Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees

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Introduction

This document is intended for a range of roles to help boards analyse, discuss, and challenge the educational and financial performance of their school or academy trust.

All governance boards, no matter what type of school or trust how many schools they govern have 3 core functions:

1. setting strategic vision, ethos, and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

You should provide this challenging and analysing what your data is telling you about your school or academy trust. You should know who is responsible for providing this information, and how it is presented, including whether it is in a form that is easily interpretable (dashboard, DfE's 'trust dashboard' or other data analysis tools) and 'raises' questions and provides the reasons for success.

You facilitate further improvement when you have a robust governance framework, we have developed Criteria for you to use as an evidence base when discussing the performance of your school or trust and the academies within it that are in your trust.

Further information on the knowledge, skills and effective behaviours which are required for governance can be found at the governance handbook and governance framework.

The governance structures and roles guidance provides an explanation of how governance works at school, including descriptions of roles and responsibilities.

A periodic external review of governance (GEM) is an important tool to test the effectiveness of your board. It provides an independent, objective view of board responsibilities serving as an independent lens to ensure that each of the three core functions of effective governance are being fulfilled. An EFSI should be conducted routinely as part of a wider programme of self-assessment and review, and should be used to identify strengths and knowledge, skills and behaviours related to the competency framework for governance.

Your evidence base

The 7 themes bring together a wide range of information to help guide board discussions and provide a basis for challenge to ensure value for money is achieved. **Your evidence base should be proportionate to the size and complexity of your school, each other, and the size and complexity of your organisation** and to state-specific obligations. It's important that you take into consideration the:

- size of your organisation
- type of school(s) within your organisation (for example, primary/ secondary/ grammar/ faith/ alternative provision/ special schools/ sixth form/ Pupil Referral Units/ Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) unit or resourced provision
- key stage
- pupil numbers
- pupil attendance and exclusions
- pupil behaviour
- quality of your guidance
- implications of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010

In all cases, you should consider what the data is telling you:

- what is going well?
- what is not going well and why from one area to another?
- what are the outcomes?
- are any areas at risk of becoming a concern?
- what changes need to be made?
- what can be done about it?
- what is the impact on pupils/staff for your school or academy trust?
- what is the impact on pupils/staff across the local authority area?

Your evidence base will support you to develop, monitor and deliver your organisation's strategy for school/academy improvement, staff development, and the deployment of resources in your school or academy trust.

It should be used to identify strategic decisions where you might expect performance to improve, and to ensure that the board is fulfilling its role to challenge and support the school, clearly documenting the changes and progress made since the last discussion.

As board and executive leaders, you should be benchmarking against comparators and analysing trends that bring together quality of leadership, financial health, resource management and pupil/student outcomes into one place.

Remember: it is important the data collected is the **most recent available**. The data should be analysed to identify trends and patterns, and to ask the right questions and to focus the board's efforts it is routinely available.

Boards and executive leaders should understand the precision and limitations of data, including the impact of small cohorts, and should be cautious about drawing disproportionate, 'time specific' conclusions and analysing data as the organisation is additional workloads on individuals. You should consider what is the minimum information the board requires to hold leaders to account.

Further information on removing unnecessary workload associated with data management is available in the making data work report, which sets out the principles for data use.

Frequency of reporting

The board and its committees **must** meet regularly enough to discharge their responsibilities. As a minimum board meetings **must** take place at least 3 times a year (and business conducted only when required).

Which boards may delegate duties to its committees, the board, remains accountable for the decisions made by its committees. Boards should be clear about the frequency of reporting of board meetings.

Reporting by exception

An exception report can be used to identify and prioritise instances which require immediate attention when reviewing the performance of your school, or academy trust and the academies within it against your strategic plan. It should be used to identify your school or trust has significantly deviated from that and/or is underperforming and to question and challenge executive leaders to understand and contribute towards the improvement actions.

The exception report should form the basis for structured discussions, and boards should be clear about what is, and is not, within their remit. The Ofsted report has been provided as a question board factsheet, with guidance notes, and examples case studies (Annex A and Annex B).

