

The importance of governance

Emma Knights
Chief Executive
National Governance Association



NGA is a membership organisation

- NGA is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees and clerks in maintained schools and academies in England
- Our charitable aim is to improve outcomes for pupils by promoting high standards in schools & improving the effectiveness of governing boards
- We do this by providing expert and tailored information, guidance and advice, training, consultancy, and challenge

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The NGA Advice Service

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GUIDANCE CENTRE

Governing board membership

STANDARD governing board £85

GOLD governing board £260

www.nga.org.uk/join



Why is governance so important?

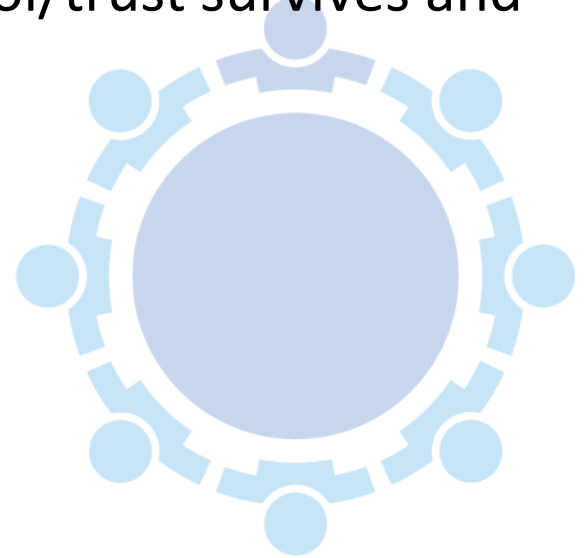
Governance determines who has the power,
who makes the decisions,
how other players make their voice heard and
how account is rendered

Institute on Governance, Canada



The issues we could cover

- a. Ethical governance and leadership
- b. Governing well
- c. Financial governance: ensuring the school/trust survives and thrives on the funding available
- d. Multi academy trust governance
- e. Making an impact for pupils

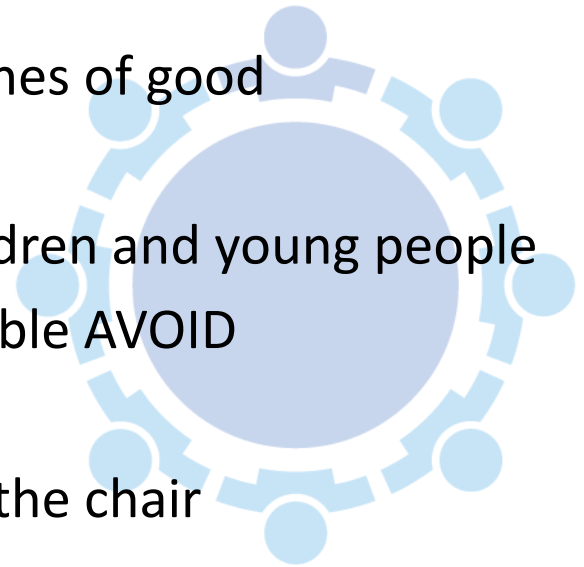


a. Ethical governance and leadership

Boards are the guardians of the organisation's vision, ethos & values:

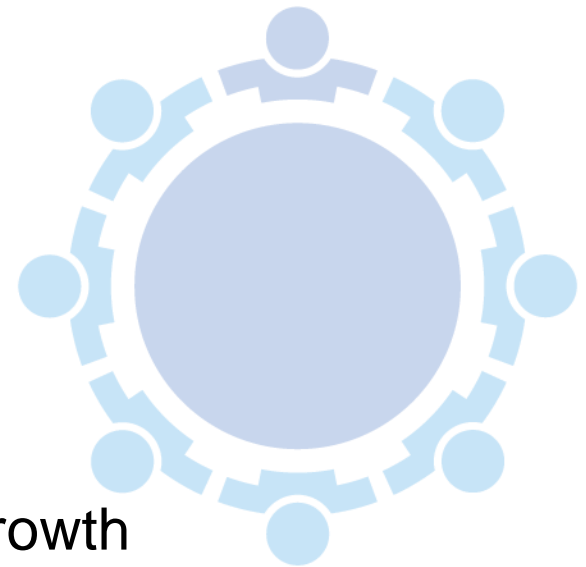
“No crooks; no cronies; no cowards”

- Not just about ‘effectiveness’: without ethics you get ‘game-playing’
- Put into practice the Nolan principles: the 7 principles of public life
 - [Selflessness](#); [Integrity](#); [Objectivity](#); [Accountability](#); [Openness](#); [Honesty](#); [Leadership](#)
- Accountability & transparency are cornerstones of good governance
- Decisions made in the best interest of all children and young people
- Conflicts of interest: declare but if at all possible AVOID
- Related party transactions & remuneration
- Agree a code of conduct & use it: the role of the chair

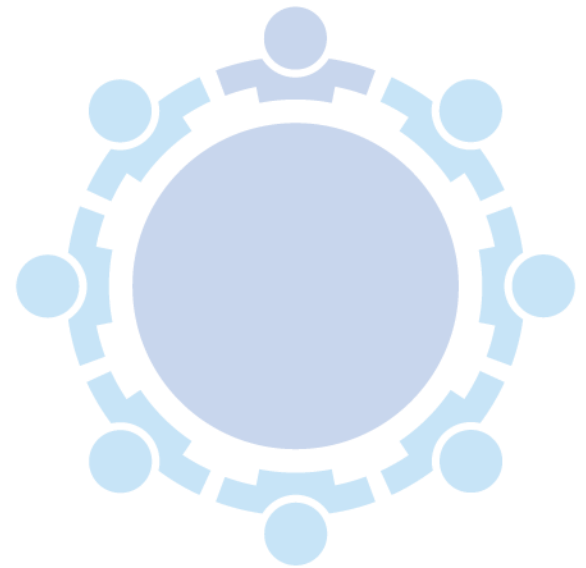


Where might be areas of ethical concern?

