Academy Ambassadors

On Board:
Induction for new multi-academy trust non-executive directors

SEPTEMBER 2016
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Congratulations on your appointment to the board of a multi-academy trust. I am delighted to welcome you as a new ‘Academy Ambassador’.

I wish you every success in your new role; I believe there is no more important work than improving the educational opportunities and life chances of our young people.

The board is the strategic decision maker and vision setter in every academy trust. You will play a vital role in ensuring the best possible education for every child by creating robust accountability for school leaders.

I want everyone involved in governance to be confident in tackling underperformance, challenging mediocrity, and setting the highest of expectations - refusing to accept second best for any child. The Academy Ambassadors online induction pack provides initial orientation to the education sector. Beyond this most board members focus their induction first on using and being familiar with objective data on the performance of pupils, teachers and finances to enable them to ask the right questions and ensure resources are allocated to school priorities.

Do not underestimate the value of your background outside education in this role - the best school leaders will welcome your challenge.

When my wife and I founded Future Academies I had no idea quite how rewarding it would be to visit the schools and see the impact of good decisions made by the board on individual children. I hope you are able to visit your trust’s schools soon and embark upon a similar journey.

I hope to meet you personally at one of the various events for trust board members I held over the year and I encourage you to meet other board members to share experiences.

Finally, I hope you might consider referring friends and colleagues.

Thank you again for making this commitment to improve education. I look forward to working together in the future.

Best wishes,

Lord Nash

PM
A wealth of information is available for new academy trust board members. Selected below are the first steps that board members have said helped them have impact more quickly.

**FIRST PRIORITIES:**

1. **Familiarise yourself with the trust vision, strategy and recent developments**
   Most trust websites should have information on ethos, performance and news. Find out key dates (board meeting dates and key trust events e.g. AGM, school events, Academy Ambassadors events [https://www.academyambassadors.org/business-leaders/events-and-academy-visits](https://www.academyambassadors.org/business-leaders/events-and-academy-visits) and establish a main point of contact - either the Clerk or Company Secretary.

2. **Check the academic performance of the trust**
   Performance data on each school in the trust is available on the DfE site and can be brought up by searching on the trust name. Data includes comparisons to national average: [https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/](https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/)

**BEFORE YOUR FIRST BOARD MEETING:**

3. **Meet key trust personnel**
   Get biographies of board and senior trust staff. Most new board members choose to meet the Chair and CEO one-to-one and most Finance Committee Members meet the CFO. ‘21 Questions for MAT Trustees’ gives areas for discussion. [https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/twenty-one-questions-multi-academy-trusts](https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/twenty-one-questions-multi-academy-trusts)

4. **Request key papers from the trust**
   Essential background reading will include: minutes and papers of past year’s meetings; trust strategy/operation plan; links to core policies; Articles of Association; board/committee terms of reference; the scheme of delegation and current financial statement. Request the most recent audit management letter - particularly noting number and type of ‘high risk’ points, if you sit on the finance committee.

5. **Understand the essentials of school performance**
   Two Academy Ambassadors guides provide a short introduction to academy data and finances. [https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/essentials-data](https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/essentials-data) [https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/essentials-finance](https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/essentials-finance)

6. **Understand expectations and norms**
   Many Academy Ambassadors focus on financial performance and benchmarking their trust. This Education and Skills Funding Agency note sets out the main indicators and norms to gauge trust performance. [https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/guide-efa](https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/guide-efa)
7. Learn the language of education
This Governors Glossary from the National Governance Association explains education terminology.
https://www.academyambassadors.org/resources/glossary

Your legal checks (DBS, DOI) should also be completed by the trust ahead of the first meeting.

BEFORE YOUR SECOND BOARD MEETING:

8. Visit a school outside a meeting of the board
Visiting a school allows you to see the trust in action and to see and check whether the vision is shared by
staff and has become a reality in the classroom. Meet with the local governor or HT of at least one of the trust
academies.

9. Request training
If the trust has not yet scheduled induction training request a 1-2 hour meeting either one-to-one or alongside
any other new board members – on educational performance data and how these are presented by the trust.

FURTHER READING:

10. Check essential sections of the Governance Handbook from the Department for Education
This provides a guide to the core functions of the board - setting vision and strategic direction; holding
the executive to account; overseeing financial performance and the role of objective data. It has detailed guidance
on structures; conduct; board improvement and inspection; pupils; parents; safeguarding; personnel;
admissions; premises; finances and accountability. Also flick forwards to know what is available in the handbook
and read the section on safeguarding (p. 61).

11. Scan over the DfE Academies Financial Handbook
The rules of academy finances are contained here, including: roles and responsibilities in financial oversight and
financial planning; monitoring and reporting; internal control; proper and regular use of public funds; managing
the General Annual Grant (GAG); audit requirements and investigation of fraud, theft and/or irregularity.

