

# Good governance

## Sheffield Governors' Conference

Emma Knights

Chief Executive, National Governance Association

28 June 2019

The independent organisation  
for school governors, trustees  
and clerks

[www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk)

# NGA is a membership organisation

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



## *Governing board membership*

STANDARD governing board £95  
GOLD governing board £270

[www.nga.org.uk/join](http://www.nga.org.uk/join)

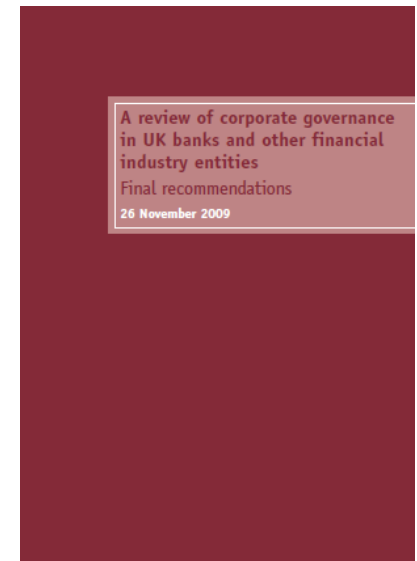
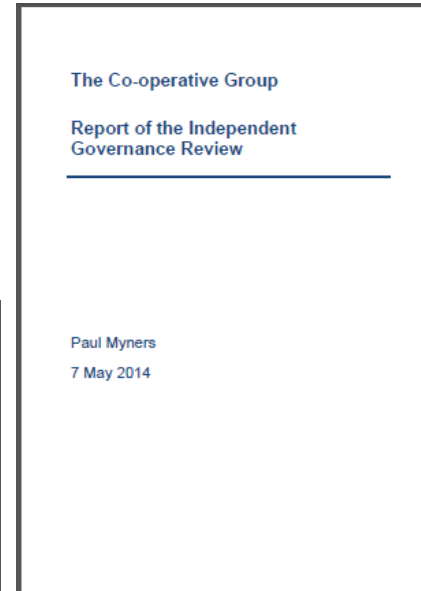
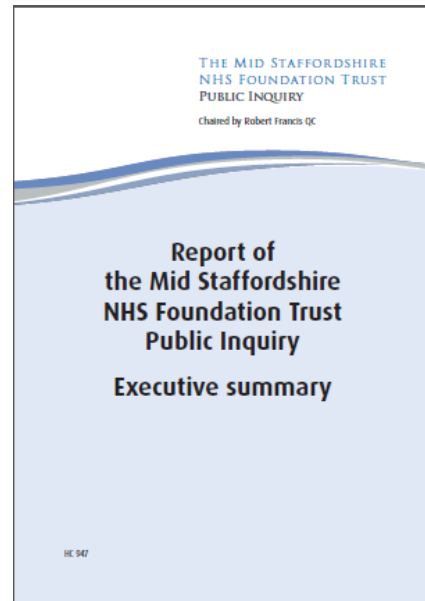
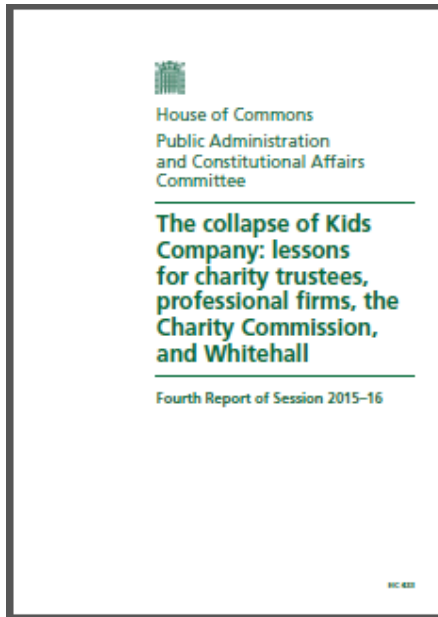


n|g|a | GOLDline  
The NGA Advice Service

n|g|a | National  
Governance  
Association

# Organisations with good governance do not fail

## Learning from other sectors



# 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

And of course school governance is all about achieving the purpose ie. making a difference for pupils

# Not talking detailed school structures today

## Guidance on forming or joining a group of schools:

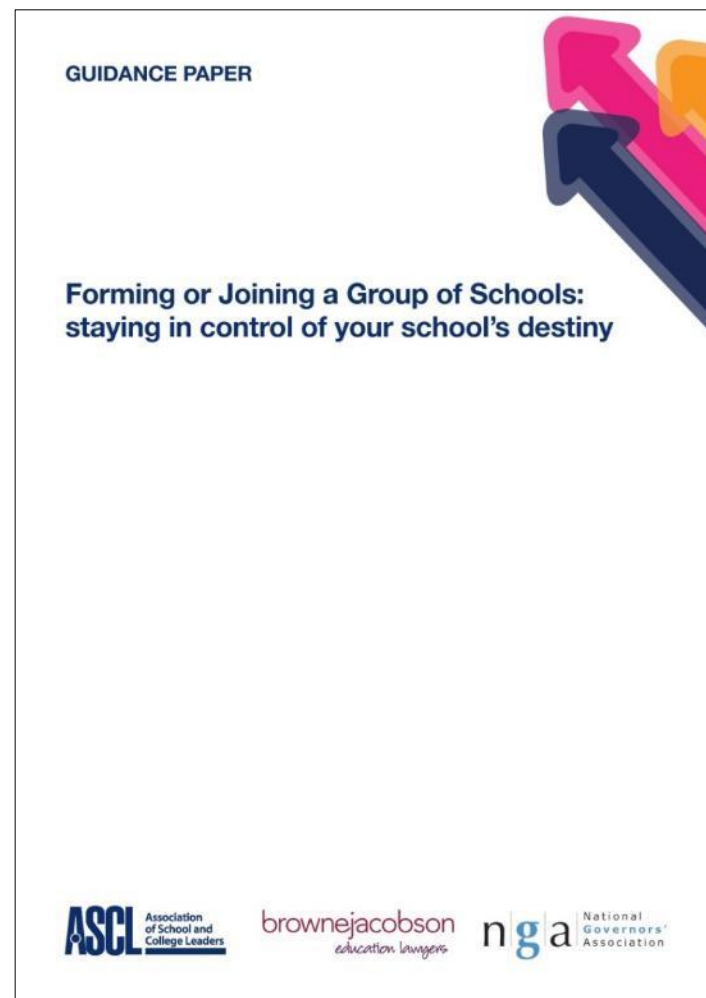
The benefits of groups and steps to take to form a group of schools accountable to one governing board.

