



Department
for Education

Governance handbook

For academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools

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

- 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;
- processes to monitor and review progress against agreed strategic goals and to refresh the vision and goals periodically and as necessary including at key growth stages or if performance of the organisation drops;
- mechanisms for enabling the board to listen, understand and respond to the voices of parents/carers, pupils, staff, local communities and employers;
- determination to initiate and lead strategic change when this is in the best interests of children, young people and the organisation, and to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders;
- procedures for the board to set and manage risk appetite and tolerance; ensuring that risks are aligned with strategic priorities and improvement plans and that appropriate intervention strategies are in place and embedding risk management at every level of governance; and
- an informed decision on whether to form, join or grow a group of schools which is underpinned by robust due diligence and an awareness of the need to review the effectiveness of governance structures and processes if and when the size, scale and complexity of the organisation changes.