12) Take a look at practical information for non-executive directors from the National Governance
Association.
Welcome to a Multi Academy Trust is a guide published by the National Governance Association. It provides
high-quality practical information on MAT governance structure and practice for new trustees and senior leaders,
whether they have previous experience of governing in standalone schools or organisations in other sectors.
http://www.nga.org.uk/Publications/Welcome-to-a-Multi-Academy-Trust.aspx
WITHIN SIX MONTHS:

13. Understand the context
Most Chairs will want to meet key regulatory authorities such as Regional Schools Commissioner, Education and Skills Funding Agency and, for Church schools, a member of the Diocesan Board. Some board members will want to have linked with another local academy trust, employer or HE institution.

14. Learn from world-class trusts
Multi-academy trusts are increasingly sharing their knowledge. Find out about leading trusts approaches to governance; financial stewardship; driving performance and a range of other topics via:
Academy Ambassadors website – www.academyambassadors.org/resources - and Academy Ambassadors 'on board' events with speakers from leading MATs.

15. Find out more
Register with Governance Groups – the National Governance Association and The Key.

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The NGA http://www.nga.org.uk/ is the representative body for state-funded school governors and trustees throughout England – most schools are members and on registration free access is available to the NGA Guidance Centre on registration.

The Key for School Governors https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/ is the national information service that provides governors with instant answers to questions on all aspects of school governance.
GUIDE FOR NEW NON-EXECUTIVES: BRIEF GUIDE TO REVENUE FUNDING AT MAINSTREAM ACADEMIES

INTRODUCTION

Academies are publicly accountable, independent schools. They are funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, rather than by local authorities.

The following sets out the basic methodologies by which academies are funded.

THE GENERAL ANNUAL GRANT (GAG)

Academies receive the majority of their revenue funding through the General Annual Grant. This is made up of a number of elements of funding.

1) Funding for Pre-16 pupils (pupils in Reception up to Year 11)

Funding for Pre-16 pupils within the GAG consists of:

- Academy Budget Share based on a formula allocation; and
- The Education Services Grant.

These grants are paid on an Academic Year basis (September to August). Academies are notified of their budget allocations by the March preceding the start of the Academic year.

Academy Budget Share - Formula Allocation: this stream of funding makes up the majority of an academy’s pre-16 funding. It is based on a “per pupil funding” methodology taking into account the number of pupils on an academy’s roll and their ages (secondary age pupils receive higher levels of funding than primary age pupils). Even though each academy receives its formula allocation directly from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the amount of funding received is determined by the “funding formula” of the local authority it is located in.

The formula also ensures that academies receive additional funding if they have pupils from a socio-economically disadvantaged background. Disadvantage is measured by pupils’ eligibility for free school meals and/or by area-level measures of deprivation. In addition, the local authority formula by which the academy is funded may also allocate additional funding to schools whose pupils didn’t reach the expected standard at the previous stage (low prior attainment funding) and schools with pupils who have recently arrived in the state education system and are learning English as a second language.

Each local authority must establish a Schools Forum and consult it on any changes to the local funding formula. Academies have a statutory right to be represented on Schools Forums. The funding that academies receive is based on the relevant local formula set by the local authority after consultation with the Schools Forum. In this way, funding is broadly comparable across all schools and academies in a local area, regardless of their type.

While local authority funding formulae can vary from area to area, the DfE limits the level of variation permitted to ensure the broad structure of the funding formula is similar across all areas. The Government has committed to introducing a National Funding Formula from 2018-19 onwards, so that similar pupils will be funded on a similar basis in future.
Education Services Grant (ESG): The ESG is paid to both academies and local authorities, according to two national per pupil rates. The general funding rate (£77 per pupil in 2016-17) is paid to both academies and local authorities to fund duties that academies are responsible for delivering for their pupils, and that local authorities deliver for maintained school pupils. The retained duties rate (£15 per pupil in 2016-17) is paid only to local authorities, to fund the duties that local authorities deliver for all pupils.

In the 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced the removal of the ESG general funding rate from 2017-18. The Government will continue to provide protections for academies to limit the reduction to their funding as a result of changes to the ESG. This protection will be set in tapered bands, with the absolute maximum loss to an academy’s funding as a result of changes to the ESG set at 3%. This protection will be unwound by 2020.

The retained duties rate will continue to be paid to local authorities to fund the duties they retain for all pupils.

2) Funding for Post-16 students (16-19 year olds)

Funding for post-16 provision is allocated according to a national formula: unlike pre-16 funding therefore, local authorities have no discretion to determine funding for post-16 provision within their area.

In common with pre-16 funding, however, it is based on pupil/student numbers. “Weightings” are applied to the base-funding unit to reflect the costs of delivering different subjects (for instance, sciences and vocational subjects receive a greater weighting than humanities). Weightings are also used to reflect disadvantage and other area costs (e.g. London salary costs).

FUNDING FOR PUPILS WITH HIGH NEEDS

Mainstream Academies and Schools are expected to meet the first £6,000 of any additional support for pupils and students with special educational needs over and above the support they offer to all their pupils and students. Costs beyond this £6,000 are paid by the relevant local authority as a “top-up” allocation and are determined on a case-by-case basis to reflect the level and severity of need. It is often the case that pupils attracting “top-up” funding have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, however this need not be the case.

