

**Governor Support Service**

# **Governor Core Induction**

**Part Two**

**Ron Fowler  
Sandra D`Souza**

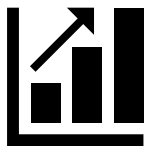


**Spring 2024**

# Course outline



Part 1 of the course will consider:  
The schools, the frameworks  
and the principles of governance



**Part 2 of the course will consider:  
The three functions of the GB and  
looking at your own school**



Part 3 of the course will consider:  
Your role in safeguarding and child  
protection



## CHAT BOX

- Say 'Hello' in the Chat Box, and chime in with any questions/comments
  - any queries, problems with the 'tech' let us know
- Keep your camera ON
- Remember to make sure your display name shows both your first name AND your surname or school

*Quick recap....*

## **3 Roles of Governing Boards**

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

# 1: Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

- Vision - articulates where the school aspires to be

The Vision Statement should be **very short** – one line, two at most. It is a summary of where you want to get to, say in 3 years (*think of it as the destination name on the front of a bus*).

- Ethos and Values - help to define the type of school you are striving to become. Should be original, inspiring and specific to the school.

The Ethos Statement is a much broader, longer description to incorporate the *feel* of the overall aim of the school. This will be more ‘flowery’. It should be a full paragraph, possibly two short paragraphs.

Church schools will recognise their historic foundation and will preserve and develop its religious character.

If the **Vision** is the 'destination name' on the front of the bus, then the **Ethos** is how **warm/cold/comfy** the **inside** of the bus is!

*It doesn't matter how cosy the bus is when you get on, if there's no destination name on the front, how do you know where you are going??*



# Strategic Direction

Is the **route** the bus takes to get where it's going....

Involves asking the questions –

- Where are we now?
  - Where do we need to be?
    - How do we know?

Setting the mission, vision & values (aims and objectives)

Agreeing the policy framework for achieving these

Setting targets

Agreeing the school improvement strategy (including the budget plan and the staffing structure)



## Strategic

The Governing Board shapes and establishes the long-term plans

By resolving -  
Where are we now?  
Where do we want to be?  
How will we get there?

The GB is strictly 'hands off' day-to-day; it delegates operational control to the Headteacher (HT) & Senior leadership team (SLT)

## Operational

The Headteacher manages the daily running of the school

By delivering the agreed strategy

The HT/SLT are responsible for being 'hands on'. They are in charge of all operational practices of running the school



# Strategic V Operational?



# Strategic or Operational...?

1. Drafting a policy about texting parents when their child is absent

A: Operational

2. Review & re-issue school policy on pupils taking term-time holidays

A: Strategic

3. Consider establishing or further promoting school Breakfast Club

A: Strategic

4. When attendance figures are low, commissioning a survey of pupils to discover what would make attendance more attractive

A: Operational

# Governance is about –

- Planning for improvement, approving priority areas
- Approving school policies
- Ensuring statutory requirements are met
- Ensuring effective systems and procedures are in place
- *Enabling the headteacher* to ensure strategic plans are achieved

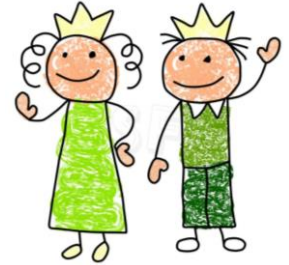
GB decisions are COLLECTIVE – all governors share equal responsibility; individual views remain confidential

- *GB Code of Conduct*
- *Awareness of ‘tainting’ (see handout)*
- *Minutes of meetings should record ‘challenge’ but not individual views (e.g. say ‘A governor objected to..’ not ‘John Smith objected to...’)*
- *Associate Members can help – but are NOT governors & can’t vote!*

# Parent and Staff governors...

- are elected by the parent or staff body, and have the *understanding of what it's like* to have children in the school, or to work in the school.
- Once elected, they are *equal to every other governor* and their views are their own – they are **not there to represent the views of other parents/staff.** *(see handout)*





The Chair of Governors is equal to others BUT...

