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in schools

The expert organisation for
school governors, trustees
and governance professionals

Outstanding Governing Boards

Emma Knights, Chief Executive, NGA

February 2023

#NGAwebinar

www.nga.org.uk

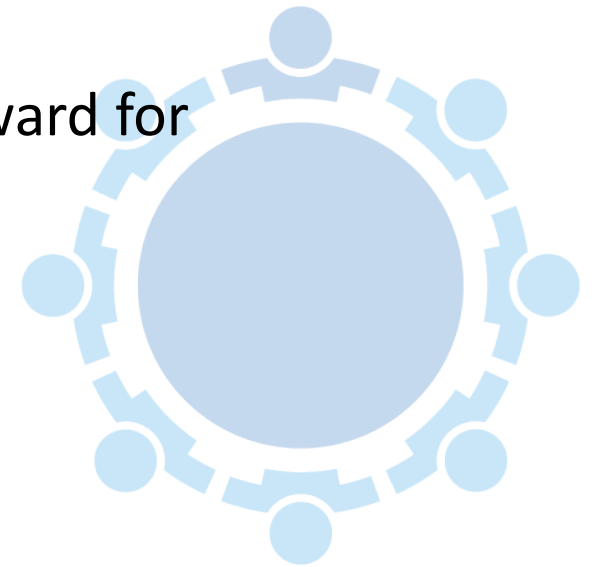
Welcome and housekeeping

- NGA webinars are 30-40 minute lectures, rather than seminars or networking opportunities: other NGA events do the latter free for our members
- Please submit any questions and comments via Chat function & we will answer them by email after the webinar
- You will be muted
- You will be sent the slides (with links to the resources we mention)
- This is being recorded and will be made available shortly afterwards via our website: please do share with others, especially those who take a lead in recruitment & development: <https://www.nga.org.uk/News/Webinars.aspx>

Thank you for what you do for the pupils and the community

What I am covering today:

- Good governance & outstanding governance
- What NGA is looking for in our 2023 Outstanding Governance Award for
Single schools and Federations
- How does this differ from Ofsted's expectations?
- What NGA is looking for in our 2023 Outstanding Governance Award for
Multi academy trusts
- High performing boards: modes of board behaviour
- The governing board's role in developing a healthy culture



NGA's Outstanding Governance Awards 2023

NGA's Outstanding Governance Awards recognise the excellent practice and achievements of governing boards and governance professionals across the country.

- Outstanding governance in a single school
- Outstanding governance in a multi academy trust
- Outstanding governance in a federation
- Outstanding clerk to a governing board
- Outstanding lead governance professional

Deadline for entry – 9 am on Monday 27 March 2023

www.nga.org.uk/awards





What makes an Outstanding Single School or Federation board?

An outstanding governing board will:

- Carry out good governance: effective, ethical and accountable
 - embody the seven Nolan Principle of Public Life
 - have a clear, accurate understanding of the strategic role and responsibilities of the governing board
 - specific examples of how the board delivers three of the eight elements of effective governance
- Deliver the four core functions of a governing boards
 1. show evidence of a clear vision and strategy, and how it was developed and reviewed
Outstanding vision and strategy: we will be selecting winners for an outstanding vision and strategy award from those who apply to the single school, federation & MAT categories
 2. hold the executive to account: triangulate of information, demonstrate support and challenge
 3. financial oversight & risk management
 4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

An outstanding single school/SAT or federation board con'd

An outstanding governing board will also:

- Be concerned about culture as well as strategy
- Be visible eg visit school as a starter
- Have a story of continued improvement: this is not about perfection, but about reflection and review
- Have an outward looking approach and seek an external view on practice

There are also some basics which we check have been covered:

- Have good outcomes for pupils
- Have a plan for board succession (following the DfE's expectations) and volunteer recruitment
- Adopted a code of conduct
- Conducted a skills audit and make use of it
- Undertaken a self-review as a board

Impact: what has been an achievement?