- Admissions & inclusion
- Exclusions & pupils otherwise leaving the roll
- Teaching to the test: stress for KS2; exam factories for KS4
- Broad and balanced curriculum & extra curricula offer
- KS 5 options – at other institutions
- Executive pay
- Staff welfare & workload
- Expansion of selection
- Collaboration & partnership: empires & growth

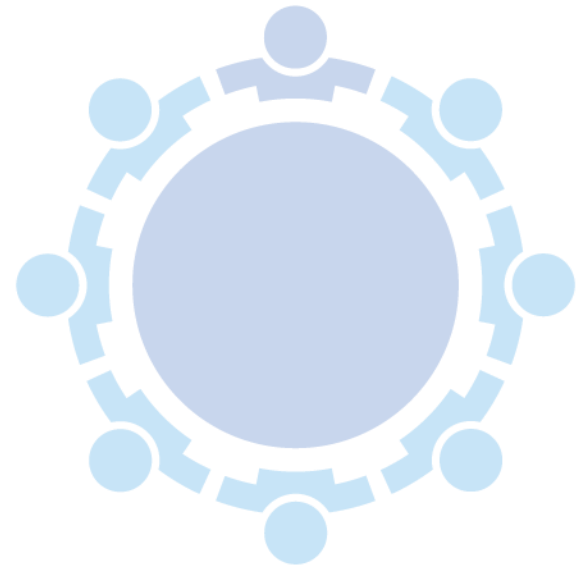


Discuss



b. Governing well

- i. The core functions of school governance
- ii. Eight elements of effective governance
- iii. The DfE's Governance Competency Framework
- iv. Engaging others
- v. Reviewing your governance



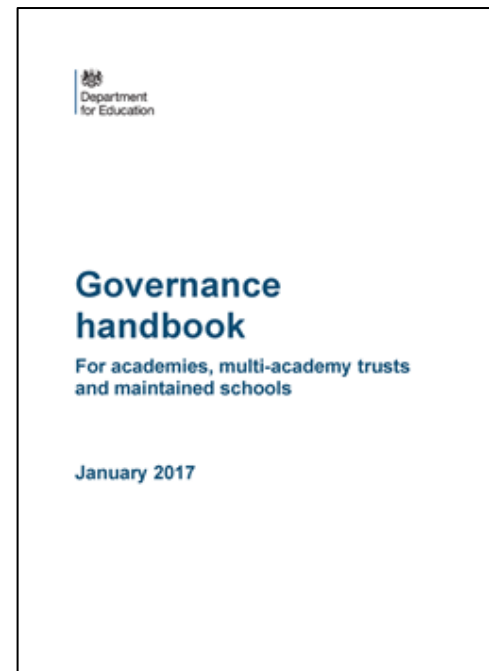
i. The core functions of school governance

In all types of schools, governing boards (GBs) have three core functions:

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

In an academy the GB is the board of trustees.

Big question: in a federation or multi academy trust (MAT) how much is delegated to school level



Turning vision into reality

Core function of the Governing Board:

Setting vision, values, ethos and strategic direction, and ensuring a culture which will deliver that strategy

But are we good at it?

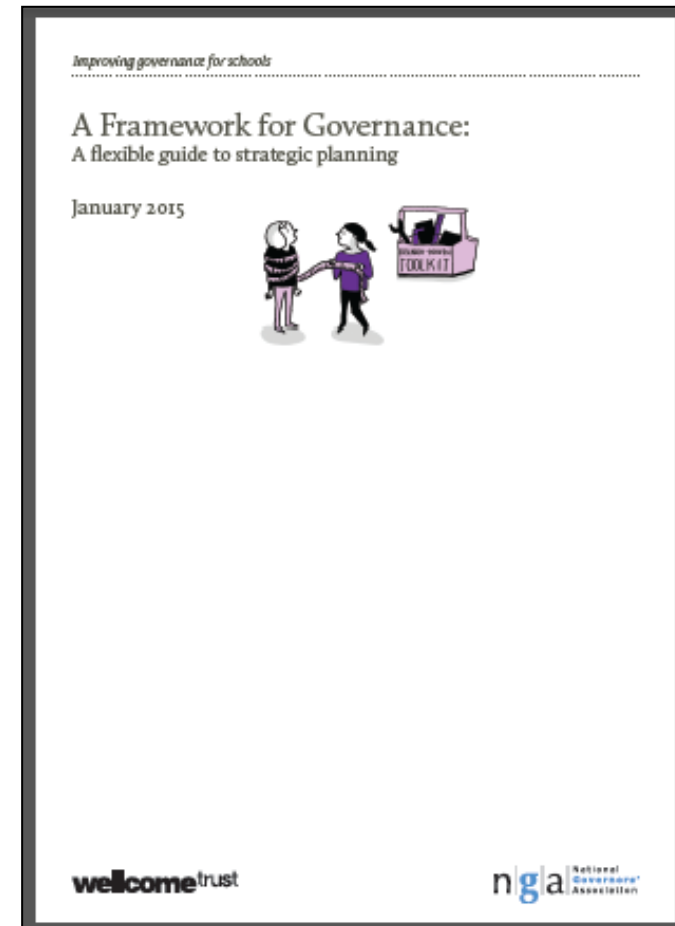
How do we do that?

Do we measure what we value?

