



Governor Information Pack - 2025 -2026 Maintained Schools

Governor Services

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Welcome

We would like to thank you for becoming a school governor and welcome you to your new role in one of the largest volunteering sectors in the UK.

This information pack has been collated to provide information and resources that will be useful to you as you embark on your governance journey.

Whilst the COVID pandemic seems to be a fair distance behind us – it's legacy on education still continues. This is coupled with ongoing national and international events which continue to have ramifications on the education sector. The Labour Government have made commitments to the education sector through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Governance priorities are continually evolving to address the issues that are presenting themselves. This ever-changing landscape requires the effective learning engagement of children and young people to ensure future life success.

Aspirational and inspirational teaching and effective school leadership will always remain a characteristic of the best schools but the complexities surrounding what our local, national and global communities need, and what schools can reasonably be expected to deliver well, must be continually examined, tested and evaluated against this context of constant change.

The shared aims and values that a school community lives by are crucial to its success. School governance at its best seeks to uphold these values (whilst keeping them under review) and ensures strategically that each pupil receives the best education that can be provided within a framework of support and challenge. At the heart of this role is the sustained development of positive relationships between members of the governing body, the school, and its community.

Every governor brings their own unique skills and experiences which can be used to help the governing body become and remain effective in its role. What all governors have in common is the desire to share in making a positive difference to young people through their commitment to the school and its continuous improvement.

We look forward to working with you during your term of office.

Becoming a Governor

What will I be expected to do?

On appointment as a Governor:

- Complete the required forms (Eligibility to Serve, Register of Pecuniary Interests)
- Complete the required checks (DBS & S128) within 21 days of appointment
- Read the information supplied in the Governor Information Pack sent by Governor Support
- Read information relating to the school and the governing body supplied by the clerk to governors which forms part of governor induction.
- Undertake Safeguarding Training on Induction, and complete the NGA Safeguarding e-learning module via NGA Learning Links platform (registration details available via Governance Training Offer)
- Attend full governing body meetings and any committee meetings of which I am a member

Before my first meeting:

- Read through the Agenda, minutes of the previous meeting and any supporting papers supplied by the clerk to governors (at least 7 days before the meeting) and make a note of any queries I have
- Consider what personal skills I can give to the governing body and be prepared to serve on one of its committees.

At the meeting:

- Sign up to the governing body's code of conduct/code of practice
- Contribute to discussion and ask any questions through the chair
- Ask for clarification on any points I do not understand.

During my office as a governor:

- Abide by the governing body's code of conduct and observe the rules of confidentiality
- Become a member of one of the committees of the governing body
- Keep up to date with current educational thinking
- Liaise with other Governors, the clerk to governors and the headteacher
- Remember that the governing body is **corporate**, and no single Governor can act independently unless given delegated powers to do so
- Get to know the school, take an interest in school activities, and carry out school visits
- Promote the school within the local community
- Undertake appropriate training and appropriate effectiveness and evaluation tasks.

What can I expect from the Governing Body/School?

- To be introduced to the other members of the governing body
- To be provided with an induction
- To receive the information necessary in good time for me to carry out my duties and make informed decisions
- To be kept up to date on school issues by the Headteacher and staff
- To be given the opportunity to attend governor training
- To have my views heard and treated fairly

Composition of the Governing Body

Who makes up the governing body?

- The governing body of any school is made up of volunteers who are elected/appointed in line with the Instrument of Government.
- These volunteers are drawn from parents of pupils at the school, staff, a governor nominated by the Local Authority, and members of the local community or are linked with the school's foundation and/or partnership.

What is "stakeholder governance"?

- The policy of drawing governors from different groups who represent a range of interests and viewpoints is known as "stakeholder governance".
- Each has an interest in how well the school does from their own perspective.
- Collectively they embody a range of viewpoints and potentially they ensure the best outcomes for the pupils.
- Governors come from all walks of life where common sense and general life experience is valued alongside professional expertise and specialist skills.

What public documents relate to my Governing Body?

All Maintained Schools have an Instrument of Government. The Instrument of Government sets out both the name of the school and the constitution of the governing body.

What other DfE resources are available to me to help me understand school governance?

1. [Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintained-schools-governance-guide)
2. [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)
3. [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)
4. [Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools](#)
5. [School governance update](#)

Organisation of the Governing Body

How many governing body meetings are held each year?

- Meetings of the full governing body **must** be held at least three times a year.
- Many governing bodies meet more frequently.
- Three members of the governing body can request (in writing) an additional meeting at any time. Following such a request a meeting must be called.
- Extraordinary meetings may also be called if there is a matter of urgency that cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

Can the governing body delegate some of its functions?