FUNDING OUTSIDE THE GAG

A small number of grants are paid to academies outside the GAG, the main one being the Pupil Premium Grant. This is paid to academies to help raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The following pupils attract this funding:

- Deprived pupils (measured by any pupil who is currently eligible for a Free School Meal, or has been eligible at any point in the last 6 years)
- Looked after children
- Children adopted from care
• Service children

Academies are free to spend this funding as they see fit, but Ofsted holds them to account for how they use the funding to raise the attainment of eligible pupils.

Other grants currently received include those to support the provision of Universal Infant Free School Meals, The PE and Sports Grant and (for schools with secondary pupils) Year 7 Catch Up Premium.

Academies receive a grant to cover their National Non-Domestic Rates liability (Rates Grant).

FUNDING FOR FREE ENTITLEMENTS TO CHILDCARE

At present, funding is available to provide disadvantaged 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds with 15 hours of free early years education for 38 weeks per year.

There is a Government Manifesto commitment to extend the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds from 15 to 30 hours a week for working parents. A consultation on the policy of the extension to 30 hours is complete. A separate consultation on reforms to the way the offer is funded is planned (this would seek views on a national funding formula and changes to the way local authorities fund childcare providers in their area).

The relevant local authority is responsible for paying this to all providers regardless of school type.

FUNDING FOR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CENTRAL FUNCTIONS

Most MATs provide a range of services to all of their schools (finance, HR etc) as well as supporting some senior members of staff with MAT-wide responsibilities (Executive Head Teacher, Chief Executive, Finance Director etc). These services and posts are funded by the trust retaining a proportion of funding from each academy’s GAG. The amount retained will vary according to the extent of the services provided or central posts supported but it is typically between 4% and 8% of the GAG. This approach enables economies of scale to be generated across an individual trust as well as providing capacity and capability that an academy operating on its own would be unlikely to be able to fund.

FURTHER READING

Academies Funding Glossary
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-funding-a-to-z-of-terms

Video guides: including basics of academy funding, guides to specific grants and webinars
https://registration.livegroup.co.uk/efa/ContentTabs/Category.aspx?ctid=239&cat=1038

The Academies Financial Handbook
Board members of multi-academy trusts must be satisfied that the pupils and students in their academies are achieving high standards and performing to the best of their ability.

While data alone is not enough to enable board members to make these judgments, without it they will be unable to reach a full understanding of the performance of each academy in their trust or what standards their pupils and students are reaching across the trust as a whole.

It is critical, therefore that board members are aware of the kinds of data needed in order to hold their senior leaders to account. This will then lead to a clear and shared understanding of where a trust is performing well or, conversely, what its priorities should be in order for it to improve.

**PUPIL AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA**

There is a vast amount of data available to board members on the performance of pupils and students. This can result in board members being overwhelmed or simply not receiving data in ways that enable them to focus on or address the right issues and priorities. The following questions can help board members ensure they are receiving the right kinds of data:

1. **What is the context of our academies and how do they compare to other schools/academies locally and nationally? Who should we be comparing ourselves with to ensure we are performing at “best in class” levels?**

2. **What do our pupils/students attain in each year group and in national tests and examinations – is this attainment consistent across different groups and sub-sets of pupils/students? For instance, do the pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding do as well as their peers or is there a gap between these two groups?**

3. **What progress do our pupils/students make given their starting points? Is this progress consistent for all groups of pupils/students or are some falling behind the rest? Are the most able receiving sufficient challenge and are the most vulnerable receiving appropriate support to ensure all pupils and students are reaching their potential?**

These questions should inform and shape the kinds of information and data board members need to receive. It is also important that data is presented in formats that are easily understood to allow effective scrutiny. Above all it is vital that data presented to board members provides national and/or best in class comparisons and shows at least a 3-year trend. Without this contextual data it is impossible to judge the performance of a school accurately.

It is not appropriate for attributable personal data of individual pupils and students to be shared with board members, except in specific cases of concern. Instead, well-designed reports should provide attainment and progress data for different groups of pupils and students that enable board members to identify any areas of concern or good/outstanding practice, as well as allowing them to monitor and evaluate any interventions and improvement initiatives.
It will be for each trust to determine which groups of pupils they need to report on. Typically, however, they will report by year group, gender, disadvantage (those in receipt of the Pupil Premium), ethnic minority groups, pupils and students with English as an additional language, pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. It is also important that such data is triangulated as far as is possible with performance nationally and against similar schools/academies: comparative performance is of equal importance to absolute performance.

The following outlines the kinds of data board members should be familiar with:

**Attainment Data**

As a minimum board members should be aware of the outcomes from national tests, taken at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and the results of GCSE and Post-16 Examinations.

In primary schools/academies, the key measure of performance to be aware of is the percentage of pupil achieving the “expected standard” in all three areas of reading, writing and mathematics. This is a new system and so long-term trends are not yet established.