Three new editions now available:  
called **Taking the next step**

For senior leaders, governors, clerks and trustees

Ethos & geography are important

Don't overlook the changing nature of headship



# A shared ethos

Stated values

What is standardised:  
which policies?  
what systems?

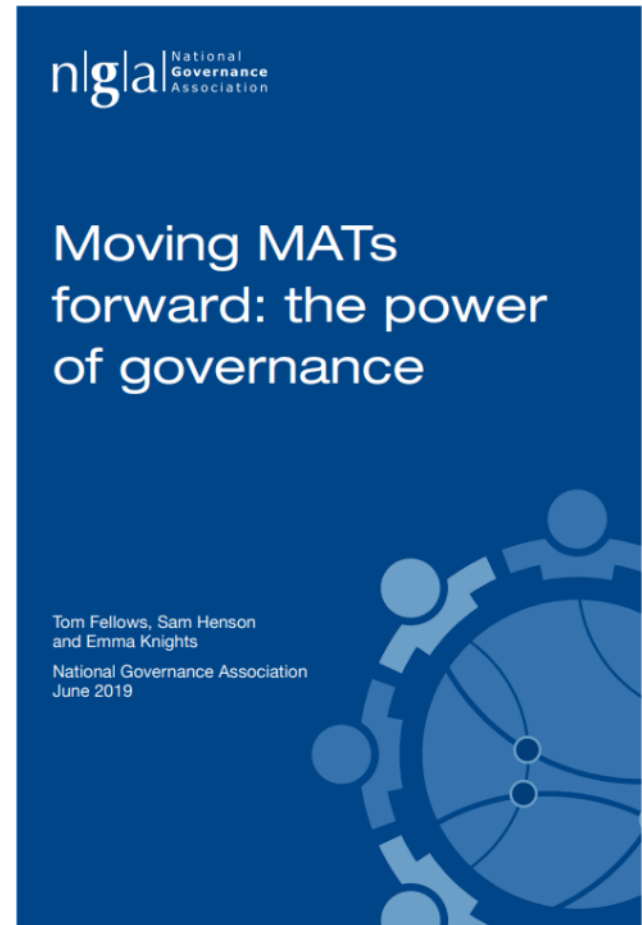
Approach to stakeholder  
views

Local governance  
arrangements  
The Scheme of Delegation  
SoD!

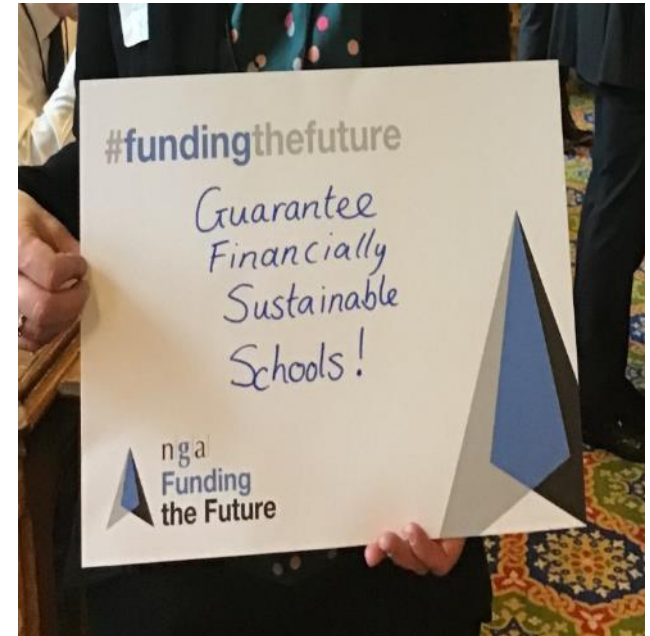
# Moving MAT's forward: the power of governance

PUBLISHED YESTERDAY!

- NGA's insights built upon a decade of evidence & expertise
- Learning from those governing experience of MATs: thank you
- Includes recommendations for boards of trustees, the DfE and wider sector working
- Calls for a debate on
  - Is the role of trust members concentrating power in the hands of too few individuals?
  - Is school improvement best served by geographically dispersed MATs?
  - Should growing MATs above a certain size be discouraged?
  - What are the implications of the changing role of school leaders in MATs and how might these work best?



# Tell your stories: invite your MP to visit



Contact Steve with your Funding the Future Stories:  
[Steve.Edmonds@nga.org.uk](mailto:Steve.Edmonds@nga.org.uk)



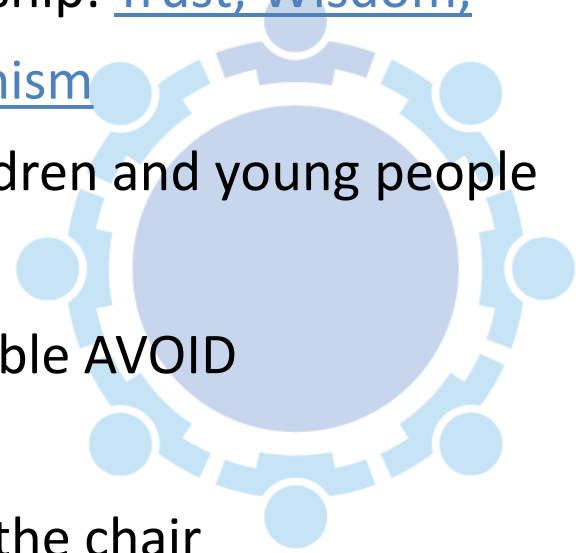
**Good governance =  
Ethical governance +  
Accountable governance +  
Effective governance**

# Ethical governance and leadership

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

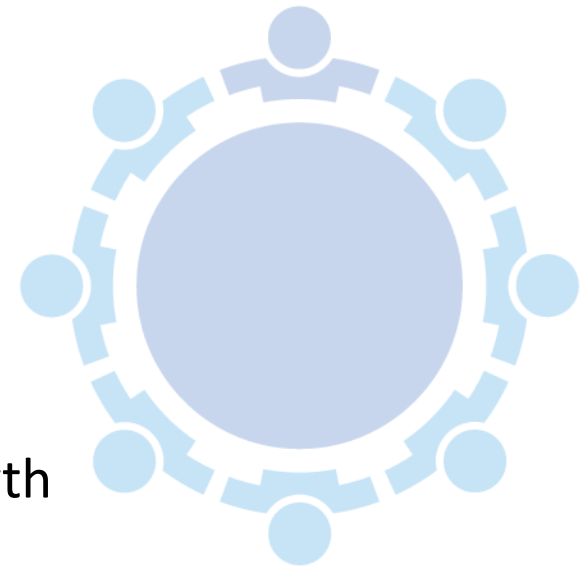
***“No crooks; no cronies; no cowards”***

