



Ofsted

A WALK THROUGH OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR GOVERNORS & TRUSTEES

Spring 2026

Aims

thank you!

This session will outline the key changes to inspection, including:

- the new 'evaluation areas' and five-point grading system
- the increased focus on inclusion
- expectations of governance (governors & trustees) as part of the 'leadership and governance' judgement
- how the Toolkit can support governors in understanding and evidencing school effectiveness
- some practical tips and resources to support schools



📁 NGA - Being Strategic - June 2023

📄 challenging-questions-20241120

📄 DBE Training for Govenors (Ofsted) - January 2026 - SLIDES

📄 discussion_prompts_for_governors_and_trustees_-_eef_guide_to_the_pupil_premium_v.1.0.0

🌐 Effective governance resources - GOV.UK

📄 Governor Questions OFSTED Jan 2026

📄 Schools_inspection_toolkit - updated 5.11.25

📄 send-link-role-20240226

📄 Special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities_ guidance for school governing boards - GOV.UK

📄 What we expect GB-Heads 4pp - (APR2022) AW

📄 What-we-expect-ATB-CEO-4pp-(APR2022)-AW

DOWNLOADS



Main changes

New report card format: Each school gets a summary report showing strengths and areas to improve, not just one overall grade.

Five-point grading scale: Ratings now range from 'urgent improvement' to 'exceptional'.

Separate inclusion judgement: Inclusion has its own grading – covering SEND, disadvantaged and well-being.

New inspection toolkit: Clear criteria for each judgement area replace the old handbook. Useful for self-evaluation.

Full inspections only: No more short inspections – all visits include graded judgements.

Increased monitoring visits: Schools with an area graded 'needs attention' within 24 months – 'urgent improvement' to receive termly visits

No more deep dives: Inspections look broadly across the school, not just a few subjects.

Increased collaboration: Inspectors work more closely with leaders through joint planning, learning walks and feedback meetings.

Optional nominee role: Schools can choose a nominee to support and liaise during inspection.

Greater focus on staff well-being: Inspectors must finish by 5pm and show consideration for workload. An extra inspector on day 1 (day 2 in small schools).

Evaluation areas and report cards

The core evaluation areas that are graded on the 5-point scale for all schools are now:

- inclusion
- curriculum and teaching
- achievement
- attendance and behaviour
- personal development and well-being
- leadership and governance

‘Early years’ and ‘post-16 provision’ are separate evaluation areas for schools where this provision is relevant.

Inspectors will consider **the experience and progress of pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND** within each evaluation area.

Primary School

Address: School Lane, Old Town, Home County, HC4 5DF

Unique reference number (URN): EG12345

Inspection report: 25 June 2024





<https://www.youtube.com/@Ofstednews>

NEW

Renewed education framework training October 2025



10:31

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Welcome and introduction
from Lee Owston, National



7:53

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Address from Sir Martyn
Oliver, His Majesty's Chief



9:49

EDUCATION 3 DAYS AGO

Schools toolkit familiarisation
webinar



1:07:01

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Pre-learning education
inspection framework training



1:19:24

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Lead inspector - main
renewed education



1:23:12

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Lead inspector - main
renewed education



1:33:05

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Team inspector - main
renewed education



39:23

EDUCATION 1 DAY AGO

Team inspector - main
renewed education



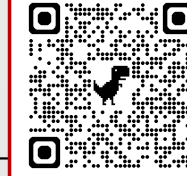
<https://www.gotostage.com/channel/ofsted-school-inspector-training-videos>

NEW



<https://www.gotostage.com/channel/ofsted-school-inspector-training-videos>

Also



<https://www.youtube.com/@Ofstednews/videos>

Underpinning skills programme (USP) modules

Different types of schools:
Key reminders

45:22

26 DAYS AGO

USP: different types of school

Flexi-schooling and
different approaches
to education

45:45

26 DAYS AGO

USP: flexi-schooling and
different approaches to

Case sampling in schools

18:08

EDUCATION 26 DAYS AGO

USP: case sampling in schools

Working with a nominee on a school
inspection

10:04

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Working with a nominee on a
school inspection

Speaking with
children, pupils and
learners on
inspection

20:40

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Speaking with children /
pupils / learners on

Getting the most from
preparation time:
Refresher of inspection
fundamentals

10:35

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Getting the most from
preparation time: Refresher

Giving and receiving feedback:
Refresher of inspection fundamentals

20:22

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Giving and receiving
feedback: Refresher of

The research that
underpins...

29:36

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

The research that underpins
the framework

Managing difficult conversations:
Refresher of inspection fundamentals

17:59

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Managing difficult
conversations: Refresher of

Time management, including making the most of
reflection time: Refresher of inspection
fundamentals

6:36

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Time management including
making the most of reflection

Professional curiosity in our
role as inspectors:
Refresher of inspection
fundamentals

18:15

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Professional curiosity in our
role as inspectors: Refresher

Responding and
learning through
change

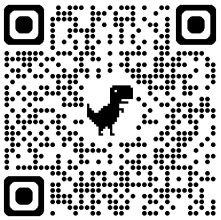
14:31

EDUCATION 6 DAYS AGO

Responding and learning
through change

When will
we be
inspected?