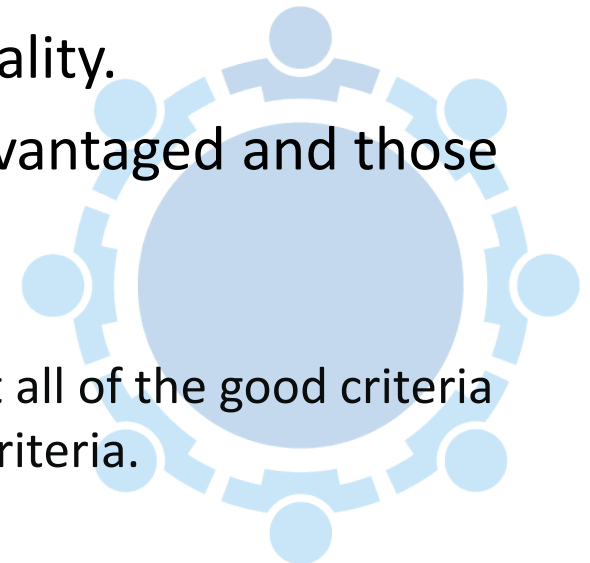
Tell us in up to 500 words about one or more significant achievement(s) of the governing board, making clear the role of the board in the strategic leadership of the change:

- how the governing board identified the issue or opportunity;
- ensured that the voices of the school's stakeholders were heard;
- the resources it has drawn upon;
- how the board worked well with the senior executive leaders;
- the discussions it had and decisions it made; and
- the outcome: so what?

Ofsted: Outstanding vs good

- The key to Ofsted outstanding is consistency
- To get an overall outstanding grade there needs to be evidence that:
 - curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the school.
 - The work given to pupils consistently achieve the aims of the curriculum.
 - Pupils' work across the curriculum is consistently of a high quality.
 - Pupils consistently achieve highly, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with SEND.

Sidenote: In order for a judgement to be outstanding, the school must meet all of the good criteria securely and consistently and it must also meet the additional outstanding criteria.



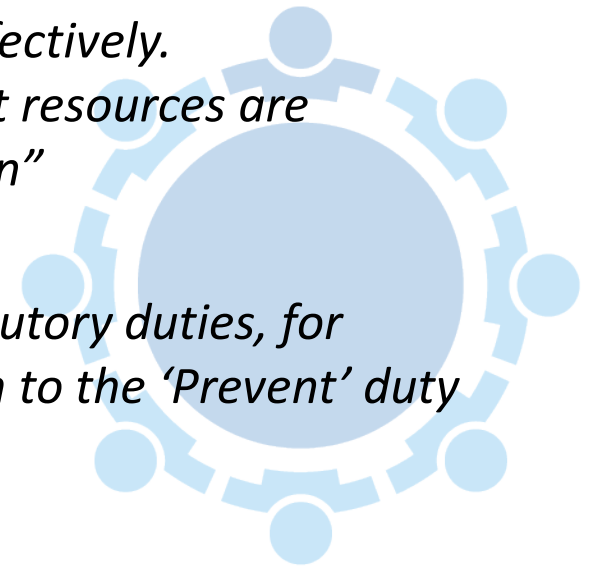
Ofsted outstanding leadership and management

- Evidence of strong stakeholder engagement is key for an Ofsted outstanding leadership and management judgement

School inspection handbook (section 417):

“Leaders engage effectively with pupils and others in their community, including, when relevant, parents, employers and local services. Engagement opportunities are focused and have purpose”

- *“Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. Governors/trustees ensure that the school has a clear vision and strategy, that resources are managed well and that leaders are held to account for the quality of education”*
- *“Those with responsibility for governance ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the ‘Prevent’ duty and safeguarding”*



What makes Multi-Academy Trust governance outstanding?

An outstanding trust will:

- Adhere to all the same principles as discussed for single schools
BUT some of the 'how' will be different