This guide published in January 2015

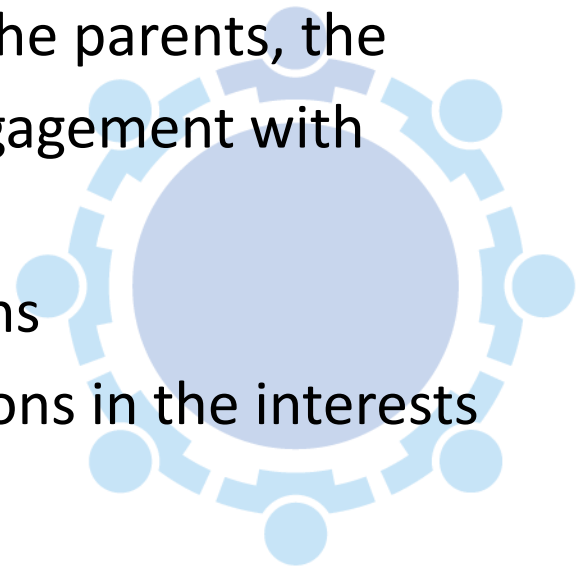
New project in 2017: get in touch if you want to be involved

Shelby.roberts@nga.org.uk



ii. Eight elements of effective governance

1. The right people round the table
2. Understanding role & responsibilities
3. Good chairing
4. Professional clerking
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school - the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community - & ensuring engagement with stakeholders
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people



Inspiring Governance: finding the right people

- a national governor recruitment service, offering schools an additional method of finding potential governors and trustees
- Schools can use the Inspiring Governance website to register the vacancy & make contact with local volunteers to interview:

www.inspiringgovernance.org

- NGA is working in partnership with the charity Education & Employers, funded by DfE: we will offer induction materials & support to new governors matched from Inspiring Governance, including e-learning
- Enquiries to 020 7566 4882 or enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org
- Feedback to Judith.Hicks@nga.org.uk

Induction guides

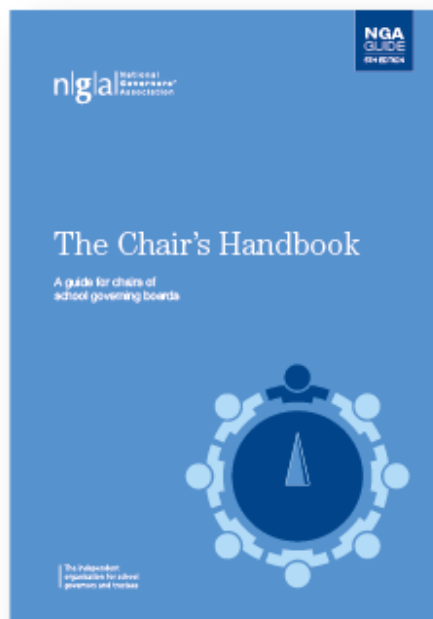
Knowing the roles & responsibilities

“ A valuable resource for thousands of new governors. ”

Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools



Free to GOLD members
Standard members: £5
Non-members: £10



“ A must read for any governing body library. ”
Schools Week



Welcome to a MAT:
Members: £6
Non-members: £12

Leading governance: the chair's role

- Chairing is a leadership role: sets the culture and tone of GB
- Trusting relationship with the head/CEO
- The time to make all this happen: using time well
- Delegate: the role of vice chair; advice & support of a good clerk
- Innovate: co-chairs
- Meet with all other members of the board individually
- Review your own performance: 360 degree review
- Aspiring chairs can join the Chairs' Development Programme: licensed by the National College: last cohorts have to start before the summer

Leading Governance ▶▶

Don't miss out on the DfE scholarships

Worth £320 of training

www.leadinggovernance.org



Inspiring Governance: finding future chairs

- Good practice: six years maximum; swop schools
- Succession planning: identify future chairs, and if not, recruit them
- More chairs are telling us that they find it hard to find the time
- NGA is piloting a service to find volunteers who are willing to step up to be chair in the near future
- We began in three areas; now increasing the number of pilot areas
- From September 2017 this will include South Yorkshire
- Would Barnsley Governor Association like to be involved in this pilot?
- More information from Judith.Hicks@nga.org.uk
- We will train mentors

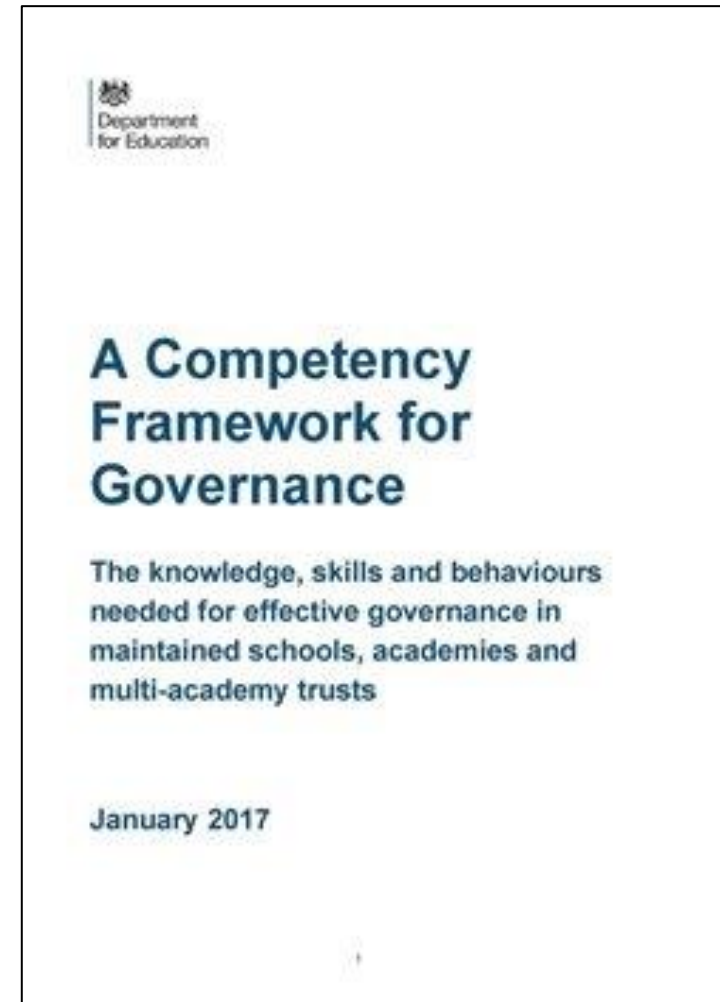
iii. DfE's Competency Framework for Governance