Cyber security

Schools and academy trusts may heavily rely IT and online services to function. They hold large amounts of sensitive and personal data on pupils, parents, and staff, which must be kept safe and secure.

You should ensure:

- if policies and procedures are in place to safeguard systems, staff, and learners, and these are observed and reviewed periodically
- if there is a robust system in place to collect, process, data security and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- you understand the policies and procedures in place for your school or academy trust and know how to apply them to ensure data is kept safe and secure

The cyber security in schools questions for governors and trustees provides a series of questions to ask your school or academy trust and cyber security information for school security to improve awareness and understanding.

Cyber security for schools provides practical resources to keep schools improve their cyber security.

The 7 themes

1. Pupil numbers/attendance and exclusions

Pupil numbers

Pupil numbers account for the vast bulk of your income. Understanding the growth or decline in numbers is vital to safeguard the financial health of your organisation.

Look at recent trends, current intake, and pupil number projections. You should consider the impact of pupil numbers on your staffing and other costs, and the impact of diverse sales against competition and local demographics.

You should consider:

- engaging with feeder schools
- transition from primary to secondary schools
- pupil projections / future financial planning including considering those with disabilities and those with special educational needs
- differences between pupil projections and actual pupil numbers
- number of service pupils' pupils from treasher families' seasonal employment trends
- liaising with local authorities where required on pupil place

Pupil absence levels (including persistent absence)

Comparative data is often a key indicator, is hunting for high performing organisations, and is a key lever for Ofsted. Persistent absence and pupil absence sales against comparators and local authority averages. Persistent absence and pupil absence sales against other schools within your local authority area or multi-academy trust (MAT) and the national average to decide where to focus your improvement efforts.

You should consider:

- absence levels by pupil characteristics including:
  - gender (Ofsted collection and First prospect
  - different year groups
  - pupils with special educational disability
  - those with special educational needs and disabilities, or long-term medical conditions
  - those who have needed a social worker (looked after children (LAC) and children in need (CIN))

The pupil absence statistics provides information on overall authorised and unauthorised pupil absences by school type, including persistent absence and pupil characteristics. Statistics are published 3 times per year.

Analyse school performance tool allows sections. Boards can request a "premier" account from their DfE Sign-in approver which allows access to KCP.

Pupil moves (including exclusion levels)

Boards should carefully consider the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who are moving and deploy maximum challenge to school and academy trust management teams on pupil movement/exclusions to ensure it is not used as a tool.

Look at suspensions and permanent exclusions, these taken off roll and those on roll but attending alternative provision. It is important to consider both the rationale for directing children to be educated off site in alternative provision (AP) and whether the provision is meeting the needs of the pupils. Look at the data on the number of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who have an education, school, academy or trust may wish to consider reviewing its SEN support.

Pupil academy trusts (PAT) may also choose to work with their academies to consider this information, and whether or not there are patterns across academies within a PAT, and how the PAT can support academies to be more effective.

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You should consider:

- effectiveness and consistency in implementing the school's behaviour policy
- the school register and absence codes
- instances where pupils receive repeat suspensions
- interventions in place to support pupils at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion
- visiting special/alternative provisions to ensure they are used very sparingly
- ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is applied to all pupils including those requiring sub-individual plans and may highlight where policies or support are not effective
- the characteristics of children who are suspended or permanently excluded, removed from rolls, or educated off site, such as the proportion who have SEND, whether they are supported by social care and have needed a social worker, are looked after children, are eligible for free school meals, are from certain ethnic groups, are disproportionately excluded or moving out of school at higher rate than others, discussing why this and whether any changes to practice are required to address disparities
- the school's exclusion policy and ensure that it is fair, transparent and sufficient alternate to provide assurance the education is achieving its objectives and that the pupils are being supported

The school exclusions and permanent exclusions information on using pupil registers and the school attendance and absence guidance, and improving school attendance.