When can schools expect their next inspection?

Inside the toolkit...gathering evidence

State-funded school inspection toolkit

This toolkit sets out the areas that will be evaluated and graded on inspections of state-funded schools under sections 5 and 8 of the Education Act 2005. It can also be used by leaders to support self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

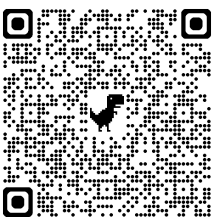
UPDATED

Updated: 5 November 2025 | Version: 1.1

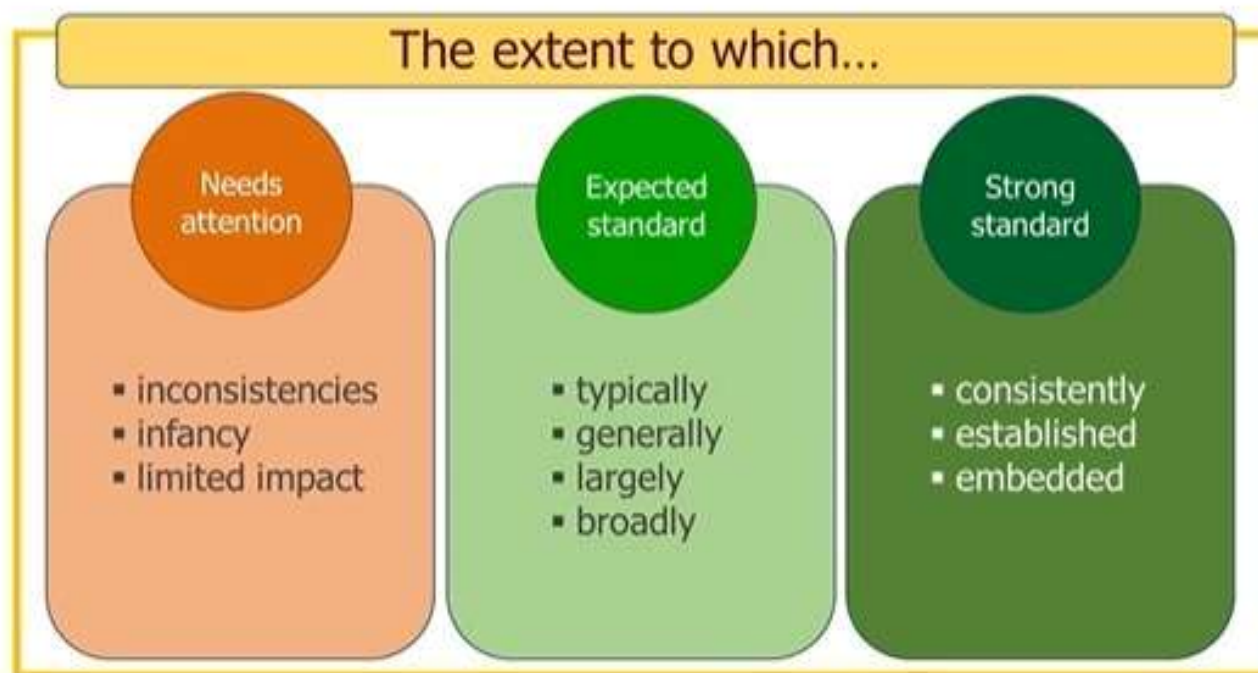
- Inspectors focus on the impact of leaders' systems and processes and how these support continuous improvement.
- They will gather first-hand evidence of how the school typically operates through professional conversations, learning walks, case sampling, talking with pupils and looking at pupils' work.
- Inspectors will only ask to see documentation linked to statutory duties or documents that already exist as part of normal business.
- Inspectors do not need information presented in any particular format and leaders do not need to produce additional paperwork.
- Inspectors weigh strengths and areas for development proportionately so that the overall evaluation is fair, balanced and rooted in what pupils experience day-to-day.

Questions to consider:

- How do we gain assurance through first-hand evidence, for example, visits, talking with pupils and looking at pupils' learning?
- Are we confident that the systems we have genuinely improve pupils' experiences, not just exist in policy?
- Do we ever ask leaders for information that increases workload unnecessarily?
- How do we make sure our monitoring focuses on the difference it is making for pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND?



From evidence-gathering prompts to grading



Safeguarding – met or not met

- Safeguarding must be effective and rooted in a culture where concerns are noticed early, shared early and acted on promptly.
- Inspectors will check statutory compliance such as the single central record but will also test lived culture rather than paper systems.
- Governors do not need operational detail but do need to be confident that safeguarding decisions are timely, proportionate and make a difference.
- Effective safeguarding is built on relationships, trust and staff who notice, question and act.

Questions to consider:

- Have all staff and governors had relevant training?
- How do we know that safeguarding culture is lived daily and not just written in policy?
- Do pupils know who they can talk to when they feel worried or unsafe?
- How often does the safeguarding governor meet with the DSL? How is information from those meetings reported back to the full governing body without breaching confidentiality? Does the safeguarding governor regularly check the single central record and staff training records?