- The governing body can delegate many of its responsibilities to an individual Governor, a committee or the headteacher
- Governing bodies choose their model of governance and govern either with or without committees (circular model).
NB: If the school has ratified the LCC Pay Policy, it must have a delegated Pay Committee
- Typically, a larger school would govern with committees, with responsibilities being divided as follows:
 - Finance/Resources/Premises/Staffing Committee(s)
 - Curriculum, Standards and Wellbeing Committee(s)
 - Strategic Development Planning Committee
 - Pay Committee
- Each committee consists of Governors who share their legal responsibilities to see that the school is led well, supported, and challenged appropriately and is accountable to parents and the wider community for the education that pupils at the school receive.

How are Committees organised?

- Committees are normally reconstituted at the start of each school year. This is an opportunity for the membership to be renewed or changed and the terms of reference to be reviewed
- Each committee must have clear terms of reference as responsibilities are likely to have been delegated to the committee by the governing body
- These committees report back to the full governing body, so that all Governors are aware of the work that has been done and are thus better placed to make informed decisions about strategic matters
- At least three governors are required, and one must be named as the Chair, before a committee is considered 'quorate'.

Do governors have individual responsibilities?

- Governors are expected to come to each meeting well prepared to take an active part in the meeting etc
- Some Governors will hold particular responsibilities for specific areas, with governors also assigned responsibilities for monitoring areas of the school development/improvement plan.
- All governing bodies must elect a Chair and Vice Chair of governors.

The Chair is expected to:

- Give a clear lead in organising the governing body's work
- Delegate roles and ensure other Governors are fully involved
- Manage meetings effectively
- Hold regular meetings with the Headteacher
- Keep other governors fully informed
- Co-operate with other agencies to support school improvement.

A Vice Chair is expected to:

- Act in the absence of the Chair
- Act as a sounding board for the chair
- Share tasks with the chair when agreed, to ensure manageable workloads
- Can be allocated responsibility for induction of new governors and board training and development.

Other Governor Roles:

- Many governing bodies also appoint other Governors to hold an oversight for particular aspects of the school's work, such as Special Educational Needs, Safeguarding, Finance, Attendance and Wellbeing.
- Other governor monitoring roles will be assigned usually in line with priorities from the School Development/Improvement Plan.

What are working parties?

- A Working Party can be formed by a governing body to look at a particular aspect of the governing body's work. For example: if a policy is to undergo major review (or if it is decided that a group of policies subject to yearly review are to be reviewed), if a particular project requires specific research to ensure its success or if a new piece of legislation poses potential implications for the school.
- A working party will make recommendations to the governing body but has no authority to take decisions.

Key Partners

Who are the key partners to support our work?

- Key people who are important to the smooth running of the governing body include the Clerk to Governors, School Business Manager, the Headteacher and staff at the school.
- For maintained schools, the local authority is also a key partner in supporting and challenging the work of the school and each maintained school is allocated a Local Authority Education Locality Lead.
- The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) are also responsible for the appointment of governors in Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools and provide an education advisor and training.
- The L.E.A.D. Teaching School Hub is a key partner with The Diocese, Local Authority and Partnership of Schools and provides professional development for school staff.

What does the Clerk do?

- **All** governing bodies must have an appointed Clerk to Governors under the School Governance Regulations.
NB. The word Clerk is interchangeable with the term Governance Professional
- Clerks/Governance professionals are paid to provide administrative and advisory support to governing boards and, depending on their roles and the governance structures served, act as the strategic lead for wider governance support provided by clerks. They make an invaluable contribution to board efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and compliance. They also have a crucial role in promoting the culture that ensures good governance in schools and trusts.
- The Clerk to Governors minutes meetings of the full governing body and committee meetings, makes sure that the governing body is informed of any relevant legislation, keeps a register of business interests, advises governors on business conduct and good practice, and is a source of administrative information. For a Clerk to be effective, good professional development is essential.
- They are responsible for the keeping accurate, timely and up-to-date records of any discussions, decisions, agreed actions and timescales, normally through agendas, minutes of meetings and correspondence. The minutes provide documentary evidence of the work of the governing body and its committees, including periodic review of their strategic role, the support and challenge they give to the school (for example, their role in the school improvement cycle) and how they account for their activities within their areas of responsibility, such as school finances, staffing and provision.

How does the Headteacher work with the governing body?

- The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school and works closely with senior colleagues and middle leaders to formulate policy, establish plans, set targets and monitor practice – all of which may be discussed and approved by the governing body.
- The Headteacher provides a Headteacher report for governors outlining an overview of the progress the school is making against agreed priorities, as well as arranging for other relevant reports to be made available at different times of the year, including financial reports to monitor

income and expenditure against the planned budget, benchmarking comparisons and performance data trends, Analyse School Performance (comparative performance data), and Ofsted and post-inspection reports.

