

Guidance

# Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees

Updated 1 September 2022

## **Applies to England**

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# Introduction

It is important everyone on the board has the skills to understand the performance data for their school or academy trust so they can hold school leaders to account.

This resource:

- provides information, grouped into 7 themes, about what performance data the board **must** and should be analysing
- supports the board to analyse performance data and build an evidence base to help identify the reasons behind success and establish the “root causes” behind any problems or failures
- boosts confidence in using performance data to make decisions and challenge others where problems/ failures are identified or persist
- helps guide board discussions to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils and value for money is achieved
- signposts to other useful sources of information

## Analysing your data

We recommend the 7 themes in this resource are used in **conjunction with each other, and in the context of your organisation** and its wider operational strategy to help you analyse your school/ academy trust’s performance data and form an evidence base.

You should consider:

- the size of your organisation
- type of school(s) within your organisation (e.g., primary/ secondary/ alternative provision/ special school) and whether a school has a specialist special educational needs and disability (SEND) unit or resourced provision
- key stage
- curriculum offer
- pupil wellbeing, resilience, and behaviour
- quality of career guidance
- implications of the [Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>).

In all cases, you should consider what the data is telling you to form your evidence base:

- what is going well?
- what learning can you apply from one area to another?
- what are the concerns?
- are any areas at risk of becoming a concern?

- what changes need to be made?
- what can be done about it?
- how will this affect productivity for your school or academy trust?
- what is the impact on educational and financial outcomes?

Benchmarking against comparators and analysing trends will bring together financial health, pupil educational outcomes and the quality of leadership and support effective [school resource management](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>).

The [governance handbook and competency framework for governance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>) provides information on the knowledge, skills and effective behaviours required by the board.

## Your evidence base

The data required for your evidence base should be:

- the most recent data available and in the format in which it is routinely available
- easily accessible and understood

Use your evidence base to:

- identify underlying reasons where you might expect performance to be better
- challenge any mitigating actions, analysing the risks and benefits
- clearly document the changes and progress made since your last board discussion

You should:

- avoid over-interpreting analysis of small subgroups of pupils
- understand the precision and limitations of data, and what can be inferred from it, the collection of data and its analysis must be proportionate
- consider what is the minimum information the board requires to hold leaders to account - time spent collecting and analysing data can be burdensome, placing additional workloads on individuals

The [making data work](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response>) report provides information on removing unnecessary workload associated with data management and sets out the principles for data use.

## Reporting by exception

An exception report should:

- be used to identify and prioritise instances that require immediate attention when reviewing the performance of your school/ academy trust

- form the basis for structured discussions and help you question and challenge your school leaders
- support with future risk and planning

To help you do this we have provided an [exception report template](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees?utm_source=ASK%20) ([https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees?utm\\_source=ASK%20](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees?utm_source=ASK%20)), with guidance notes, and example case studies (example A and example B).

## Cyber security and data protection

All schools rely heavily on IT and online services to function. They hold vast amounts of sensitive and personal data on pupils, parents, and staff, which **must** be kept safe and secure.

You should ensure:

- your school has IT and data protection policies and procedures in place to safeguard systems, staff, and learners that are compliant with UK data protection legislation that is currently the [UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/) (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>)
- you understand the policies and procedures in place, and you know how to apply them to ensure data is kept safe and secure

The [cyber security in schools: questions for governors and trustees](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/school-governor-questions) (<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/school-governor-questions>) provides a series of questions for boards to ask school leaders and start conversations about cyber security to improve awareness and understanding.

The [data protection toolkit for schools and annual review of school records and safe data destruction checklist](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools>) helps you understand your data protection obligations and manage your compliance with UK data protection law.

## The 7 themes

### 1. Pupil numbers/ attendance and exclusions

#### 1.1 Pupil numbers

Pupil numbers account for the majority of your income. Understanding the growth or decline in numbers is vital to safeguard the financial health of your organisation.

