

Governor Visits

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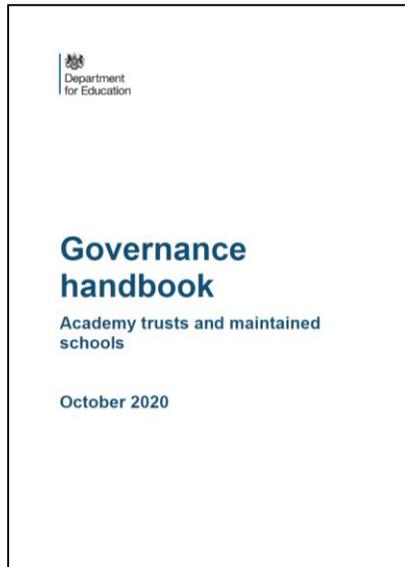
Core function of governors

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its money is well spent, including the pupil premium

Ofsted - Inspectors will consider **‘whether leaders and those responsible for governance all understand their respective roles and perform these in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school’**



‘Visits to schools by those governing can be enormously useful in helping them carry out their role. That role is largely strategic, not operational, and includes ensuring vision is being turned into reality, ethos is being embedded and progress is being made against the strategic plan. At the heart of this is one of NGA’s eight elements of effective governance: knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children and the community.’



‘Many governors find that visiting, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors can see for themselves whether the school is implementing their policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice’.

Vision and School Improvement Plan

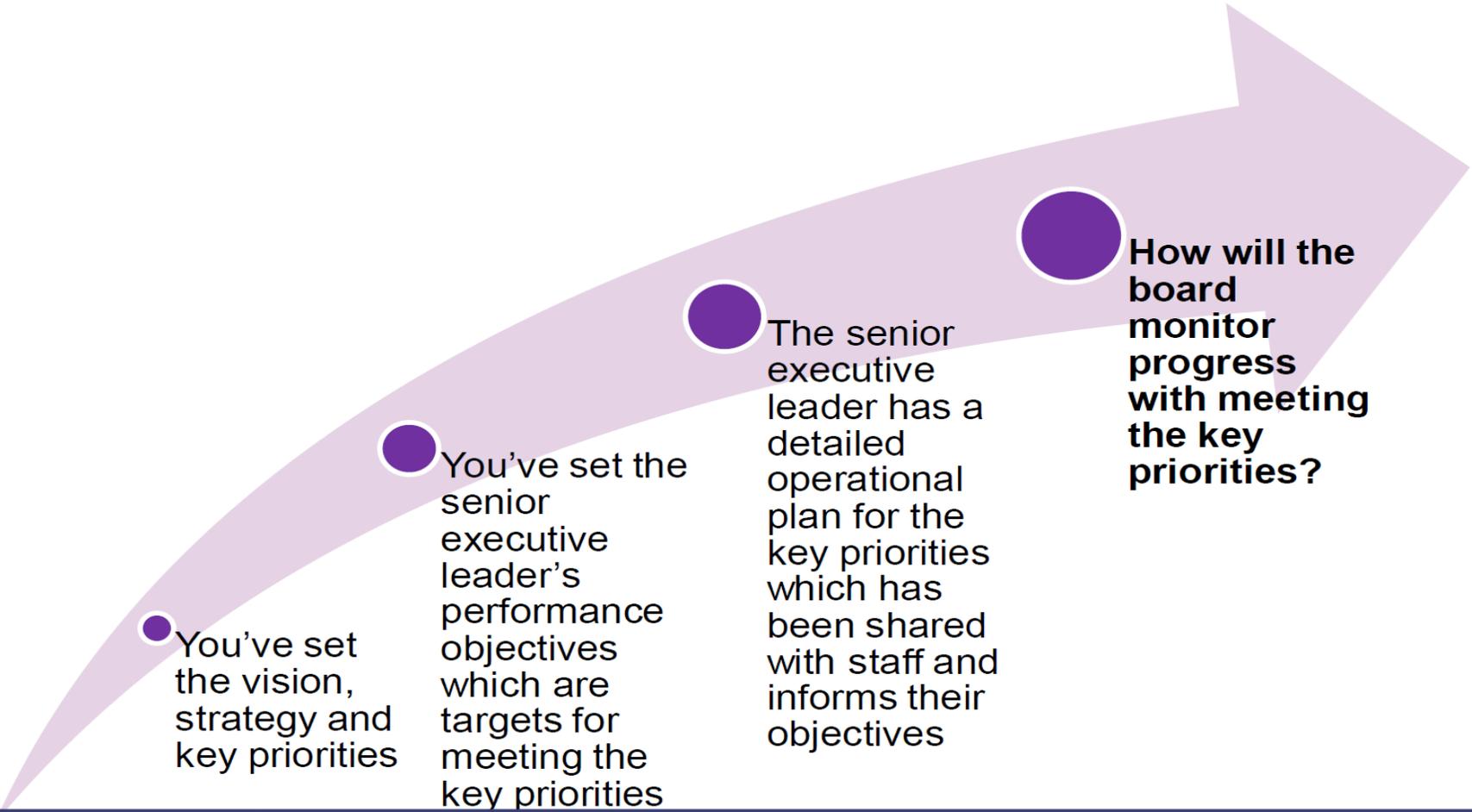
Your vision describes what the pupils will have left school having learned in terms of attainment and progress and how they will be prepared for the next stage of their lives