Inclusion

- Inclusion is strengthened in the new toolkit. It has a separate section and also threads through the other evaluation areas.
- Inspectors will examine how needs are identified early and how support is targeted and builds independence, not dependence
- Inspectors will reflect on whether pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND experience an ambitious curriculum and experience success over time. They will use case sampling to gain an understanding of children's lived experiences.
- Governors should understand how school decisions reduce barriers and ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND can thrive

Questions to consider:

- How well do we understand the actual barriers pupils face at our schools?
- How do we know that support helps pupils become more independent over time?
- How confident are we that pupils who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those known to (or previously known to) social care and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing experience an ambitious curriculum?

The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium



The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium

Updated digital guide to support you to develop and refine your Pupil Premium strategy.

educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/using-pupil-premium

New
resource



The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium

Discussion prompts for governors and trustees to support an effective strategy

As a school governor or trustee, you have an important role to play in supporting and challenging the leadership team at your school to improve outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. How the school spends its Pupil Premium funding is an important part of this role.

Did you know?

The Department for Education (DfE) requires every school to review and publish an updated Pupil Premium strategy statement every academic year before 31 December.

How you can support your school to plan, monitor, implement and sustain an effective strategy

Your school's Pupil Premium strategy should be based on analysis of internal data as well as the best available external evidence. This will help your leadership team to accurately diagnose eligible pupils' particular needs so they can identify appropriate solutions using evidence.

We recommend all schools appoint a dedicated Pupil Premium governor who will have conversations with their senior teams to:

- Analyse how Pupil Premium is spent in the setting using the [DfE's menu of approaches](#);
- Evaluate the impact of spending on targeted groups; and
- Monitor the attainment and progress of eligible pupils compared with their classmates.



All governors should champion strategic Pupil Premium spending by asking questions and initiating purposeful discussions. To help, we've put together some discussion prompts based on our five-point plan to planning, monitoring, implementing, and sustaining an effective strategy from our [Guide to the Pupil Premium](#).

Useful reading



FOR FURTHER SUPPORT
The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium and its accompanying evidence brief



FOR FURTHER SUPPORT
The Department for Education's guidance on using Pupil Premium funding



The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium

Discussion prompts for governors and trustees to support an effective strategy

Discussion prompts

Indicators of good practice

	Discussion prompts	Indicators of good practice
STEP 1 Diagnose your pupils' needs	<p>What do current socio-economic attainment gaps look like?</p> <p>What specific challenges do disadvantaged pupils face within your school?</p> <p>What could be done to further support those who are higher attaining?</p> <p>What does behaviour, attendance, and exclusion data look like for this group of pupils?</p>	Schools are aware of how their setting compares with national averages. Leaders can identify specific barriers to attainment for Pupil Premium-eligible pupils informed by data covering academic outcomes, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, SEND, and access to resources.
STEP 2 Use strong evidence to support your strategy	<p>To what extent is research evidence used to inform choices for how to manage Pupil Premium spending?</p> <p>How does your Pupil Premium strategy promote high quality teaching across your school?</p>	Schools use a broad range of evidence to lead decision making (see examples in our evidence brief).
STEP 3 Develop your strategy	<p>Does your school's Pupil Premium strategy take a three-year view?</p> <p>Is your school's strategy updated and published on the school website annually by 31 December using the DfE strategy template?</p> <p>Which staff members have responsibility for developing and implementing the strategy?</p>	<p>The school's Pupil Premium strategy is updated and re-published annually.</p> <p>Leaders involve all relevant stakeholders in strategy development (including SLT, SENDCo, and teaching and learning leads) in this process.</p>
STEP 4 Implement your strategy	<p>What are the current priorities outlined in your school's Pupil Premium strategy?</p> <p>Are those priorities aligned with other school development plans and current practices?</p> <p>Does the strategy provide the necessary professional development and support for staff to implement new approaches successfully?</p>	<p>Strategies are aligned to school development priorities and professional development planning.</p> <p>High quality teaching sits at the heart of the school's strategy.</p> <p>Leaders are encouraged to focus on doing a few things well rather than introducing too much change too quickly.</p>
STEP 5 Monitor and evaluate your strategy	<p>What sources of internal data are used to monitor the impact of your school's Pupil Premium spending?</p> <p>What are the recent successes or challenges that have emerged as a result of your strategy?</p>	<p>School leaders monitor what is working well and make iterative changes as appropriate.</p> <p>Governors and trustees review and support these activities.</p>



Digital First

In the downloads folder

Guidance

Special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities: guidance for school governing boards

Updated 3 February 2025

Contents

[Purpose of this guidance](#)

[The role and responsibilities of the governing board](#)

[SEN and disability checklist](#)

[Use of data](#)

[Further resources](#)

Checklist

Governors and trustees will wish to be assured that:

- the school promotes an inclusive culture
- there is effective communication and engagement between the school and parents of pupils with SEN and disabilities
- parents are involved closely in keeping the school's general SEN and disability policy and practice under review
- the pupil voice is central to decisions about support for those with SEN and disabilities, at both individual and school level
- funding, including SEN funding, is allocated and spent effectively
- the school works effectively with the local authority in reviewing the SEN and disability provision available locally and developing the SEN and disabilities Local Offer
- staff have the expertise needed to support those with SEN and disabilities and that the school has access to external specialist skills where required

Governors and trustees should be satisfied with how the school:

- identifies a pupil with SEN or a disability and how it uses the 'graduated approach' to respond to that need
- monitors the progress and development of pupils with SEN and disabilities
- supports pupils in Preparing for Adulthood at each age and stage, and monitors outcomes and destinations - some tools and resources are available from the [National Development Team for Inclusion \(NDTi\)](#).