- Put into practice the Nolan principles: the 7 principles of public life
  - Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness;  
Honesty; Leadership
  - Ethical Framework for Educational leadership: Trust, Wisdom, Kindness, Justice, Service, Courage, Optimism
- Decisions made in the best interest of all children and young people
- What about the interests of the institution?
- 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
- Improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
- Teaching to the test: stress for KS2; exam factories for KS4
- Broad and balanced curriculum & extra curricula offer
- KS 5 options – including at other institutions
- Executive pay
- Staff welfare & workload
- Use of evidence vs what is fashionable
- Collaboration & partnership: empires & growth



# Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

1. **SELFLESSNESS** School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. **INTEGRITY** School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. **OBJECTIVITY** School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. **ACCOUNTABILITY** School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **OPENNESS** School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **HONESTY** School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. **LEADERSHIP** School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do.

Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **TRUST** *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*  
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **WISDOM** *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*  
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.
- c. **KINDNESS** *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*  
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- d. **JUSTICE** *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*  
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
- e. **SERVICE** *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*  
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.
- f. **COURAGE** *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*  
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
- g. **OPTIMISM** *leaders are positive and encouraging*  
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent

education to change the world  
for the better.



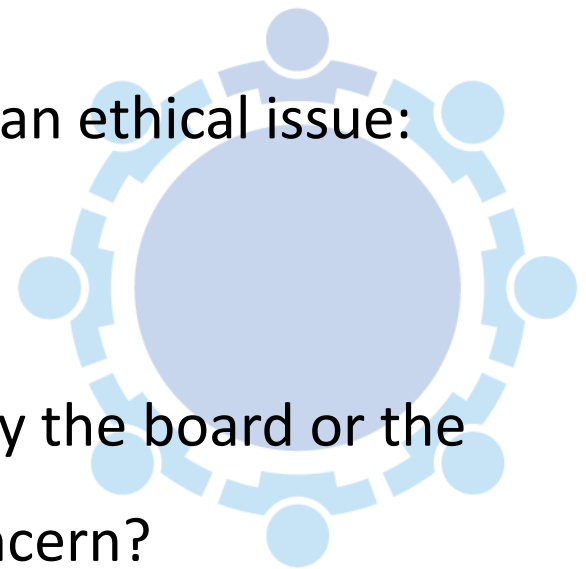
# Discuss

What are your school's/trust's values?

Does the way you deal with these issues fit with those values and ethos?

When did your governing board last debate an ethical issue: what was it and was it resolved?

When did you last challenge the way the way the board or the school does things because of an ethical concern?



# *Become a pathfinder for the Framework*

The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education is designed to give busy, devoted and distracted school leaders and governing boards the chance to look at what underpins the decisions we make. We hope that you find it useful and thought-provoking and it will make our schools truly places where the next generation of ethical leaders may grow.

## Great reasons to be a pathfinder:

- Improve your school's ethical foundation
- Access to pathfinder resources and support
- Networking with similar-thinking schools: invited to attend two free events
- Lead the way as an exemplar of ethical leadership

## Pathfinders will be required to:

- Commit to complete one of the 'paths' to explore ethical leadership; or do something else of your own choosing
- Respond to two light touch surveys to provide written feedback on your progress

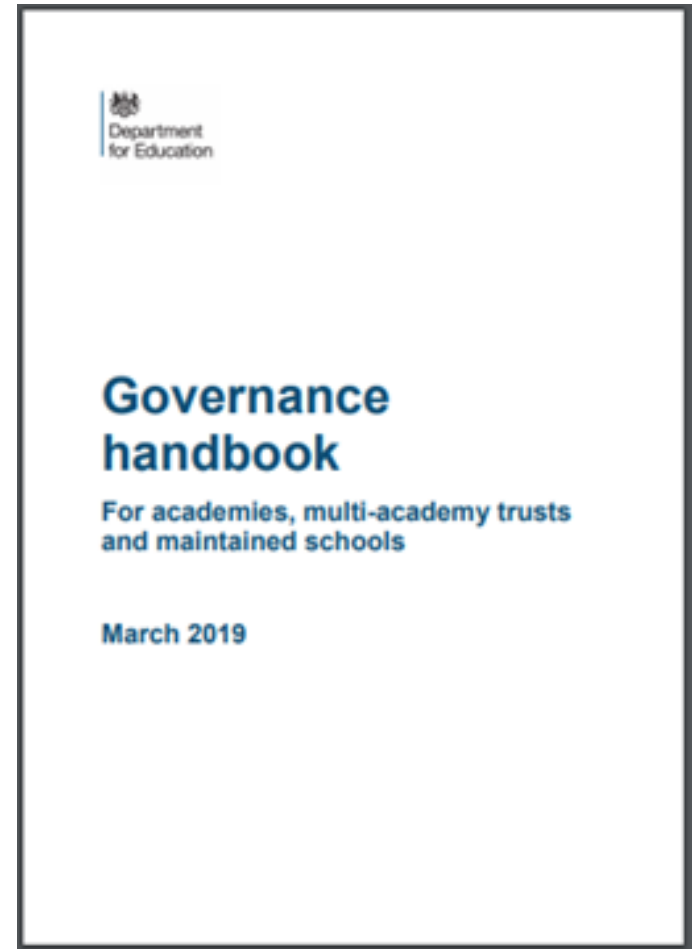
## Submitting your interest:

In order to receive your resource pack, please register your interest with NGA – email [ethicalschools@nga.org.uk](mailto:ethicalschools@nga.org.uk)