- 16 competencies grouped under the 'six features of effective governance'
- some skills or knowledge that the DfE thinks everyone on the board needs to have, and others that the chair or 'at least someone' on the board will need to have.
- In all there are 200 aspects to the framework
- More emphasis on risk assessment
- But don't be daunted



Don't panic: it's not a checklist

- Sir David Carter agreed with us:
@Carter6D Jan 12 “Governance Competency Framework is a guide & tool for evaluation to build stronger governance. Not a checklist!”
- Keep doing what you should have been doing: a skills audit of the board and recruit to the gaps identified
- NGA has an updated model skills audit
- Do not give this to potential recruits: much better to give the role description and expectations



iv. Engaging governance

- How do other players make their voice heard?
- The GB needs to make sure this is happening
- Staff, parents, pupils, the community, employers
- Lots of models: surveys, open events, focus groups
- Developing the vision and priorities is one opportunity
- Two way dialogue which is meaningful:

What changes as a result?

“you said, we did”

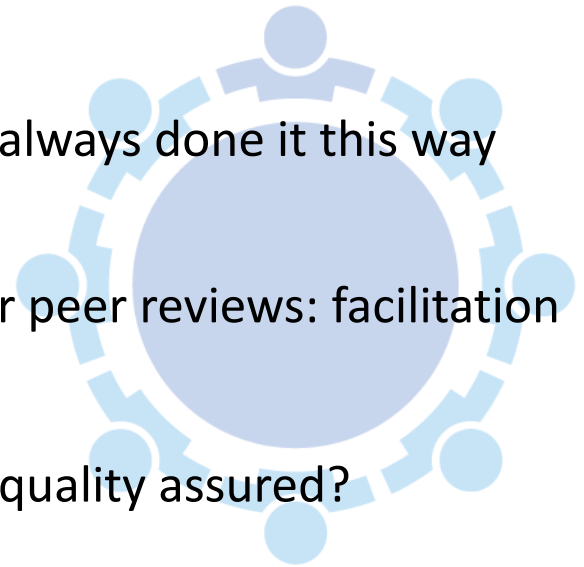
- Reporting to stakeholders: accountability
- Academies could change their constitution to have many members



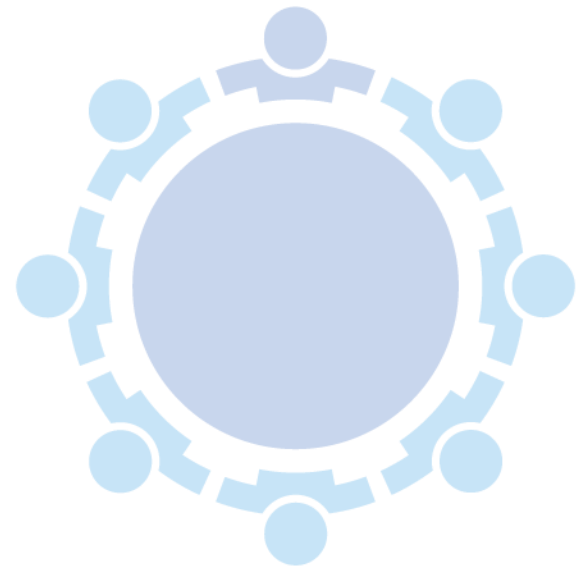
v. Reviewing governance

- Development of clerking, including CPD
 - Reduce the paperwork: streamline agendas
 - Maximum: two committee structure for a stand alone school
- All-party parliamentary group on education governance & leadership:
 - 20 questions for a Governing Board to ask itself
 - 21 questions for a MAT board of trustees to ask itself
- NGA has an on-line self evaluation tool with Evalu8
- “This is how we do it here”: just because you have always done it this way does not make it the best way
- Visit other governing boards in action, and consider peer reviews: facilitation
- Free support from National Leaders of Governance
- External reviews of governance: is your consultant quality assured?

More information: Clare.Collins@nga.org.uk

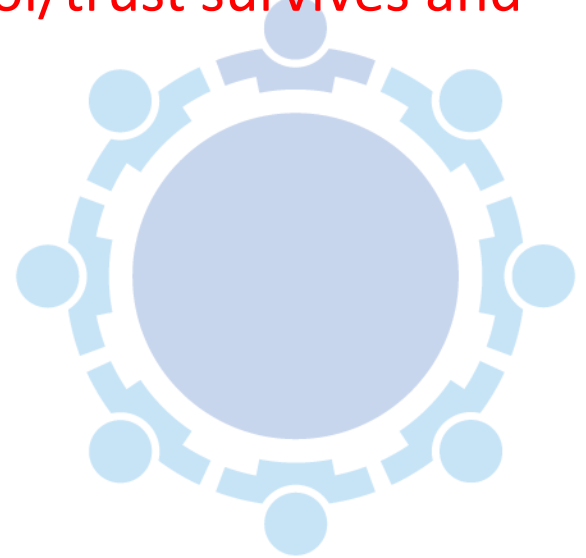


Any questions?