Governors and trustees of mainstream schools should also ensure that a qualified teacher or the head teacher is designated as the SENCO and that they:

- achieve the relevant mandatory qualification within 3 years of appointment
- have sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in a similar way to other important strategic roles within the school
- are empowered to support high quality outcomes for pupils with SEN and disabilities

Schools have a duty to prepare and regularly update:

- a SEN Information Report
- equality information - information to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- equality objectives
- an accessibility plan (setting out how the school plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information)

Governors and trustees should also be familiar with the school's SEN and disability policy and ensure that it is reviewed regularly (working with parents and pupils) to reflect changing needs of the school community.

Governors and trustees will wish to be assured that these documents help the school to:

- understand the impact of its policies, practices and decisions on different groups of pupils
- identify areas of inequality that may need to be addressed
- help plan for the school to be increasingly inclusive over time

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance for schools on [Publishing equality information](#) has more information.



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Updated 3 February 2025

In the
downloads
folder

NGA
For Schools & Trusts

Topics Knowledge Cen

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Views My NGA

Back

SEND
SEND link governor/trustee role description

Use our role description to learn how to act as the governing board's SEND specialist and champion the needs of pupils with SEND at board level.

Task & templates
28/09/2024



Do we have a designated SEND link governor?

Contents

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How can we check?



Curriculum and teaching

- Inspectors will consider whether curriculum sequencing supports pupils to know more and remember more, at a pace that supports secure learning
- Inspectors will look at how teaching supports understanding and gives pupils time to practise, apply and consolidate knowledge
- Inspectors will reflect on how additional adults support pupils and whether this develops independence rather than reliance
- Governors should ask leaders how they know the curriculum works well, and how they test that pupils retain knowledge

Questions to consider:

- How do we know that pupils remember important content over time?
- How do we know the curriculum works (e.g. across our school – or in mixed-age classes)?
- How do we know that our curriculum is inclusive – and meets the needs of all pupils?
- What do pupils say about how adults help them when learning is difficult?

Achievement

- Inspectors will consider whether pupils gain secure foundational knowledge, vocabulary and subject content needed for long-term success
- Inspectors will look at pupils' learning in books, in lessons and hold pupil conversations
- Ofsted acknowledges that in small schools, published data is less reliable because of cohort volatility so first-hand evidence carries greater weight
- Governors need to know the school's published data but also understand its limitations. They should have an understanding of how leaders have designed and implemented a curriculum that enables all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEND, to make secure progress from their starting points

Questions to consider:

- How do we know pupils are achieving well?
- What do our monitoring activities tell us about progress?
- How well do different groups of pupils achieve?
- What are the school's priorities for improvement – and how do we know things are improving? Ask about impact...



What is achievement?

- Securing foundational knowledge (including reading) and the knowledge needed for more complex tasks
- Progressing from starting points to develop broad and deep knowledge across the curriculum
- Producing high-quality work
- Achieving well in national tests and examinations
- Being prepared for next steps



'Achievement' evaluation area and how we use data: what schools need to know

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Inspection Data Summary Report



**STOP
PRESS**

IDSR release: 4 November 2025

This release contains:

- provisional key stage 2 data
- spring school census data
- provisional phonics data
- final exclusions data
- 1-term absence data
- developments throughout IDSR for the renewed framework



UPDATED

21 November 2025

- Provisional key stage 4 performance data for 2025
- Provisional key stage 4 destinations data for 2024
- Provisional key stage 5 destinations data for 2024
- Further to feedback from our users, we have introduced the function to be able to PDF and print the IDSR. Just right-click on the IDSR.



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5 December 2025

- revised key stage 2 performance data for 2025
- provisional 16 to 18 performance & L3 VA data for 2025
- final phonics data for 2025
- 2 term absence data for academic year 2024/25
- final multiplication tables check data for 2025

Example Primary CONTEXT

	2023	2024	2025
School number on roll	Well above average 541	Well above average 563	Well above average 552
School % FSM6	Above average 41	Above average 36	Above average 37
Local area % FSM6	Close to average 31	Close to average 31	Close to average 31
School % SEN support	Close to average 13	Close to average 16	Close to average 15
Local area % SEN support	Close to average 16	Close to average 15	Close to average 13
School % EHC plan	Close to average 4	Close to average 3	Close to average 5
Local area % EHC plan	Close to average 3	Close to average 3	Close to average 5
School % EAL	Close to average 23	Close to average 24	Close to average 24
Local area % EAL	Close to average 19	Close to average 20	Close to average 22
School % CIN	Well above average 8	Above average 7	Close to average 5
Local area % CIN	Well above average 8	Well above average 8	Above average 6
School % stability	Close to average 83	Close to average 78	Close to average 81
School pupil base deprivation	Close to average	Close to average	Close to average
Local area pupil base deprivation	Close to average	Close to average	Close to average
School location deprivation	Close to average	Close to average	Close to average