- The Headteacher also provides the governing body with advice on strategic matters and ensures that documentation reflects the governing body's strategic direction.
- The Headteacher usually has a close professional relationship with the Chair of Governors, and they meet on a regular basis to ensure continuity of information.

How do other staff work with the governing body?

- Other senior staff hold leadership responsibilities. Examples might include Deputy or Assistant headteacher, key stage leader or head of department. These will report back to governors on aspects of their work.
- Increasingly, the school business manager (SBM) or bursar reports to a committee in respect of income and expenditure.
- Middle leaders also work closely with governors engaged in monitoring the work of the school.

Key Roles

What are the key roles of the governing body?

In carrying out its role effectively, the work of the governing body is focused on three main areas:

- **Strategic Leadership**
- **Support and Challenge**
- **Accountability**

Although each area has its own characteristics for success, all three are interdependent within the context of the school.

Can you explain these three roles and how I might be involved in them?

Strategic Leadership is concerned with decision-making around the values, aims and aspirations of the school. It takes account of where the school is now, where it wants to be in the future and how it will get there. As a Governor you should know what the aims and values of your school are and use this knowledge to support you in making decisions about the school. The governing body is responsible for setting the policy framework within which the school manages the day to day running.

Good strategic leadership is often characterised by clearly articulated and shared values, vision and aims. The governing body provides clear strategic direction supported by the school's Headteacher and staff. The school community is clear about what is important to the school and the future direction of the school.

Support and challenge is the way in which the governing body acts as a critical friend of the school. 'Critical' in the sense of its responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness, asking challenging questions and pressing for improvement. A 'friend' in the sense that governors celebrate the successes of the school and promote its interests.

Good support and challenge rests on the confidence to ask questions, the quality and timing of information provided, the ability to understand reports received and the desire to play an active part in the life of the school.

As a Governor you will want to know from the school; how well pupils are achieving in their academic work and extra-curricular activities, how good pupils' attendance is and what strategies are being deployed to overcome barriers to attendance, whether any pupils have been excluded (and why). You will want to know how well pupils behave and whether their attitudes to learning help them to do their best. You will want to understand whether pupils feel safe, and free from bullying and to what extent parents are involved in their child's learning.

Accountability is concerned with the school's performance across a range of indicators and at different times of the year. Headteachers are accountable to the governing body for the attainment and progress of every pupil in the school, the curriculum they receive and the leadership and management decisions that help this to happen.

Good accountability is evident when quality documentation is presented in an accessible way to the school and wider community. The governing body explains its decisions and welcomes comment and

questions from the school community. As a Governor you should always be prepared to engage with school stakeholders and others to explain decisions taken by the governing body, remembering that these are corporate decisions.

Key Documents

What school resources will be useful to me to fulfil these roles?

The School Website will contain relevant statutory and useful information.

The School Self Evaluation captures the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is used to summarise the school's position and is used particularly at the time of a school inspection by Ofsted. Schools are no longer required to maintain a SEF, however, the majority of schools continue to complete some form of self-evaluation record.

The School Development Plan (SDP) (also known as the **School Improvement Plan (SIP)**) identifies the school's priorities and targets in both the long- and short-term following communication and consultation with a range of 'stakeholders' that may include governors, staff, pupils, parents, and members of the local and wider community. It is a public document primarily used within the school for planning and action purposes.

The Ofsted Inspection Report provides a public summary of the latest school inspection report for the school and can be found on the Ofsted website.

The Analyse School Performance report from the Department for Education (DfE) provides an annual performance report for the school and is a confidential document for internal school use (which is also available to the Local Authority and Ofsted). It contains measures of the schools' attainment performance and value-added progress compared with other schools.

The Headteacher's Report to governors is written prior to each full governing body meeting and provides an up-to-date summary of school information, progress against priorities and the quality of teaching and leadership and management within the school.

Governor Visit Reports are written following a focused visit into school by a Governor(s). Often these reports are written to an agreed pro forma and will highlight any issues arising from that visit.

Financial Reports can be produced each month by the school to monitor actual school expenditure against planned expenditure. These are normally used by the governing body to ensure that spending is on track and to move money from one allocation to another during the financial year.

An Auditor's Report will be written following an audit visit. Within the report any financial issues will be raised, and the urgency with which these issues should be addressed indicated.

The Risk Register provides the governing body with an overview and mitigation schedule for the management of risk. Governors are expected to understand their school's risk appetite, ensure that a risk register is maintained and reviewed regularly, and confirm that appropriate controls and mitigation strategies are in place. Risks may be internal (eg staffing, compliance, financial) or external (funding changes, policy shifts, environmental events). Governance-specific risks – such as governing body capacity and skills gaps must also be considered.

