

2019 Ofsted inspection framework: what it means for your school

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The impact of COVID-19

Ofsted's latest handbook update takes into account the pandemic and its effect on schools. It recognises that most schools will have been unable to implement the curriculum in the usual way.

As such, inspectors will look at how your school has adapted and prioritised the curriculum from September 2020, including:

- How your school has implemented it remotely
- How subject leaders and teachers have identified pupils' learning gaps and new starting points, and
- How they have responded to that in their curriculum planning

See paragraphs 14 and 15 of the [School Inspection Handbook](#).

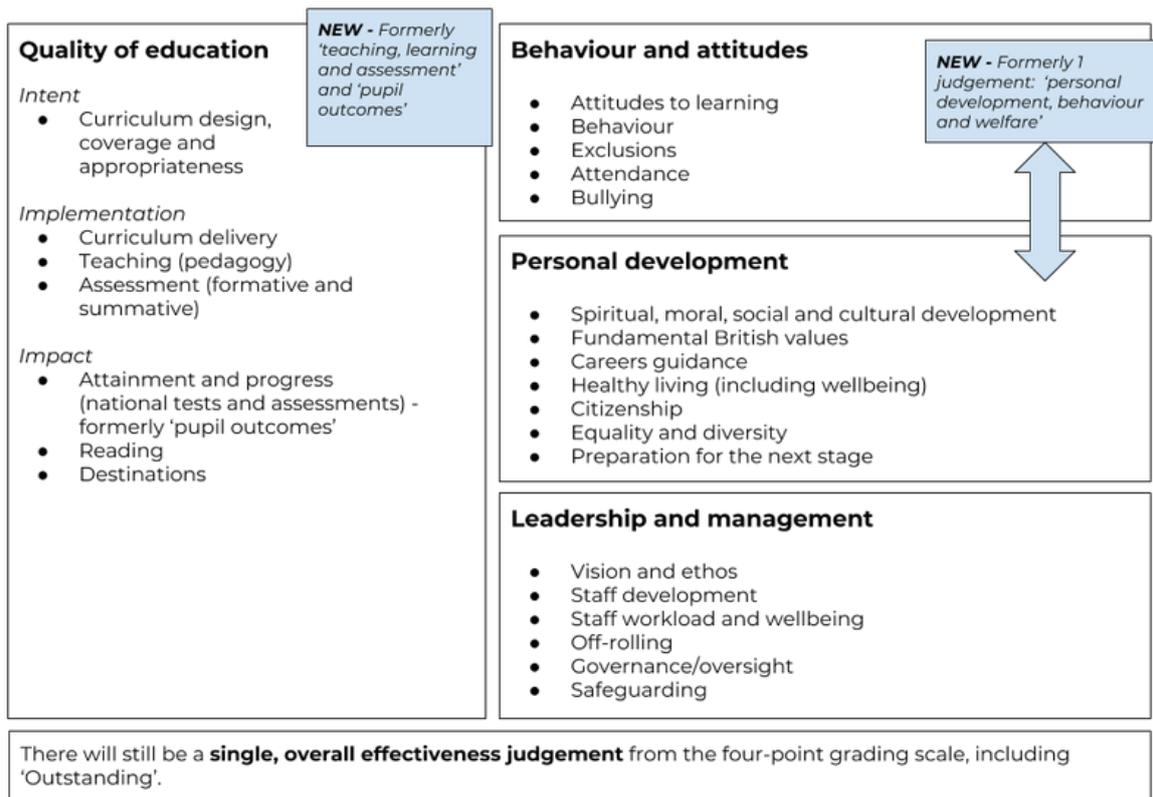
A sharper focus on the curriculum with the 'quality of education' measure

The 'quality of education' measure:

- Is a combination of the previous 'teaching, learning and assessment' rating and the 'pupil outcomes' grade
- Puts a single conversation about education at the centre of inspection, drawing together curriculum, teaching, assessment and standards

By taking into account a school's **broader curriculum offering**, it aims to lessen the reliance on exam results as a measure of school quality.

The 4 inspection judgements



Adapted from an Ofsted presentation

Read more about [how Ofsted inspects your curriculum](#).

Intent, implementation and impact

Ofsted splits up the 'quality of education' judgement into these 3 curriculum concepts:

- **Intent:** your curriculum plan, including its design, structure and sequence
- **Implementation:** how you teach and assess your intended curriculum
- **Impact:** the outcomes for your pupils as a result of the education they've received

Inspectors **won't** judge them as 3 separate measures - they'll consider them all as part of your 'quality of education' judgement.

See our [curriculum jargon buster](#) for examples.

Intent: what are you trying to achieve with your curriculum?

Your curriculum intent is what you want your pupils to know and be able to do - both at different stages of their education (for instance, spring term of year 4), and by the time they leave your school.

Use these prompts when thinking about your curriculum's intent, for a flavour of what inspectors might ask.

- What are the **objectives** for your curriculum? What do you want pupils to be able to know and do by the time they leave?
- How does your curriculum plan set out the **sequence and structure** of how is it going to be implemented?
- Why is it shaped the way it is? What **values** have guided your decisions about the curriculum you have in place? How does your curriculum reflect your school's context?
- To what extent have you made these objectives **clear**? Does everybody know them?
- How does your curriculum reflect **national policy**, for example, British values, or relationship and sex education (RSE)?
- How does it cater for **different pupil groups**, such as pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or disadvantaged pupils? Make sure these pupils aren't 'shut out' of pursuing subjects they wish to study because of too sharp a focus on exam results

Actions to take

- Look at who's in your school and shape your curriculum to the needs of your intake. For example, if you have lots of pupils with English as an additional language: how does the entire curriculum support their learning of English? If your pupils arrive with above average standards of attainment, how does the curriculum make sure they continue to attain at a high standard?
- Involve your parents, pupils, staff and governors. What would they like to see in the curriculum?
- Make sure you aren't just 'talking the talk' and that you're clear about how your curriculum plan is being implemented, and what impact it's having. Senior leaders and teachers alike should know the rationale behind your curriculum and how what they're doing relates to it
- Give subject and/or middle leaders the time and support to develop schemes of work that match your curriculum intent, make the most of their expertise, and build good progression from pupils' starting points, whatever these may be. This will save time later and reduce the burden of planning on teachers
- Primary schools: have your subject leaders carry out a [curriculum intent audit](#)
- Secondary schools: have your subject leaders carry out a subject-specific curriculum intent audit for [English](#), [maths](#), [science](#), [geography](#), [history](#) and [modern foreign languages \(MFL\)](#)
- See questions Ofsted might ask [middle leaders](#), and [headteachers and the SLT](#) about the curriculum

Implementation: how is your curriculum delivered?