For secondary academies, in addition to measuring the proportion of students gaining 5 good GCSEs (C and above including English and mathematics), attainment is also measured by the Attainment 8 measure which looks at the attainment of students across subjects including mathematics, English, 3 further qualifications that count in the group of subjects within the English Baccalaureate (Modern Foreign Languages, Sciences - including Computer Science, Geography and History) and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.

In addition to these national tests and examination measures, attainment should also be measured for each year group using trusts’ internal assessment processes to ensure that pupils and students are on track to meet expectations. What these internal assessment processes look like will vary from trust to trust. Board members should be satisfied, however, that robust assessment systems are in place that will provide them with accurate and timely data.

**Progress Data**

Measuring attainment is only part of the picture. Board members also need to ask themselves if the pupils’ and students’ attainment demonstrates that they have made good progress, given their starting points.

In the primary phase progress measures are used to show the progress that pupils make from the end of key stage 1 to the end of primary school. These measures compare pupils’ results to the actual achievements of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. This then shows the progress schools are making with all of their pupils, whether they are low, middle or high attainers.

Similar information is available for pupils in the secondary phase, whose progress is measured between the end of Primary School (Year 6) and the end of Secondary School (Year 11). This is described as Progress 8 which is a measure designed to encourage schools and academies to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a focus on academic subjects.
FLOOR STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE AGAINST SIMILAR SCHOOLS

The DfE sets floor standards – standards that schools are expected to meet as a minimum. These are set for primary and secondary schools and board members should know whether their academies have met or failed to meet these floor standards.

Meeting the floor standards is not sufficient to ensure an academy is performing well, however. An academy may have exceeded the floor standards but may not be performing in-line with similar schools.

Nationally produced data is available that enables these comparisons to be made and board members should routinely be challenging their senior leaders over the extent to which their academies are performing in line with the best in class.

Data Sources

The DfE and Ofsted produce a significant amount of data annually and board members should expect to be provided with the key information from it. Two specific data sources board members should be familiar with are RAISEonline (there are sections that are specifically designed for Board members/Governors) and the School Comparison Tool.

The School Comparison Tool uses straightforward graphical presentations to compare performance data across schools and can be used to check individual school performance. RAISEonline on the other hand contains more detailed information that is useful in drilling down into the performance of specific groups of pupils and individual subjects within a specific school/academy.

All of the data in these sources are summative – i.e. they look backwards at what pupils have achieved in national test and examinations. To try and avoid surprises, it is important that trusts also provide their board members with formative assessment data and information. Such data will enable board members to gain a clear sense of the progress pupils and students are making towards their predicted grades/outcomes. It also allows them to challenge any interventions that the academy has put in place to accelerate and support the achievement of pupils/students.

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

As this short note has shown, performance data is a complex and technical area. It is the role of senior leaders in a trust to ensure all board members are aware of the performance of their pupils/students so that there is a clear understanding of what a trust’s priorities are and how well they are meeting them. Many trusts operate a sub-committee structure to enable detailed scrutiny work to take place on pupil and student data. This can be a useful forum in which to include a wider group of academy leaders (middle leaders, subject leaders etc). Ultimately though, all board members must have a shared understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of their trust to enable them to exercise an effective overview and scrutiny role.
Regardless of the structures in place, it is important that board members are not solely reliant on their senior leaders when it comes to the production and analysis of performance data. Board members must have sufficient understanding to enable them to question the data they are presented with, and understand the answers they are given. Robust challenge and scrutiny is only possible where board members are able to exercise independent judgment – this may come from board members themselves, some of whom may be serving head teachers or educational experts. Where this is not the case, however, board members should seek external advice in order to moderate, confirm and quality assure the information they receive internally. This could include developing “peer challenge” arrangements with other similar academy trusts and schools or by using the services of an independent, expert adviser who can give board members the confidence that the data they are receiving is robust and secure.

Board members should expect their trusts to provide training on data to all new board members as part of their induction. In addition, ongoing training provided by the trust or external organisations should be provided routinely to ensure board members are fully aware of national developments in relation to data matters.

FURTHER READING

School Comparison Tool – www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk
Ofsted RaiseOnline – www.raiseonline.org
Accountability system - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency
DfE Performance Tables – www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/
To govern well it is important to understand the financial position of the trust and undertake financial planning. Trusts should be seeking to operate as efficiently as possible.

- **Financial policies, procedures and KPIs** should be identified and consistent across all of the schools within the trust, and all of the schools must be aware of these.

- **Medium term financial plans** should be in place for all schools within the trust, not just annual budgets.

- **Common systems** should be used across all of the schools in the trust. This should include services, ranging from **payroll** through to **utilisation standards**, and **procurement and contract management arrangements** to ensure best value for money is achieved.

