



Effective school governance

**Emma Knights
Chief Executive, NGA**

NGA is a membership organisation

- representing governors and Trustees in all state funded schools in England
- our aim is to improve the effectiveness of governing boards by providing expert and tailored information and advice, and challenge when appropriate

Standard Governing Body membership is £75

GOLD Governing Body membership is £260

and includes an advice line



Governance in the spotlight

- The great & the good are taking an interest – and now the press
- The Sept 2012 Ofsted framework raised the expectations
- More autonomy brings more responsibility & more risks, but organisations with strong governance do not fail
- More decision-making is being devolved e.g. Academy conversion, performance related pay, procurement, curriculum, assessment
- Limited resources requires more efficiency
- Different schools structures bring different governance structures, particularly when governing more than one school:
- TEFAT's scheme of delegation
- Learning from other sectors, especially on role of Trustees and Directors of limited companies

High quality governance

...in all types of schools is characterised by a relentless focus on the three core strategic functions:

- a. Setting vision, ethos and strategic direction
- b. Holding headteachers to account for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety, and challenging and strengthening their leadership;
- c. Ensuring finances are managed well leading to probity, solvency and effective use of resources

From DfE's Governors' Handbook

Governing boards to operate as non-executive boards:
this requires cultural change

8 Elements of effective governance

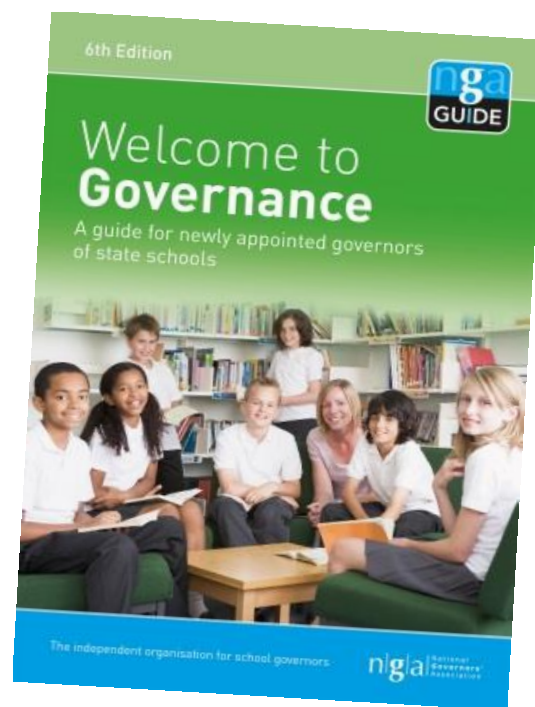
1. The right people round the table
2. Understanding role & responsibilities
3. Good chairing
4. Professional clerking
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community, the quality of teaching
7. Committed to asking challenging questions
8. Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

The right people around the table

- Review size & constitution
 - Re-constitution for LA maintained schools this year
- Skills audits – NGA model with matrix
- NGA has role description for governors: www.nga.org.uk
- Take time to recruit – approach local employers
- State expectations eg. on role, conduct, time, induction & CPD
- Interview prospective governors (where possible)
- **Change the culture: plan the succession**
 - Good practice: limit terms of office to 2 x 4 years
- Support middle leaders to govern at other schools

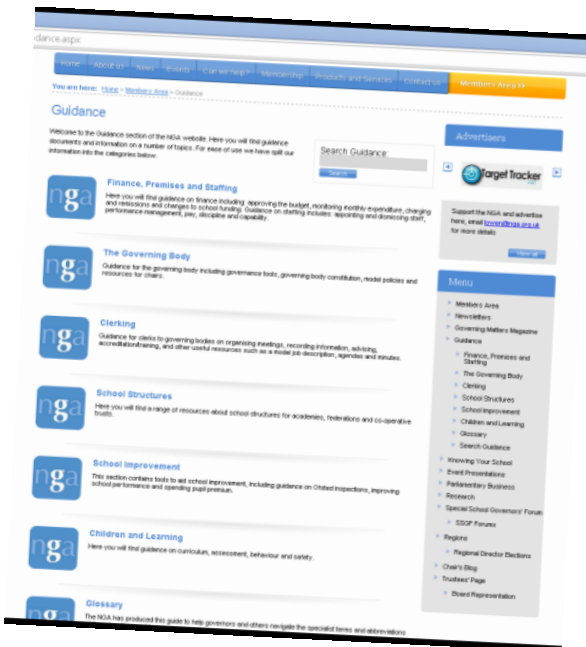
GBs must understand roles & responsibilities

