



Effective school governance in changing times

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Who are we?

- A membership organisation representing the voice of school governors in England
 - governors from all state funded schools, both LA maintained schools and academies
- We aim to improve the effectiveness of governing bodies by providing expert and tailored information and advice

Lord Hill, minister for schools, at NGA's Annual Conference 2010

‘the most important decision-making group in any school is the governing body’.

‘governing bodies should set the overall strategic direction of a school, hold the headteacher to account and have a relentless focus on driving up standards – but not get dragged into micro-managing the school or the minutiae of its day-to-day activities’.

What is changing?



Higher aspirations

- Higher floor standards for attainment
 - Primary: 60% pupils achieving level 4 in English and Maths (plus at least the national average making the expected levels of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English and Maths)
 - Secondary: raised to 40% pupils getting 5 A-C in 2012, going up to 50% by 2015
- More emphasis on progress, including of different groups
- Closing the gap: use of the pupil premium

Higher aspirations

- Parental expectations & Parent View
- Revised Ofsted framework from September
 - All schools should be good
 - More emphasis on governance
 - HMIs may recommend external governance reviews where governance 'requires improvement'
- Better performance management
- More emphasis on CPD
- Higher quality of teaching

Ofsted expectations

Inspectors should consider whether governors:

- carry out their statutory duties
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, or whether they are misled by 'headlines'
- are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
- are challenging and supporting leadership in equal measure;

Ofsted expectations con'd

- provide support for an effective headteacher, or whether they are hindering school improvement by not successfully tackling key concerns
- understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression
- performance manage the headteacher rigorously
- are failing to perform well and contributing to weaknesses in leadership and management.
- ensure that the school's finances are properly managed, and have a role in deciding how the school is using the Pupil Premium.

Funding

- Future school funding reductions
- Changes to local authority funding formulae
- SEN high needs costs, plus further changes in the pipeline
- Capital allocations squeezed
- Pupil premium increasing – what is its impact?

Freedom and diversity

- More autonomy for schools:
 - more decision making at school level
 - more academies, including UTCs & free schools
 - more procurement for schools
- Reducing bureaucracy – less guidance
- More diversity in schools structures & groupings
 - More federation?
- Much more data in the public domain
- More powers for the Secretary of State in the Education Act 2011

School to school support

- Reduced LA funding for support services
- Fewer quangos & support programmes
- NLEs, LLEs and now NLGs
- Collaboration vs competition
- Teaching schools
- More chains & federations
- Converting academies supporting another school
- Partnerships for procurement or support services
- Debate about the 'middle' tier

Size & composition of GBs

- The Education Act 2011 allows LA maintained GBs to change their size & composition from 1 Sept 2012 (academies already this freedom)
- The legislation is permissive – you can change within limits if you want but you will not have to
- A minimum of two parent governors, one staff governor, one local authority governor
- Minimum size lowered to seven
- Size does not relate to effectiveness
- More emphasis on skills – carry out a skills audit
- Use SGOSS: www.sgoss.org.uk

Core GB Responsibilities

The governing body is the school's accountable body.

Core responsibilities for GB's have not and will not change (2002 Education Act):

- The GB is responsible for the conduct of the school
- The GB must work to promote high standards

For academies, legal framework is different but the business of governing is very similar

Governance under the spotlight

- More local decision-making e.g.
 - where does GB get school improvement advice from?
 - what self evaluation process shall the school use?
 - what is the best school structure?
 - Less ring-fenced funding
- We need to do better:
 - autonomy brings more risks
 - need to provide more effective challenge
 - succession planning for GBs: limit on length of service?
- Review GB effectiveness & impact: 20 questions

Making an impact

- Set the ethos, including curriculum
- Stay strategic & focussed on improvement
- Don't get overwhelmed by compliance & reviewing policies – delegate
- Recruit good school leaders and trust them to recruit good staff
- Ensure school leaders are equipped to do their jobs, including HR aspects , procurement
- Need to ensure access to support & expertise
- Encourage collaboration – new forms of partnership; and federation

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
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

Please use NGA resources

- Code of Practice for GBs
- Skills audit template
- ‘Knowing your school’ briefing notes on data:
 - first two on RAISEonline
- Q&As for academy conversion and more to come, e.g. on academy governance; federation
- Model policies
- *Welcome to Governance* induction guides
- Chair’s Handbook & coming soon the Chairs’ Development Programme

Join us

Standard NGA membership for a school GB is £70,
and you receive:

- weekly e-newsletter for all governors,
- five copies of the bi-monthly 40 page NGA members' magazine *Governing Matters*,
- access to the members' area of the website,
- a free place at NGA member regional events and national conferences

GOLD package for £250 includes legal advice and other enhanced benefits e.g. *Welcome to Governance*