**Important indicators** for board members to consider when reviewing the financial position of a trust should include, but are not limited to:

1. **Pupil numbers** – the level of funding is largely influenced by the number of pupils. It is the primary source of income, and is paid on a one year lagged basis.
   - The trust should review projected pupil numbers regularly and forecasts must be realistic. Financial plans need to reflect income based on realistic pupil number projections.
   - Trusts need to prepare medium term financial plans and have a model which allows sensitivity testing i.e. model the impact of lower than predicted future pupil numbers or a change in the number of pupil premium funding. For example if actual pupil numbers were in the region of 20% less than expected, the trust might expect to encounter financial issues.
   - The important aspect is that future planned expenditure (especially variable costs) is adjusted to reflect changes in income levels.

2. **Staff costs as a percentage of income** – this is a trust’s greatest expenditure and must be sustainable.
   - Normal range for this is likely to be somewhere between 70% and 80%, however this does vary by trust depending on specific situations.
   - Where the percentage of income spent on staff costs is low, it is worth checking that this expenditure is not being disguised elsewhere if some of the staffing is outsourced for example.
   - Trusts must ask whether the curriculum offer is realistic and sustainable over time.
Positive or negative revenue reserves - the Funding Agreement requires the trust to set a balanced budget. Trusts are also expected to operate a balanced budget. Failure to do these two things is a breach of the Funding Agreement.

- Cumulative revenue trends should be reviewed. This should be done looking both back and forwards over 3-5 years. Gradually eroding reserves may indicate an unsustainable financial situation.

- Trusts should not generate large reserves, as the funding provided should be spent to achieve the best outcomes possible for pupils. However planning for capital investment might be a reason for accumulating a surplus.

- It is good practice for annual budgets to contain a small contingency for unforeseen expenditure.

Current ratio: current assets divided by current liabilities - it is important that a trust can meet its current liabilities.

- This ratio should be at least equal to 1.

- Review of this on a monthly basis is important.

- Trusts need to monitor cashflow to ensure commitments can be met.

The management accounts should be reviewed

- Variances between budgeted and actual income and expenditure should be analysed. Assumptions made when setting the budget should be reviewed for impact on latest position. Staffing costs are the greatest known cost and because they should be fairly static, they should be forecast with a good degree of accuracy. Therefore variance ranges should be small.

- Cashflow position should be monitored each month to ensure trusts have funds to pay current and future liabilities.

Sustainability of the financial plans should be assessed across the whole trust.

- It is important that all trusts agree medium term financial plans which must include projections for all academies in the trust. These plans should demonstrate the trust is sustainable, projecting forward over a reasonable period.
FRAMEWORKS

Academy trusts are both charitable companies and public bodies. They are bound by company law, charity law, HM Treasury’s Managing Public Money Standards, their Funding Agreements and Articles of Association.

The Academies Financial Handbook pulls all of these frameworks together - it is essential to understand the requirements which this sets out. (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-financial-handbook)

TOOLS TO SUPPORT TRUSTS

The following resources provide simple ways for schools to improve their financial efficiency. These are important to help schools achieve a greater impact on pupil outcomes from their resources.

Benchmarking allows schools to consider how they use their resources, and highlights where they may be able to improve their efficiency. The tools made available to trusts are to help leadership teams make informed financial decisions and their own comparisons with other similar schools. Find out more on GOV.UK:


Financial health checks should be undertaken regularly. The financial health check supplier directory includes organisations that provide advice and support to help schools review their current financial position, identify issues and take appropriate action.


The efficiency metric tool allows schools to gage their efficiency, based on pupil attainment and the money received for pupils, relative to statistically similar schools. This should prompt thinking about where trusts can become more efficient and how they might better focus their resources to support measures to increase attainment.

FINANCIAL POSITION, HEALTH AND EFFICIENCY OF TRUSTS: EFSA GUIDE FOR NEW ACADEMY TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Further information on financial health and efficiency can be found online at GOV.UK:

Sector level benchmarking reports are available:

*Kreston Benchmarking Report*
http://www.jamescowperkreston.co.uk/benchmark-report/

*UHY Hacker Young Benchmarking Report*
A copy can be requested via the following link -
TOOLS AND CHECKLISTS:

GLOSSARY
National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees and clerks in maintained schools and academies in England. The NGA’s goal is to improve the well-being of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. It does this by providing information, guidance, research, advice and training. It also works closely with, and lobbies, UK government and educational bodies, and is the leading campaigning national membership organisation for school governors and trustees.

The NGA online Guidance Centre is the information hub for governors. It supports you in your role as a governor, giving you access to up to date guidance and advice covering all aspects of school governance, including finance; staffing; Ofsted; curriculum; special educational needs; legislation and school improvement.

Practical governance resources include sample documents; templates; checklists; information summaries; insights; case studies and much more.

To join NGA and receive regular updates, contact:
T: 0121 237 3780 | E: membership@nga.org.uk | www.nga.org.uk
Glossary

Academy Academies are publicly funded independent schools. Academies have different governance arrangements from other schools.

Academy committee A committee of the trust board in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The role and responsibility of any committee is defined in the MAT’s scheme of delegation.

Academy converter A school which converted to academy status voluntarily (usually high performing at the time of conversion), having previously been a local authority maintained school.

Academy sponsor led A school which converted to academy status with the support of a sponsor (usually lower performing at the time of conversion).