The school suspensions and permanent exclusions mandatory guidance provide a guide to the legislation that governs the suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils from local authority maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units.

The alternative provision statutory guidance provides information for local authorities, as well as headteachers and governing bodies of settings providing alternative provision.

Analyse school performance tool allows sections. Boards can request a "premier" account from their DfE Sign-in approver which allows access to KCP.

2. Attainment and progress

Pupil education outcomes

The measure will reflect the type and offered of the school, for example key stage 2, key stage 4 progress, and attainment.

Look at the breakdown of pupil numbers, for example, by boys/ girls, free school meals, ethnicity, special educational needs and disability, looked after children (those with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan and those on SEN Support), looked after children, and previously looked after children.

Prioritise the actions taken to close the attainment gap and to improve year on year outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Consider the impact of wider factors that sit within the above or the national context report.

You should consider:

- the progress of pupils attracting pupil premium and recovery premium by the school, coordinated, and expected together
- the progress of disadvantaged pupils by key stages* year group against that of their non-disadvantaged peers nationally
- the use of pupil premium plus and how it is being used to raise the educational attainment of previously looked after children
- the progress of pupils with an EHC plan or SEN Support and an evaluation of the impact of the school's SEND provision
- the progress of pupils who have benefitted from the catch up premium, coupled against the use of that funding
- the school's Ofsted and DfE performance measures (of KS2 – progress and attainment in reading, maths, and GPS – Progress 8/ Attainment 8 measure, English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure, and at KS1 – progress, attainment – progress in reading, writing, and maths, and attainment in reading, writing, and maths, and the use of special schools, independent and pupil progress data measures and how it is against outcomes in Education, Health and Care plans)
- the most recently published destination/ career data including for pupils with SEND

Boards can use the tools available in the school and college performance measures to analyse the school's performance against other schools and local authorities.

Remember, it is important that boards and executive leaders consider whether data is proportionate, and the frequency and linear resource costs of data collection. For example, they should not be requiring data more generated than is being used.

Additional support for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

Boards place an important role in the school's work to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years provides guidance to schools, academy trusts, and governing bodies of the board, or a committee who has specific responsibility for determining the strategy, development of SEN policy and provision in the school, and ensuring the school meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. Including in relation to reasonable adjustments for pupils.

You should consider:

- data on the SEN population in the school and compare the numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs, and disabilities
- what % of the school population has SEND
- what % is of SEN Support
- what % is EHC plan
- what is the breakdown of SEND by category of need
- data relating to SEN funding information, for example, national SEN funding and top up funding
- how is it spent and its impact
- if it is targeted strategically based on your knowledge of the school SEND profile
- if the SEN funding is spent to improve progress and if so, how?

Schools and academy trusts are also required to publish a SEN information report. Governors should review the information in the report to ensure it is up to date and is compliant in quality. Does will place a key part in monitoring the school's implementation of that policy.

The SEND governance review guide sets out a framework to ensure learners with SEND access high-quality provision.

3. Curriculum planning – staff and class sizes

Curriculum planning (integrated with financial planning)

It's vital that curriculum planning is coordinated as a joint exercise with your budget planning and staffing structure. Consider what the needs of all pupils (including those with additional needs) and is effective.

A curriculum and data driven approach to financial planning will help establish a staffing structure that can deliver the greatest impact. Boards should challenge and leadership teams on the effectiveness organisation of the curriculum and deployment of staff.

Look at factors including:

- pupil to teacher ratio
- average class size
- teacher contact ratio (of secondary)
- average teacher cost
- % teacher spend on teaching/ non-teaching
- % teaching assistant spend on teaching
- special pupil to non-supernumerary teacher (for example, catering, ICT, aviation management, business administration, energy, and curriculum supplies)
- Key Stage 4 Qualifications in Employment (Ofsted) and Higher Education Institute (HEI) (DfE)
- the amount of non-teaching time the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has available compared to the number of pupils with SEND

You should consider:

- whether the current staff deployment strategy supports the school's educational and financial sustainability
- current and future pupil forecasts to identify any changes in staffing requirements, including consideration of any especially educational needs and disabilities of current pupils/ pupils
- how does the school's published accessibility plan, that must include plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum
- where all pupil numbers change from year to year
- the impact of any changes to staffing
- teaching and learning resourcing (TLR) and on costs (for example, National Insurance)

Schools can then use this data to model alternative scenarios and plan strategically to implement new structures if necessary.