- Value the skills & knowledge brought from other sectors
- Induction for new governors (including staff governors) before they begin governing, & a mentor
- Set expectations (& a budget) for board CPD
- Set expectations on behaviour: integrity, selflessness, objectivity, accountability; openness, honesty; and leadership
- **Change the culture: Challenge each other**
 - Enforce the Code of Conduct for GBs
 - Is everyone contributing?
 - Performance reviews for governors
 - Zero tolerance for failure to engage effectively and strategically
- Ensure GB has access to independent advice



Guidance for members

- Resources on www.nga.org.uk on finance, premises, staffing, clerking, school improvement, GB constitutions & procedures, model policies, pupil premium, evaluating governance, school structures, curriculum and learning, and much more ..
- Q&As for governors on a number of key topics
- Hundreds of questions to ask senior leaders
- A glossary, and
- “NGA advises”



The strategic role

Where do we want the school to be in 3-5 years time?

To achieve that, how do we:

- position the school to succeed,
- take advantage of opportunity,
- minimise risks and
- use resources?

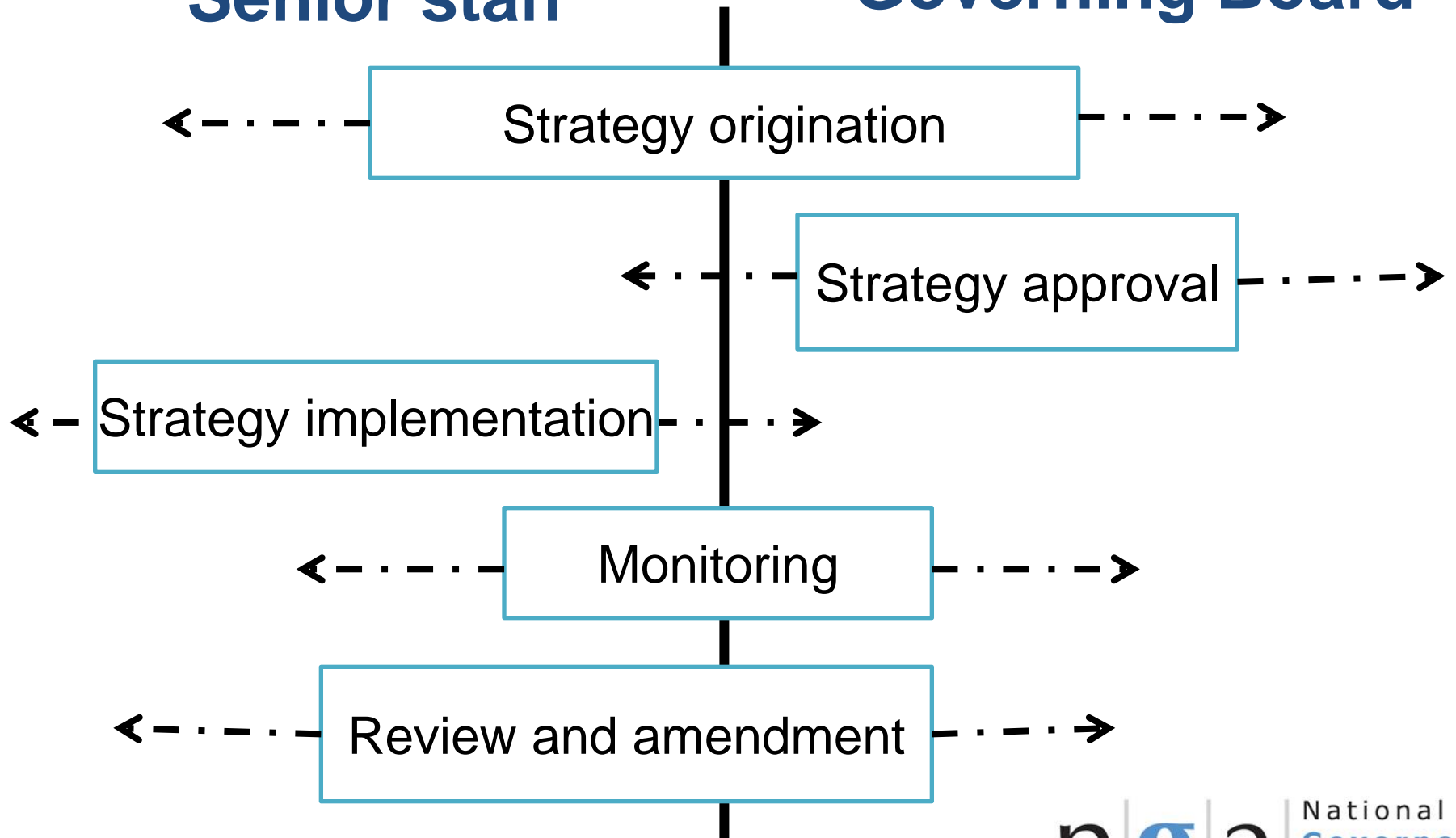
How do we get there?