Admissions Code A document providing statutory guidance on schools admission with which all schools must comply.

Articles of Association The Articles of Association is the formal governing document for an academy and sets out its rules for operating, including the composition of the governing board.

ASCL Association of School and College Leaders – a headteacher union.

Associate members Individuals appointed by the governing body of a maintained school. They are not part of the governing body, but are allowed to attend meetings and sit on committees and can be given voting powers. They are appointed for 1-4 years, with the opportunity for re-appointment. An associate member could be a pupil, member of staff or someone with expertise in a particular area. Academies’ Articles of Association allow them to appoint non-governors to committees and give them voting rights.

A level General Certificate of Education Advanced level – usually completed by some 16-18 year olds after GCSE.

ATL Association of Teachers and Lecturers – a union for education professionals.

Assessment without levels A common phrase to describe changes to the primary curriculum. Grade descriptions and levels have now been removed from the national curriculum and it is up to primary schools to decide how they track pupil progress and attainment. Children will still sit SATs exams in KS1 and KS2 as a national benchmark, however they will no longer be given a grade. Instead, they will be given a scaled score, with a score of 100 or above showing that a pupil has met national expectations.

Attainment 8 A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. Measures the achievement of a pupil across English, maths and six further qualifications (three of which must count in the EBacc measure).

Attainment targets These establish what children of different abilities should be expected to know and be able to do by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum.
DDA Disability Discrimination Act

Delegated budget Money provided to schools, which governors can manage at their discretion

Delegated powers Authority given to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher to take action on behalf of the governing board. In multi academy trusts this also refers to powers delegated to academy committees

Designated person Liaises with other services on behalf of young people in care and has a responsibility for promoting their educational achievement

DfE Department for Education— the government department responsible for schools and children (formerly DCSF)

Directed time Time when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the headteacher – a maximum of 1265 hours in a school year

Disapplication A term used where national curriculum requirements may not apply to a pupil

DSG Dedicated School Grant— funding from central government to the LA, the majority of which is then delegated directly to individual schools through the LA’s funding formula

EEF Education endowment foundation

EAL English as an Additional Language

EBacc A school performance measure based on achievement of GCSEs in ‘core academic subjects’ of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language

EBD Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Education Forum Established by the government as a consultative group including the National Governors’ Association (NGA), the Local Government Association (LGA) and all the teaching and headteacher unions

EFSA Education and Skills Funding Agency - it is responsible for all revenue and capital funding for schools and is part of the DfE

EHC plans Education, health and care plans – the document which replaces statements of SEN and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children and young people with special educational needs

ESO Education Supervision Order, which LAs may apply for to deal with cases of poor attendance at school

Ethos The morals, values and beliefs that do, or at least should, underpin the school culture

EWO Education Welfare Officer – a professional worker who visits pupils’ homes and deals with attendance problems and other welfare matters in co-operation with the school

Ex officio Able to attend meetings by virtue of holding a particular office
Exclusion The temporary or permanent removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school’s behaviour and discipline policy

Executive headteacher Unlike a traditional headteacher who leads one school only, an executive headteacher is the lead professional of more than one school; or a lead professional who manages a school with multiple phases; or who has management responsibility significantly beyond that of a single school site

Extended schools/services Schools that provide a range of services and activities often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the wider community

Federation Two or more local authority maintained (or community) schools governed by one governing body

FFT Fischer Family Trust – a non-profit company that provides data and analyses to LAs and schools in England and Wales

Form of entry The number of classes of 30 children that a school admits each year

Foundation governor/trustee Appointed by the foundation board

Foundation schools Maintained schools in which the governing body is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria

Foundation special schools Maintained special schools, which have the same freedoms as foundation schools (see above)

Foundation stage Curriculum followed by children below statutory school age, in schools and nursery/pre-school provision

Free school A type of academy, either a new school set up in response to parental demand or a fee-paying school joining the state education system

FSM Free school meals – pupils are eligible for FSM if their parents receive certain benefits

Funding agreement The document which sets out the relationship between an academy/MAT and the Education Funding Agency (EFA)/Department for Education (DfE)

GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education

Governor services May be ‘in-house’ in larger MATs but often externally commissioned, governor services provide essential support to the governing board which may be in the form of training, advice or clerking services. This has historically been offered by the local authority through a service level agreement. Academies and maintained schools are free to buy into their local authority’s governor services or seek alternative arrangements.