You should consider:

- latest trends, current numbers, and in-year churn in all year groups
- first, second and third choices and transition from primary to secondary schools

- pupil projections/ future financial planning, including those with additional needs that will require additional funding
- differences between pupil projections and actual pupil numbers
- the number of pupils who fall into various categories, including those who are on free school meals, have EHC plans, have SEND but no EHC plan, attract Pupil Premium (or Service or Early Years Pupil Premium), those from gypsy/ Roma/ traveller families
- if a local school increases or decreases their PAN, or accepts children over their PAN

## 1.2 Pupil attendance levels (including persistent absence)

In line with [working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>), all boards should regularly review and discuss attendance data to challenge school leaders and help them focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils and cohorts who need it most. For schools struggling with attendance, boards are also expected to work with school leaders to develop a comprehensive plan to improve attendance. This should be evaluated and reviewed regularly at meetings.

Boards of multi academy trusts (MATs) or federations may also wish to hold termly attendance review meetings with each individual school and/ or ask them to report on their attendance at defined intervals.

You should consider:

- current and historic trends on attendance
- pupil cohorts who historically have had poor attendance, e.g., pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance has historically been low, have a long-term medical condition, special educational needs, or a disability, or are eligible for free school meals
- benchmarking with comparator schools

Schools are strongly encouraged to [share their daily attendance data](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/share-your-daily-school-attendance-data) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/share-your-daily-school-attendance-data>) through an automated collection from their management information system which provides them with easy-to-use attendance reports. To meet the expectations outlined above, boards are encouraged to prompt their school(s) to sign up to the programme and share attendance data from the reports with them.

[Pupil absence statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-pupil-absence) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-pupil-absence>) provides information on overall authorised and unauthorised pupil absences by school type, including persistent absentees and pupil characteristics. Statistics are published 3 times per year.

[Analyse school performance \(ASP\)](https://services.signin.education.gov.uk/) (<https://services.signin.education.gov.uk/>) also applies. Boards can request a “governor” account from their DfE Sign-in approver which allows access to ASP.

### 1.3 Pupil moves (including exclusion levels)

Boards should carefully consider the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who are moving on any permanent exclusions to ensure the sanction is only used when necessary, and as a last resort.

You should consider:

- effectiveness and consistency in implementing the school's behaviour policy
- the school register and absence codes
- instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- variations in the rolling average of permanent exclusions to understand why this is happening, and ensure they are only used when necessary
- characteristics of children who are suspended, permanently excluded, removed from roll, or educated off site, and why this is taking place
- timing of moves and permanent exclusions, and whether there are any patterns including any indications, which may highlight where policies or support are not working, e.g., if high numbers of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) are moving, your school may wish to consider reviewing its SEN support
- whether the placements of pupils directed off site into alternative provision (AP) are reviewed at sufficient intervals to provide assurance the education is achieving its objectives and that the pupils are benefiting from it
- cost implications of directing children to be educated off site in AP

Academy trusts:

Multi academy trust's (MATs) may choose to work with their academies to consider this information, and if there are patterns across academies within a MAT, recognising that numbers in any one academy are often too low to allow for meaningful statistical analysis.

For all boards:

Find out more information in the [school suspensions and permanent exclusions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>) statutory guidance.

[Analyse school performance \(ASP\)](https://services.signin.education.gov.uk/) (<https://services.signin.education.gov.uk/>) also applies. Boards can request a "governor" account from their DfE Sign-in approver which allows access to ASP.

## 2. Attainment and progress

### 2.1 Pupil education outcomes

Monitor actions taken by your school to close the attainment gap and to improve year on year.

We appreciate that the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic mean that schools will be cautious about [making comparisons with performance data \(https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/06/22/were-changing-the-way-we-present-school-and-college-results-data-this-year-what-you-need-to-know-about-performance-tables/\)](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/06/22/were-changing-the-way-we-present-school-and-college-results-data-this-year-what-you-need-to-know-about-performance-tables/) from previous years, and directly with other schools/ academy trusts, and when comparing with national or local authority averages. Talking to your school is a vital step to understanding the broader context around data and how the pandemic may have impacted your school and its pupils.

