

Governance glossary

Specialist terms and abbreviations used in the education sector.

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A

A level

General Certificate of Education Advanced level – completed by some 16 to 18 year olds after GCSE.

ABIE - attendance baseline improvement expectation

Tailored and issued to individual schools by DfE, minimum improvements in attendance that schools are expected to meet every academic year.

Academy

Academies are publicly funded independent schools. Academies have different governance arrangements from local authority-maintained schools.

Academy committee

The body to which trustees delegate local governance functions within a multi academy trust. NGA refers to these bodies as academy committees, but they are often called local governing bodies (LGBs), academy councils or similar.

Academy converter

A school which converted to academy status voluntarily (usually high performing at the time of conversion), having previously been a local authority-maintained school.

Academy sponsor-led

A school which converted to academy status with the support of a sponsor (usually lower performing at the time of conversion).

Academy Trust Handbook (ATH)

A statutory document issued by the DfE that sets out the management and governance requirements that apply to all academy trusts.

Accounting officer

An individual appointed with specific responsibilities for financial matters in an academy trust. This should be same person as the senior executive leader (principal in a SAT/CEO in a MAT).

Admissions Code

A document providing statutory guidance on school admissions with which all schools must comply.

Advisory boards

Each regional director (RD) has a board of elected headteachers, academy trust CEOs, trustees and business leaders in their area to advise on and scrutinise academy-related decisions.

AGM

Annual general meeting – the yearly meeting of an academy trust’s members. Other meetings of the members are known as general meetings.

Articles of Association

The legal governing document for an academy that sets out its rules for operating, including the composition of the trust board.

ASP - Analyse School Performance

A service providing schools and other existing user groups with detailed performance analysis to support local school improvement.

Associate members

Individuals appointed by the governing body of a maintained school to sit on committees. They are not part of the governing body but are allowed to attend its meetings and can be given voting powers for the committee(s) they sit on.

Attainment 8

A headline measure of school performance at GCSE. Measures the average achievement of pupils across eight subjects, including English and maths.

Attainment targets

These establish what children of different abilities should be expected to know and be able to do by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum.

AWPU

Age-weighted pupil unit – the sum of money allocated to the school for each pupil according to age. This is the basic unit of funding for the school.

B

Baseline assessment

The reception baseline assessment is carried out in the first six weeks of a pupil starting their reception year. It provides a starting point assessment from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 can be created. It is a statutory assessment.

Bursar

A school's business professional. The exact role of a bursar varies but their duties almost always include financial and administrative management, and many are involved in strategic planning and risk management.

C

Capital funding

Funding provided to schools for use on projects, improvements and extensions to the school's land and buildings.

Chair's action

In maintained schools, the chair is allowed to take decisions without asking the governing body if a delay is likely to be detrimental to the school, a member of staff, a pupil or a parent. In academies, this power is not automatic and must be delegated to the chair.

Chief executive officer (CEO)

The senior executive leader in a multi academy trust (MAT). They are held to account by the trust board for all aspects of the MAT.

Chief financial officer (CFO)

All academy trusts are required to appoint a CFO, although trusts may give this person another title (such as finance director or chief operating officer). Their role is to have strategic oversight of the financial performance of each academy within the trust.

Circle model

In maintained schools, where a governing body has no committees and so conducts all its business in full board meetings.

Clerk

The clerk provides advice on governance, constitutional and procedural matters. They also offer administrative support to the governing board and relay information on legal requirements. See also 'governance professional'.

Collaboration

A legal agreement between two or more maintained schools for their governing bodies to work together. The schools keep their individual governing boards but may set up joint committees to which they can delegate powers.

Community schools

Maintained schools at which the local authority (LA) is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria. The LA also take a proportion of income known as 'top slice' for the provision of central services such as HR, legal, etc.

Community special schools

Special schools that have the same responsibilities as maintained community schools.

Co-opted governor/trustee

Governors/trustees that are appointed by the governing board, generally on the basis of their skills and experience.

CPD

Continuing professional development (for school staff or the governing board, for example).

D

Dedicated schools grant (DSG)

Funding from central government to the LA for maintained schools, the majority of which is delegated directly to individual schools through the LA's funding formula.

Delegated budget

Money provided to maintained schools by the LA, which governors can manage at their discretion.

Delegated powers

Authority given to a committee, an individual governor/trustee or the headteacher/CEO to take action on behalf of the governing board. In multi academy trusts, this also refers to powers delegated to academy committees.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Senior staff member appointed to take the lead on safeguarding and child protection in the school/trust.

Designated teacher

Liaises with the local authority on behalf of pupils in care and has a responsibility for promoting their educational achievement.