The issues:

- a. Ethical governance and leadership
- b. Governing well
- c. Financial governance: ensuring the school/trust survives and thrives on the funding available
- d. Multi academy trust governance
- e. Making an impact for pupils



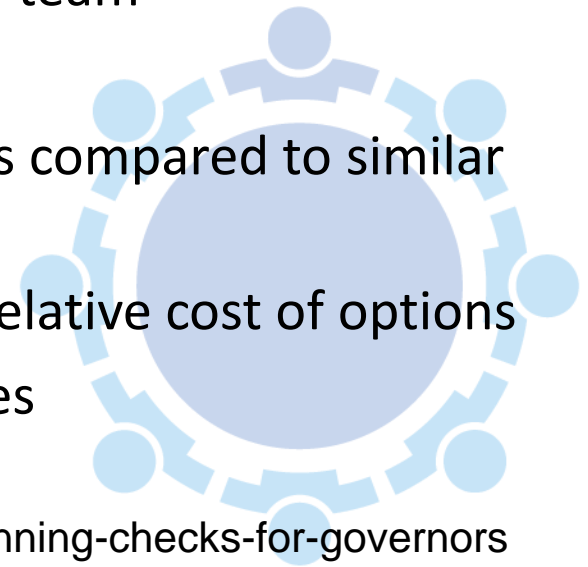
c. Financial governance & school funding

- Invest in business management staff
- Keep exploring financial efficiencies and plan ahead
- Benchmark: use the DfE's efficiency tools eg. Metric; scorecard for your school
- Connect the pupil offer & the budget
- Ensure good human resource processes
- Procure jointly where possible: collaborate & federate
- DfE [Schools' Buying Strategy](#) published January 2017
- Consider other sources of income
- Draw on pupil premium resources to good effect
- The National Funding Formula consultation
- The size of the pot: is it enough?
- Lobby your MP & share your stories: emma.knights@nga.org.uk
- NGA's funding campaign: Funding the Future



INVESTIGATE : 10 checks for governors

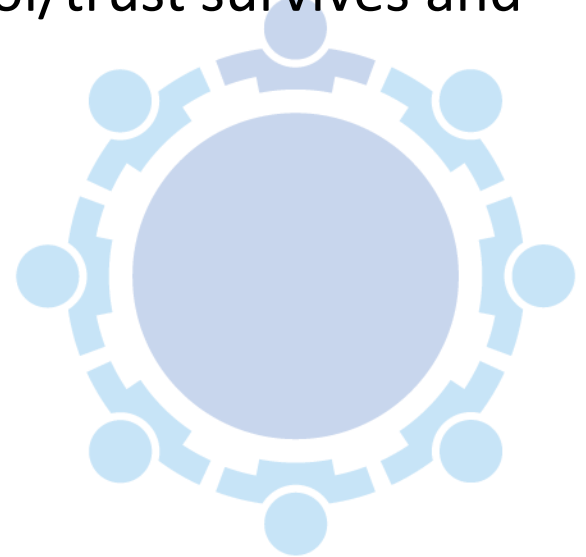
1. Staff pay as percentage of total expenditure
2. Average teacher cost
3. Pupil to teacher ratio (PTR)
4. Class sizes
5. Teacher contact ratio
6. Proportion of budget spent on the leadership team
7. 3 to 5 year budget projections
8. Spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines compared to similar schools
9. School improvement plan priorities and the relative cost of options
10. List of contracts with costs and renewal dates



www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-efficiency-top-10-planning-checks-for-governors

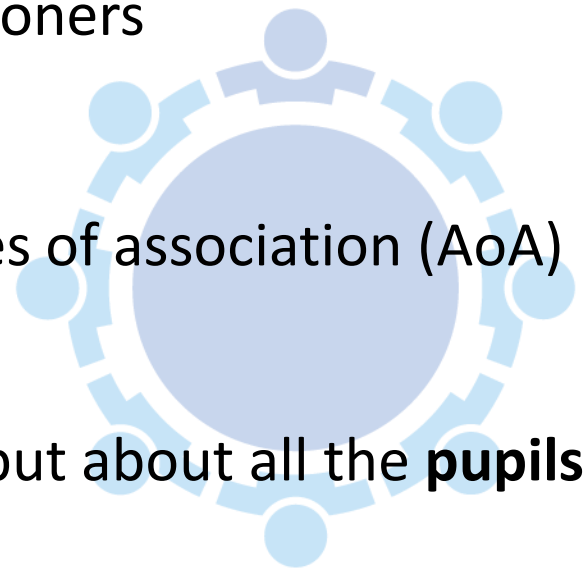
The issues I will cover

- a. Ethical governance and leadership
- b. Governing well
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- d. **Multi academy trust governance**
- e. Making an impact for pupils



What is a MAT?

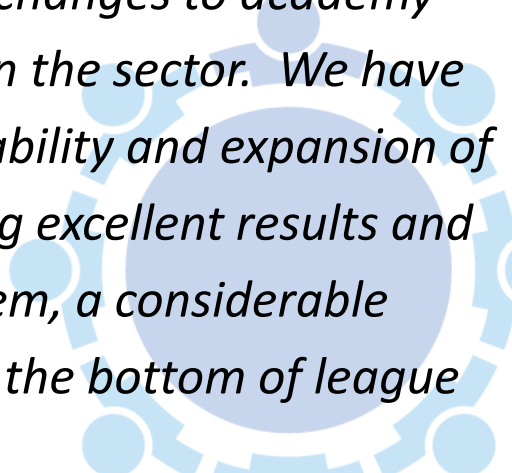
- A multi academy trust is an charitable trust & a company limited by guarantee which has responsibility for more than one academy
- Exempt charity: regulated by DfE
- Accountable to the Secretary of State, via the Education Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioners
- It may have a sponsor, but doesn't have to
- It is one organisation with one set of articles of association (AoA) and one vision and ethos
- Culture change: it is not about one school but about all the **pupils** of all the schools in the trust