- Has casting vote in a tie
- Can act on behalf of the GB in an emergency (“Chair’s Powers”)
  - *automatic duty in a maintained school*
  - *needs to be in the Articles of Association for an academy*
- The GB **must** have an elected Chair AND elected Vice Chair BUT...
  - they don’t have to be elected every year, the GB can decide beforehand for longer periods of office
  - No limit on number of successive terms of office
  - They must be elected at a **quorate** meeting

Any questions??



## ***3 Roles of Governing Boards....***

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

## ***2 : Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff***

Evidence....

- Pupil progress data
- School Development Plan (SDP)
- Ofsted inspection reports\*
- Headteacher's report
- Challenge recorded in board and committee minutes
- Headteacher Appraisal
- Link governor reports
- Audit reports (H&S/safeguarding)
- Feedback from parent and staff surveys
- Governor school visits

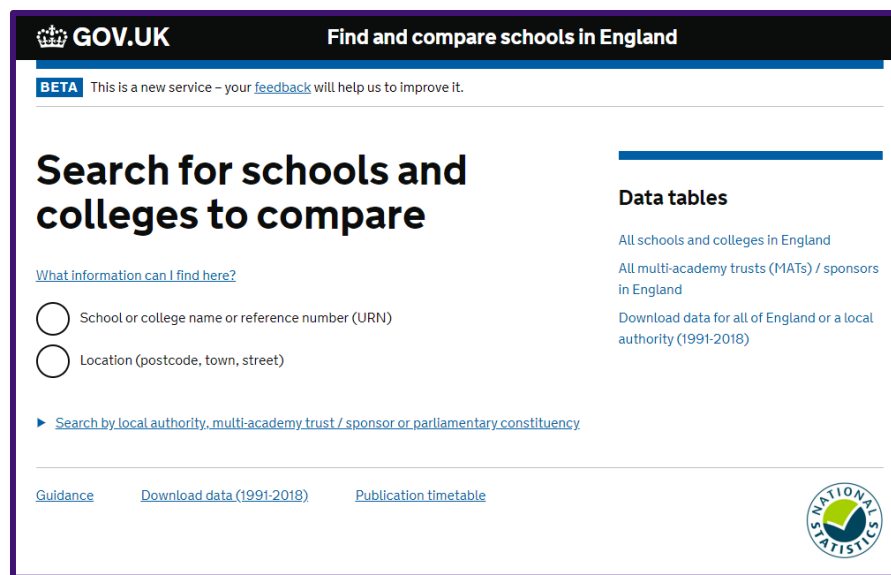
\*Ofsted inspection handbook, linked [here](#)



## The School Development Plan

- **The School Development Plan (SDP/SIP/Action Plan)** – borne out of identified areas for development from the school's ongoing self-evaluation, and by considering external performance factors
- The Headteacher *drafts* an improvement or development plan, giving the main priorities to be addressed in order to raise standards
- The SDP is presented to the governing board for discussion and *approval / establishment*
- Any formal governor visits into the school should be based upon this SDP – looking at least at one of the objectives, and seeing how it is being achieved
- The SDP should be reviewed at every GB meeting to monitor progress

# Benchmarking: Comparing your school's performance



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface for 'Find and compare schools in England'. At the top left is the GOV.UK logo. The main heading is 'Find and compare schools in England'. Below this is a 'BETA' notice: 'This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it.' The main content area is titled 'Search for schools and colleges to compare'. Underneath, there is a link 'What information can I find here?'. Two radio buttons are present: the first is selected and labeled 'School or college name or reference number (URN)', and the second is labeled 'Location (postcode, town, street)'. Below the radio buttons is a link: '▶ [Search by local authority, multi-academy trust / sponsor or parliamentary constituency](#)'. At the bottom left of the main content area are three links: 'Guidance', 'Download data (1991-2018)', and 'Publication timetable'. On the right side, there is a section titled 'Data tables' with a blue horizontal line above it. It lists three options: 'All schools and colleges in England', 'All multi-academy trusts (MATs) / sponsors in England', and 'Download data for all of England or a local authority (1991-2018)'. In the bottom right corner of the dashboard is the 'NATIONAL STATISTICS' logo.