Main Responsibilities

Governing Bodies are encouraged to adopt an **annual planning cycle** to structure their work across the academic year. This approach ensures that statutory duties, strategic priorities, and monitoring responsibilities are addressed in a timely and coherent manner and allows the Governing Body to undertake effective governance.

Using an annual cycle helps governing boards remain focused, proactive, and responsive to the needs of the school community.

How are the key roles converted into the main responsibilities?

It is up to each governing body to determine how best to meet their roles and responsibilities. There is no blueprint for governance, but it is often the case that the whole governing body will delegate certain responsibilities, for example to committees (see Organisation of the Governing Body).

What are the key responsibilities?

There are a number of key responsibilities including:

- ***pupil achievement***
- ***financial management***
- ***staffing***

*What exactly are governors responsible for in **pupil achievement**?*

- The governing body establishes an ethos of high expectations and aspirations for all.
- The governing body may delegate a detailed scrutiny of pupil standards and progress to a committee or to a monitoring governor(s).
- This committee/governor(s) would compare the pupils' results against other schools and against national benchmarks to identify how well the school is achieving and to challenge any underperformance of cohorts and groups each year and over time.
- It/they also need to identify whether pupils are making expected progress, and where pupils fall behind, what action the school is taking to support those pupils and whether that remedial action is successful.

*What exactly are governors responsible for in respect of **financial management**?*

- Management of the school's delegated budget is the overall responsibility of the governing body although they can delegate authority for certain tasks, for example to the finance committee or finance governor, headteacher or other staff, provided this is agreed and recorded, at least annually, in the minutes of the Governing Body meetings.
- The Governing Body **must** receive 6 finance reports per year to meet Schools Financial Value Standards.
- The committee/finance governor will undertake a regular review of the school's finances.
- In Lincolnshire, financial governance is guided by the [Scheme For Financing Schools June 2025](#) , which sets out the financial relationship between maintained schools and the Local Authority
- Governors should also reference the School Finance Handbook which contains the Roles and Responsibilities of the Governing Body in Section A3 (available via Perspective Lite – speak to SBM).

*What exactly are governors responsible for regarding **staffing**?*

- Staffing issues again normally fall under the overall responsibility of the governing body, however a HR/Staffing committee will often deal with detailed matters.
- Whilst recruitment and appointment of new staff is the responsibility of the headteacher, the total number of staff employed remains the governing body's responsibility.
- Leadership appointments (Headteacher including Deputy Headteacher) are the responsibility of the governing body which usually appoints an appointments panel to carry out the process.
NB: At least one governing body member must hold a safer recruitment certificate.
- Similarly, a small group of appointed governors carry out the performance management of the headteacher each year with a governing body appointed external advisor, and referencing the Headteacher Standards.
- The Pay Committee have delegated responsibilities regarding Pay.
- Further committees will need to be constituted to deal with other HR issues.
- Retention of good staff and leadership planning is also an important part of this remit.

School Terminology

What is the School Improvement cycle?

The school improvement cycle is a feature of ongoing change management in all schools. It involves processes such as:

- **evaluation** – making a judgement about how high standards are, taking account of how the school compares with its own recent performance, with that of other similar schools and nationally, and whether the actions are having the impact needed or whether alternative approaches are required
- **planning** – identifying the school's priorities and targets and organising and targeting the resources available so that the school's priorities can be met
- **action** – doing what needs to be done to achieve the school's goals
- **monitoring** – finding out if the planned actions have taken place and to what extent they have had a positive impact.

What is School Self Evaluation?

- Self-evaluation is a crucial part of the schools ongoing cycle of review and improvement planning. A self-evaluation summary is an important tool which enables a school to draw together an evaluation of different aspects of their work leading to an evaluation of the quality of education provided by the school overall.
- There is no fixed time in the year when a self-evaluation might be completed.
- School self-evaluation is the systematic review of all aspects of the school, which culminates in an agreed judgement about the school's current performance (in terms of achievement, provision and leadership and management), and records its priorities and targets for future development.
- OFSTED will request to see a summary of any self-evaluation or equivalent.
- A governing body that is confident, knows its school well and knows where it is heading can significantly strengthen the overall leadership and management of the school.

What is School Development/Improvement Planning?

- This is the name given to the process following school self-evaluation. When a school professionally judges how well it is doing, the next step is to plan for prioritised improvements to take place.
- Although it is likely that all aspects of the school's work will be considered in drawing up the school priorities for improvement, it is helpful if the agreed school development plan focuses on the few areas that will have the most impact for pupils.
- The school development plan comes in many formats, but it is essentially a collaborative document, which sets out to improve the work of the school at a pace appropriate to the school's context.
- Normally it will outline the priorities and targets over three years and include a detailed plan over the coming year. Governors will look to the headteacher and senior staff to provide information about the progress of the priorities within the school development plan over the course of the year.