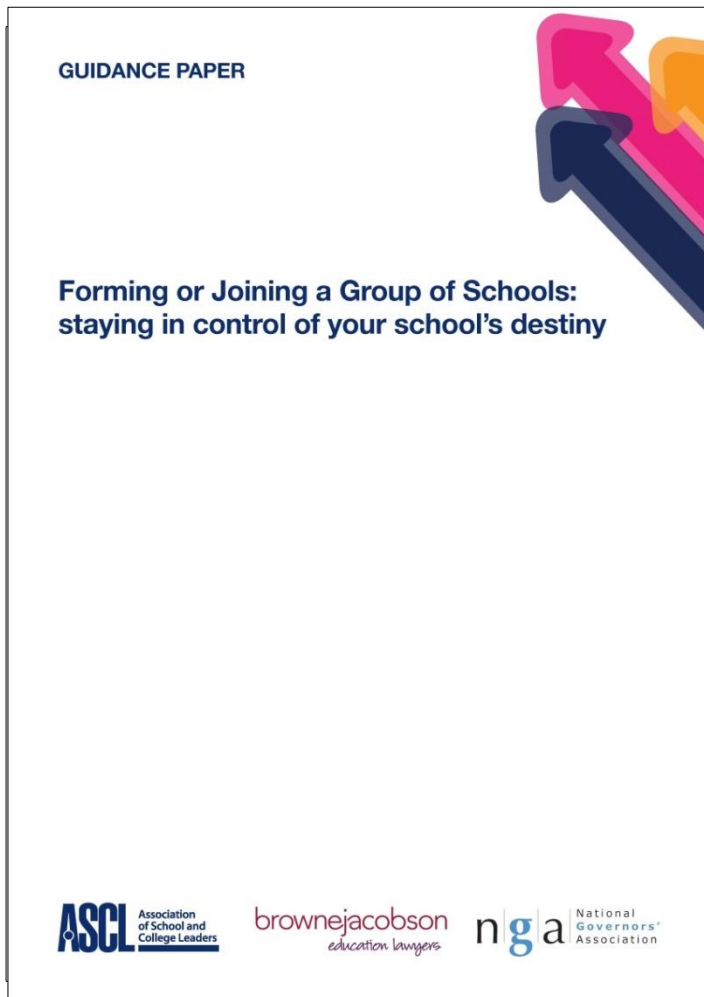
Improving education: how much do structures matter?

Neil Carmichael MP, Chair of the House of Commons Education Committee, said on the publication of its report on multi academy trusts 28 February 2017:

“Since launching this inquiry there have been several changes to academy policy which have caused uncertainty and instability in the sector. We have significant concerns about the performance, accountability and expansion of multi-academy trusts. While some MATs are producing excellent results and making a valuable contribution to our education system, a considerable number are failing to improve and are consistently at the bottom of league tables.”



The benefits of a group of schools



Increasing body of evidence that formal collaborations between schools, particularly where collaboration is consolidated through shared accountability, can bring substantial benefits

- Shared accountability can lead to a better offer for & better progress and attainment for pupils
- School leaders and teachers can share thinking and planning to spread expertise
- Find and fund specialist expertise
- Staff can be shared across more than one school
- Shared professional development
- Find different solutions to recruitment challenges, to retain staff & plan succession
- Economies of scale through group business management, joint policies and collective purchasing
- Governors and trustees can work strategically

Who are the players in MAT governance?

For definitive answer for a particular MAT see its AoA

Members: usually a small group who ensure the trustees are doing their job properly; eg appoint some trustees, approve AoA, receive audited accounts

Trustees / directors: make up the governing board

Chief Executive Officer: appointed by the trust board to deliver its vision, run the trust and line manage other executives.

- Mates MATs and Flat MATs will not be agreed in future

Governors: do not exist in the same way as in LA maintained schools

Committees of the board: eg. resources, standards, and academy committees (often called LGBs)