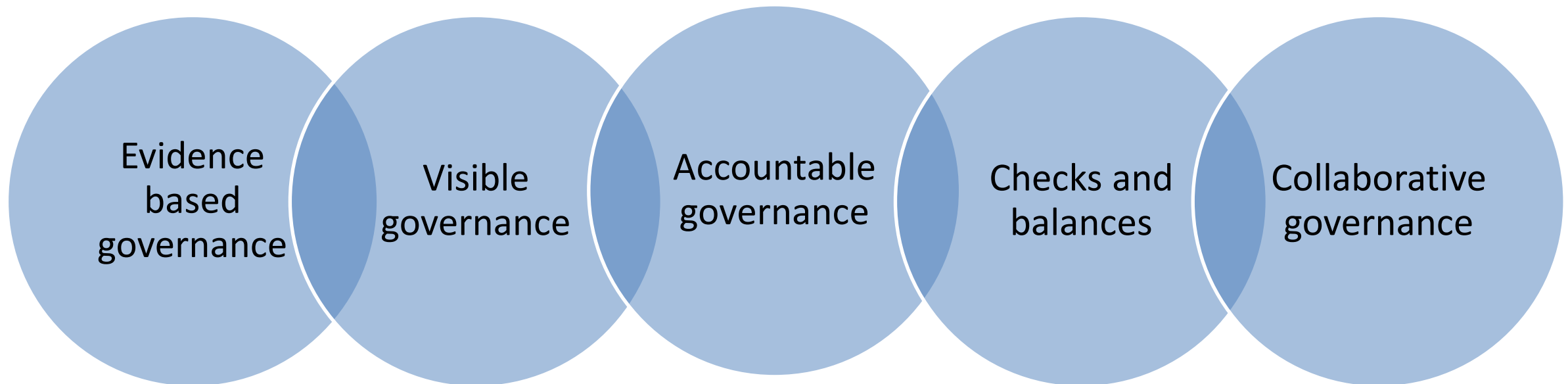
AND ALSO

- Have meaningful local governance arrangements
- All involved understands the trust is one organisation and is governed as such, with every committee and tier about its role within the whole

We will look at key documents, including the trust's Scheme of Delegation

What about local governance?

- The Schools White Paper says “all trusts should have **local governance arrangements** for their schools to be responsive to communities and stakeholders, including parents”
- Local governance tends to cover standards; stakeholders, safeguarding & SEND (4S's) but some also have more delegated, including financial and staffing responsibilities
- [NGA Blog/April-2022/Local-governance-setting-the-standard](#) sets out the benefits that local governance offers and some expectations:



Meaningful local governance: the expectations

- 1. Communication** – two-way communication is crucial, including regular chairs/vice chairs meetings

- 2. Separation** – MAT governance has three layers for a reason: to ensure accountability of those serving on each layer remains distinct and there are no conflicts of interest

- 3. Investment in professional, expert support** – there must be a lead governance professional in any MAT to guide and connect the work of local committees and the trust board

- 4. Clear delegation** – a good scheme of delegation essential to ensuring harmonious working between the layers of governance

- 5. The local tier does not need to have its own committees** – an academy committee/LGB is itself a committee of the trust board

Local governance: expectations continued

6. Meaningful & accepted role in challenge – appointment of own chair and a formal process for removing governors inc. appeal

7. A local tier formed by local volunteers not executives – executives don't control conversation

8. Trust boards are visible and accountable to the local tier – local governors are invited to hear of the work of the trustees as a minimum on an annual basis eg through the AGM

9. Input from local tier, namely the chair, in performance management of school heads

10. The trust values and seeks engagement from the local tier in the recruitment of new heads, including the local chair in the recruitment process

11. A whole trust governance development plan encourages governors to learn from schools outside their trust

12. Contribution to school improvement and awareness of school's budget and spending plan

High performing board: the 5S's

- **Support**

encouraging leaders & enabling them to do their work

- **Stewardship**

protecting & conserving the organisation's assets and good name for beneficiaries of tomorrow as well as today