DfE

Department for Education – the government department responsible for schools and children’s services.

Directed time

Time when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the headteacher – a maximum of 1265 hours in a school year.

Director general of the regions group

A civil servant responsible for overseeing the work of the nine regional directors (see Regional Directors).

Disapplication

A term used where national curriculum requirements may not apply to a pupil.

E

EAL

English as an additional language.

EBacc

English Baccalaureate – a school performance measure based on achievement of GCSEs in ‘core academic subjects’ of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language.

ECF

Early career framework - sets out what early career teachers are entitled to learn about and learn how to do when they start their careers.

ECT

Early career teacher - a teacher in the first two years following qualification (achieving QTS).

EHC plans

Education, health and care plans – a legal document that sets out the specific needs and support that will be provided for children and young people with special educational needs. Also known as EHCPs.

ESO

Education supervision order – an order which local authorities may apply for to deal with cases of poor attendance at school.

Ethos

The morals, values and beliefs that underpin the school culture.

EWO

Education welfare officer – a professional worker who visits pupils' homes and deals with attendance problems and other welfare matters in co-operation with the school.

Ex officio

Governing board membership by virtue of holding a particular office (such as headteacher).

Exclusion

The permanent removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy.

Executive headteacher

Unlike a traditional headteacher who leads one school only, an executive headteacher is the lead professional of more than one school; or a lead professional who manages a school with multiple phases; or who has management responsibility significantly beyond that of a single school site.

Executive leaders

Those held to account by the board for the performance of the organisation. This may be the CEO, executive headteacher, headteacher or principal, as well as other senior employees/staff, depending on the structure of the organisation.

Extended schools and services

Schools that provide a range of services and activities beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the wider community.

External review of governance (ERG)

An objective expert review of a governing board's practices and their effectiveness.

EYFS

Early Years Foundation Stage – curriculum followed by children below statutory school age, in schools and nursery/pre-school provision.

F

Federation

Two or more maintained schools governed by one governing body.

Form of entry

The number of classes that a school admits in each year group.

Foundation governor/trustee

Appointed by the charitable body or foundation associated with the school/trust. They ensure that the school/trust character (including religious, if it has one) is upheld.

Foundation schools

Maintained schools in which the governing body is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria.

Foundation special schools

Maintained special schools that have the same freedoms as foundation schools (see above).

Free school

A type of academy, either a new school set up in response to parental demand or a fee-paying school joining the state education system.

FSM

Free school meals – pupils are eligible for FSM if their parents receive certain benefits.

Funding agreement

The document which sets out the relationship between an academy/MAT and the DfE.

G

GAG

General Annual Grant – the main source of revenue funding for academy trusts.

GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education.

GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation.

Governance professional

A collective description for all those involved in supporting and advising governing boards in schools and trusts (including clerks, governance managers and directors of governance).

Governing board

Overarching term for boards in both maintained school (governing body) and academy trust (trust board) settings.

Governing body

Refers to the governing board of a maintained school only.

Governor services

Governor services provide support to governing boards which may be in the form of training, advice or clerking services. May be 'in-house' in larger MATs or externally commissioned. Academies and maintained schools are free to buy into their local authority's governor services or seek alternative arrangements.

H

HLTA

Higher level teaching assistant.

HMCI

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills.

HMI

His Majesty's inspector.

HSE

Health and Safety Executive.

I

ICFP

Integrated curriculum and financial planning – a collaborative process that brings together the governance, education leadership and business support functions in a school or trust to design a curriculum that is affordable and sustainable.

IEB

Interim Executive Board – appointed by the local authority or Regional Director (RD) in accordance with the Education Act 2006 to replace the governing body of a maintained school that is eligible for intervention.

IEP

Individual education plan – for pupils with SEND.

INSET

In-service education and training – dedicated training time for teachers and other school staff, often delivered during five ‘INSET days’ each academic year when pupils do not attend school.

Instrument of government

A legal document setting out the composition of maintained school governing bodies.

IDSR

Inspection data summary report – produced by Ofsted using DfE national performance data, reports that consolidate and analyse data available about a school.

K

Key stage

Key stages 1 to 4 are the four stages of the national curriculum: KS1 for pupils aged 5 to 7; KS2 for 7 to 11; KS3 for 11 to 14; KS4 for 14 to 16.

KPI

Key performance indicators – used to evaluate the success of a school or of a particular activity in which it engages.

L

LA

Local authority – the LA has certain responsibilities regarding education, for example the educational achievement of looked-after children and for school place planning. It also provides other services to schools, which may be provided via a service-level agreement.

LA governor

Nominated by the local authority and then appointed by the governing body.