# The core functions of school governance

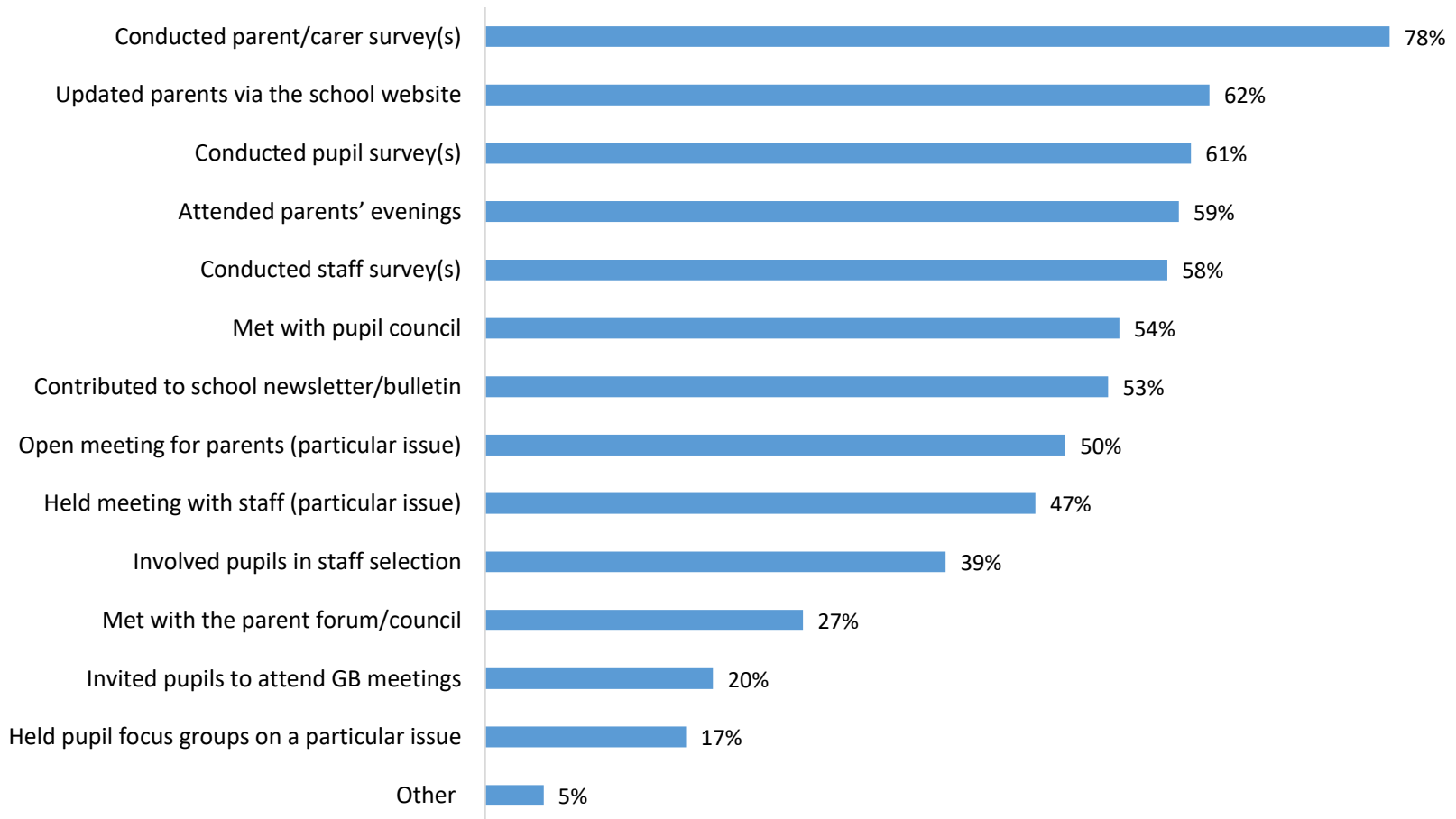
In all types of schools, governing boards (GBs) have four core functions:

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 of staff;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. Ensuring decisions take into account the views and experiences of stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff and the community)



# Accountable governance

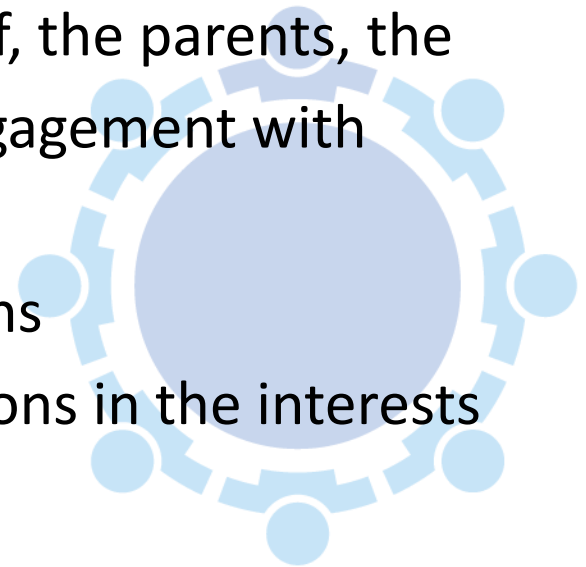
## What strategies has the governing board employed to engage with stakeholders in the past year?