- **Scrutiny**

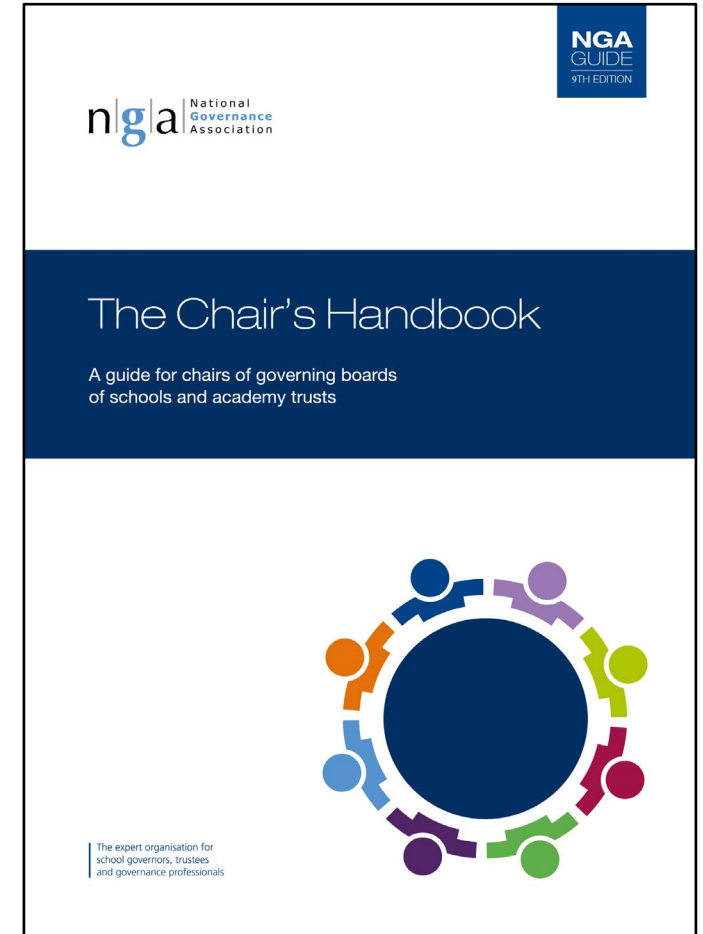
ensuring accountability through scrutinising proposals or examining process and their outcomes

- **Strategy**

making the decisions about the future direction and priorities

- **Stretch**

questioning how can we do better



available [NGA Publications](#)

Free to NGA GOLD & MAT members

NGA standard members: £8

Non-members: £16

Governance culture & behaviours: good-decision making

- Has good information been provided to board members & read in advance?
- Be aware of the dynamics in meetings: the flow & ‘bounce’ of the conversation
 - Who does the talking? Who’s in charge? Who is listened to?
- Everyone participating: listening, contributing and supporting the healthy culture
 - addressing differences of opinion: healthy conflict but not hostility
- Challenge which is constructive, confident, principled and proportionate
 - independent thinking: question assumptions & established orthodoxy
 - you are not trying to win an argument but to enable the board to deliberate
- Time provided for generative thinking: new ideas welcomed
- The achievement: closure on individual items of board business with good decisions
- Review each meeting: did your discussions make a difference to the pupils?

Positive school/trust culture: ‘the way things get done around here’

The board should set and safeguard an ethos of high expectations of everyone in the school community. This includes high expectations for the behaviour, progress and attainment of all pupils and for the conduct and professionalism of both staff and the board themselves. The board should foster a common culture, set of values and ethos across the whole organisation, ensuring it is reflected consistently in both its policies and its practices

DfE’s Governance Handbook Oct 2020

How has your board ensured or developed a positive culture?

For example in relation to:

- Staff workload and wellbeing
- Staff development – a learning organisation
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Pupil wellbeing
- Pupil ambition



Outstanding Governance Awards 2021



Development for Chairs: Designed for governors both aspiring to become a chair and currently working as a chair, and for trustees. Specific cohorts for Academies and Maintained/LGBs – The programme will support you to develop your leadership skills and runs over approximately three terms. The cost of this virtual programme is £270 per participant. [NGA Leading Governance Development for Chairs - National Governance Association](#)

Development for MAT Trustees: New programme of workshops for multi academy trustees will give you the opportunity to gain a practical grounding into how effective governance can work in MATs, the expectations of trustees and CEOs and other trust leaders. Undertake the whole programme or select from 8 two-hour workshops for MATs. Led by experienced facilitators with expertise in trust governance [NGA Leading Governance development for MAT trustees - National Governance Association](#)

Development for School & Trust Governance Professionals: An accredited programme designed for clerks/governance professional with at least three months' experience and currently working in any school or trust setting. The cost of the programme is £480 per participant. [NGA Leading Governance Development for Clerks - National Governance Association](#)

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Thank you

any further information from: awards@nga.org.uk

**Next webinar on 9 March:
Excelling as governance professional**

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