You should consider:

- progress of pupils attracting pupil premium and recovery premium to the school, monitored, and reported together
- progress of disadvantaged pupils by key stage/ year group against that of their non-disadvantaged peers nationally
- use of pupil premium plus and how it is being used to raise the educational attainment of previously looked after children
- progress of pupils with an EHC plan, or on SEN Support and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision made for them
- progress of pupils who have benefitted from the catch-up premium, tracked against the use of that funding
- most recently published destination/ career data including for pupils with SEND
- most recently published DfE performance measures at KS4 and 16-18 (KS2 data will not be published for 2021/ 22, however, we will still produce the normal suite of KS2 [accountability measures \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-school-accountability\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-school-accountability) at school level)
- breakdown of current numbers, e.g., by boys/ girls, ethnicity, free school meals, pupil premium, English as an additional language, SEN (those with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan and those on SEN Support), disability, looked after children, and previously looked after children

Special schools:

- should use individual pupil progress data measures and progress against outcomes in EHC plans)

## **2.2 Additional support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities**

Boards play an important role in the school's work to support children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND). The [SEND code of practice \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25) sets out an expectation that, alongside the headteacher, there should be a member of the board, or a sub-committee who has specific oversight for determining the strategic development of SEN policy and provision in the school, and ensuring the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including in relation to reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.



You should consider:

- data on SEN population and compare the numbers of pupils identified with neighbouring schools, the LA, and national positions
- what % of the school population has SEN
- what % of the school population has a disability
- what % is at SEN Support
- what % has an EHC plan
- what is the breakdown of SEND by category of need
- data relating to SEN funding information (e.g., notional SEN funding and top up funding), how is it spent and its impact
- if that funding is targeted strategically based on your knowledge of the school SEND profile
- if the SEN funding is leading to improved progress and if so, how

All schools are required to publish a SEN information report about the implementation of the board/ proprietor's policy for pupils with SEN and to update it at least annually. Data will play a key part in demonstrating the effectiveness of that policy.

The [SEND governance review guide \(https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/page/wss-review-guides\)](https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/page/wss-review-guides) guide sets out a framework to ensure learners with SEND access high-quality provision.

### **3. Curriculum planning – staff and class sizes**

#### **3.1 Curriculum planning (integrated with financial planning)**

It is vital that curriculum planning is coordinated as a joint exercise with your budget planning to produce a curriculum that meets the needs of **all** pupils (including those with additional needs) and is affordable.

A curriculum-led and data-informed approach to financial planning will help establish a staffing structure that can deliver the greatest impact. Boards should challenge leadership teams on the effective organisation of the curriculum and deployment of staff.

You should consider:

- pupil to teacher ratio
- average class size
- teacher contact ratio (at secondary)
- average teacher cost
- % of total spend on teaching/ non-teaching staff
- % of total spend on senior leadership team

- spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines (e.g., catering, ICT, estates management, business administration, energy, and curriculum supplies)
- data on the deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) and higher-level teaching assistants (HLTAs)
- amount of non-teaching time the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has available in relation to the number of pupils with SEN (mainstream schools)
- whether the current staff deployment strategy supports the school's educational vision and pupil outcomes
- current and future pupil forecasts to identify any changes in staffing requirements, including consideration of current and future pupils with SEND
- progress against the school's accessibility plan, which **must** include plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- where actual pupil numbers diverge from forecasts
- succession planning/ staff turnover
- teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) and on costs (e.g., National Insurance)

You can use this data to model alternative scenarios and plan strategically to implement new structures if necessary.

The [integrated curriculum and financial planning \(ICFP\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-curriculum-and-financial-planning-icfp) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-curriculum-and-financial-planning-icfp>) guidance provides information on how all schools can use ICFP to create the best curriculum for pupils with available funding.

## 4. Financial management and governance

### 4.1 Financial management

All schools should have robust systems and processes in place to manage their finances securely and effectively and provide assurance of this. It is important the board understands the financial data that is presented to them to ensure there is sufficient challenge.

As a minimum we recommend you should:

- highlight any material divergence from initial budgets set and ongoing forecasts
- identify and challenge trends and inefficiencies to understand what is happening in your school(s)
- track income versus planned and actual expenditure against budget forecasts, revenue expenditure and non-staff costs as a percentage of total expenditure (and of income)
- analyse cash flow
- ensure pupil number projections have been accurate and if not, immediately re-budget accordingly

- take a longer-term view so you understand financial commitments likely to arise beyond the current year (e.g., replacement of capital assets)

Academy trusts:

- **must** monitor their budget in accordance with the requirements set out in the Academy Trust Handbook
- should ensure there is clarity around the services provided centrally to its academies (e.g., through service level agreements) and have robust processes in place for assessing the quality of these services and their value for money

The [academy trust financial management good practice guides](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides>) provide information outlining good practice in academy trust financial management, accounting, and assurance.