# 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(s) - 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



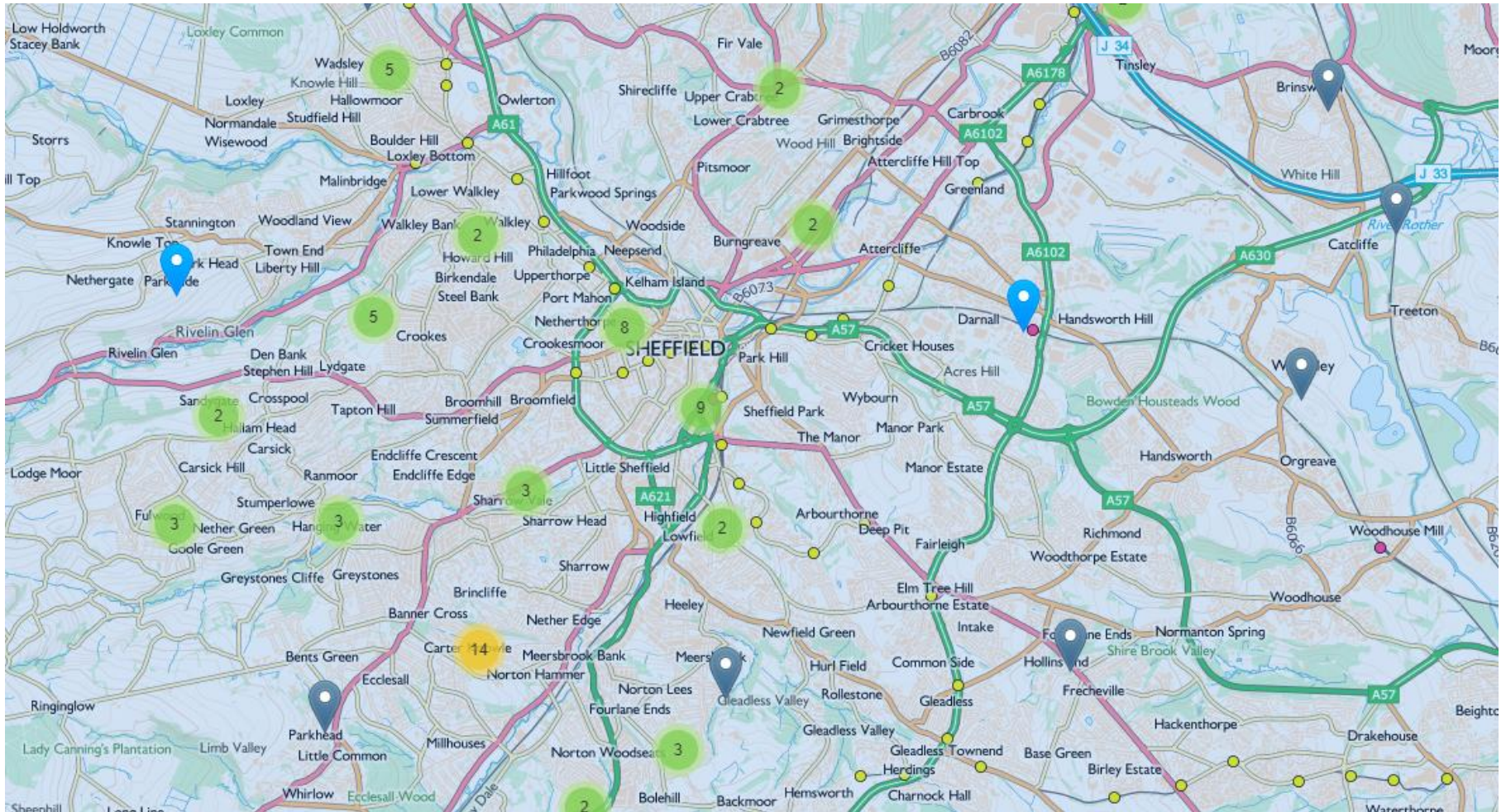
# The right people round the table

- What skills do you need? You also need time & commitment
- Inspiring Governance is a free online recruitment service (funded by the DfE) which connects volunteers interested in becoming governors and trustees with schools that need them
- You can use the Inspiring Governance website to register your vacancies & make contact with local volunteers [www.inspiringgovernance.org](http://www.inspiringgovernance.org)
- Enquiries to 020 7566 4882 or [enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org](mailto:enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org)
- NGA is working in partnership with the charity Education & Employers, so that all governors and trustees recruited through Inspiring Governance receive 12 months free support from NGA, including e-learning
- Everyone on Board: campaign to increase diversity

inspiring  
governance

The school governance  
recruitment and support service





## Everyone on Board – governing board diversity



Watch the film and learn more at [nga.org.uk/everyone-on-board](http://nga.org.uk/everyone-on-board)

# Educators on Board



Championing  
Educators on  
Board



# FREE training & support available

- free copy of an NGA induction guide “Welcome to Governance” or “Welcome to a Multi-Academy Trust”
- Access to a dedicated support telephone line, staffed by professional advisers, for Inspiring Governance governors and trustees
- If you prefer to email your question, you can email [inspiringgovernance@nga.org.uk](mailto:inspiringgovernance@nga.org.uk)
- Access to the NGA website, including the on-line guidance centre and on-line magazine
- Weekly members e-newsletter & monthly “Hot Topics” for new IG governors and trustees



## Develop your governance skills and knowledge

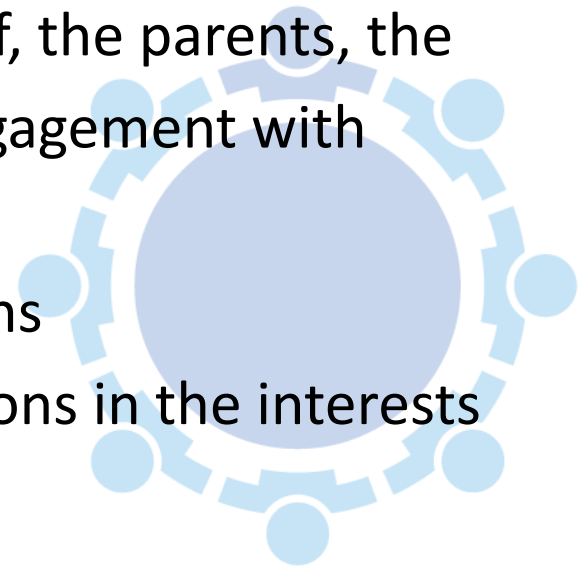
Key topics: induction; strategy; team work; assessment; staffing; financial oversight; effective governance; compliance; collaboration, and much more.

## Benefits

- Eight in-depth interactive induction modules
- Over 50 CPD accredited e-learning modules
- A certificate of achievement with every module
- Secure access – 24 hours, 7 days a week
- Multi-device access – desktops, tablets and smartphones
- Tracked learning – revisit content, take a break or pick up where you left off
- A dedicated support service
- NGA governing board members can purchase Learning Link at discounted prices.  
Call 0121 237 4600 or [learninglink@nga.org.uk](mailto:learninglink@nga.org.uk)

# Eight elements of effective governance

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# Development programmes: don't miss out



- Chairs programmes is free with Leading Governance: funded by DfE now for 2 places for each GB: development worth £1000
- Clerks programmes cost £75 per delegate and is accredited by the ICOSA: the Institute for Governance
- Clerks and chairs programme cohorts in Sheffield starting in September
- **Register : [bit.ly/NGA-LG](https://bit.ly/NGA-LG) or email: [leading.governance@nga.org.uk](mailto:leading.governance@nga.org.uk)**
- DfE is also paying £2000 for each GB that governs more than one school