Your curriculum implementation includes teaching methods, classroom resources, sequencing and structure of lessons, and assessment.

Use these prompts to understand what inspectors might ask you.

- What do your objectives look like in practice?
 - How does the current curriculum **match** the intention?
 - What **subjects** are you teaching?

- What's the **content** of those subjects?
- How do those subjects **join together**? What cross-curricular links are there (in particular, in the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum)? How are you developing progression as pupils move through the school?
- Is the curriculum for each subject designed, over time, to maximise the likelihood that children will remember and **connect the steps** they've been taught?
- How is the curriculum being **differentiated** for different ability groups?
- Are subjects **staffed appropriately**? Are staff trained? Are subjects adequately resourced in terms of time and other resources?

For teachers:

- **Why** are they teaching this particular lesson/topic?
- How are their teaching methods **delivering on the objectives** for this subject?
- How does this lesson/topic fit into **previous schemes** of work?
- How does this lesson/topic **further pupils' learning**?
- How well do **resources** match the curriculum and schemes of work?
- To what extent do teachers use homework to prepare for new topics and/or to **consolidate classwork**? How do they encourage broader reading, enquiry and thinking outside of contact time?

Actions to take

*Remember, there's no magic formula for the perfect curriculum - you should always have sound justification for why you are or aren't doing something, and how this relates to your curriculum **intent**. Use the following as suggestions for how you might provide a broad and balanced curriculum.*

Primary schools

✓ Prioritise phonics and the transition into early reading in key stage 1, and encourage older children to read widely and deeply

✓ Feed language, writing and maths skills throughout all subjects

✗ Don't focus too heavily on English and maths at KS2, to the detriment of the wider curriculum

✗ Don't spend a disproportionate amount of time on SATs preparation, such as mock tests and booster classes, when formal assessments return

You can also ask your subject leaders to carry out a [curriculum implementation audit](#) to spot any weaknesses.

Secondary schools

- ✓ Invest time in making KS3 a strong foundation for KS4, to avoid interventions and catching up in year 11. Make sure schemes of work provide a solid foundation for the demands at GCSE
- ✓ If you've shortened KS3, make sure you have sound justification for doing so. Are pupils getting long enough to develop depth and breadth of learning before being narrowed into GCSE subjects? Take a look at some [pros and cons of a condensed KS3](#)
- ✓ Make sure pupils aren't unnecessarily restricted from taking whatever subjects they like and that there's a wide range of options available, **particularly** for disadvantaged groups and pupils with low attainment
- ✓ Dedicate substantial timetable slots beyond the 'core' subjects
- ✓ Think about how you can structure the timetable to allow for a wider range of subjects and extra-curricular opportunities. For example, Manchester Communication Academy have a [simple, block timetabling system](#) that makes sure their pupils experience a variety of subjects, without negatively impacting on school finances or pupil outcomes
- ✓ Pitch year 7 work at the correct level. Don't underestimate the quality of work being done in primaries. Contact local primaries, or your main feeder schools, to make sure you know what work they're doing and how you can build on this in year 7
- ✓ Encourage the take-up of core EBacc subjects at GCSE, such as the humanities and languages, alongside the arts and creative subjects
- ✗ Don't push pupils into less rigorous qualifications to boost league table positions
- ✗ Don't spend a disproportionate amount of time on test or exam preparation at the expense of teaching

All phases

- ✓ Offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits, trips and visitors to complement and broaden the curriculum, but make sure these are purposeful and link with what is being taught in class. Ofsted representatives have said that what have been traditionally thought of as 'extra-curricular' activities *are* [considered part of the curriculum](#)
- ✓ Think about offering specialist focus weeks, or project days, where all pupils come off-timetable, to provide broader provision in non-core areas such as technology, science or the humanities
- ✓ Encourage reading for pleasure at all ages

Impact: what difference is your curriculum having on pupils?

Your curriculum impact is the extent to which pupils have learned what you intended them to learn, and **how you know this**.

Use these prompts when thinking about your curriculum's impact, so you can anticipate what inspectors might ask.

- How well are children **learning the content** outlined in the curriculum? How do you know?
- How well are pupils **prepared** for their next stage of education or working life? Where do they go?
- What are the types of both **formative and summative assessment** used? What impact do they have on the curriculum? Do they dictate the curriculum?
- How do you know your curriculum is having **an effect** across all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have low attainment?

For teachers:

- How well are key subject **knowledge and skills consolidated** before moving onto the next topic? How do teachers know?
- How do teachers know pupils **remember** what they've been taught?
- How well developed are **pupils' learning habits and learning skills**? How do teachers know?
- How do teachers use evidence of pupils' learning to feed into their **planning and adaptation** of the curriculum, both collectively and individually?

Actions to take

- Think about 'outcomes' more broadly than exam results:
 - For **secondary** schools, this might mean progression and leavers' destinations
 - For **primaries**, this might mean instilling a love of reading, developing learning skills, or making sure they're well-prepared for secondary. The range of activities pupils do prepares them for the future, but won't necessarily show in results
- Use a range of both qualitative and quantitative data to show how you know pupils are learning. Ofsted will look at performance data, but they'll also look at:
 - The quality of work in pupils' books, to see how pupils are progressing and the kinds of tasks they're doing
 - Outcomes of conversations with pupils and teachers
 - How the wider curriculum framework is supporting teachers to deliver lessons
 - *How* you use data and how this informs your curriculum design, rather than looking at the data itself

How will you be accountable for your curriculum quality?