- The dashboard can be used by governors to compare performance with any school
- Covers achievement, absence, funding, staffing.
- Links to Ofsted report, school website, download the raw data.
- Has a comparison tool, so you can compare your school to others

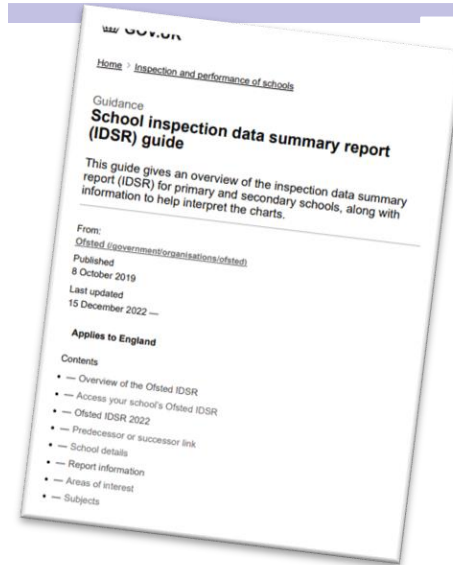
# Data Sources

## IDSR: Inspection Data Summary Reports for primary & secondary schools

### ASP: Analyse School Performance

- a secure web-based system from the DfE that provides schools and local authorities with a range of analyses

FFT: Fischer Family Trust data - a paid subscription service *(not accessed by all schools)*



To interpret the data accurately, those governing will need to have a broad knowledge of the headline measures that concern their school (i.e. “progress/attainment 8” or “early years foundation stage” etc.)

Ask your headteacher to arrange for someone in school to go through the school’s data sources with you so that you are able to understand it (or ask to attend a separate training session on Understanding Data)

# School Visits

- Visiting during the day (with HT permission) is recommended to find out more about the school.
- ‘Governor hat’ – be clear what role you are in school for, especially if you have more than one role.
- Visits should be pre-arranged with a **clear focus** – refer to school development plan (SDP) - see whether the school is implementing policies and improvement plans signed off by the GB - how they are working in practice?
- It is not about collecting **more** information, but about collecting the **right** information, understanding it, discussing it and using it to inform your actions.
- Use a ‘Visits Record’ form. Report back to the whole Governing Board. Minute the discussion and record the impact of the visit.

Record of Governor's Visit to School

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Name/s  | Class/Lesson & Date Visited: |
| Focus & Aim of visit<br><small>(link to Strategy &amp; School Development Plan; how does the visit relate to a specific priority in the Plan?)</small>  |                              |
| Visit preparation:  |                              |
| Governor comments on visit focus:<br><small>(e.g. chief concern of activities; how long did the visit last? What did you see? Aspects you would like clarified? What did you learn as a result of the visit?)</small>   |                              |
| Is the School Development Plan on track? Y/N<br><small>Aspects/actions for the governing board to consider<br/>(e.g. the way resources (or all resources) are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing a key policy, provision for SEND/OLAC)</small> |                              |
| Impact of Visit: What have the GB learned from this governor's visit, and how does this help the welfare and education of our children? (i.e. record of any action agreed by the GB with regard to this visit)  |                              |
| Date of FGB meeting presented & discussed:  |                              |

Form to be completed by the governor and presented to the PCB at the meeting following the visit. Copy to be stored on the Gb computer for reference.