# Succession planning

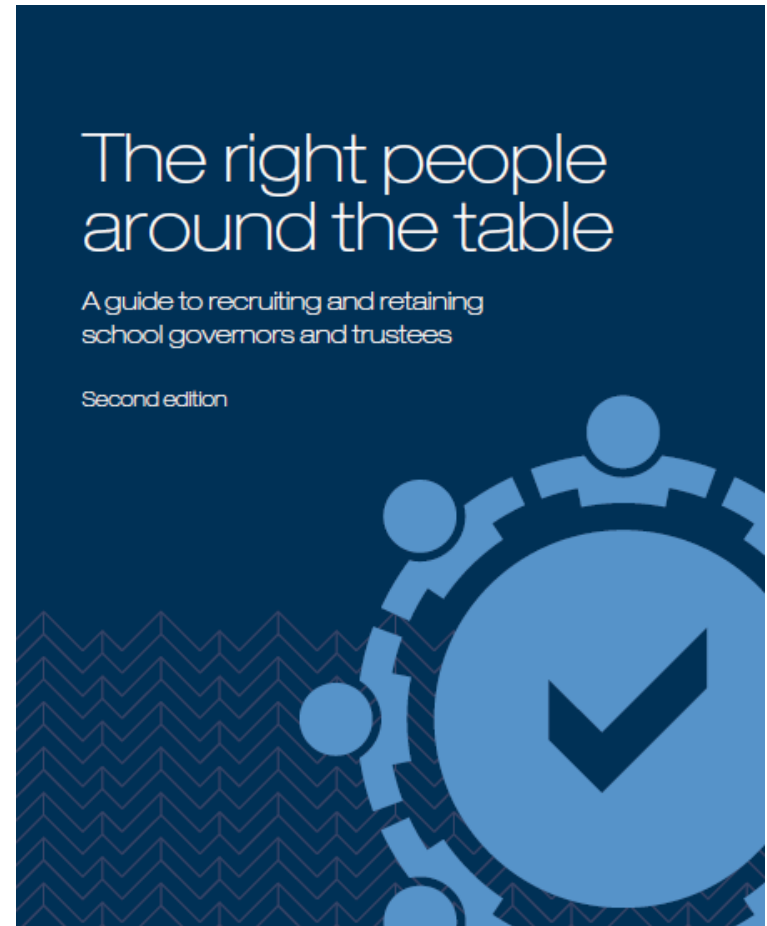


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Governance  
Association

**inspiring  
governance**  
The school governance  
network and support service

**future  
chairs**  
The national coalition  
for school boards

Funded by  
  
Department  
for Education



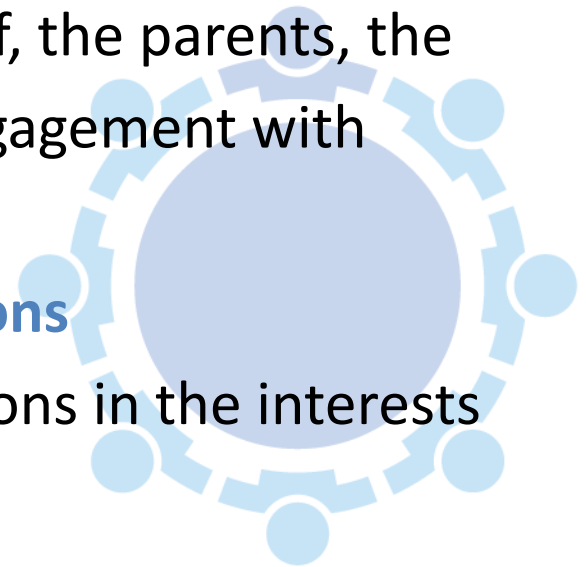
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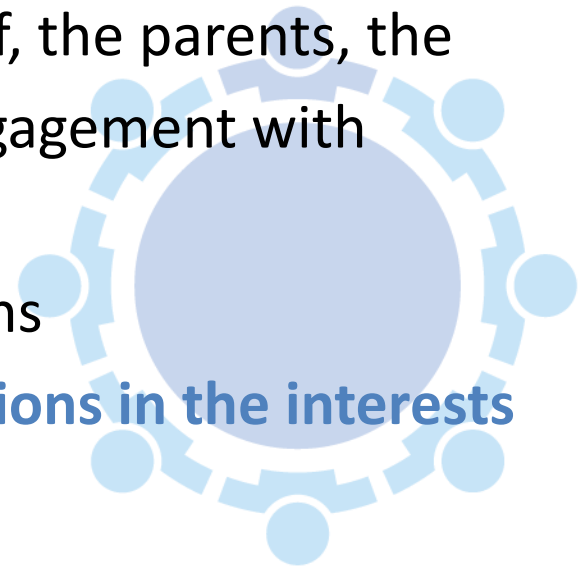
# Collaboration, challenge & support

**What governing boards  
should expect from school  
leaders and what school  
leaders should expect from  
governing boards**



# Eight elements of effective governance

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# The offer for pupils

Has the governing board had a conversation on curriculum?

1. What is our curriculum rationale?
2. What are the key curriculum drivers in this school?
3. Does the curriculum across the school promote its values & ethos?
4. How do we ensure our pupils receive a broad and balanced education?
  - Including an appropriate balance in terms of subjects?
5. How do we know that the curriculum meets the particular needs of all our pupils?
6. How do we ensure students gain a) the knowledge and b) the skills they need and c) develop appropriate attitudes to enable them to flourish in & outside school?
7. If there were no rules, would you change the curriculum?
  - If so, what's stopping you?
8. How do you ensure that curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural & physical development?

# Creating a strategy to turn 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

What is the vision?