- The detailed Action Plan might be typically broken down into a number of targets/priorities, time-limited actions and 'milestones' to ensure the agreed criteria for overall success are eventually met.
- Responsibilities of key staff and other personnel would be highlighted (including involvement by governors or the local authority, for example in monitoring or providing professional development), and anything with a cost implication would be linked to the school's budget.

What is teaching and learning?

- No one will argue that the quality of **Teaching and Learning** affects outcomes for pupils. This includes not only the standards pupils reach but also their motivation to continue learning new skills and knowledge so their potential for better life choices is increased.
- The same cyclical processes for improving the school also generally apply to more specific areas such as teaching and learning, through the examination of such aspects as curriculum content, subject expertise, methods of lesson delivery or rates of progress. It is through thoughtful evaluation, planning, communication, undertaking action, monitoring and re-evaluation that positive change will be affected.
- Governors provide useful support and challenge through questions asked informally as well as through taking part in planned monitoring activities, for example, through SDP priority review, specified governor role or considering the learning experience from the child's point of view.

What is "Special Educational Needs and Disabilities"?

- The achievement and wellbeing of every child in the school is fundamental to its core work.
- Pupils who have **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** can present a wide range of particular challenges which require the knowledge, expertise and skills of any number of specialist staff who visit the school on a part-time basis.
- The quality of communication and liaison between parents, pupils, teachers, support workers, outside agencies and others requires good organisational skills as well as knowledge of each child and their particular need(s).
- Leading and co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEND is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (**SENCO**) who is a qualified teacher. The SENCO also arranges review meetings throughout the year with those involved to discuss the progress of each pupil and agree their 'next steps'.
- In most cases, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is produced for each pupil outlining goals and methods for the next unit of learning.
- Sometimes, pupils' needs can highlight professional development issues for staff, for example identifying the best ways to engage a pupil who is hard of hearing, or developing a whole school approach for one particular pupil, who for example exhibits regular challenging behaviour which disrupts lessons.
- Governors **must** review the SEND policy in light of the *SEND Code of Practice 2015*, and disabled access arrangements, on an **annual** basis. A SEND governor can ensure, through good communication with the SENCO and through participation in collaborative monitoring and evaluation, that school improvement extends to this very important area of provision.

Strategic Leadership

What is Strategic Leadership?

- Strategic leadership is closely allied to the strategic direction of the school which involves setting aims, agreeing policies, plans and targets that reflect those aims and monitoring and evaluating the impact of the actions.
- School's arrangements for review should be manageable and complement a school improvement/development workload that is organised, shared, and spread over the year.
- The governing body's remit for responsibility can be daunting:
 - Planning for spending the school's budget allocation
 - Taking decisions about staffing arrangements, pay and performance management
 - Making sure the curriculum is 'broad and balanced' and includes Religious Education and collective worship
 - Taking a strategic and rational approach to promoting high standards of achievement; ensuring standards of behaviour, discipline and wellbeing promote learning
 - Maintaining policies such as admissions, discipline, safeguarding, child protection, SEND, exclusions and appeals (in some schools)
 - Appointing the next Headteacher and carrying out other statutory obligations relating to premises, insurance, health and safety, organisation of the school and information to parents will all be affected by the quality of leadership.
- When leadership is strategic, many of the areas that governors are collectively responsible for can be affected and strengthened by a single priority for development.
- Key to strategic leadership is the Governing Body's annual self-evaluation exercise where governors can reflect on their leadership, culture, structure and impact. (See Appendix B for NGA self-evaluation tool).

What is Leadership Planning?

- There are many reasons why developing future leaders from within the school's staff and planning for future leadership makes sense in the wider context of governors' strategic planning.
- Recruiting and retaining Headteachers has become increasingly challenging in recent years – and Governing Boards should consider succession planning as a matter of course.
- When considering its key role in staffing, governors have a vital role to play in to ensure the school is equipped with the staff it needs to carry out its vision for continuous improvement.

What are Academies and Free Schools?

The Department for Education states that **Academies Free schools** are run by not-for-profit academy trusts and are independent from the Local Authority - [Types of School: Academies](#). The Labour Government are progressing their Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill through Parliament currently.

Support and Challenge

*How do governors **Support and Challenge** the school?*

- This is one of the three key roles of the governing body.
- Asking what sometimes may be difficult, probing, questions and discussing what and how the school might need to improve, governance of the school has much potential to shape the quality of education at the school.
- New Governors may or may not know, a great deal about the school. Either way, to be effective in this role, it is helpful to understand the school's history as well as to keep abreast of current developments and trends.
- Information acquired through the Headteacher's report to governors each term and participating in agreed visits to the school (with reference to the school's policy on governor visits) should assist new (and more experienced) Governors in their endeavours.