Inspectors will triangulate evidence about your curriculum from various sources, such as:

- Answers to questions about your curriculum's intent, implementation and impact from senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teachers. There'll be a greater emphasis on conversations with curriculum leaders than previously
- Work scrutiny
- Lesson observations
- Nationally-generated performance information about pupil progress and attainment, available from the inspection data summary report (IDSR)
- Conversations with pupils to "gauge their understanding and participation in learning", as well as their "perceptions of the typical quality of education at their school"
- Listening to pupils read

What you can do now about your curriculum

- Assess your curriculum using Ofsted's quality indicators as a guide (see the sub-section below). Use our guidance for [how to review your curriculum](#), including a downloadable template for conducting a full curriculum audit
- Show you're making curriculum development and design a priority. Survey your staff to see how confident they feel in these skills
- Have a plan: how is curriculum development work going to be shared out between different members of staff? How long will it take?
- Use our prompts above to help you think about and discuss your curriculum's intent, implementation and impact. Make sure you involve all members of staff early so everyone is able to talk about your curriculum consistently by the time of an inspection
- Read more about how to integrate [your curriculum with your financial planning to maximise your resources](#)

Assess your curriculum using Ofsted's curriculum quality indicators

As part of their [curriculum research](#), Ofsted inspectors used 25 indicators to assess the quality of a school's curriculum. This does **not** mean inspectors will use these indicators during inspections going forward, but you can use them as a starting point when thinking about your own curriculum and to identify room for improvement.

Go through each indicator and give it a grade according to the criteria described in the document.

[KeyDoc: Ofsted curriculum quality indicators](#) DOC, 160.0 KB [Download](#)

'Behaviour and attitudes' has moved away from 'personal development'

The new framework separates the former 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' judgement into 2 separate judgements - '**personal development**' and '**behaviour and attitudes**'.

On the whole, the way Ofsted inspects behaviour and personal development hasn't changed. Separating into 2 judgements simply allows for an enhanced focus and clearer reporting on each individually.

It's also important to know that Ofsted will clamp down on evidence of **off-rolling**, but inspectors will look at off-rolling as part of the ['leadership and management' judgement](#).

Behaviour and attitudes

Inspectors will look at how you create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment in your school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

This includes factors such as:

- Setting clear routines and expectations for behaviour
- Having clear and effective behaviour and attendance policies in place
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and how motivated they are
- Having a positive and respectful school culture
- Providing a safe environment for pupils where bullying, discrimination and peer-on-peer abuse – online or offline – are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently and effectively

See paragraphs 227 and 228 in the [School Inspection Handbook](#).

Inspectors will:

- Observe pupils' behaviour around school
- Speak to staff, on an individual basis, about behaviour at the school. This is likely to be a sample of staff that research suggests are most affected by challenging behaviour, such as TAs, supply staff, NQTs, administrative staff and catering staff
- Speak to a range of pupils from different backgrounds about behaviour at the school, including those who've received sanctions
- Gather views from parents
- Try to get a sense of how staff treat behaviour and misbehaviour (for example through awards, and how closely they follow the behaviour policy), and how both formal and informal statistics on behaviour inform decision-making
- Look for patterns of over-representation by groups (for example, pupils with SEN) in poor behaviour figures, and ask questions about what your school is doing to combat these
- Evaluate the prevalence of permanent exclusions and the effectiveness of fixed-term and internal exclusions

See paragraphs 235 to 239 of the School Inspection Handbook (linked above).

Personal development

Inspectors will consider how your school supports pupils to develop in many diverse aspects of life.

They:

- Will primarily gain evidence for this through the curriculum
- Won't attempt to measure the impact of your school's work on the lives of individual pupils. This is because the impact of your provision for personal development often won't be assessable during pupils' time at school

Actions to take

- Download and adapt our [model behaviour policy](#) and see examples from other schools
- Look for patterns in any data or information you collect around behaviour and exclusions - are any groups over-represented?
- Think about how awareness of safeguarding issues feeds into the curriculum, for example, through teaching about topics such as internet safety, bias, sexting and critical thinking
- Offer a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that enhance pupils' cultural development, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, debating and the [Duke of Edinburgh award](#)

Other changes: internal data ignored and longer section 8 inspections

Inspectors won't look at internal progress and attainment data

Inspectors will look at how you use assessment in your school, but won't look at your non-statutory, internal progress and attainment data. This is a way of addressing staff workload and the data-driven culture that has arisen as a result of Ofsted inspections.

You shouldn't have more than 2 or 3 data collection points a year

If you formally collect assessment data more often than this, you should have a **clear rationale** for doing so.

Inspectors will look for:

- Whether leaders and staff understand the limitations of assessment
- Whether staff are spending too much time on setting assessments, and on collating, analysing and interpreting data from assessments
- Whether staff are acting on findings from data or collecting data for data's sake

Longer section 8 ('short') inspections for good schools

Ofsted has increased from 1 to **2 days** the time a lead inspector is on-site during a section 8 ('short inspection', for 'good' and 'outstanding' schools). The exception is for the smallest schools (150 or fewer pupils on roll), who'll continue to have 1-day 'short' inspections.

Actions to take

- Find out 5 common [practices that you can stop doing](#) with pupil performance data, and strategies to use instead

- Expecting the call? Download our [school leaders' pre-inspection checklist](#) to make sure you're all ready on the day
- Start tackling staff workload right away by cutting out [these time-consuming practices](#)

Governors:

