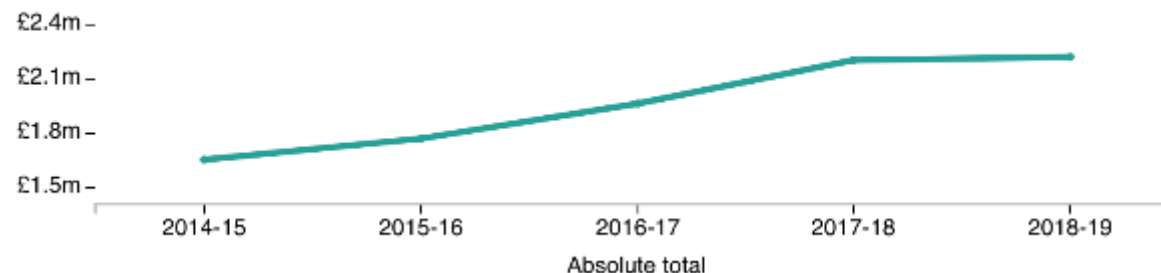
Total expenditure

Show value ?

Absolute total

[View as tables](#)

Total expenditure



2018 - 2019

£2.21m



Department
for Education

b) Schools Financial Health and Efficiency

gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency

Schools financial efficiency: top 10 planning checks for governors

1. Staff pay as percentage of total expenditure
2. Average teacher cost
3. Pupil to teacher ratio (PTR)
4. Class sizes
5. Teacher contact ratio
6. Proportion of budget spent on the leadership team
7. 3 to 5 year budget projections
8. Spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines compared to similar schools
9. School improvement plan priorities and the relative cost of options
10. List of contracts with costs and renewal dates

Impact of Covid?

Guidance

School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) for the period March to July 2020

Published 7 April 2020

- Increased premises related costs
- Support for free school meals for eligible children not attending school
- Additional cleaning

Holding the school/s to account

Questions to ask

1. Am I confident in our analysis and understanding of both educational and financial data?
2. Do governors benchmark against similar schools?
3. What are the key challenges and risks for the school in terms of educational performance and finance?

Risk

Robust decision making also takes account of risk. Effective boards have a **framework for identifying and managing risk** and explicitly set and manage their risk appetite and tolerance. In particular, they consider the risks associated with their strategic priorities and improvement plans.

Risk: increasingly, boards need a more sophisticated understanding of **financial, organisational and educational** risk; its assessment and its minimisation – and this in turn highlights that increasingly the board must be strategic, that it must focus on priorities and that it must manage by exception.

3. People — *‘everyone demonstrates commitment to their role and to active participation in governance’*



Building a team

The right skills and confidence?

- Skills audits
- Targeted governor recruitment
- Training and support

4. Structures *'everyone understands its 3 core functions'*

- Roles and responsibilities
- Strategic not operational
- Governance structures – Instrument (maintained) Articles (Academy)
- Committee structures, terms of reference
- Quality clerking

5. Compliance — *‘the legal, regulatory and financial requirements’*

- Governance Handbook
- Academies Financial Handbook
- Ofsted framework
- Equalities and Health and Safety legislation
- Safeguarding

6. Evaluation

Governance review

- Governance Handbook and Competency Framework
- Parliamentary group '20 Questions'
- Ofsted Inspection handbook
- NGA Effective governance
- Formal Governance reviews

Self evaluation of governing boards

NGA

1 The right people around the table Building a successful team is all about achieving balance and diversity in skills and experience and then investing in the development of people.

2 Understanding the role and responsibilities The role of the governing board is a strategic one with three core responsibilities.

3 Good chairing The role of the chair of governors or trustees should be viewed in the same light as that of the chair of the board in any other sector. The chair leads the governing board ensuring it fulfils its functions well.

4 Professional clerking A professional clerk is essential to an effective and efficient governing board and its committees. The enormous value of a good clerk as legal adviser should not be underestimated.

5 Good relationships based on trust We expect that governing boards and school leaders will jointly develop effective working practices which are mutually supportive and respectful of each other's roles and responsibilities.

6 Knowing the school: data, children, parents, staff & community Governing boards hold their schools to account and ensure high standards and outcomes for young people. To do this, governors and trustees need to know their school's strengths and weaknesses.

7 Commitment to asking challenging questions One of the three core responsibilities is holding headteachers to account for the performance of the school. A vital part of doing so is asking challenging questions.

8 Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interest of children and young people A truly courageous conversation is more than just asking challenging questions - it involves following up on the answers and ensuring that changes are made.

© National Governors' Association 2015

APPG

All Party Parliamentary Group on Education, Governance and Leadership

Twenty Questions ~ 2nd Edition 2015

Key questions every governing board should ask itself

Governing boards are essential for good schools. In ordinary periods, governing boards are not often the main focus of attention. They do a good job of their core functions: to support and challenge headteachers, holding them to account so that pupils get the best possible education. But governing boards also need to understand the bigger picture. These twenty questions seek to encourage governors to think about the wider context of their governing schools, colleges and academies.

The first edition of 20 questions for governing bodies was developed by the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the School Governors' Association (SGA) in May 2012. It was published in the NGA's journal in 2012.

Since then they have been used extensively by many governing boards across England when reviewing their governing practices, and it was time to review them in the light of that experience.

Once again the questions are NOT attempting to:

- cover every aspect of school governance;
- provide a checklist to be ticked off based on reflecting honestly and objectively on current practice in comparison with others;
- replace the good guidance for governing bodies provided by a range of organisations.

A number of organisations including NGA and the key law bodies have agreed to help governing boards evaluate their performance using these questions and to continue to develop the framework to improve governing practices.

These questions are being re-published in a new guide to help improve the way that school governors and trustees can best promote and improve school governance published by NGA and the Wellcome Trust.

We would like to continue to keep these questions relevant so that they are part of the means for school improvement. We want to engage as many governing boards as possible in as many schools as possible to improve their practice. Governing boards, schools and academies should consider using them.

National Governors' Association

Setting an example

“The board should set and safeguard an ethos of high expectations of everyone in the school community. This includes **high expectations for** the behaviour, progress and attainment of all pupils and for the conduct and professionalism of both staff and **the board themselves**. The board should foster a common culture, values and ethos across the whole organisation, ensuring it is reflected consistently in both its policies and its practices.”

Governance Handbook 2019

Good luck

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