A shared ethos

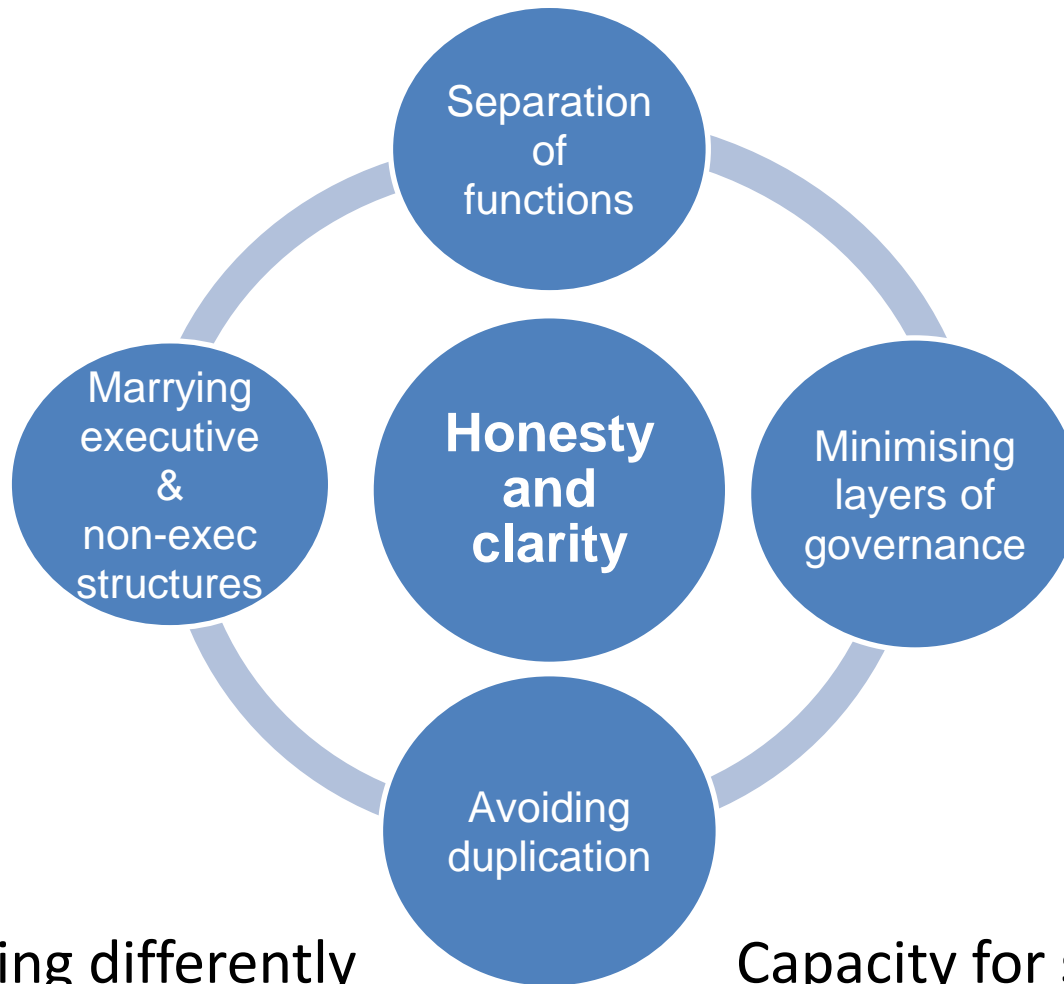
Stated values

Policies

Approach to stakeholder
views

Local governance
arrangements

Some challenges for MAT governance



MATs: clarity of role

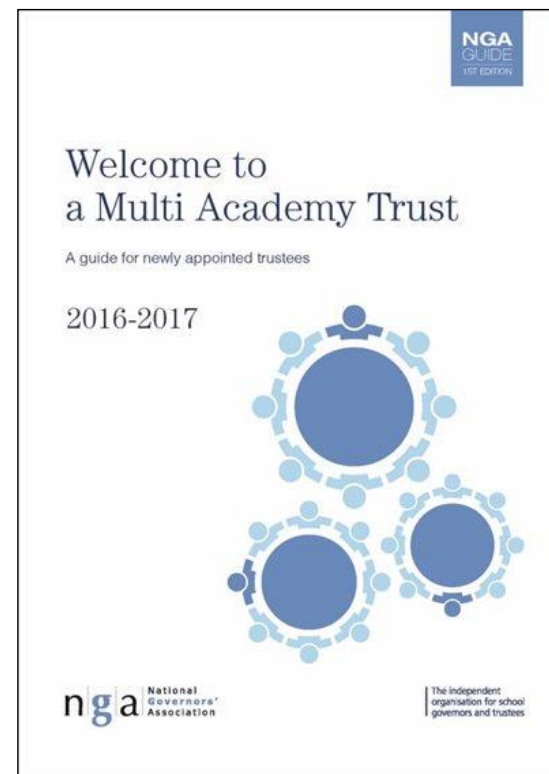
The House of Commons Education Committee report on MATs :

“While we welcome the Government’s recent document which set out examples of best practice in governance, there is still significant confusion about the move to boards of trustees being the accountable bodies for MATs. This move has not been communicated well enough by the Department and has led schools to join or start trusts without full knowledge of how their governance structures will change. The Department must improve and extend the advice and guidance they offer.”

MATs: clarity of role

Lord Nash, the under-Secretary of State for Schools with responsibility for academies & governance when questioned by the committee on guidance on governance

- **Lord Nash:** I think you know, Neil, that the NGA has done a lot of work on that.
- **Chair:** I do
- **Lord Nash:** In fact, it has published its own material on that governance, which has been really helpful and really thorough. It all comes down to an effective and clear scheme of delegation between the centre and the local governing body..... The NGA has done some excellent work on this




Scheme of delegation

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GUIDANCE CENTRE

The independent organisation for school governors and trustees

Governance structures: multi academy trusts
NGA model schemes of delegation v2
Model 1: Delegation to academy committees




Need advice?
For advice on any issue, Gold members have access to GOLDline legal advice 9-5pm weekdays. Find out more T: 0121 237 3782 www.nga.org.uk/goldline

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NGA model schemes of delegation v2
Model 2: Delegation to academy committees




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Governance structures: multi academy trusts
NGA model schemes of delegation v2
Model 3: Delegation to cluster committees