- If the school is part of a MAT, please clarify the role of the trust and any delegated responsibilities to LGB's. How is information shared across trustees and any local governing bodies?
- Are they aware of the vision and ethos of the school? What are the main priorities? How are these reflected in the curriculum vision? Tell me about your school?
- How are leaders driving improvement? What is governors' role? How are they supporting? What does challenge look like from governors? Governor expertise?
- What are the strengths of the school? What are the main areas for development within the school? (how do you know this – how do you know what leaders are telling you is the full picture?) What does the SEF/SIP say and how do governors quality assure this?
- What difference do governors make?
- Is the full curriculum offered and is everyone getting this curriculum?
- What can you tell me about your curriculum? -> How do you know that it is ambitious for **all** pupils? -> Discuss a subject, if required?
- Do they understand their duties in promoting equality/safeguarding/prevent? How are British Values, Equalities and Prevent promoted in school?
- How well are leaders held to account? How do you know what you are being told is accurate?
- What do they understand about the Quality of Education? How involved are they in school improvement?
- Do governors understand the attendance data and have they evaluated the actions that leaders have taken? What is the school doing to improve attendance and reduce exclusions?
- How do you know that the PPG/catch-up/sport premium funding is well spent? What is the impact? Examples?
- How does the 'school' keep pupils safe? In what ways do governors ensure oversight of safeguarding? What was the quality of this training? With what impact? How do governors check safeguarding?
- What Safeguarding training have governors had? What other training have governors had? How were training needs identified?
- How are governors involved in the recruitment process in school?
- With regard to safeguarding concerns, how are allegations against staff dealt with?
- How well are concerns raised by pupils, staff and parents dealt with (eg grooming, health and safety, other safeguarding issues)
- How well were pupils safeguarded during the pandemic?
- What are governors' views on current standards and how do they monitor leaders' actions?
- How do they ensure the well-being of staff, including the headteacher?
- How do they monitor staff workload and ensure that leaders are not making excessive demands of staff?
- Do they discuss the well-being of staff and implications on workload of any new initiatives or actions? Are they mindful of this?
- How do they hold leaders to account for safeguarding, standards, additional funding?
- Equalities?

Questions asked during inspection under the new framework (EEF19)

1. How do you 'monitor' the curriculum? How do you know it matches the national curriculum?
2. How do leaders discuss the sequencing of curriculum development? How do teachers know what to teach?
3. What scrutiny have you done of SEND across the curriculum (she corrected the first response about data being broken down at SEN progress being reported on, as she did not want to know about data monitoring) How do you know how SEND pupils are achieving in subjects other than English and Maths?
4. How does phonics translate into reading at the end of KS1? Do you know that there are two different phonics schemes in EYFS? Why was that decision made?
5. What is put in place for your bottom 20% in phonics and why are they not achieving national average, particularly SEND or pupil premium pupils?
6. How do you scrutinise this?
7. In your book scrutiny, how do you know if the books belong to PP children, how do you know if they are making progress?
8. Are parents supportive of the school?
9. What training have governors done and what training can they access?
10. What are your school priorities?
11. How do you as a GB ensure the priorities are moved forward?
12. How do you ensure staff wellbeing & give examples of this?
13. What do you hope Y6 have achieved by the time they leave?
14. How do you meet the equalities act?
15. How do you ensure safeguarding is met?
16. How do you ensure HT wellbeing? - with examples
17. Tell me about your safeguarding training...
18. How do you manage the wellbeing of the head and staff?
19. How do we know diversity is being taught in school?
20. How are we involved in planning the curriculum?
21. Do you have a governor skills audit?
22. How do we keep updated on our training?
23. What is your subject and how are you linked to the subject leader?
24. How do you hold the HT to account and give examples in Governor minutes where Govs. have questioned him?
25. How do you know about attendance?
26. How do we know the needs of disadvantaged pupils are being met?
27. What do we want our children to be?
28. What is the one thing that has had the biggest impact THIS TERM (Nov 19) on the outcomes for your children in school
29. Do you have any gaps on your governing body?
30. What is the story since the last inspection?
31. How is the new curriculum being developed and introduced?
32. What evidence do you have of safeguarding within the school?
33. What evidence do you have of the school's support for SEND children?

34. Why does the school have a higher percentage of special needs children than the average?
35. What evidence do you have of teachers' workload/wellbeing being taken into account?
36. What are your strengths and weaknesses? How do you know?
37. What's the quality of teaching? How do you know?
38. Are Year 6 taught RE?
39. How strong is writing in EYFS?
40. How does the curriculum intent match your values and vision?
41. What plans are in place for monitoring your weakest areas?
42. How do you monitor attainment in foundation subjects?
43. How do you monitor staff wellbeing and ensure they are well supported, including the head?
44. How did you recruit the new head and why her?
45. Asked to see reports/data on attendance
46. Asked to see the head's report to check what's included
47. How is attendance reported to governors?
48. Checked number of leavers and their reasons for leaving
49. How are you overcoming barriers to improvement created by your context?
50. Do you have a strong enough curriculum to turn the school around?
51. Curriculum and knowledge base, cultural capital, sequencing and ambition
52. How do you monitor curriculum?
53. How do you know the curriculum matches the national curriculum?
54. What scrutiny have you done of SEND across the curriculum (not data!)?
55. How do you know how SEND pupils are achieving in subjects other than English and Maths?
56. How does phonics translate into reading at the end of KS1?
57. Do you know there are two phonics schemes in EYFS? Why was this decision made?
58. What is put in place for your bottom 20% and why are they not achieving national average, particularly SEND or pupil premium pupils? How do you scrutinise this?
59. In your book scrutiny, how do you know if the books belong to PP children, how do you know if they are making progress?
60. Are parents supportive of the school?
61. Questions around governance structure
62. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
63. Talk through your priorities in SDP and why do you see X as an area for development, what was being done in it, and what the expected outcome / impact would be.
64. What grade do you think you are and why?
65. What have you done to tackle your responsibilities in relation to the prevention of discrimination in relation to the Equalities Act 2010, the Prevent duty, safeguarding, child criminal exploitation (county lines)?
66. Safeguarding - How often is training undertaken? DSL's and staff?
67. How is the additional funding for disadvantaged/pupils with SEND spent? Tell me about the impact of this funding.
68. Is your school still good and how do you know?
69. How often do you receive information from the school?
70. How do you know safeguarding is effective?

71. How do you know disadvantaged and SEN children receive appropriate support?
72. Tell me, with examples, where the board's strategic decision making has had an impact since the last inspection?
73. How do you know children are safe? (Also talked about the safeguarding governor, learning walks and asking children)
74. Do you check SCR?
75. How is the board organised?
76. What information does the board receive and how?
77. Staff wellbeing. Have you done a staff survey?
78. How do you know if disadvantaged pupils engage fully with the curriculum and extra-curricular activities?
79. How do you monitor the school development plan?