Governing board Refers to the board of maintained schools (governing body) and academies/MATs (board of trustees)

Governing body Refers to the governing body of a maintained school only
Headteacher Board Each Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has a board of elected headteachers of academies in their area to advise on and scrutinise their decisions

HLTA Higher Level Teaching Assistant

HMCI Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools

HMI Her Majesty’s Inspector

HSE Health and Safety Executive

IEP Individual Education Plan for pupils with special educational needs

IGCSE International GCSE

INSET In-Service Education and Training – courses for practising teachers and other school staff

Instrument of Government A legal document setting out the composition of maintained school governing bodies

KS 1–4 Key stages 1-4. The four stages of the national curriculum: KS1 for pupils aged 5-7; KS2 for 7-11; KS3 for 11-14; KS4 for 14-16. KS5 applies to 16-19 year-olds but is not part of the national curriculum

Local association A group of governors and trustees from different schools in the local area. Local associations vary in size and capacity. The smallest local associations may offer an informal support network for local governors whereas larger local associations may organise useful local events and provide formal support and training opportunities

LA Local authority – the LA has certain responsibilities regarding education, for example the educational achievement of looked-after children and for school places planning. It will also provide other services to schools, which may be provided via a service level agreement to maintained schools and in many cases academies

LA Governor Nominated by the LA but appointed by the governing body

LAC Looked After Children – Children who are in care provision. May also refer to children who have been in care at any time in the last six years

LGA Local Government Association – national organisation supporting and representing local government

LGB Local governing body – a term often used to describe a committee of a trust board for an individual school within a MAT. See LGC, academy committee

LGC Local governing committee – a term often used to describe a committee of a trust board for an individual school within a MAT. See LGB, academy committee

LACSEG Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant – the funding academies receive to meet their additional responsibilities
Maintained schools  Publicly funded schools overseen by the local authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national pay and conditions guidelines.

MAT  Multi academy trust – where two or more academies are governed by one trust (the members) and a board of trustees (the trustees)

MAT board  Common term for the board of trustees overseeing a multi academy trust

Mixed ability  A teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together

NAHT  National Association of Head Teachers – a headteacher union

NASBM  National Association of School Business Managers

NASUWT  National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers – a teaching union

National College  National College for Teaching and Leadership – the organisation responsible for national training programmes for school leaders, aspiring school leaders and the development of leaders of Children’s Services. In particular, it is responsible for the National Professional Qualification for Headship, the Chairs of Governors’ Leadership Development Programme and National Clerks’ Development Programme

National curriculum  This was established by the 1988 Education Reform Act to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced education, which is relevant to their needs. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, but many still choose to

National Schools Commissioner (NSC)  A civil servant responsible for co-ordinating the work of the eight RSCs

NFER  National Foundation for Educational Research

NGA  National Governance Association. The national membership organisation for school governors

Non-teaching (support) staff  Members of the school staff employed to provide services in a school, such as teaching assistants, cleaners and office staff

NOR  Number on roll

NPQH  National Professional Qualification for Headship – training for new or aspiring headteachers

NQT  Newly Qualified Teacher

NUT  National Union of Teachers – a teaching union

Ofqual  Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Register – the regulator of examinations and qualifications

Ofsted  Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills – the body which inspects education and training for learners of all ages and inspects and regulates care for children and young people
**PAN** Published Admissions Number – the number of children the LA (or governing board of a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy trust) determines must be admitted to any one year group in the school

**Parent governor/trustee** Member of the governing board elected by the parents of the school’s pupils

**Partnership governor** In schools with a religious character these governors must be appointed with the purpose of preserving and promoting the religious ethos

**Peripatetic teacher** One who teaches in a number of schools, to give specialist instruction, e.g. in music

**PE and sports premium** Funding for years 1 to 6 to provide additional PE and sport beyond that already provided in the curriculum

**PFI** Private Finance Initiative – enables local authorities to enter into contracts with the private sector for the provision of new and/or improved capital assets (infrastructure for example) and related services

**PGCE** Post-Graduate Certificate of Education

**PGR** Parent Governor Representative – elected to serve on a local authority committee discharging the education functions of the LA

**PI** Performance Indicators (sometimes called key performance indicators). Used to evaluate the success of a school or of a particular activity in which it engages

**PPA** Planning, Preparation and Assessment – 10% guaranteed non-contact time for teachers

**Progress 8** A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. It aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4

**PRP** Performance Related Pay – schools following the STCPD must now ensure teachers’ pay is linked to their performance

**PRU** Pupil Referral Unit – alternative education provision for pupils unable to attend a mainstream school or special school

**PSP** Pastoral Support Programme for pupils at serious risk of permanent exclusion

**PTA** Parent Teacher Association – or PSA (Parent Staff Association)

**PTA UK** National membership organisation for parent teacher associations – formerly NCPTA

**PTR** Pupil/Teacher Ratio – this is calculated by dividing the number of pupils in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers

**Public Sector Equality Duty** decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010
**Pupil premium** Funding allocated to schools to support pupils eligible for FSM, in care, or who have parents in the armed forces

**Pupil profile** Broad evaluation of a pupil’s personality, interests and capabilities – this forms part of the pupil’s Record of Achievement

**QTS** Qualified Teacher Status

**Quorate** A meeting is quorate if a sufficient number of members are present. Decisions can only be ratified if a meeting is quorate

**Quorum** The minimum number of members present at a meeting before decisions can be made

**RAISEonline** Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation is the web-based system to disseminate school performance data to schools

**Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs)** Civil servants that act on behalf of the Secretary of State. Their responsibilities include intervening in underperforming academies and free schools, making decisions on conversion to academy status, and encouraging and deciding on applications for academy sponsors. There are eight RSCs serving different regions, reporting to the Schools Commissioner.