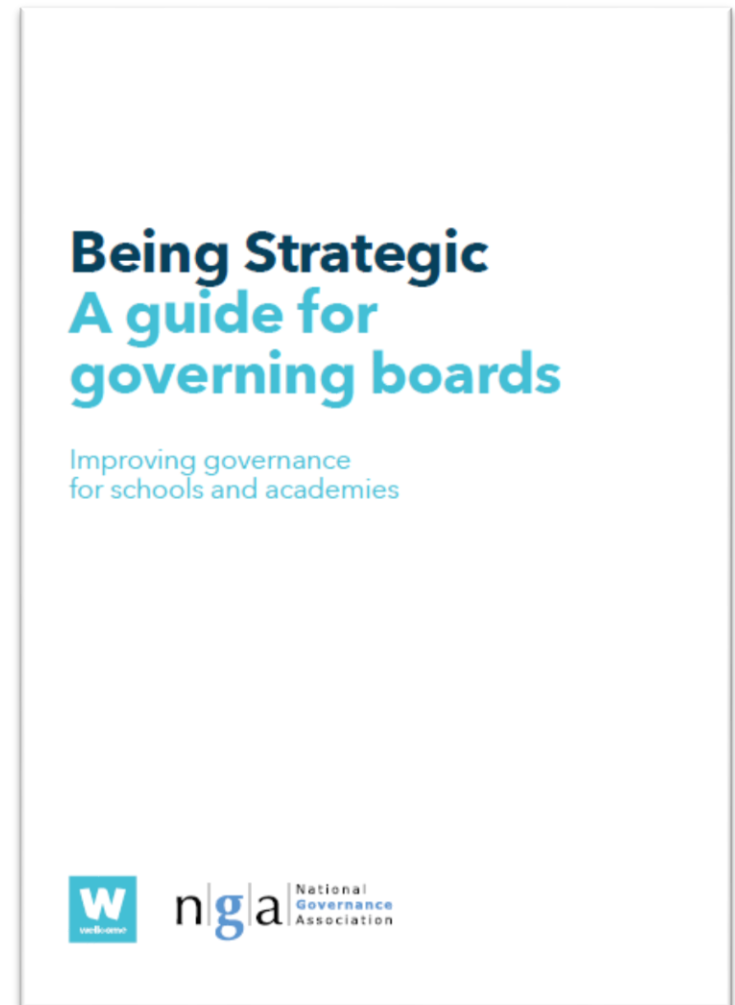
Where are we now?

How do we get there?

How do we know if we are getting there?

Do we measure what we value?

**Take control of your own destiny**



# Where we are now: consider challenges

- **Funding:** moving towards a funding formula/ sustainability of small schools / value for money / school business management / performance related pay / efficiencies vs sufficiency
- **Standards:** raising the bar and closing the gap / changing qualifications and metrics / quality CDP
- **Determining the curriculum:** resourcing the offer
- **Recruiting and retaining staff:** culture; workload & flexible working
- **Support and collaboration:** proliferation of players; changing structure; added complexity with teaching school alliances
- **Strength of governance & leadership:** Size / composition / governor skills/ recruitment & succession planning/ review effectiveness and structures



# Deciding the vision

The governing board determines **the ethos** and the **vision**.

The **vision** should:

- Build on your school's values
- Describe what your school will look like in 3 to 5 years' time
- Describe what the children will have left the school having learned
- Be developed with the school community: take account of stakeholder views – staff, pupils, parents
- Be agreed by the GB (who is that in a MAT?)
- Communicated to and owned by the school community

# Achieving the vision

In order to achieve the vision, it is necessary to identify:

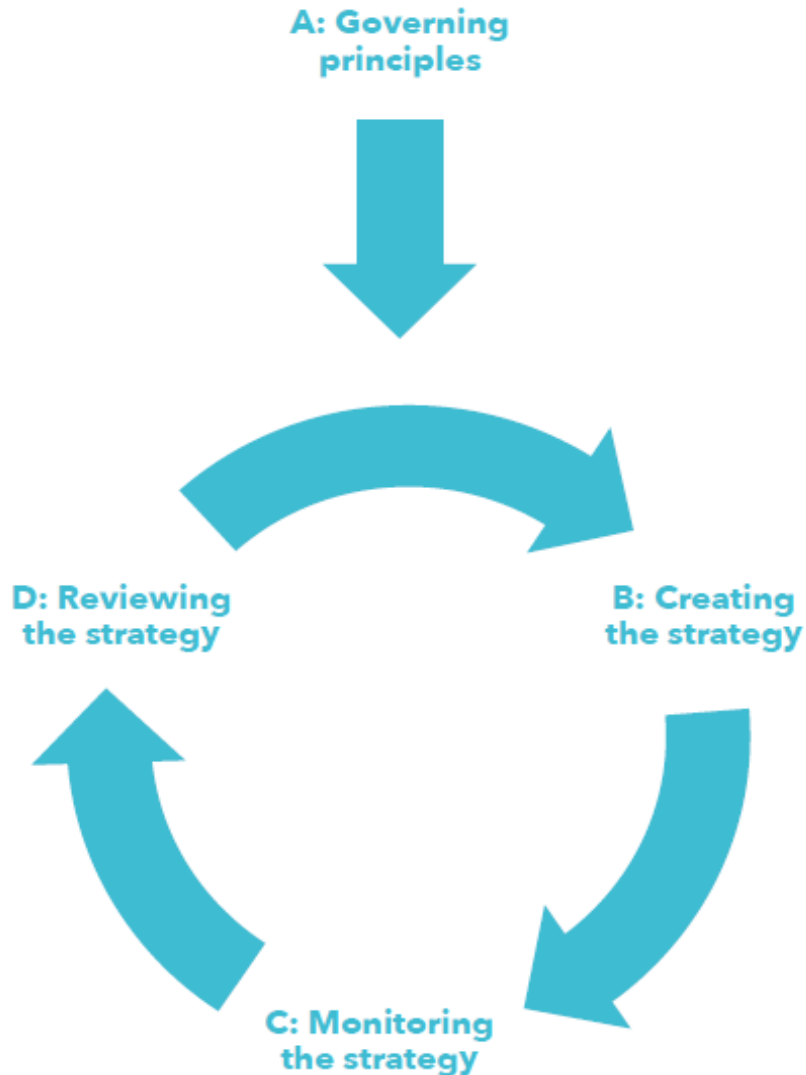
- Where the school is now (through self evaluation)
- Where you want the school to be (the vision) and
- How the school will get there (by determining the priorities to be pursued and targets to be achieved)

which is the ...