Questions asked during inspections carried out during the pandemic

1. How have you been providing education during the pandemic through remote learning?
2. What are your key areas of improvement?
3. What progress has been made in areas identified when you were judged to be RI?
4. What's the most important decision/change you have made as governors since the last inspection?
5. How do you know you are being effective?
6. Is there evidence of governor challenge?
7. How is phonics embedded in the curriculum?
8. How are you improving reading?

Questions Ofsted might ask governors

Know your role and your school

Inspectors want to make sure that you understand your [role as a governor and your statutory duties](#).

More specifically, they want to know how well you fulfil your role and how well you know your school. They'll likely ask you about:

- Your vision for the school
- Your school's culture
- What issues your school faces
- Its strengths and weaknesses
- How the governing board responds to challenges
- Why certain statutory requirements aren't being met, if that's the case. For example they might ask you if you're aware that the school website doesn't meet requirements

The 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' of your school

Even 'outstanding' schools will have 'weaknesses', or areas for improvement.

You should be familiar with your school's last Ofsted report and Ofsted's [inspection data summary report](#). These will tell you:

- Which areas Ofsted has flagged for investigation
- Whether there are particular subjects that aren't performing as strongly as others
- Whether there are particular pupil groups that aren't performing as strongly as others
- If pupils with special education needs (SEN) are not making at least as good progress as other pupils with SEN nationally
- Where Ofsted was critical of your school in the past, and where they'll be looking to see improvement this time

As a governor, you should be aware of the strategies your school is using to address any issues, because these should be included in your school's self-evaluation form or school improvement plan (SIP).

For example, attendance may be an issue at your school. You should be able to say whether there's a particular pupil group for which attendance is a problem (e.g. boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils), and explain how your school is handling it.

Inspectors are also likely to look for evidence in the governing board's minutes or documentation that the board is monitoring any such issues.

How money flows in and out of your school

Managing the budget is one of the governing board's key duties. Even if you aren't on the finance committee, you should have a basic understanding of:

- How finances are managed (scheme of delegation)
- How pupil premium and SEN funding are monitored
- The impact of targeted funding like PE and sports premium or year 7 catch-up premium
- How the governing board has held the school to account for its spending

Safeguarding and welfare is a significant focus for any inspection

As a governor, you're expected to be familiar with all the statutory requirements related to [safeguarding](#) and know how to show you're compliant. You're likely to be asked:

- How you keep policies up-to-date and compliant
- How you ensure policies are implemented
- How effectively your school addresses not just general risks to children but also those risks that might be specific to the communities you serve (e.g. risk of female genital mutilation or radicalisation)
- How safe the children feel and how you know

'Quality of education' under the new framework

Under the 2019 Ofsted inspection framework, there's more of a focus on the quality of your school's curriculum.

Inspectors will look at your curriculum's:

- **Intent:** the extent to which your school's curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills pupils will gain at each stage
- **Implementation:** the way your school staff teach and assess your selected curriculum, to support pupils to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills
- **Impact:** the outcomes pupils achieve as a result of the education they've received

Don't worry though, you don't suddenly need to know the granular details on how you school delivers the curriculum. For governors, questions in this area will be general and focus on policy and results.

The role of data in an inspection

Even though the new framework does step away from data as a key factor in grading schools, data still plays a role in inspection. You should have an understanding of your school's performance and know:

- How pupils' attainment and progress compares to other schools nationally, especially if the school is in the top or bottom 20% in the country
- Trends in your school's performance over time
- The performance of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding compared with their peers

You should also be aware of the messages in the Analyse School Performance (ASP) report. See how to analyse your data using ASP if you're a [primary](#) or a [secondary](#) school.

Holding the headteacher and senior leaders to account

You might be asked how you verify the accuracy of what the headteacher tells you.

To evidence this, be sure that governors' questions in holding the senior leadership team to account are accurately recorded in the minutes of governing board meetings. The responses should also be reflected in the SIP, as they're likely to be the school's priorities for improvement.

The SIP should be further evidence of the governing board's response to challenges and how you're using success criteria to monitor progress and impact.

'Personal development' and 'behaviour and attitudes' under the new framework

Another change to the inspection framework is that 'behaviour and attitudes' will now be judged separately from 'personal development'.

Behaviour and attitudes

This focuses on the school environment. For example, be prepared to describe your school's strategies for:

- Behaviour management
- Attendance
- Bullying

Personal development

Inspectors want to know how effectively the governing board is guiding and monitoring pupils' development into effective adults and good citizens. They might ask you how your school promotes:

- British values such as mutual tolerance and respect and the value of democracy
- Healthy lifestyle choices

How to respond to Ofsted inspectors' questions

[from: Clerk to Governors blog <http://clerktogovernors.wordpress.com/>]

The following guidance relates to the previous Ofsted framework (ie 2009 schedule) but might be of use to any governors considering how they would respond to questions from an Ofsted inspector ...

What will Ofsted ask governors and what answers will they expect?

An education expert, Ken Bush, explains the type of responses that are expected. He also offers general guidance on what Ofsted inspectors are looking for.

Ofsted publishes a briefing document for inspectors, which includes a list of sample questions that inspectors can ask to help them evaluate the effectiveness of governance.

Strengths and weaknesses of the school

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how do governors know?

The key focus of this answer is likely to be on outcomes for pupils. The most important (in inspection terms) are achievement, behaviour and attendance.

Governors would be expected to have a fair working knowledge of the school's progress in these areas, based on rigorous monitoring and evaluation. This should take place during governors' meetings.

Strengths and weaknesses of the governing body

What are the strengths and areas for development for the governing body?

Can governors give examples of how they have supported and challenged the school?

How are the training needs of governors identified and addressed?

What training have governors undertaken recently and what has been the impact of this training?

These questions are testing the extent to which governors have reflected on their own effectiveness. Governors may comment on how they support the school, act as critical friends, hold the school to account, and are involved in strategic planning.

In an ideal world, governors' training needs would be identified in a similar way as for staff. While this is not always possible, some form of auditing should take place, using tools such as Governor Mark.

Self-evaluation and school improvement

What are the main barriers to learning and what action has been taken to overcome them? How successful have the actions been?

