



QUESTIONS TO ASK

# 20 key questions for governing boards

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- The Key for School Governors, the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Education Governance and Leadership developed 20 key questions for governing boards.
- They aim to help governors reflect on their practice.

## Governing board effectiveness

### **Right skills: do we have the right skills on the governing board?**

- Have we completed a skills audit which informs the governor specification we use as the basis of governor appointment and interview?

### **Effectiveness: are we as effective as we could be?**

- 2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?
- Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing board's induction and development needs?
- Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?
- How do we make use of good practice from across the country?

### **Role of the chair: does our chair show strong and effective leadership?**

- Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair's performance and elect the chair each year?
- Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than 2 terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every 6 years?
- Does the chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the board's performance?

## Vision, ethos and strategy

### **Strategy: does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?**

- › Does our vision look forward 3 to 5 years, and does it include what the children who have left the school will have achieved?
- › Have we agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?
- › How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing board's activities and agenda setting?

### **Engagement: are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?**

- › How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?
- › How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing board to our parents and local community?
- › What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

## Effective accountability

### **Accountability of the executive: do we hold the school leaders to account?**

- › How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data) so we can properly hold school leaders to account?
- › Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?
- › How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?
- › Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?
- › Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?

### **Impact: are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?**

- › How much has the school improved over the last 3 years, and what has the governing board's contribution been to this?