- Hold an annual strategy session
- Communicate, review and update

## Four stages of the annual strategic cycle



- But this is not about having a document for its own sake
- It is about knowing what you want to achieve & putting resources to do that
- Use the strategic priorities to set your agenda for GB meetings & monitoring visits
- Be creative: think differently; have fun; do not let yourself be limited
- It is not set in concrete – you may need to amend it

# From mission to results

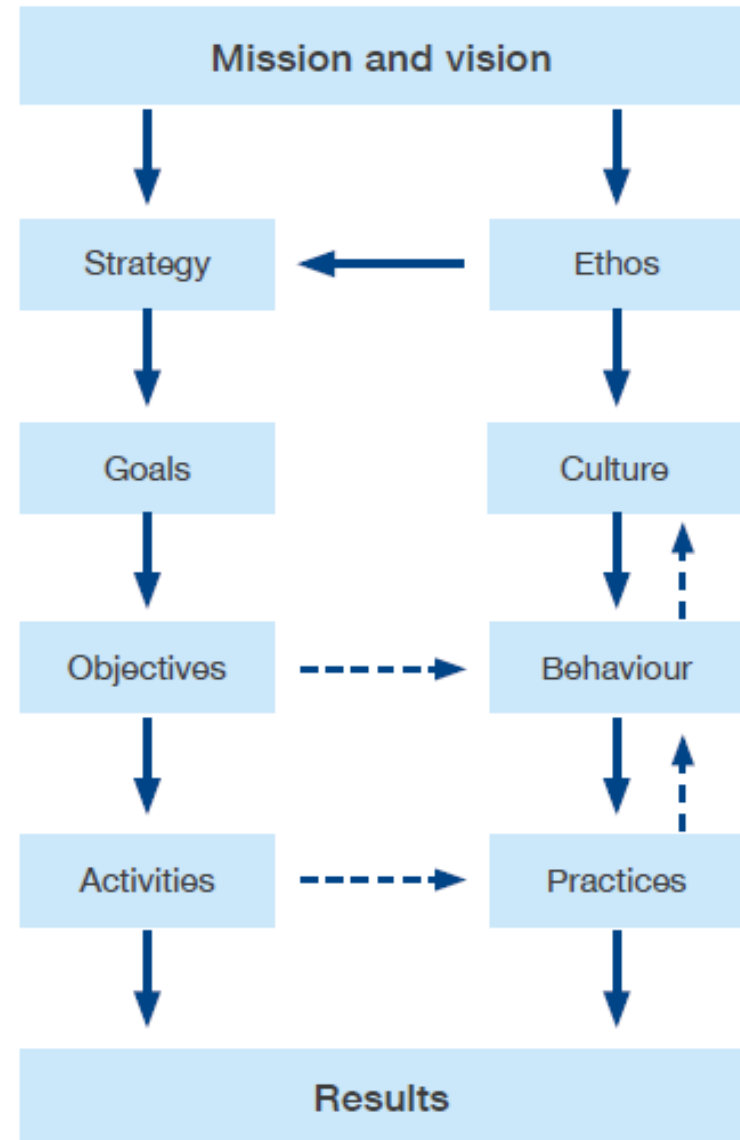
Your organisation's values must permeate and inform all of this

**“A strategy that is at odds with a company's culture is doomed.”**

Attributed to Peter Drucker and popularised in 2006 by Mark Fields, president of Ford Motor Company

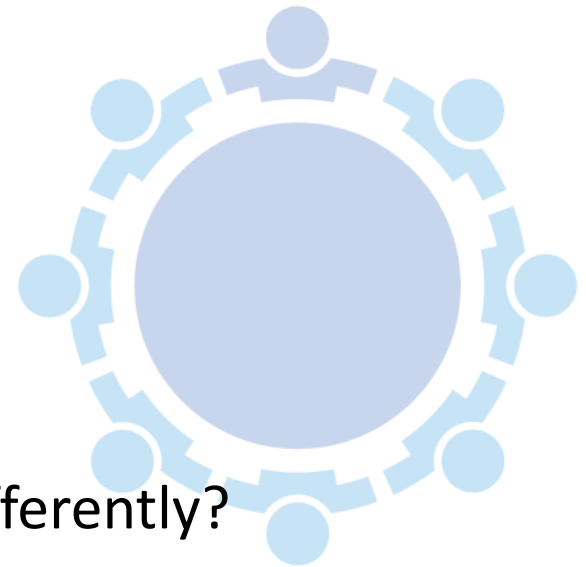
The culture - the way we do things round here - is co-created by the Board and senior leaders

The Board must ensure the culture is healthy



# Table discussions

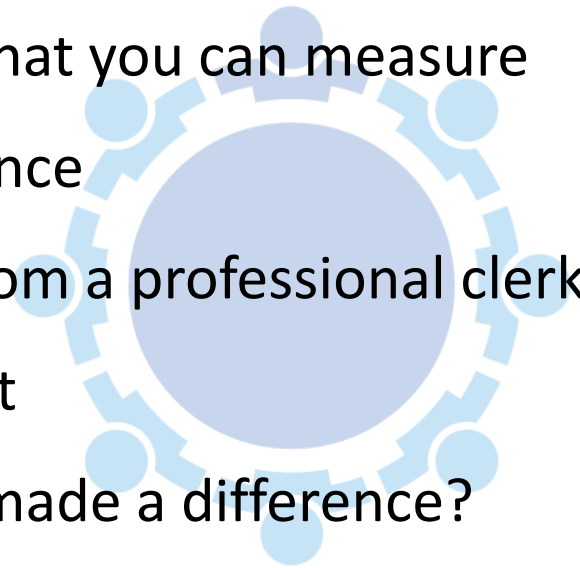
1. Do you have a strategy? (as opposed to a SDP)
2. Do you have an annual strategy review day with your SLT?
3. How did you decide it? Who did you involve?
4. What are your priorities?
5. How are you measuring them?
6. Are you making progress?
7. What has changed for pupils?
8. What worked and what might you do differently?



# What do you need to do to make a difference?

- Ethical governance & leadership: values & ethos
- A vision & an understanding of what good looks like
- The right culture
- The right strategy: and resources deployed to achieve it
- The right measures: but don't just value what you can measure
- The right people: commitment & competence
- The right structures & processes: advice from a professional clerk
- The willingness to review, reflect and adapt

Check at the end of each meeting: what has made a difference?



# School governance: challenges for the year ahead

1. **Growing governance:** setting vision, ethos, culture and strategic priorities in order to deliver the best education possible for pupils
2. **Inspiring governance:** recruiting volunteers & developing their knowledge
3. **Leading governance:** the chairs' role, time & succession planning
4. **Trusting but challenging governance:** maintaining respectful relationships with the senior leader while holding them to account
5. **Engaging governance:** how do other players make their voice heard?
6. **Financial governance:** ensuring your school/trust survives and thrives
7. **Ensuring a broad & balanced education:** achieving the best for all pupils
8. **Reviewing governance:** assessing your impact & doing even better
9. **Collaborative governance:** do you consider all pupils in the community?  
Look outwards, not upwards, to learn & improve; a group of schools