The main barriers to learning might include:

- Lack of specialist staffing
- Inadequate accommodation
- Tight budgets
- Challenging pupil intake
- Limited parental aspirations

However, the main thrust of the question is to see if governors are focused on problems or solutions. Knowledge of 'how successful the actions have been' links to the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation.

What contribution does the governing body think it has made to improving provision, especially teaching, and outcomes for pupils?

Governors should be aware that, in inspection terms, provision includes: teaching, the curriculum, care, guidance and support.

Governors should have had some involvement in the recruitment of staff. They should be aware of how continuing professional development (CPD) resources have been used. They should also have been consulted on major curriculum changes, e.g. literacy and numeracy provision.

Governors may also have had some direct input into behaviour plans for individual pupils.

To what extent is the governing body involved in the school's processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning?

How do governors monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school improvement plan?

Governors should explain:

- How they are involved in identifying priorities
- Whether specific individuals monitor parts of the plan to give a 'hands on' dimension
- How frequently the plan is subject to scrutiny

Safeguarding

What are the procedures for safeguarding pupils and how have training needs been met?

The governing body is not responsible for the day-to-day operation of safeguarding procedures, but must have a close involvement in the formulation of the child protection policy and monitor and evaluate its impact annually.

The key question governors must ask themselves is: does the policy work and what information will be needed to make that judgement?

The governor and the senior member of staff that have responsibility for safeguarding may hold regular meetings. The governing body may also 'spot check' the single central record.

Governors must also stay up to date with training guidance and minimum training standards, including refresher training.

Consultation with parents and the community

Governor drop-in sessions can be an effective way of maintaining awareness of parental concerns

How do governors consult parents/the local community?

Can governors give examples of when parental/community views have been sought and acted upon?

In order to be judged as at least 'Good' for governance, governors need to be able to demonstrate that they have systems in place to seek parental views and, if required, act on them. Increasingly, inspectors are asking for specific examples.

Governor drop-in sessions can be an effective way of maintaining awareness of parental concerns.

Other possible questions to governors

In addition to the questions from Ofsted's document, Ken Bush suggested three others:

How effectively do governors fulfill the full range of statutory duties?

Governors should be writing (*C2G note: Really?*) and reviewing policies. They should ensure that they have the necessary information, which might include:

- Achievement, attendance and exclusion data organised by pupil groups (e.g. free school meals, ethnicity)
- Racial incident and bullying logs

Other areas which are likely to come up during inspection are:

- The governing body's responsibility to tackle discrimination and promote community cohesion
- Equality of opportunity

What is the governing body's view of the quality of leadership in the school?

Governors should show an understanding of what effective school leadership is. This might include:

- Improving the outcomes for pupils
- Building capacity for improvement via CPD
- Delegating leadership duties to staff
- Developing a positive ethos

In larger schools, an awareness of the relevant strengths and weaknesses of middle leadership might also be expected.

How effectively does the governing body ensure that its skills and expertise are utilised?

The chair of governors is responsible for making the best use of individuals within the governing body. Inspectors will look for examples showing that governors' talents and skills have been identified and utilised.

What are inspectors looking for from the governing body?

Ken Bush says that a general set of expectations might include:

- Clear knowledge and understanding of the extent of their duties, particularly those which are statutory
- Awareness of the main issues that the school is facing and how well school leaders are going about the task of improvement
- Evidence of involvement in school life
- Evidence of the impact of governors' actions and interventions
- Awareness of the views and concerns of pupils, parents and the wider community; and where appropriate, evidence of responsiveness to the issues raised
- A view of what constitutes community cohesion and an evaluation of what has been achieved to date

Who should represent the governing body?

Before an inspection, the headteacher and chair of governors should take a strategic approach to deciding which particular governors should represent the governing body and why.

Ofsted inspection

A guide for governing boards in schools and trusts

Updated November 2022



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NGA Ofsted research

NGA's June 2022 [research report](#) highlights where Ofsted inspection practice has changed or improved following our 2020 report which identified key issues and areas to address.



National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is the membership organisation for governors, trustees and clerks of state schools in England.

We are an independent, not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We are expert leaders in school and trust governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning.

We represent the views of governors, trustees and governance professionals at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.

Introduction

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. Ofsted’s role is to make sure that organisations providing education, training and care services in England do so to a high standard. Ofsted fulfil this role in schools by carrying out inspections.

Inspection provides independent, external evaluation and identifies what needs to improve in order for provision to be good or better. It is based on gathering a range of evidence that is evaluated against the education inspection framework and takes full account of policies and relevant legislation in areas such as safeguarding, equality and diversity.

This guide has been developed to help governing boards:

- know what to expect from an Ofsted inspection
- understand what inspectors look at and the evidence they consult
- know what to expect when they meet with inspectors
- take steps following inspection to support school improvement

1. Types of inspection

Graded inspections (formerly known as Section 5 inspections) normally last two days. These inspections result in a judgement on the overall effectiveness of provision at the school, graded on the following scale:

1. Outstanding
2. Good
3. Requires improvement
4. Inadequate

Ungraded inspections (formerly known as Section 8 inspections) do not result in individual graded judgements but focus on determining whether the school remains the same grade as at the previous graded inspection. An ungraded inspection may be deemed a graded inspection if the school’s overall effectiveness or safeguarding provisions have declined.

A [summary table](#) outlining the different types of inspection is available.

1.1 Frequency of inspections

Judgement at last inspection	Frequency of subsequent inspection
Good or outstanding*	Ungraded inspection around every four years
Requires improvement	Graded inspection within approximately six terms
Inadequate	Dependent upon whether the school leadership (including the governing board) have demonstrated the capacity to bring about improvement – see section 4.3

*Following a change in regulations, schools judged outstanding are no longer exempt from routine inspection. In these cases:

- Schools last inspected before September 2015 will receive a graded inspection by 2025.
- Schools last inspected after September 2015 will receive an ungraded inspection by 2025.

Ofsted carry out urgent inspections (previously known as a no formal designation inspection) at any time where there are serious concerns (about safeguarding or leadership, for example).

1.2 Summary evaluations of MATs

Graded and ungraded inspections are carried out on an individual school basis. However, in some cases, Ofsted carry out [summary evaluations of multi academy trusts](#) (MATs) with the cooperation and consent of the MAT being reviewed.