Type of resourced provision: No resourced provision

Capacity:

Type of SEN provision:

Number of pupils with SEN who are also FSM6 and/or CLA: 37

Example Secondary SEND

SEN primary need	SEN support (63)							Total
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	
Specific Learning Difficulty	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Moderate Learning Difficulty	5	6	2	1	5	1	2	22
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	0	4	3	0	3	1	0	11
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	5	2	0	3	5	0	1	16
Hearing Impairment	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	5
Physical Disability	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Year group totals	13	17	6	7	15	2	3	63

SEN primary need	EHC plan (12)							Total
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	
Moderate Learning Difficulty	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Severe Learning Difficulty	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Physical Disability	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Year group totals	4	2	1	1	4	0	0	12

Attendance and behaviour; personal development and well-being

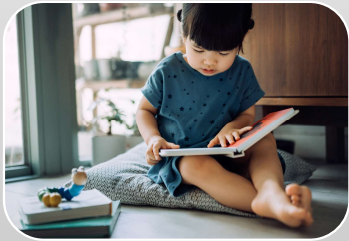
- Inspectors will consider whether pupils attend regularly and whether they feel they belong and are part of a positive learning community where behaviour supports learning
- Inspectors will consider how leaders work with families to remove barriers to attendance, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND
- Inspectors will reflect on whether pupils feel safe, calm and ready to learn and whether routines support this daily for all pupils
- Governors should understand what leaders are doing to strengthen well-being, personal development and resilience across the school

Questions to consider:

- How does our attendance compare to schools nationally? To schools with similar context?
- How do we know pupils feel safe, welcome and able to learn each day?
- What has helped improve attendance, behaviour and well-being?

Early Years

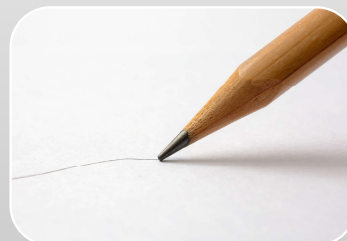
- Inspectors will examine whether early years secures vocabulary, early reading, phonics, purposeful interactions and foundational knowledge that prepares pupils for KS1 and beyond
- Daily story time, exposure to high-quality vocabulary and strong focus on talk are central because these underpin reading fluency and wider success
- Inspectors will consider the quality of continuous provision, how adults interact purposefully with pupils and how independence is developed
- Governors should understand how early years supports curriculum sequencing and provides strong foundations for the whole school



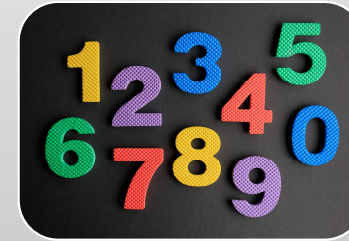
**Word
reading**



Spelling



Handwriting



**Early
mathematics**



**High-quality
interactions**

Leadership and governance

This evaluation area considers:

- whether leaders and those responsible for governance collectively ensure that the school's provision enables every pupil to thrive
- the commitment of leaders and those responsible for governance to raising standards of education and care to improve the lives of all pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being

Inspectors focus on gathering evidence relating to the factors that statutory and non-statutory guidance, professional standards, research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to leadership and governance.

Inside the toolkit... leadership and governance

These factors are:

- having a clear and strategic approach to improvement, in which leaders accurately monitor the school's context and prioritise actions that address the most significant barriers to learning
- managing the school as an organisation effectively, including organising staff strategically and removing barriers and distractions from core classroom activities
- leaders making decisions in the best interests of pupils, including prioritising the experiences and outcomes of the groups listed above
- leaders having a reflective understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and taking effective action to engage the school community to improve and/or to sustain high standards
- having a coherent professional learning programme for all staff that is rooted in a culture of purposeful collaboration, focuses on building collective expertise and enables expert teaching across all subjects and phases
- leaders and those responsible for governance (where relevant) understanding their respective roles and their performance in these roles, in a way that enhances the school's effectiveness
- parents and the school community engaging and participating in a thoughtful and positive way that supports pupils' education
- the responsible body taking into account the workload and well-being of leaders and, in turn, leaders taking into account the workload and well-being of their staff



Inside the toolkit... leadership and governance

Governance

In gathering evidence about governance, inspectors consider the extent to which governors/trustees:

- are knowledgeable about their statutory duties and carry them out effectively
- support and challenge the school's leaders effectively, using the best methods to assure themselves of the quality and impact of different aspects of the school's work
- understand their role as the responsible body, where applicable, in considering and addressing leaders' workload and well-being
- assure themselves that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context and are prioritising the actions for improvement that will have the greatest impact on pupils
- ensure that systems for monitoring and quality assurance are fair, valid and constructive, and provide leaders and staff with high-quality feedback to inform continuous improvement
- hold leaders to account appropriately and effectively for the impact of the school's professional learning programme for staff
- hold leaders to account appropriately and effectively for the school's support and provision for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being

Grading leadership and governance

Needs attention	Expected standard	Strong standard
<p>Leadership and governance are likely to be graded 'needs attention' when the 'expected' standard has not been met.</p> <p>This may include when one or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leaders have a broad awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development, but their actions lack precision and/or do not identify the underlying causes of any weakness and/or have unintended consequences for pupils or particular groups of pupils. ■ Leaders' actions to bring about improvement are largely focused on the right areas, but do not lead to improvement quickly enough. ■ Governors/trustees understand their broad roles and responsibilities but do not typically support and/or challenge leaders well. Their approaches to assuring themselves of the impact of leaders' work do not give them a precise picture of it. ■ Leaders are conscious of the implications any changes to practice may have on staff's workload, but they do not do enough to manage that 	<p>Leadership and governance meet the 'expected standard' when all the following apply:</p> <p>Leaders understand the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They have a clear rationale for their improvement priorities and largely take appropriate action to drive improvement across all key stages and areas of the school's work. If an aspect of the school's provision falls short of the expected standard, this is dealt with quickly and effectively.</p> <p>Governors/trustees ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined, take account of context, and make sure that resources, including digital technologies, are used effectively. They typically support and challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to leaders' and staff well-being and workload.</p> <p>Leaders are role models of high expectations and professionalism. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.</p> <p>Leaders ensure that staff and governors feel valued and involved in the strategic direction of the school. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for them to share perspectives</p>	<p>Leadership and governance meet the 'strong standard' when the 'expected standard' has been met and all the following apply:</p> <p>Leaders ensure that staff and governors feel valued and involved in the strategic direction of the school. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for them to share perspectives and insights and collaborate throughout any change process.</p> <p>Leaders use their detailed and insightful analysis of school performance to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision. They accurately identify, monitor and act on priorities for improvement, leading to consistently strong standards across all areas of the school's work or rapid improvement in any areas where this is not the case.</p> <p>Leaders at all levels make a consistently positive contribution to the school's priorities and develop staff expertise as the key driver of improvement. They allocate enough time for staff to work together to achieve this. Staff understand their role in improving and sustaining standards and make a consistently positive contribution to this.</p>

Grading leadership and governance

Needs attention	Expected standard	Strong standard
<p>workload or to avoid unnecessary burdens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders have a broad programme of professional learning and expertise, but it is overly generic or insufficiently targeted to build expertise (in terms of knowledge, skill and judgement). This limits its impact on the quality of the provision pupils receive. It provides few opportunities for purposeful collaboration or for staff to receive effective feedback on their practice. Leaders have engaged with parents and the local community but this has been limited and/or not targeted appropriately. 	<p>and insights and collaborate throughout any change process.</p> <p>The professional learning and expertise programme is evidence-informed, of high quality and designed to build expertise. It draws on evidence and includes planned opportunities to apply and embed practice to build an effective team of teachers and staff, including ECTs and trainees, where relevant. Leaders protect time for professional learning.</p> <p>Leaders support staff's well-being and ensure that their workload is manageable. Leaders have systems to protect staff from bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.</p> <p>Leaders and governors develop constructive relationships with all parents and with the wider community, to build trust. They draw on these relationships to support pupils to achieve and feel that they belong.</p> <p>Leaders work with other schools, organisations and professionals in a culture of mutual support and challenge.</p> <p>Leaders act in the best interest of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.</p>	<p>Governors/trustees use their knowledge and expertise to provide consistent support and robust challenge to leaders across all aspects of the school's work.</p> <p>Leaders have achieved a culture of high expectations and professionalism, which ensures a positive experience for all pupils.</p> <p>Leaders have developed a highly effective culture of professional learning and expertise in which staff take responsibility for their own learning and are keen to continually improve their expertise. Leaders ensure that there is a professional learning and expertise curriculum that is informed by the best available evidence, including research, and is precisely matched to priorities for whole-school improvement, subjects/teams/phases and individual needs.</p>

Grading leadership and governance

Exceptional

Inspectors may consider leadership and governance to be 'exceptional' when the 'strong standard' has been met and all the following apply:

- Exceptionally high standards of leadership and governance have been sustained. Governors, other leaders at all levels, and all staff make a strong, positive contribution to the school's strategic priorities. This leads to continued improvement and/or sustained high standards in all areas of the school's work.
- Leaders' actions have a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. These pupils achieve and thrive.
- There are no significant areas for improvement that leaders have not already prioritised.

If this grade is awarded, leaders should use their exceptional success in this evaluation area to:

- support improvement across all aspects of their own school and/or group
- share their learning and best practice externally to support system-wide improvement, for example with other schools, professionals, their community and stakeholders, including local and/or national networks

What governing boards and headteachers should expect from each other

updated 2022

Getting governance right is important because of the significant impact it has on the quality of educational provision and the opportunity and life chances of children. This joint guidance aims to help governing boards and headteachers to get governance right by working together, being mutually supportive and respecting each other's roles and responsibilities.