*What is the **Headteacher's Report to Governors**?*

- The governing board determines the scope, content and frequency of the report.
- This should be kept under review to ensure that the information requested is useful and effective.
- Boards should remain mindful of workload implications for school leaders and staff.
- The report supports the three roles of governance by raising issues on which strategic decisions need to be taken, accounting to the governing body for the school's performance, and includes statutory reporting information.
- The Headteacher's report is circulated to every member of the governing body, together with the agenda for the coming full meeting and the minutes of the previous one, legally a minimum of 7 days prior to the meeting, to ensure all governors have time to read, reflect and prepare any questions. Minutes from committees may also be included.
- During the meeting, the Headteacher will be invited to highlight the main points from the report, take questions about the detail of the report and answer questions or open the point for discussion. Decisions about matters arising may be taken during the meeting or deferred to a committee to follow up.

*Can you tell me a little more about **Governor Visits**?*

- Because every school is unique, visits into school help governors gain important insight into the life, work and ethos of the school, equipping them with first-hand experience of how pupils are learning and progressing in their development and how teachers and leaders are driving the learning process.
- Visits into school provide an insight into the work of the school and the translation of priorities into action and so not only strengthen governors' ability to support and challenge the leadership and management of the school effectively, they can be vital in deepening Governors' individual and collective understanding of the school's policies, practices and performance for which Governors have overall responsibility.
- It is an opportunity to celebrate the hard work and successes of all those involved and to encourage further effort and commitment in the process of school improvement.

Accountability

- Governors' accountability is a two-way process.
- Most of what goes on in school is the Headteacher's responsibility.
- Staff are accountable to the Headteacher and the Headteacher is accountable to the governing body - not only for the responsibilities the governing body has delegated to the Headteacher but also for those which s/he is required by law to carry out.
- The Headteacher must report to the governing body on all of these areas as the governing body requires.
- The governing body accountable for its own actions but, ultimately, for everything that goes on at the school.
- In practice, because the Headteacher is accountable to the governing body for the school's overall performance, most Headteachers are full members of the governing body – at the very least the Headteacher is entitled to attend meetings of the governing body and its committees.

Stakeholders

What do parents expect?

- Parents can expect to be provided with information about their own child's progress as well as what they are being taught.
- Parents also have right of access to the non-confidential parts of minutes of the governing body and its committees, including papers and documents.
- They are entitled to receive a range of government specified information, normally found on the school's website, as well as any non-confidential reports about the school such as the outcome of an Ofsted inspection.
- Parents should be consulted about how they view the different aspects of the education their child receives at the school and the results of these surveys can influence the choice of priorities in the school development plan if for example an important concern which requires strategic attention is shared by many.
- For operational issues that concern one or more parents, sometimes these can be addressed quickly and easily without the need for longer term action planning.
- Parental surveys can highlight small things the school previously may not have been aware of and the effectiveness of the school's response to concerns raised by parents can go a long way to ensuring their satisfaction with the school.
- If you are approached by a stakeholder who wishes to raise a complaint, you, you should direct them to the school's complaint procedure, which is published on the school website. The complainant then has the right to escalate their complaint through all the stages of the relevant procedure and finally onto the DfE if they are dissatisfied.

What does Ofsted do?

- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is legally required to carry out inspections in all maintained schools under the Education Act 2025.
- From the academic year 2025-26, Ofsted are introducing the “School Inspection Toolkit”.
- This Toolkit is currently issued in draft (8/25), with more information and confirmation expected in the early part of the academy year 2025-26.
- Governors can review the draft Toolkit here:
 - [School inspection toolkit](#)
- Governance is inspected under “Leadership and Governance” within the draft Toolkit.
- Safeguarding is always a focus for inspectors and has its own criteria within the draft Toolkit.
- Schools are informed of an inspection on a Monday morning.
- Inspectors will expect to meet members of the Governing Body.

Advice and Supporting Governance

What advice and support is there beyond the governing body?

There is plenty of advice and support offered to Governors which includes an appointment letter, copy of the Instrument of Government and this Governor Information Pack. There is also a dedicated Governor Services webpage - [Governor Services – Professional resources](#) which has links to resources and the training offer.

Governor Support is provided free by the local authority and provides a range of advice and resources to all maintained schools.

Online and Telephone Advice

E-mail and telephone support is available to answer all queries from all Governors, Headteachers and Clerk to Governors.

Contact: Governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk
(request a telephone call back or access email advice)

Governor Training Courses

There is a Governance Training Offer available, which outlines all training and briefing events available over the course of the academic year - [Governance Training Offer – Professional resources](#)

Governor E-Learning

The Local Authority provides **FREE** access for all maintained school governors to the NGA Learning Link platform – registration details can be found here: [NGA Learning Link – Professional resources](#) .

This online platform has over 50 online courses which are designed to develop skills and provide information on key areas to ensure effective governance.