Summary evaluations look at the extent to which the trust is delivering a high quality education and improving pupils' outcomes.

During a summary evaluation, inspectors meet the leaders of the MAT, discuss the findings of individual academy inspections (that precede the summary evaluation) and overall educational quality across the MAT. Inspectors also meet trustees and visit individual academies to capture the views of academy leaders and staff.

2. Before an inspection

Ofsted will usually telephone the headteacher to give notice of an inspection the day before an inspection starts. This will be communicated to the whole governing board by the governance professional (clerk to the board), headteacher, or other member of staff.

Parents and carers of pupils will also receive a letter about the inspection and options for providing their views.

The lead inspector and the headteacher will discuss arrangements for the visit. Inspectors use this conversation to understand the school's context, the progress made since the last inspection and to agree [deep dive areas](#). Before they arrive, inspectors will also research the school and [review relevant data and information](#).

2.1 Demonstrating effective governance to Ofsted

Governance is inspected under leadership and management. The Ofsted inspection handbook states that “this area of judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education that the school provides has a positive impact on all its pupils”.

By keeping the strategy document, school improvement plan and relevant policies under review, boards are well placed to talk to inspectors about:

- their strengths and areas for development
- the progress being made towards strategic priorities
- areas where expected progress is not being made
- the plans in place to address this

The areas above incorporate the school's quality of education, how its resources are managed and the culture of safeguarding.

The following table outlines leadership and management areas that Ofsted focus on and shows how these relate to the work of the governing board. Use the links to NGA resources provided to find further information and access best practice guidance.

Area of focus	Evidence to support effective governance Boards can demonstrate effective governance by evidencing that they:
Governing board self-review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ have an effective induction programme in place to help new board members understand their role ■ engage in regular internal and external self-review to improve skills, knowledge and the quality and impact of governance ■ undertake a skills audit (at least annually) to identify the skills, knowledge and experience of board members and address any gaps through development and targeted recruitment
Vision and strategy Refer to NGA's guide to Being Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ work collaboratively with school leaders and stakeholders to develop a clear and ambitious vision ■ have created a strategy document setting out how the vision will be achieved ■ are clear on what pupils should leave the school knowing and having done ■ receive sufficient data to monitor the outcomes detailed in the strategy
Quality of education Refer to NGA's curriculum guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ monitor the impact of what pupils are taught (reviewing assessment and destination data to support with this) ■ monitor the impact of the curriculum on all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities and those eligible for pupil premium ■ ensure that staff development needs are identified and CPD is well planned and resourced to support delivery of the curriculum ■ hold leaders to account for the quality of education
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ monitor staff workload and wellbeing and pupil wellbeing regularly ■ engage with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community to identify areas of strength and improvement ■ build effective partnerships with external stakeholders (such as local employers) to improve educational standards for all pupils
Safeguarding Refer to NGA safeguarding guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ influence a positive culture of safeguarding ■ provide strategic oversight and monitoring of safeguarding policies and practice ■ understand the risks that their pupils are likely to face
Statutory requirements Refer to NGA compliance resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ use the services of a professional clerk to stay up to date and receive advice on the board's legal duties ■ comply with their statutory requirements including their legal duties under The Equality Act ■ use an effective process to ensure up-to-date information is uploaded to the school or trust website

3. How schools are inspected

The [education inspection framework](#) sets out how Ofsted inspects schools and is accompanied by a [schools inspection handbook](#).

3.1 Judgement areas

One or two inspectors (depending on school size) evaluate the school against the following key judgements which are consistent for both graded and ungraded inspections.

Where relevant, inspectors will also make judgements on early years or sixth-form provision.

Quality of education

Inspectors evaluate the extent to which the school's curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage (the 'intent'), the way that the curriculum is taught and assessed in order to support pupils to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills (the 'implementation') and the outcomes that pupils achieve as a result (the 'impact').

Inspectors recognise that curriculum development is an ongoing process; leaders are expected to understand current curriculum practice and to have identified clear next steps.

Behaviour and attitudes

Inspectors consider how leaders and staff create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils and their attainment.

Personal development

This judgement focuses on developing healthy, responsible, respectful, and active citizens who are able to play their part and become actively involved in public life as adults.

Leadership and management

Inspectors consider how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education that the school provides has a positive impact on all its pupils.

This includes looking at areas such as stakeholder engagement, staff CPD arrangements and whether leaders and those responsible for governance understand their respective roles and perform these in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school.

Inspectors will always make a written judgement under 'leadership and management' about whether the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Where safeguarding is found to be ineffective, it is likely to lead to an inadequate judgement for leadership and management.

NGA and the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) have published [joint advice for governing boards on safeguarding and school inspection](#).

Ungraded inspection focus

Ungraded inspections are likely to concentrate on the following areas within each judgement:

Behaviour – whether schools set high expectations for pupils’ behaviour and conduct and applies this fairly and consistently.

Workload – the extent to which leaders engage with staff and are aware of pressures on them.

Gaming and off-rolling – ensuring that schools are not enrolling or removing pupils for the sole interest of the school instead of the pupil(s).

Pupils’ wider development – the extent to which the curriculum provides broader development to enhance spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

3.2 Gathering evidence

Inspectors will gather evidence from a range of sources, including:

- national performance data – exploring trends and areas for improvement
- Parent View responses – looking for themes such as bullying, behaviour or homework
- the school website – checking that statutory information is correct and looking at how the school engages with stakeholders
- previous inspection information – looking to see that necessary actioned has been taken
- exclusion records, behaviour records and attendance analysis
- documented evidence on the work and priorities of those responsible for governance

Some of this evidence will be looked at before the inspector visits the school. Your governance professional (clerk to the board) is responsible for ensuring that governance documentation is filed correctly and readily accessible for inspectors.

Inspectors will not use internal data as evidence; however, they will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from internal assessment information.