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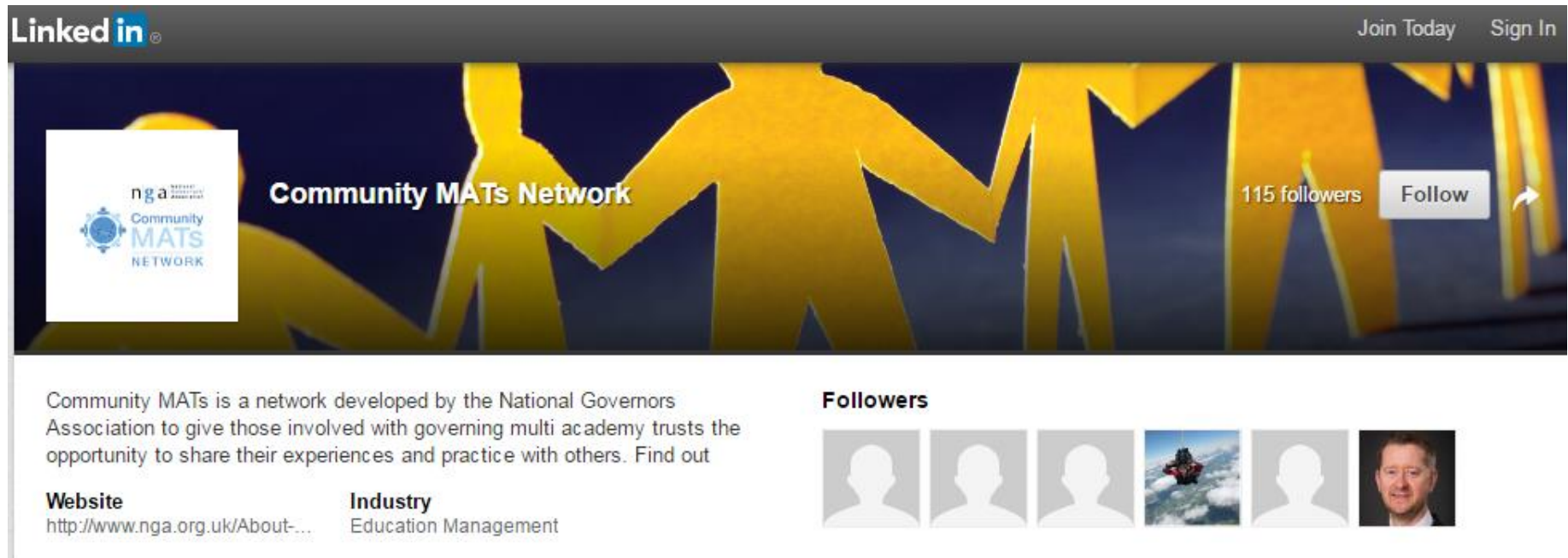
Governance structures: multi academy trusts
NGA model schemes of delegation v2
Model 4: Mixed delegation



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Community MATs network

- A network for now and beyond – ideas for the future
- Thinking differently – an evolving system
- Communication – how do we continue to share and learn from each other?
- NGA campaigning and guidance
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/community-mats-network>



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile for the Community MATs Network. The header features the LinkedIn logo and navigation links 'Join Today' and 'Sign In'. The profile picture is the NGA Community MATs Network logo. The banner image shows yellow silhouettes of people holding hands. The text 'Community MATs Network' is displayed in the banner area. To the right, it says '115 followers' and has a 'Follow' button. Below the banner, a description states: 'Community MATs is a network developed by the National Governors Association to give those involved with governing multi academy trusts the opportunity to share their experiences and practice with others. Find out'. Below this, the 'Website' is listed as 'http://www.nga.org.uk/About-...' and the 'Industry' is 'Education Management'. A 'Followers' section shows six profile pictures, including three generic grey silhouettes, a person in a red kayak, and a man in a suit.

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 **Community MATs Network** 115 followers Follow

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Website
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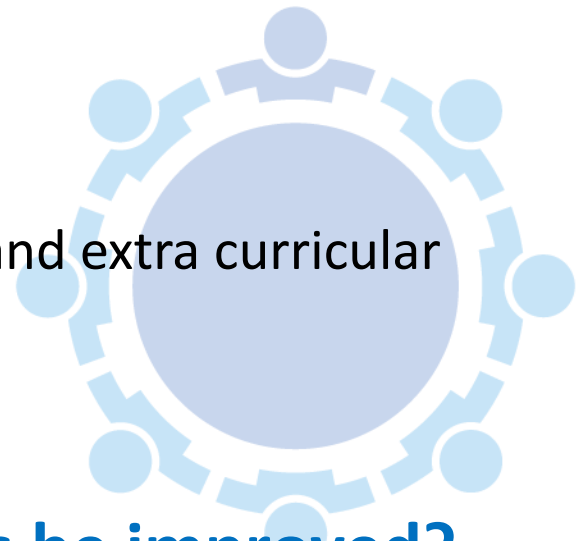
Industry
Education Management

Followers



Making an impact for pupils : challenges in improving the education

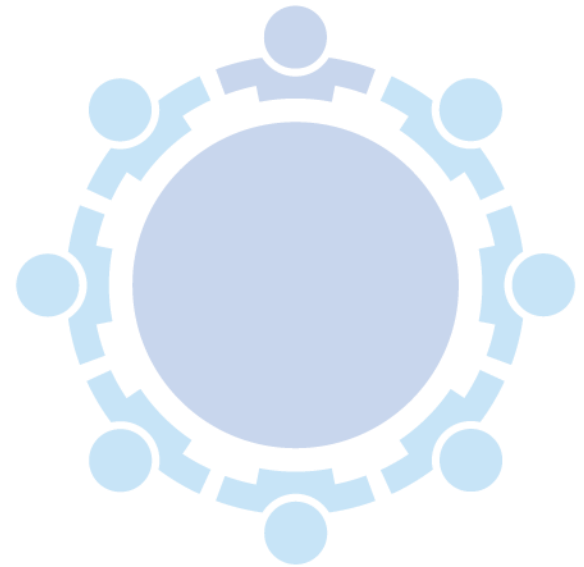
- Ensuring a high quality of teaching and good outcomes for children
- Higher aspirations & improving the attainment of disadvantaged children:
 - Is your pupil premium making a difference?
- Recruiting and retaining staff
- Encourage, fund and monitor CPD
- Maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum and extra curricular activities



How could your school's offer to pupils be improved?

What do you need to do to achieve that?

- Ethical governance & leadership: values & ethos
- The right culture
- The right strategy
- The right people
- The right structures & processes
- The right measures
- Understand what good looks like



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