LA maintained schools:

- **must** provide the authority with details of anticipated and actual expenditure and income, in a form and at times determined by the authority

[Schemes for financing local authority-maintained schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schemes-for-financing-schools) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schemes-for-financing-schools>) sets out the financial relationship between local authorities and the schools they maintain.

All boards can review financial data for their school(s) using:

- [View my financial insights \(VMFI\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/view-my-financial-insights) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/view-my-financial-insights>) - access is given by requesting a “VMFI read only” account from your DfE Sign-in approver
- [Schools financial benchmarking service](https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/) (<https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/>)

[School resource management](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>) provides information, tools, training, and guidance to help all schools save money on day-to-day costs.

## 4.2 School and academy trust improvement activities

The budgetary process should be embedded within the strategic leadership function. It is an integral part of the planning cycle, not an isolated activity that is the sole responsibility of the finance manager.

You should consider:

- if your school(s) improvement initiatives prioritised, costed, and linked to the budget?
- are all new initiatives fully costed before your school is committed to the proposal?
- any additional workload burden to staff as a result of new initiatives

- whether outcomes for pupils with SEND suggest you require a specific focus on SEND in terms of school improvement

[Whole School SEND \(https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/\)](https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/) provides resources/training in relation to SEND.

### 4.3 Long and short-term financial/ budget planning

Ensure there is a 3-5 year financial/ budget plan, including a balance sheet.

You should challenge the assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures to ensure they are realistic.

You should consider:

- your school(s) formula funding for additional needs and the available data on the pupils it will support (e.g., those with special educational needs or English as an additional language) and funding provided through pupil premium
- consult your school(s) published strategy for using pupil premium and recovery premium, check with senior leaders the rationale for the spending decisions and the impact on pupil progress
- planning for expenditure on your estate, including in implementing your published accessibility plan (the content of which **must** include plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the physical environment)
- planning for implementation and refresh of digital and technology infrastructure

### 4.4 Schedule of contracts

It is important that contract renewal is planned for in advance of expiration.

All schools should:

- have a contract log to identify which contracts are due for renewal
- allow time to review all available commercial options and align with your school(s) requirements
- regularly review their management information system (MIS) to ensure it continues to be effective
- ensure they are getting the best deals on all goods/ services (e.g., energy and water supplies, devices such as printers, scanners, and copiers and technology)

#### [Choosing a school management information system \(MIS\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-school-management-information-system-mis)

[\(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-school-management-information-system-mis\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-school-management-information-system-mis) helps you compare MIS providers.

#### [Get help buying for schools \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-buying-for-schools\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-buying-for-schools)

provides advice and guidance on buying goods/ services through the DfE's approved frameworks. Free one-to-one [advice and guidance](https://bit.ly/Adviceandguidance)

[\(https://bit.ly/Adviceandguidance\)](https://bit.ly/Adviceandguidance) is also available from our procurement experts.

Use [meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges>) to make informed decisions about broadband, network switching, cabling or wireless standards.

#### 4.5 Estate management

The school estate should be managed strategically and maintained in a safe working condition.

We recommend you:

- produce an estate vision, strategy, and asset management plan to support your education vision, which, reflects short and long term needs and priorities, including disability access in line with your accessibility plan
- ensure you have the right data and information about your estate, such as up-to-date condition surveys, to help with strategic decision-making and prioritising maintenance
- analyse what you spend on your estate now, and what you need to spend to keep it safe, watertight and to provide for the future
- prioritise expenditure and investment accordingly

[Good estate management for schools](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>) (GEMS) provides information, tools and resources on estate management and performance, and the data you should have about your estate to manage it effectively.

#### 4.6 Financial governance

To ensure effective financial governance boards need to have:

- appropriate financial skills and the ability to understand and interpret data
- clear, concise monitoring reports of you school(s) budget position
- access financial expertise from the school business professional or finance specialist, including when those staff are absent
- robust plans, policies, procedures in place to set, monitor and authorise spend and manage the risks of overspend
- adequate arrangements for audit
- adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors, and suppliers
- a regularly maintained register of the business interests of the board and staff to avoid conflicts of interest

Academy trusts:

The [Academy Trust Handbook](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook>) describes the financial requirements for academy trusts.