To support their evidence collection, inspectors will also:

- observe pupils in situations outside of lessons (such as at break times)
- meet with the governing board ([see section 3.6](#))
- meet with leaders to discuss the school’s self-evaluation and other aspects of management

3.3 Deep dives

Inspectors conduct ‘deep dives’ into three-to-six subject areas (depending on school phase and size) to evaluate how education flows from intention to impact within a school. This entails:

- discussions with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils
- scrutiny of pupils’ work
- visits to a sample of lessons (carried out alongside a school leader)

3.4 Focus on attendance

Inspectors recognise that the context in which schools operate has changed as a result of the pandemic. They will consider and discuss attendance patterns and the steps taken to ensure the best possible rates of attendance during the pandemic and on an ongoing basis.

NGA's [pupil attendance resources](#) set out the board's role in securing good attendance.

3.5 Governing board meeting with inspectors

Inspectors meet with members of the governing board for around 30 minutes. The chair or governance professional should contact governors/trustees to see who is available; as many governors/trustees as possible should attend the meeting (school staff will not be present).

Where the school is part of a MAT, the meeting will be with the trust board. The academy committee (the local governing body) may also be invited, depending on the scheme of delegation. The trust's [scheme of delegation](#) should be provided to inspectors at the earliest opportunity so that they are clear about lines of accountability.

The purpose of the meeting

The meeting is intended to help inspectors establish whether the board understands its role and carries it out effectively. The discussion should be centred around the board's core strategic functions and avoid operational areas such as the detail of what pupils are taught and how they are taught. Board members attending the meeting should be prepared to point out if the discussion has moved into operational rather than strategic areas.

Examples of questions inspectors may ask

The following are examples of the type of questions that governing boards may be asked in their meeting with inspectors.

1. What is the governing board's vision for the school?
2. What is the strategy for achieving the vision – who determines this?
3. What are the school's development priorities?
4. How does the board ensure that progress is made on these priorities?
5. How do you hold your headteacher to account?
6. How do you know safeguarding is robust? What staff and governing board training takes place?
7. What sources of information do you use to find out the views of parents, staff and pupils?
8. How is pupil premium funding being used and what impact is it having?
9. How do you ensure that pupils gain the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens?
10. How do you monitor attendance and absence rates?

4. Inspection feedback and judgements

4.1 The feedback meeting

At the end of the inspection, the lead inspector will hold a feedback meeting in which the main findings of the inspection are explained. This includes provisional grades for each area of judgement and the implications, if relevant, of being judged as 'requires improvement' or being placed in 'special measures'. The inspector will also set out recommendations for improvement.

We recommend that as many members of the governing board as possible attend the feedback meeting to hear the grades awarded and judgements reached. In doing so, board members can begin to understand the work required to tackle any areas for improvement.

We also recommend that the governance professional (clerk to the board) attends to take a written note of the meeting. This may be shared confidentially with all those responsible for the governance of the school, regardless of whether they were able to attend the meeting or not.

4.2 Inspection report

An inspection report is produced which explains the judgements made. This is intended for parents and stakeholders and provides a snapshot of what it is like to be a pupil at the school.

Following inspection, a confidential draft report is sent to school leaders and the governing board for comment. This is an opportunity to challenge any factual inaccuracies or where it is felt that the report does not represent the findings discussed at the feedback meeting.

The school is made aware of any subsequent changes and the report is published on Ofsted's website within 30 working days. Schools receive an electronic version of the final report in advance of publication which should be uploaded to the school's website.

Schools in MATs should check that the report has the trust board named as the accountable body, with the chair of the trust board named.

4.3 Inadequate judgements

Schools judged 'inadequate' are categorised as being in special measures or as having serious weaknesses depending on whether the school leadership (including the governing board) have demonstrated the capacity to bring about improvement.

Where a school is judged as 'inadequate', the following action is taken:

- Maintained schools are issued an academy order to become a sponsored academy and subsequently inspected by Ofsted as new schools (in their third year).
- Single academy trusts are moved into a MAT.
- Schools already part of a MAT can be moved to a different MAT where the regional director deems the existing MAT not to have sufficient capacity to bring about the necessary improvement. If an academy is not moved to a different academy trust, it will be subject to monitoring before its next full inspection.

Following an inadequate judgement, Ofsted will carry out monitoring inspections within three-to-nine months of the publication of the graded inspection report. Inspectors will look for evidence of how well leaders are implementing the statement of action and the school's improvement plan.

Further information is available from Ofsted's guidance on [schools causing concern](#); chapter two provides guidance on maintained schools, chapter four covers academies causing concern.

Schools with two or more consecutive Ofsted ratings below 'good' may be subject to an [academisation order](#).

4.4 Post-inspection board discussions

Governing boards and leaders should make time to discuss the inspection process and reflect on findings from the feedback meeting. The board should then ensure that:

- plans are put in place to address any identified areas for improvement
- the board's strategy is informed by Ofsted's findings of the school
- plans for improvement are reflected in the board's strategy
- school staff (and the executive leader in particular) continue to receive the professional and personal development they need
- they discuss the impact of inspection and the resulting judgement on staff wellbeing, workload and recruitment

Ofsted e-learning

NGA Learning Link subscribers can access an [Ofsted e-learning module](#) which covers the inspection process, what boards can expect and how to support school leaders.

Ofsted training

NGA also offers a [two-hour training session](#) on preparing for Ofsted to help governors and trustees understand the inspection process and identify any issues that need to be addressed prior to inspection.

Thank you for reading this guide. If you have any feedback you'd like to share, please email kcfeedback@nga.org.uk.

More from NGA

Knowledge Centre: best practice guidance

NGA members get exclusive online access to best practice school governance guidance from NGA's Knowledge Centre. Go to [NGA's Knowledge Centre](#) and log in to browse and download guidance, templates, model policies, information summaries and more.

GOLDline: bespoke advice

NGA's [GOLDline advice service](#) provides independent and timely advice to governing boards with GOLD membership. Our advisers guide members through topics including governance roles and responsibilities, admissions, exclusions, complaints, and board constitution.

Find out more about [NGA GOLD membership](#) and sign up.

Don't miss out on membership benefits

If you're an NGA member, check your account details are correct by logging in at nga.org.uk and visiting the account management page. Every member of your governing board needs an up-to-date account to access benefits including our Governing Matters magazine and weekly e-newsletter. If you don't have an account or you're not sure, talk to your clerk or chair or [contact us](#).

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