A parallel version of this guidance is available for multi academy trust boards and CEOs.

Terminology

We use 'governing board' in this document to mean governing bodies in local authority (LA) maintained schools and federations, trust boards in a single academy trust (SAT) and regional or academy level committees, sometimes called the local governing body.

We use 'headteacher' to mean those responsible for the overall management of a school, a federation of schools or an academy. This includes the headteacher of a single school and executive leader of a federation.

Those governing on academy committees should read this guidance alongside the scheme of delegation for the multi academy trust their school is part of. This is important as the scheme of delegation defines the committee's responsibility.

The eight elements of effective governance



1. Respecting the respective roles

A key aspect of an effective working relationship is respecting the difference between strategic governance and operational management.

- The governing board is expected to concentrate on delivering its core strategic functions.
- The headteacher is expected to implement the strategic priorities of the governing board through their day-to-day management of the school.

Those governing are not asked to, and should not try to, involve themselves in day-to-day management, or carry out staff roles on an unpaid basis.

2. Working together to set a strategy

The governing board and headteacher have a shared responsibility for setting a future strategy that reflects the values of their school. In practice, this means:

- Articulating a clear vision of where they want their school(s) to be in three to five years' time, reflecting their values and ethos.
- Using self-evaluation to identify priorities that reflect the current context and challenges.
- Agreeing priorities that will achieve that vision and align with available resources.
- The governing board monitoring progress within an annual cycle, which provides a focus for their meetings.

Further guidance on developing a strategy is available for boards and school leaders.

▶ Visit www.nga.org.uk/BeingStrategic

3. Engaging stakeholders

Meaningful engagement with stakeholders – pupils, parents, staff and the wider community – helps the governing board to make informed decisions and build trust and shared ownership in those decisions.

The governing board and headteacher have a shared commitment to building and maintaining key stakeholder relationships, modelling openness and transparency and developing lines of communication, thus creating the conditions for:

- a diverse governing board
- local knowledge to be valued
- meaningful engagement and consultation
- full participation
- informed decision making

Participating in inspections

The governing board is expected to make itself available and participate in meetings with Ofsted inspectors and inspection feedback meetings.

The headteacher is expected to support the participation of the governing board in inspections by requesting meetings are held at the beginning or end of the school day to maximise attendance.

4. Ensuring your school is a great place to work

Staff are a school's most valuable resource and the largest area of expenditure in its budget. Governing boards have legal responsibilities as the employer of staff, which vary depending on the type of school. Boards in all LA maintained schools must comply with employment and health and safety legislation.

The governing board and headteacher have a shared responsibility for creating the leadership culture and climate necessary for the school to be recognised as a great place to work. This means:

- complying with employment and equalities legislation
- promoting safeguarding, transparency and equality of opportunity
- avoiding discriminatory practice
- HR policies being applied consistently
- ensuring policies and their implementation promote a positive culture
- recognising, encouraging and rewarding talent
- seeking workload issues
- engaging with staff to bring about improvement.

Discharging your duty of care

The governing board is expected to exercise its duty of care towards the headteacher and support their work-life balance. This means monitoring the impact of strategies and initiatives that promote a positive and sustainable workplace and ensure a safe and secure working environment.

Dedicated leadership time

Getting the right people around the table

The governing board is expected to:

- determine what size and composition works for them
- conduct skills audits to identify skills gaps and development needs to be met, whether through recruitment or training
- adopt transparent processes for recruiting and selecting governors, including interviewing prospective candidates
- consider targeted recruitment to create a more diverse board
- replace board members over time (ie after their second term of office), including timely succession planning for the chair

An effective chair and vice chair

The chair leads the governing board and ensures that it fulfils its functions well. The vice chair can be very important in sharing the leadership of the board, not only making the role of chair more manageable but also acting as a sounding board when there are challenges and opportunities to reflect on.

The chair and vice chair are expected to work together to facilitate the governing board working as a team and supporting all governors to participate actively and equally.

Developing skills and knowledge

The governing board is expected to prioritise and have a system in place for the induction of new governors, including signposting to relevant training as appropriate. The headteacher is expected to be part of the induction process. For example, by attending a welcome meeting and/or visit to the school(s).

The governing board is expected to remain proactive in developing its skills and knowledge. This means keeping up to date on its responsibilities and good practice, responding to the results of the skills audit and arranging training as appropriate. The headteacher is expected to encourage and support this. For example, through arranging joint training with the governing board and leadership team where appropriate.

Self-evaluation

The governing board is expected to evaluate its impact on a routine basis as well as the contribution of individual governors. This includes meeting the expectation of carrying out an annual self-assessment of the governing board and commissioning independent external reviews of governance. The headteacher is expected to support this process.

Guidance is available from the DfE on how to arrange an effective external review of governance and questions are available to support the process of self-evaluation.