The [school resource management self-assessment checklist](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-resource-management-self-assessment-tool) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-resource-management-self-assessment-tool>) provides assurance to academy trusts that they are fulfilling their financial management obligations.

LA maintained schools:

The [schools financial value standard \(SFVS\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-value-standard-and-assurance-sfvs) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-value-standard-and-assurance-sfvs>) provides assurance that good financial management is in place.

The [schemes for financing schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schemes-for-financing-schools) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schemes-for-financing-schools>) sets out the financial relationship between local authorities and the schools they maintain.

#### **4.7 Remuneration**

It is essential that we have the best people to lead our schools if we are to raise standards. High pay can only be justified by delivering exceptional education and financial performance.

We recommend you:

- exercise strong governance around CEO pay, or other highly paid staff
- evidence and validate your decision-making processes when setting and increasing pay and associated packages
- ensure there is strong challenge to ensure high pay is appropriate

Academy trusts:

[Setting executive salaries](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-executive-salaries-guidance-for-academy-trusts/setting-executive-salaries-guidance-for-academy-trusts) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-executive-salaries-guidance-for-academy-trusts/setting-executive-salaries-guidance-for-academy-trusts>) guidance outlines the contextual factors boards should consider when setting or reviewing executive salaries.

LA maintained schools:

[School teachers' pay and conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>) guidance applies.

#### **4.8 Gender pay gap**

The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly wage of all men and women across a workforce. All schools with 250 or more employees are legally required to publish their gender pay gap figures annually, via the Government's [reporting portal](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/) (<https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>) and on their own websites. The statutory deadline for public bodies to publish their data is 30 March each year.

We recommend:



- boards challenge leadership teams to identify potential causes of the gender pay gap in their school(s)
- develop an effective action plan to tackle gender pay gap

Use the [gender pay gap service \(https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/\)](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/) to access guidance to understand gender pay gap figures, take actions to address gender pay differences, develop an action plan and reporting requirements.

## 5. Quality assurance

### 5.1 Ofsted judgements

Boards should review the last [Ofsted inspection report \(https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/\)](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/), taking note of areas requiring improvement. These should be discussed with senior leaders at a board meeting, with a view to receiving an action plan and regular progress reports on action taken to address the issues highlighted in the report.

The [education inspection framework \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework) sets out Ofsted's inspection principles and the criteria for judgements made.

### 5.2 Audit ratings

Boards should:

- review internal and external audit ratings
- identify areas for improvement
- ensure there is clear ownership of actions and timescales for completion

Academy trusts:

- **must** comply with their responsibilities for internal and external audit as set out in the Academy Trust Handbook

The [academy trust financial management good practice guides \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides) provides information on management letters, choosing an external auditor and internal scrutiny.

LA maintained schools:

- local authorities (LAs) are responsible for the financial monitoring and audit of maintained schools

[Schemes for financing schools \(http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schemes-for-financing-schools\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schemes-for-financing-schools) sets out the financial relationship between LAs and the schools they maintain and includes information about auditing.

### 5.3 Risk register

Boards should regularly review the procedures, processes, and controls in place to effectively manage risk and any actions to mitigate them.

Academy trusts:

- **must** manage risk and maintain a risk register setting out the challenges and threats that the trust is facing, and the action that the trust's management team should be taking to mitigate negative outcomes. The [academy trust risk management good practice guides](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides>) provide further information on risk management

## 5.4 Equality

Review data relevant to your published equality objectives and how you are complying with the Equality Act 2010, including the [Public Sector Equality Duty](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>).

## 5.5 Other reviews

You should consider:

- outcomes of annual reviews, including, but not limited to school improvement; pupil premium; safeguarding, and denominational inspections (for organisations designated with a religious denomination)
- if data highlights a need to commission a [SEND review](https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/page/wss-review-guides) (<https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/page/wss-review-guides>), which looks at how education settings provide for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
- if your establishment is sufficiently [preparing all pupils for adulthood from the earliest years](https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/resources/preparing-adulthood-earliest-years-review-guide) (<https://www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk/resources/preparing-adulthood-earliest-years-review-guide>)

# 6. Safeguarding and well-being

## 6.1 Safeguarding

Boards should ensure their schools have effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place as set out in [keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>) and [working together to safeguard children \(WT\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>) statutory guidance to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

Everyone on the board should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge, and to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies/ procedures in place at their school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.