**Resolution** A formal decision which has been proposed, seconded and agreed – not necessarily by a vote – at a meeting

**Revenue funding** Revenue funding can be spent to provide services and buy items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment

**ROA** Record of Achievement

**SACRE** Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – local statutory board which advises on religious education and collective worship

**SATs** Standard Assessment Tasks – used for national curriculum assessment

**Scheme of delegation** A document defining the lines of responsibility and accountability in a MAT, sometimes referred to as a Roles and Responsibilities document

**School business manager** A professional employed by a school with responsibility for financial management and often other areas such as human resources and health and safety management. Usually part of the senior leadership team

**School census** A statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms. Maintained schools and academies should take part in the census

**School development plan** The operational document describing how the school will work towards the strategic priorities set by the governing board
Schools Forum A Schools Forum has been established in each LA area to advise on the allocation of the funding for schools – the majority of places on this board should be filled by governors and headteachers, preferably in equal numbers.

Secondment The release of staff on a temporary basis for work elsewhere.

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – learning difficulties for which special educational provision has to be made.

SENCO SEN Co-ordinator – the teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the school.

SENDIST Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal.

Service level agreement A contract between a service provider (the local authority or another private sector provider) and a school that defines the level of service expected from the service provider.

Service premium Funding allocated to schools to support pupils whose parents are serving in HM armed forces, or have at any time since 2011, or who are in receipt of a child’s pension from the Ministry of Defence.

Secretary of State for Education The senior government minister with responsibility for education. Leads the Department for Education.

Setting A system of organising pupils into ability groups for particular subjects.

SFVS Schools Financial Value Standard – a means for the governing board to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills.

Short inspection A one day Ofsted inspection carried out at ‘good’ schools (or special schools, nurseries, and PRUs judged ‘outstanding’).

SIMS Schools Information and Management System – a computer package to assist schools in managing information on pupils, staff and resources, provided by Capita.

Special school Pupils with a statement of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or an education, health and care plan, whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision.

Special Unit (or Resourced Provision) A unit attached to a mainstream school to cater for children with specific special needs.

Sponsor An organisation or person who has received approval from the DfE to support an underperforming academy or group of academies. Examples of sponsors include academies, businesses and charities.

SSAT Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

Staff governor/trustee Elected by those who are paid to work at the school.
**Statementing** Officially assessing a child as having special educational needs. In 2014 this procedure was replaced by education, health and care plans

**STPCD** School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document – an annually published document which forms a part of the contract of all teachers and headteachers in maintained schools in England and Wales. Many academies will also follow the STPCD

**Strategic plan** The school’s strategic document which sets out a small number of key priorities for the school over the next 3-5 years. The governing board should take the lead on developing the strategic plan

**STRB** School Teachers’ Review Body – makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on teachers’ pay

**Streaming** Placing pupils in classes according to their ability across a range of subjects

**TA** Teaching Assistant

**Teaching schools** Schools that work with others to provide CPD for school staff

**Teaching school alliances** Led by teaching schools and include schools that are benefiting from support as well as strategic partners

**Terms of reference** The scope and limitations of a committee’s activity or area of knowledge

**TLR** Teaching and Learning Responsibility – payments made to teachers for an additional responsibility

**Trust Deed** The deed by which a voluntary aided or a voluntary controlled school has been established

**Trustee board** The governing board of a single academy trust or MAT

**UNISON** Union of Public Employees. Many school support staff will be members of this union

**Virtual school headteacher** Looked after children are on a virtual school roll, and each local authority will employ an experienced teacher to oversee the educational progress of all children under the care of that particular LA. The virtual school headteacher will have the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers. They will also work with professionals in the Children’s Services department of the council and with all schools in the area to promote the education of children in care

**VA** Voluntary Aided - A school set up and owned by a voluntary board, usually a church board, largely financed by the LA. The governing board employs the staff and controls pupil admissions and religious education. The school’s buildings and land (apart from playing fields) will normally be owned by a charitable foundation. VA schools set their own admissions criteria in line with the admissions code.
**Value Added (VA)** The progress schools help pupils make relative to their individual starting points – rather than looking at raw results VA also takes into account the prior attainment, thus enabling a judgment to be made about the effect of the school on pupils’ current attainment.

**VC** Voluntary Controlled: usually a denominational school wholly maintained but with certain residual rights regarding religious worship.

**Vertical grouping** Classes formed (in primary schools) with children of different age groups.

**Virement** The agreed transfer of money from the budget heading to which it has been allocated to another budget heading.

**Vision** The school’s vision should, in a few sentences, describe what the school will look like in three to five years’ time.

**VOICE** A teaching union.

**Vocational** A subject that would not be considered academic in the traditional sense. Students in key stage 4 and key stage 5 may undertake a vocational apprenticeship or qualification as a viable alternative to GCSEs or A levels.

**Work experience** A planned programme as part of careers education, which enables pupils to sample experience of a working environment of their choice in school time.