LAC

Looked-after children – children who are in the care of their local authority. May also refer to children who have been in care at any time in the last six years.

LGA

Local Government Association – national organisation supporting and representing local government.

LGB

Local governing body – a term often used to describe a committee of a trust board for an individual academy within a MAT. See also ‘academy committee’.

Local association

A group of governors and trustees from different schools in the local area. Local associations vary in size and capacity. The smallest local associations may offer an informal support network for local governors/trustees whereas larger local associations may organise useful local events and provide formal support and training opportunities.

M

Maintained schools

Publicly funded schools overseen by the local authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national pay and conditions guidelines (see STPCD).

Managed move

A process which leads to the transfer of a pupil to another mainstream school permanently. Used as a preventative measure to exclusion.

MAT

Multi academy trust – two or more academies governed by one trust and trust board.

MAT board

Common term for the trust board overseeing a multi academy trust.

Members

Members in an academy trust sit at the top of the trust’s governance structure, holding the trust board to account for effective governance.

Mixed ability

A teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together.

N

National curriculum

A minimum framework of the subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools, to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced education that is relevant to their needs. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, but many choose to.

NFF

National Funding Formula – the standardised formula for school funding allocations across every mainstream state funded school in England.

Non-teaching staff

Members of the school staff employed to provide services other than teaching in a school, such as teaching assistants, cleaners and office staff. Also known as support staff.

NOR

Number (of pupils) on roll.

NPQH

National Professional Qualification for Headship – training for new or aspiring headteachers.

O

Off-site direction

Arrangement that requires a pupil to attend another education setting temporarily to improve their behaviour.

Ofqual

Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Register – the regulator of examinations and qualifications.

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – the body which inspects education and training for learners of all ages and inspects and regulates care for children and young people.

P

PAN

Published admissions number – the maximum number of children the admissions authority determines must be admitted to each 'relevant age group' (the age group at which pupils are normally admitted to the school, for example, reception and year 7).

Parent governor/trustee

Member of the governing board who is a parent/carer of a registered pupil at the school/trust and elected by the parents of the school/trust's pupils.

Partnership governor

In schools with a religious character, governors appointed by the governing body of a foundation school (which does not have a foundation) with the purpose of preserving and promoting the religious ethos.

Peripatetic teacher

A teacher who teaches in a number of schools, usually to give specialist instruction such as in music.

Persons with significant control (PSC)

Individuals who have control of an academy trust and who must be recorded with Companies House.

PFI

Private finance initiative – enables local authorities to enter into contracts with the private sector for the provision of new and/or improved capital assets (infrastructure for example) and related services.

PGCE

Post-Graduate Certificate of Education.

PPA

Planning, preparation and assessment – 10% guaranteed non-contact time for teachers.

Progress 8

A headline measure of school performance at GCSE. It aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4.

PRP

Performance related pay – schools and academies have the option to link teachers' pay to their performance.

PRU

Pupil referral unit – alternative education provision for pupils unable to attend a mainstream school or special school.

PSHE

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is a school subject through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to manage their lives, now and in the future.

PSP

Pastoral support programme – programme for pupils at serious risk of permanent exclusion.

PTA

Parent teacher association.

PTR

Pupil/teacher ratio – this is calculated by dividing the number of pupils in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Sets out equality matters that schools need to consider when making decisions that affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Pupil premium

Funding allocated to schools to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Q

QTS

Qualified teacher status.

Quorate

A meeting is quorate if a sufficient number of members are present. Decisions can only be ratified if a meeting is quorate.

Quorum

The minimum number of members present at a meeting before decisions can be made.

R

Regional directors (RDs)

Civil servants that act on behalf of the secretary of state. Their responsibilities include intervening in underperforming academies and free schools, making decisions on conversion to academy status, and encouraging and deciding on applications for academy sponsors. There are nine RDs serving different regions, reporting to the director general.

Resolution

A decision which has been agreed to at a meeting. Members and trust boards (and their committees) may also agree to decisions by written resolution.

Revenue funding

Revenue funding is spent on the day-to-day costs of running a school. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment.

RSHE

Relationships, sex and health education.

S

SACRE

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – statutory board in each local authority which advises on religious education and collective worship.

SAT

Single academy trust – an academy trust that has only one academy.

SATs

Standard assessment tests – used for national curriculum assessment in years 2 and 6.

Scheme of delegation

A document defining the lines of responsibility and accountability in a MAT and where different functions have been delegated.

School business professional (SBP)

A professional employed by a school/trust with responsibility for financial management and often other areas such as human resources and health and safety management. Usually part of the senior leadership team. Often known as the school business manager in maintained schools, and chief financial officer in academy trusts (see CFO).