Conduct

The governing board is expected to adopt a code of conduct, which sets out general standards of behaviour and how governors deal with each other and employees. Both the board and headteacher are expected to model the standards of behaviour set out in the code and demonstrate their commitment to their school's values, ethical governance and leadership. NGA has published a model code of conduct for governing boards to inspire:

compliance and risk management. The governing board is encouraged to champion business professionals working at all levels and to promote the benefits of business and governance working seamlessly together.

The headteacher is expected to facilitate collaboration between school business professionals and the governing board, ensuring that they are fully involved in reporting to the governing board on operational management and strategic resource planning.

Meetings

The governing board and headteacher are expected to work together and with their governance professional to ensure that meetings are well planned, take place at appropriate intervals and have manageable agendas, which prevent overlap in the work and responsibilities of senior leaders and committees. When arranging meetings, consideration should also be given to the work-life balance and commitments of the governing board, headteacher and relevant staff, including how appropriate use of online platforms can support increased attendance and accessibility.

Headteacher reporting

The governing board is expected to determine the content of the terms report it receives from the headteacher to gain an overview of progress being made towards strategic priorities. This should be discussed with the headteacher to ensure that the resulting workload is both reasonable and proportionate. Typically, the report will cover:

- current context (eg pupil numbers)
- progress against strategic priorities
- current high-level risks
- the curriculum, teaching and learning outcomes
- financial performance, compliance and resource management
- human resources and the performance management of staff
- pupil behaviour, wellbeing, welfare and safeguarding

Using data

The governing board and headteacher are expected to agree on what data is required by the board and how it is presented in a meaningful way, which allows the board to evaluate progress, openly risk and inform support and challenge, at the same time as avoiding placing an unreasonable burden on the headteacher.

The governing board collectively is expected to gain the knowledge it needs to use data in a meaningful way. For example, by understanding how its school(s) assess attainment and track progress between external assessment points.

Monitoring visits

Governors are expected to visit their school(s) to gain an understanding of how the vision and strategy are being implemented and culture reflected in daily life. The headteacher is expected to encourage such visits and support with the arrangements.

Governors carrying out and supporting monitoring visits are expected to follow agreed protocols, which help ensure the visit is effective, conducted in the right spirit (ie not perceived as an inspection) and convenient to all parties.

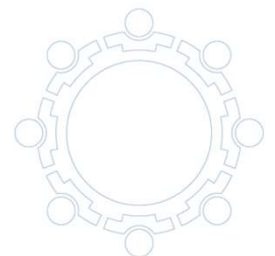
Delegation

The governing board is responsible for developing a compliant and effective framework (scheme) of delegation, which is clearly documented, including terms of reference for all committees. This should be reviewed at least annually or sooner if any significant changes are needed. The governing board and headteacher should expect to work together on this and seek the advice of the governance professional.

Oversight of policies

The governing board is expected to have in place and follow a schedule for reviewing policies that are required by law. The schedule should include review frequency, approval rules and be aligned with the framework of delegation. The governing board is expected to monitor the impact of policies it is required to approve.

The headteacher and their leadership team are expected to write/draft/adapt policies in line with the schedule and ensure they reflect the values of the school(s), are sufficient about, compliant with the law, and consider the views of stakeholders.



In the downloads folder

The core functions of the governing body are as set out in (regulation 6) and include, but are not limited to ensuring:

1. that the **vision, ethos and strategic direction** of the school are clearly defined
2. that the **headteacher performs their responsibilities** for the **educational performance** of the school
3. the sound, proper and effective use of the **school's financial resources**

A governing body and its governors **must**, as required by

[The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013, regulation 6\(2\)](#):

- act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school
- be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and shall be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties

The governing body also has legislative responsibility and strategic oversight for the school's **safeguarding** arrangements.



NGA recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:
4. ensuring the **voices of stakeholders** are heard

Guidance

Maintained schools: governance guide

Published 19 November 2025

From: [Department for Education](#)

Published 7 March 2024

Updated: 7 March 2024 - [See all updates](#)

UPDATED



<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools>



Things to consider...



The new grades – varied profile – communications?



Pupil Premium Strategy – SDP link – monitored?



Inclusion, high expectations, high-quality inclusive teaching



Achievement – progress? How do we know/discuss this?



Case sampling

Recent Inspections: Governor Feedback

In the
downloads
folder

- **About the governors:** What is your role?
- **School Context and Strategy:** Tell me about your school. SIP.
- **Safeguarding:** Single central record, training, culture
- **Inclusion:** What barriers to learning impact for vulnerable pupils and how are these overcome?
- **Support and Challenge 'Assure themselves':**
How do governors know how well the school is performing?
- **Additional Areas of Questioning/Discussion:**
New staff/ECTs, HT well-being, Diversity/Equality
- **School Specific:** Risk Evaluation. Anything else to share?

Not just about Ofsted!



**DfE Guidance on SEND
checklist**



**Strategic Vision for all our pupils...
for all to flourish and thrive**



Monitoring
Ask about impact... how do we know?
All groups?
External validation?



Engagement with parents?



thank you!

Ofsted focus: 'celebrate, validate and highlight'

Any Questions?...