- having considered the Trust's vision, the GB must set goals and agree the school's development priorities (between 4 and 6)
- each of these priorities needs a target for the short & longer term
- most of the GB business is monitoring progress against these, and
- at the end of the year formally review

Framework for strategy development

Senior staff

Governing Board



Source: Caroline Copeman, 2011

| Strategic ie governance | Operational |
|--|--|
| Monitoring reports on quality of teaching against pupils' outcomes | Making judgements about quality of teaching |
| Receiving financial audit report | Governor coming into school to supervise book-keeper |
| Ensuring necessary audits have been carried out by qualified professionals | Governors undertaking audits eg. Health & safety |
| Interviewing senior leaders | Interviewing teachers |
| Agreeing to invest in school buses | Organising the bus routes |
| Agreeing to a building project | Obtaining quotes for cost |
| Ensuring school is marketed well | Writing school prospectus |

Staying strategic

- Do you have a short sharp school strategy with priorities?
- Distinguish when you are governing and when you are volunteering in another capacity
- Using time to best effect - on the key school priorities, not just compliance and 'policies'
- Differentiate 'principle' from 'procedures'
- Are school leaders equipped to do their jobs (including HR, procurement) without operational support from governors?
- Do not do someone else's job: see joint statement with ASCL and NAHT: *"What governing bodies should expect from school leaders and what school leaders should expect from governing bodies"*
- **Change the culture:** zero tolerance for interference

The challenge for chairs

The time to make all this happen

Chairing is a leadership role

Join the Chairs' Development

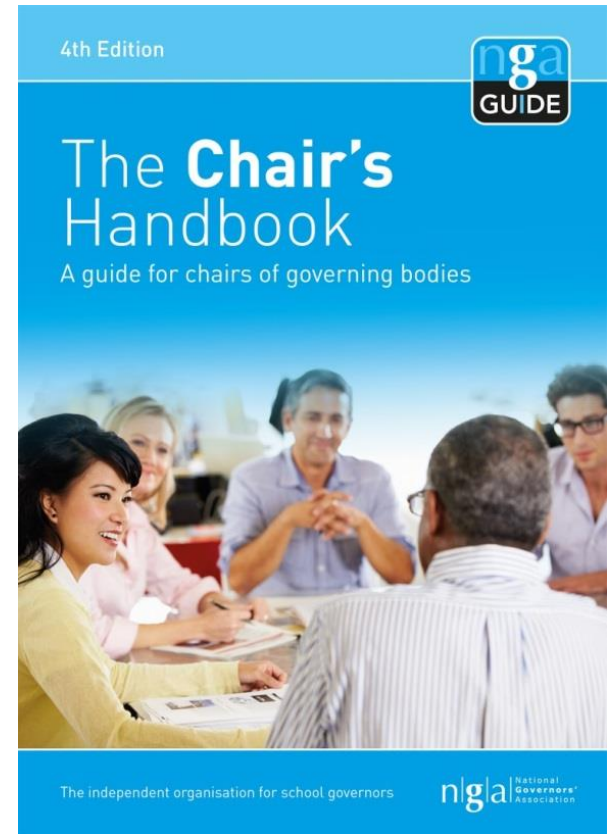
Programme: licensed by the
National College