School census

A statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring and summer terms. Maintained schools and academies must take part in the census.

School development plan

The operational document describing how the school will work towards the strategic priorities set by the governing board. Also known as a school improvement plan.

Schools Forum

A schools forum has been established in each LA area to advise on the allocation of funding for schools – the majority of places on this board should be filled by governors and headteachers, preferably in equal numbers.

Secretary of State for Education

The senior government minister with responsibility for education. Leads the Department for Education.

SENCO

Special educational needs co-ordinator – the teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the school.

SEND

Special educational needs and disabilities – learning difficulties and/or disabilities which call for special education provision to be made.

Senior executive leader

School and trust governing boards must appoint a senior executive leader to lead the organisation. In maintained schools, this is the headteacher. In a SAT, this individual is often known as the principal, and in MATs, the CEO. The senior executive leader should also be appointed as the accounting officer in an academy trust.

Service level agreement (SLA)

A contract between a service provider (the local authority or another private sector provider) and a school that defines the level of service expected.

Service pupil premium

Funding allocated to schools to support pupils whose parents are serving in HM armed forces or have at any time in the last six years, or who are in recipient of a child's pension from the Ministry of Defence.

SFVS

Schools financial value standard – a means for the governing board to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills. Must be completed by maintained schools annually.

SIAMS

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools – inspection that looks at the denominational education and collective worship at schools with a religious character. Also known as section 48 inspections.

SIMS

Schools Information Management System – a computer package to assist schools in managing information on pupils, staff and resources.

Special school

For pupils with a statement of SEND or an EHC plan, whose needs cannot be fully met in mainstream provision.

Special unit (or resourced provision)

A unit attached to a mainstream school to cater for children with specific special needs.

Sponsor

An organisation or person who has received approval from the DfE to support an underperforming academy or group of academies. Examples of sponsors include academies, businesses and charities.

SRMSAC

School resource management self-assessment checklist – a means for the trust board to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills. Must be completed by academy trusts annually.

Staff governor/trustee

Member of the governing board who is employed by the school/trust and elected by those who are employed at the school/trust.

STPCD

School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document – an annually published document which forms a part of the contract of all teachers and headteachers in maintained schools in England. Many academies choose to also follow the STPCD.

Strategic plan

The school's strategic document which sets out a small number of key priorities for the school over the next three to five years. The governing board should take the lead on developing the strategic plan.

STRB

School Teachers' Review Body – makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on teachers' pay.

Streaming

Placing pupils in classes according to their ability across a range of subjects.

Suspension

The temporary removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy.

T

TA

Teaching assistant.

Teaching school alliances

A group of schools and other partners who are supported by the leadership of a teaching school.

Teaching school hubs

Schools that work with others, offering teacher training and professional development for teachers and leaders at all stages of their career.

Terms of reference

Sets out the roles, responsibilities and procedures of a committee.

TLR

Teaching and learning responsibility – payments made to teachers for undertaking additional leadership and management responsibility.

Trust Deed

The deed by which a voluntary aided or a voluntary controlled school has been established.

Trust board

The governing board of an academy trust (a SAT or MAT).

V

Value added (VA)

The progress pupils make relative to their individual starting points. VA takes into account prior attainment to help evaluate the effect of the school on pupils' current attainment.

Vertical grouping

Classes formed with children of different age groups.

Virement

The agreed transfer of money from the budget heading to which it has been allocated to another budget heading.

Virtual school headteacher

An experienced teacher employed by the LA to oversee the educational progress of all looked-after children under its care on a virtual school roll. The virtual school headteacher has the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers. They also work with professionals in the Children's Services department of the council and with all schools in the area to promote the education of children in care.

Vision

Every school/trust will have a vision. This should, in a few sentences, describe what the school/trust will look like in three to five years' time.

Vocational

A subject that would not be considered academic in the traditional sense. Students in key stage 4 and key stage 5 may undertake a vocational apprenticeship or qualification as a viable alternative to GCSEs or A-levels.

Voluntary aided (VA)

A maintained school set up and owned by a voluntary board, usually a church board, largely financed by the local authority. The governing board employs the staff and controls pupil admissions and religious education. The school's buildings and land (apart from playing fields) are normally owned by a charitable foundation.

Voluntary controlled (VC)

A denominational maintained school with certain residual rights regarding religious worship. The school's land and buildings are usually owned by a trust.

W

Wraparound care

Childcare provided by schools before and after the school day for primary phase pupils.

Y

Young Carer

A young carer is anyone under 18 years of age who helps to look after a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, or has a substance misuse problem.