You should consider:

- types of concern recorded, including the subsequent action taken, e.g., referrals to children's services or other LA support to identify emerging trends and mitigate the risk of re-occurrence
- the effect of the concern on pupil(s) and impact of intervention taken as a result of the concern
- complaints received from parents or others, including staff grievances
- relevant external sources such as local media, [Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>)
- the behaviour sanctions record
- inviting regular pupil and parent feedback, e.g., termly pupil/ parent views
- reviewing the staff safeguarding training plan, and arrangements for updating staff on changes to safeguarding and child protection matters
- ensuring regular audit checks are conducted effectively on pre-employment checks
- regularly challenging the percentage of DBS cleared staff, including: if clearance is at the right level; prohibition checks; outstanding vetting in new employees; interventions put in place to mitigate risks to pupils until clearance is received; ensuring written confirmation is received from third parties (if used) that relevant checks have been conducted

Academy trusts:

- **must** also comply with the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283>).

## 6.2 Health and safety

Boards should analyse health and safety/ accident reports and review areas of non-compliance and audit concerns. Contingency plans should be in place, which cover a range of potential incidents that could occur.

You should consider:

- number of notifiable accidents/ dangerous occurrences
- near misses and assess what can be learned/ what improvements can be made

The [emergency planning and response](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>) guidance provides information on how all schools should plan for and deal with emergencies, including severe weather and foods.

The [health and safety: responsibilities for schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools#responsibilities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools#responsibilities>) guidance summarises the health and safety law relevant to all schools.

The [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>) guidance provides information on how statutory requirements should be met over meeting a pupil's health needs.

## **7. The school community – staff, pupils, parents, and the governing board**

### **7.1 Human resource considerations**

You should consider:

- reasons for high staff absence/ turnover
- staff performance/ objective setting and appraisals
- succession planning
- skills shortages for teaching/ non-teaching staff and at board level

The [professional development for school leaders](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/professional-development-for-school-leaders) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/professional-development-for-school-leaders>) collection provides information on professional development for school leaders.

### **7.2 Staff views**

You should consider:

- staff feedback to measure levels of satisfaction, staff surveys, and exit interview summary reports

The [school workload reduction toolkit](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit>) includes examples of staff workload surveys and advice and tools to reduce workload.

The [reducing teacher workload: data management review group report](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-data-management-review-group-report) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-data-management-review-group-report>) provides information about eliminating unnecessary workload for teachers when managing data.

### **7.3 Pupil views**

Boards should engage with pupils and be responsive to their views. Establish a feedback mechanism, e.g., student surveys or focus groups to collect and measure pupil satisfaction.

### **7.4 Parent views**

Boards should ensure that their organisation regularly communicates/ seeks the views of parents and carers and the local community, including disadvantaged families or those families where English is not the first language.

We recommend you establish a feedback mechanism to:

- demonstrate how the views of parent, carers and others have informed the board's decision-making
- measure the engagement and satisfaction levels of this group

You should consider:

- trend in numbers of first choice applicants for school places
- attendance rates at open days or parents' evenings
- number of complaints received – what are these about/ is there a common theme, what action is being taken to address these?
- an annual questionnaire

Ofsted [Parent View \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-view-toolkit-for-schools/parent-view-toolkit-for-schools\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-view-toolkit-for-schools/parent-view-toolkit-for-schools) is a mechanism available to parents/ carers to provide feedback regarding their child's school. All schools can sign up for regular feedback alerts.

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### **What does it mean to be a parent governor?**

Parent governors are elected as “representative” of the parents and carers of registered pupils in the school. They are not delegates and should not see it as their role. Where a parent has a concern, they should be pointed in the direction of the appropriate member of school staff (in accordance with the school's concerns/complaints procedure.) Parent governors cannot be mandated by the parents to vote in a certain way but must vote for what is best for the school.

### **What does it mean to be a staff governor?**

The role is different from a union representative. A staff governor is not a staff representative but a representative member of staff. Staff governors cannot be mandated by the staff to vote in a certain way but must vote for what is best for the school.

### **Tainted**

The chair of governors or members of the board would normally be considered 'tainted' by their previous knowledge of a concern or complaint, and therefore their ability to be seen as impartial would be prejudiced.