11 Key questions for governors to ask

- 1. Do we have a clear vision and strategy for the school?**
- 2. What are the school's values?**
- 3. How does the curriculum relate to our vision for the school?**
- 4. What are we doing to raise standards?**
- 5. Have we got the right approach to staffing?**
- 6. Do we have a sound financial strategy, get good value for money, and have robust procurement and financial systems?**
- 7. Do we keep our buildings and other assets in good condition and are they well used?**
- 8. How well do we keep parents and stakeholders informed and take account of their views?**
- 9. Do we keep children safe and meet the statutory health and safety requirements?**
- 10. How does the school promote good behaviour and attendance to enhance learning?**
- 11. Do we offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities which engage all pupils?**

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Governing board self-evaluation questions RAG rating guidance

This guidance is designed to help governing boards respond to NGA's 20 self-evaluation questions.

- We recommend that boards use a red, amber or green (RAG) rating system to respond to the questions.
- Each member of the board should provide individual responses.
- Select the most appropriate RAG rating using the descriptors given below.

Board culture and practice

Self-evaluation questions	Descriptors <i>Tick the red, amber or green descriptor that best fits your board.</i>	
1. Governance culture The governing board is a committed team that works well with senior leaders and the governance professional (clerk to the board).	Our board is a team which collaborates with senior leaders and the governance professional; we have the time required to carry out the role, our meetings are well attended, we undertake training and development and visit our school.	Green
	Our board is developing as a team and mostly manages to give the time required to carry out the role with most meetings being quorate; some of us undertake training and development and are able to visit the school.	Amber
	Our board is not yet a team and can struggle to find the time to carry out the role with some meetings not being quorate, and few of us manage to undertake training and development or visit our school.	Red

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2. Leadership The chair is elected annually, leads with integrity, is supported by a vice chair and ensures the board stays strategic and does not shy away from making the right decisions for the school.	We elect our chair and vice chair annually following a nomination and election process which allows the board to consider if the nominee(s) have the right qualities to lead our board.	
	We elect our chair and vice chair annually but there are not usually other candidates.	
	We are grateful for anyone willing to take on the roles.	
3. Governance professional The school employs a dedicated governance professional with an up-to-date job description who supports the board with independent advice and guidance.	Our governance professional is qualified, is up to date with current legislation and practice, administers and advises the board with skill – we couldn't do without this.	
	Our governance professional schedules and minutes meetings with skill but does not advise our board.	
	Our governance professional has other roles within the school and would benefit from training and development.	
4. Skills and diversity Succession is planned, the recruitment process is designed to ensure new board members are recruited to fill skills gaps and ensure diversity of knowledge, experience, perspectives and approaches.	We undertake a skills audit regularly and use the outcome to inform our succession planning, recruitment strategy and training and development; recently we have focused on diversifying our board.	
	We undertake a skills audit when we need to recruit but have yet to use it to inform succession planning, training and development; we struggle to find people to commit to the role but are thinking more about diversity.	

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	We have not carried out a skills audit recently; our board is long-standing and stable and appointing more diverse people is not a priority.	
5. Induction and ongoing development There is a quality induction programme in place for new board members and a culture of ongoing governance training and development.	All new board members get a comprehensive induction and can access quality training and development for areas where the board needs to learn and develop.	
	New board members are given information and meet the chair and headteacher; board members generally identify where they need training and development.	
	New board members learn on the job; our board knows what it is doing and doesn't need training and development.	
6. Collaboration Those governing are committed to collaboration and the sharing of best practice.	Our board is well informed, attends network meetings and other relevant events so it is aware of new developments; we have learned from others and shared our practice.	
	Our board does its best to keep up with best practice and tries to get to meetings and events that would enable collaboration.	
	Our board is experienced and has decided to focus solely on our school.	

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Board structure

7. Size The governing board is the right size with a proportionate committee structure.	We have the right number of people around the table for the board to undertake its strategic functions and to enable delegation to the committees we need.	
	We have not yet got the right number of people around the table: there are not enough people to delegate responsibilities effectively OR there are too many people and so some are not making a meaningful contribution.	
	We have not yet made time to review the size of our board and evaluate our committee structure.	
8. Delegation Committee terms of reference are up to date, are comprehensive and the work undertaken is not duplicated.	We review and revise our committee terms of reference annually to ensure that we are working as efficiently as we can.	
	There is some duplication of our work and we have yet to ensure our terms of reference are constructed in a way that means this does not happen.	
	We have not reviewed our terms of reference properly for some time and they do not reflect the work we undertake at committee level.	