Revised 2024, 2025

# Thoughts??



## ***3 Roles of Governing Boards....***

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*
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- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent**

### 3: *Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent*

#### Evidence....

- Maintained Schools:  
the Schools' Financial Value Standard (SFVS) - *"schools fruit & veg scheme"*!
- Academies:  
Academy Trust handbook & ESFA
- Pupil Premium reports
- PE and sports funding reports
- Catch-up Premium

*Plus, as before -*

- *Pupil progress data*
- *School Development Plan (SDP)*
- *Ofsted inspection reports*
- *Headteacher's report*
- *Challenge recorded in board and committee minutes*
- *HT Appraisal*
- *Link governor reports*
- *Audit reports (H&S/safeguarding)*
- *Feedback from parent and staff surveys*
- *Governor school visits*

# Academies

## Financial framework (links):

- Academy Trust [Handbook](#) (*previously known as the Academies Financial Handbook*)
- Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) [Funding agreement](#)

Guidance

### ESFA Education and Skills agreements 2022 to 2023

Information about ESFA Education and Skills agreements for 2022 to 2023

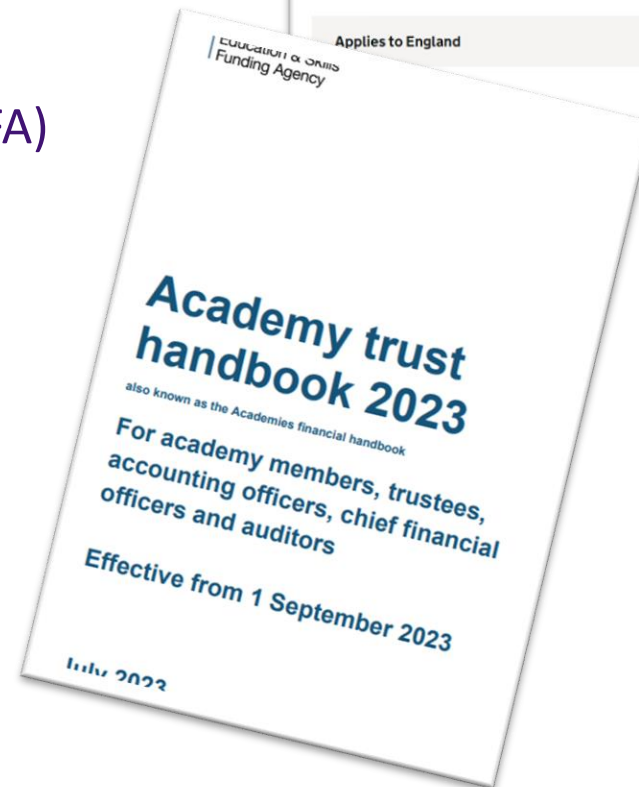
From: [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#)

Published 24 May 2022

Last updated 22 July 2022 — [See all updates](#)

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Applies to England





# Maintained Schools

## Schools financial value standard (SFVS)

Ask your headteacher to arrange for someone in school to go through the SFVS and the school's budgets with you so that you are able to understand them (or ask to attend a separate training session on Understanding Finance)



### A. Governance

1. In the view of the governing body and senior staff, does the governing body have adequate and up-to-date financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money? Is there a plan in place to address any gaps?

#### What this question means

##### Why it is important for the governing body to have adequate and up-to-date financial skills

It is essential for the governing body to have access to adequate financial skills and to maintain these skills to ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities for the financial management of the school and can safeguard the large amounts of public money for which they are responsible.

Not all governors need all these skills, but collectively members of the governing body (and finance committee or equivalent) should have these skills among them. Schools should ensure they have a plan in place to fill any gaps in knowledge.