Your strategy identifies the key priorities you will focus on to achieve your vision

Each priority will have a KPI or target which will need to be met

These KPIs or target will form the basis of the senior executive leader's performance objectives

Monitoring your priorities



You've set the vision, strategy and key priorities

You've set the senior executive leader's performance objectives which are targets for meeting the key priorities

The senior executive leader has a detailed operational plan for the key priorities which has been shared with staff and informs their objectives

How will the board monitor progress with meeting the key priorities?

Sources of Information

Reports from senior leaders	Reports from external advisors / consultants	Published data	Ofsted IDSR data
School's internal data	Subject leader / department head reports	Surveys – staff / pupils / parents	Attendance at key meetings
Answers to questions at board meetings	School self-evaluation	Mid-year performance reviews	Governor visits

Triangulation



Setting expectations

- Prearranged focus
- Related to the monitoring of school improvement plan / strategic plan
- Linked to objectives / targets
- Develop an understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- Involve a member of staff responsible for the objective / target
- Give background information / context
- Discussions with pupils / staff affected by it
- See the initiative in action

Strategic not operational

- Visits are not inspections – this should be left to professionals contracted to the school e.g. health and safety
- Developing understanding of policy and practice
- Could be a tour – if new to role
- Attend meetings as an observer
- Visit informally – performances / celebrations
- Governors should not be observing lessons... 'Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning'. DfE
- Follow the protocol for Governor visits

How often should you visit?

- Those visiting “should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school”
- It can therefore be useful for the governing board to set a minimum and maximum number of visits that individuals should make each school year
- NGA recommends that each individual board member visits the school at least once a year but no more than once a term
- A well-planned and utilised hour at the beginning or end of the school day can be sufficient for a productive visit

What should I do?

- It is vital to plan school visits in advance, especially if they involve visiting classrooms
- Visits should be part of a planned programme agreed by the **whole governing board** and **linking to the school strategy**
- Having a **clear protocol in place** that is understood by all ensures a disproportionate amount of time isn't spent planning each visit
- Each member of staff who will be involved in the visit should also know the purpose of the visit and what to expect. This should be coordinated directly through the headteacher who will confirm details of the visit with the staff member themselves

What should I do?

Should be familiar with the school's code of conduct as well as that of the governing board.

May wish to ask specific questions such as:

- Where should I go on arrival at the school?
- Who will meet me and introduce me to the relevant staff member?
- How would you like me to be introduced to pupils?
- How should I address staff ?
- What should I do if a pupil asks for help?
- What should I do if I see a pupil behaving inappropriately?

What should I do?

Reviewing school visits

After each visit to the school, individuals should take time to reflect and consider anything they might do differently in future visits.

In addition, the governing board should review their school visits protocol every academic year. **The review should consider:**

- Are our visits proving useful?
- What benefits, particularly unexpected benefits, have come from our visits?
- Are we better informed and enabled to make sensible decisions?
- Is there anything we need to change about how visits are conducted, taking into account feedback from school staff?
- What should I do if I have concerns about staff?

Visit Protocol

- Purpose – focus / notice
- Code of conduct
- Follow-up – visit report / shared with committee / full board
- Confidentiality
- Frequency
- Review

Visit Template

- Focus of visit
- Summary of activities
- Impact of actions to date / next steps
- Clarification / further questions
- Actions for governors to consider
- Other comments

What is it like to be a pupil at your school on a daily basis?