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Core functions

9. Values, ethics and culture The governing board and headteacher have agreed the school's values which are evident in policies and practice, ensure ethical behaviours and underpin a healthy culture across the school.	We have worked with the headteacher to review our values and regularly test that they drive ethical behaviour and a healthy culture.	
	Our values are long-established and we believe that they drive ethical behaviour and a healthy culture.	
	Our headteacher sets the values and we trust that they drive ethical behaviour and a healthy culture.	
10. Vision The governing board and headteacher have established a clear and ambitious vision which describes what the school should look like in three to five years and what pupils will achieve.	Our board has worked with the headteacher and has consulted with stakeholders in establishing our ambitious vision for the next three to five years.	
	Our headteacher has a clear vision and we agree with it.	
	Our board has yet to look forward three to five years and think about what we would like our school to look like then.	
11. Strategy Those governing have agreed with the headteacher a limited number of measurable strategic aims which need to be met in order for the school to achieve its vision; these aims drive the board's business.	Our board has agreed a limited number of measurable strategic aims and progress with meeting these is reported to our board termly meetings.	
	Our aims are known but do not align with the school improvement plan and so it is not straightforward for the board to track progress being made.	

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	Our board focuses on the school improvement plan; there is too much uncertainty to look further ahead than this.	
12. Employer responsibilities The governing board acknowledges its employer responsibilities and ensures the development and wellbeing of the headteacher.	Staff wellbeing and development is a priority for our board; we engage with staff and use surveys and other data to monitor the effectiveness of our policies.	
	We are introducing staff surveys and other mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of our policies.	
	Our board relies on the headteacher to keep us informed about staff wellbeing and development; we trust them to inform us of any issues.	
13. Accountability – quality of education Those governing hold the headteacher to account for the quality of education, ensuring school leaders develop, implement and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum which is taught effectively.	We have had training on curriculum matters and have a good understanding of the principles that underpin our curriculum, its implementation and impact.	
	Our board is beginning to understand the principles that underpin our curriculum, its implementation and impact.	
	Our board has yet to build an understanding of the principles that underpin our curriculum, its implementation and impact.	

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14.Accountability – financial oversight Those governing have sufficient understanding of how the school's funds are managed to hold the headteacher to account for the efficiency, sustainability and impact of the school's financial planning and management.	Our board has a good understanding of how schools are funded and how our school manages its budget; several of our board members have detailed knowledge of budget planning and monitoring.	
	Our board has just enough people with an understanding of school funding, budget planning and monitoring.	
	Our board focuses on pupil outcomes and believes that financial sustainability should be of secondary concern.	
15.Accountability – stakeholders Those governing know their school, engage with its stakeholders and take into account their views when making key decisions and report on their work each year.	Our board knows the school well, actively engages with stakeholders and takes into account their views when making key decisions; we report on our work each year.	
	Some of our board members know the school and like going to events but systematic engagement with stakeholders is largely via the school's leaders.	
	Our board finds it hard to find time to get to know the school well and relies on the headteacher to report what stakeholders think.	

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Compliance

16. Statutory requirements Those governing are confident that the school meets all legal requirements and takes into account statutory guidance.	We are aware of our statutory responsibilities, take into account statutory guidance and are compliant with policies and procedures.	
	We think we meet most statutory requirements, aim to take into account statutory guidance and think we comply with policies and procedures.	
	There are so many requirements that it is hard to know if we are compliant or not.	
17. Managing risk Those governing are involved in the identification and assessment of key strategic risks.	We identify and review annually risks which may prevent us from achieving our strategic aims or of non-compliance.	
	We are in the process of understanding our role in managing risk.	
	Our school leaders manage operational risks; we have not made any assessment of strategic risks.	

Evaluation and impact

18. Evaluation of individual contributions A 360° appraisal process is used to evaluate the chair's effectiveness, and the chair or vice chair reviews board members' individual contributions and effectiveness each year.	The chair undertakes a 360° appraisal, and the vice chair speaks to all board members individually about how they have contributed to the work of the board each year.	
	The chair is going to undertake a 360° appraisal this year and it has been agreed that they will speak to all board members individually about how they have contributed to the work of the board.	

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	Our chair and vice chair don't perceive a need to undertake appraisal or are too busy.	
19. Evaluation of board practice The governing board undertakes annual self-evaluation and commissions an external evaluation every three years.	We self-evaluate annually and commission an external review every three years.	
	We self-evaluate most years and have discussed commissioning an external review of governance.	
	This is the first time we have self-evaluated, and we have not yet commissioned an external review of governance.	
20. Evaluation of impact Those governing are confident that the decisions the governing board makes have led to both improved outcomes for pupils and ongoing financial stability for the school.	Our pupils' outcomes continue to improve and meet the highest expectations and our school's budget is balanced with a reasonable contingency.	
	Our pupils' outcomes are generally improving, and our school's budget is tight with minimal contingency.	
	Our pupils' outcomes are not improving as much as we would like, and our school's current budget position needs to be more secure.	