##### Why it is important for the governing body to challenge and support the headteacher

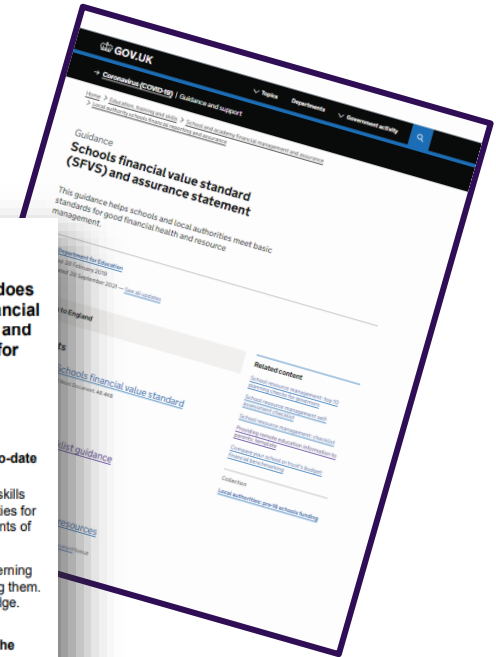
The governing body has a statutory responsibility to support and challenge the headteacher. Members of the governing body do this to ensure that:

- resources are deployed appropriately in line with the school's priorities
- planned levels of financial performance are achieved
- the school avoids incurring financial loss and waste
- the school receives favourable audit assessments

##### The key financial roles of the governing body and its committees

The governing body is given its powers and duties as an incorporated body. The statutory responsibilities of the governing body of a maintained school are detailed in [section 21 of the Education Act 2002](#) (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/21>). Their key financial roles are to:

- manage the school budget



The SFVS is for Maintained school reporting – but Academies can also use the check list!

# DfE Expectations

Whilst your school may have **committees** that look at finance and performance data, **ALL governors** should be able to engage fully with discussions about the performance of their school. Every governing board **must** have at least one governor with the skills **to understand and interpret the full detail of the financial and performance data available and explain this to the board.**

- The governors in this role should make sure that the wider governing board has a correct understanding of the school's performance and finances
- They should identify from the data the most important issues that need to be discussed.
- Other governors should aim to undertake any available training to improve their confidence and skills in looking at data.

# Know your school!

*It's your duty, but how do you go about it?*

- **Visit the school and report back**
  - Focus on a specific aspect of school life – *use the School Development/Improvement plan*
- **Know the different types of data**
  - Including reports on performance management, pupil achievement (Fischer Family Trust (FFT), DfE Analyse School Performance (ASP school data), staff and pupil attendance, behaviour, finance, benchmarking, statistical
- **Read and question internal and external reports**
  - School Development Plan (SDP), Self evaluation (SEF), Headteacher reports, Any senior leadership (SLT) reports, External Adviser visits, Ofsted, Audit reports, Link governor reports
- **Commission annual surveys of staff and parents**
- **Look online at the school website and media profile**

# How do you really know?

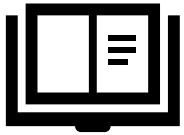
- What do you know about your school already?
- How do you know for sure? *Have you seen evidence??*
- What will you do next to learn more about the school?
- What is the impact of knowing the school well?



Questions?



## Next time



Part 3 of the course will consider:  
Your role in safeguarding and child  
protection

*Look forward to seeing you on:  
Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 6.30pm*





**Governor Support Service  
Based in Hillingdon and  
supporting governors and clerks  
throughout the borough and beyond**

**Email:** [office@governor.support](mailto:office@governor.support)

**Website:** [www.governor.support](http://www.governor.support)

**Phone: 01895 717321**

A screenshot of the GSS website homepage. The page has a purple header with the GSS logo. On the left, there is a login form with fields for 'Username' (containing 'Melanie Wright') and 'Password' (containing '\*\*\*\*\*'). Below the password field is a 'Remember Me' checkbox and a purple 'LOG IN' button. Underneath the login form is a section titled 'LA Statutory Duties' with a 'Read more' link. The main content area features a 'Home' breadcrumb, a 'Welcome to the Governor Support Service' heading, and a paragraph of introductory text. To the right of the text is a group photo of five people. Below the welcome message are two columns: 'Our services' with a sub-heading 'Advice &amp; Guidance' and a brief description, and 'Courses' with a sub-heading 'Clerks' Briefing Meeting (evening session) - Spring' and a 'More Courses &gt;' link.