Share good practice with other
chairs

Good practice: six years maximum

Succession planning

Review your own performance





Leading Governance Chairs' & Clerks' Development Programme:

one of NCTL's eleven licensees across the country



www.leadinggovernance.org

Clerking Matters

- Working with SOLACE and other partners to:
 - Raise the profile of professional clerking
 - Highlight the importance of effective clerking
 - Improve the overall standard of clerking
 - Find a clerk' pilot
- See www.nga.org.uk for clerk's job description – this includes advice, not only administration
- National College's new clerks' national development programme
- GBs must pay clerks a reasonable wage
- GBs must ensure clerks are appraised


Knowing your school: using data

nga National Governors' Association

RM Education Data Solutions

Knowing Your School

A series of briefing notes for school governors from the National Governors' Association produced in association with partners



RAISEonline for Governors of Secondary Schools

Briefing Note: 2 December 2011

Dave Thomson, RM Education

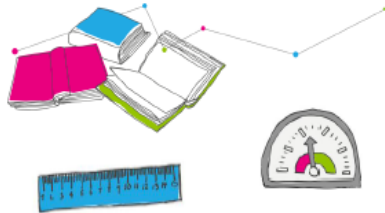
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nga National Governors' Association

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Knowing Your School

A series of briefing notes for school governors from the National Governors' Association produced in association with partners



The FFT Governor Dashboard for secondary school governors

Briefing note: 5a May 2013

There is an equivalent briefing note (5b) for primary schools

Available from www.nga.org.uk

Knowing the school: support & challenge

It is not all about hard data: what else do we value?

- How does the GB know the quality of teaching?
- How does the GB know the pupil premium is working?
- How does the GB seek views from parents, pupils & staff?
- Are the purpose of school visits clear?
 - Do you have a protocol for school visits?
 - Are they monitoring strategic priorities?
 - Are link governors used effectively?
- Did governors receive a report from Ofsted inspectors?
- HT reports are key, but also independent audit & advice
- Effective HT performance management (PM)
- Moderation of staff PM & pay

Effective support, challenge & scrutiny

- Research – and Ofsted reports - show GBs are more effective at support and compliance duties than challenge.
- As well as the knowledge, skills and time, there must be a confidence, courage and culture of the importance of challenge
- Courageous conversations: e.g are identified issues followed up?
 - why didn't the interventions have the desired impact?
 - how is teaching 'good' but progress low?
 - why isn't pupil premium spending closing the gap?
 - what difference has investment in CPD made?
- Is the GB equipped to carry out the head's performance development and appraisal well?
- See NGA's "Questions for governors to ask"

Governance making an impact

- Review GB structure and practice regularly
 - e.g. two committee structure; streamline agendas; 2 hr meetings
 - How robust is the business planning cycle?
- Review GB effectiveness:
 - Resources: eg ‘20 questions for GBs to ask themselves’, GovernorMark, Target Tracker’s GSET: see www.nga.org.uk
 - External reviews of governance
- **Change the culture:** Be honest and not defensive
- Is improving the offer to children your focus?
- Is collaboration encouraged & full advantage taken of others in TEFAT

Bottom line: targets are being met and children’s outcomes are positive

NGA Awards for Outstanding Governance!



- Celebrating excellent practice of governing boards and clerks across England & raising the profile of governance
- Open to any state-funded school, federation & multi-academy trust - you don't have to be a member of NGA
- Finalists will be invited to the awards ceremony at the House of Commons on 9 June 2015, with the presentation by the Under-secretary of State for Schools
- To nominate and for more info, go to www.nga.org.uk and click on awards banner on the home page.
- Nominations close at 12 noon on **Monday 1 December 2014**
- Do you know a GB or clerk who has made a difference?

Join us: **GOLD** membership

n|g|a| **GOLD**line
The NGA Advice Service

As a **GOLD** member of NGA the school is entitled to:

- Access to the guidance centre on NGA's website for all governors & the clerk;
- the bi-monthly 40 page NGA members' magazine *Governing Matters* for all;
- A weekly e-newsletter for all governors/trustees & clerks;
- free places at NGA regional and national conferences;
- Access to NGA's advice line and legal advice:
- *A Chair's Handbook*, and *Welcome to Governance* induction guides for all new governors/trustees

For a **£30** discount from **GOLD** membership,

quote **DIS0056** when joining on www.nga.org.uk ,

or when you ring 0121 237 3780 or email membership@nga.org.uk



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