The financial oversight and financial planning (FOFP) guidance provides information for governors can use FOFP to create the school curriculum for pupils with additional funding.

The school workforce planning guidance provides reference tools for governors to review their staff structure regularly, as part of annual school improvement, curriculum, and financial planning.

Boards can use the school financial management, top 10 planning checks for governors and trustees to support curriculum planning.

To help schools, academy trusts and school resource management (SSRM) is a digital tool for school financial management systems (MFSS). SRMMs are practicing sector experts, who can provide independent advice and support on financial management and governance to schools and academy trusts on how they could make best use of their revenue and capital resources to deliver the best possible educational outcomes for their pupils. Information on the SRMM programme, and how to find an SRMM, is available on GOV.UK. Partnership schools should refer to their local authority.

A range of the School Resource Management support, tools and frameworks can be access through the DfE's website page.

4. Financial management and governance

Financial management

Effective financial management tools should have robust systems and processes in place to manage their finances securely and effectively and provide accurate data. It is important that board members understand the financial data that is presented to them and can use it to challenge executive leaders – if you are unsure, ask!

As a minimum the board should:

- ensure that the school's budget is in balance and that budgets set and ongoing forecasts
- identify and challenge trends and inefficiencies in spending and ensure it is happened in your school or academy trust
- track income across planned and actual expenditure against budget forecasts, and implementation and non-staff costs as a percentage of total expenditure (part of the financial health)
- analyse cost flow
- ensure pupil premium/ catch up premium have been accurate and if not, immediately inform the board

Use the school financial benchmarking service, or more the financial health, substantial assessment of your financial data, to compare your school's income and expenditure against that of similar schools and academy trusts.

1. For help with planning your school's finances and resources use the school resource management tool.
2. The self-review tool for governors guidance can help you for an external finance adviser.

Academy trust Handbook

- must monitor their budget in accordance with the requirements set out in the Academy Trust Handbook
- should ensure there is clarity around the services provided centrally by its academies and the services provided locally by individual academies, and should be responsible for assessing the quality of these services and their value for money

The school's income management self-assessment questionnaire can be used to measure how effective and efficient they are in maximising resources effectively and to identify the potential need to make.

The academy trust financial management good practice guide provides information outlining good practice in academy trust financial management, accounting, and assurance.

LA maintained schools.

- must provide the authority with details of anticipated and actual expenditure and income, in a form and at times directed by the authority

Schools for financing local authority maintained schools and the financial relationship between local authorities and the schools they maintain.

The school financial value standard (SFVS) and assurance statement helps schools to ensure they meet high standards of good financial management and resource management.

School and academy trust improvement activities

The budgetary process should be embedded within the strategic leadership function. It is an integral part of the planning cycle, not an exercise activity that is the sole responsibility of the finance manager.

You should consider:

- are school or academy trust improvement initiatives prioritised, costed, and linked to the budget?
- are all new initiatives fully costed before the board approves them, including staff time?
- any additional workload placed on staff as a result of new initiatives?
- do outcomes for pupils with SEND/ support/ pupils requires a specific focus on SEND in terms of school improvement?

Resource and training are available via the SENDCo Gateway to support schools to improve their practice in relation to SEND, including support for governors.

Long and short-term financial/budget planning

Ofsted's new EIF is a long-term financial budget plan, including balance sheet and the academy trusts cash flow projections. (Academy trusts are required to submit a 3 year budget forecast to EFA in their annual budget forecast return (BFR), and an annual budget forecast return (AFR) for the current year. Academy trusts are required to submit cash flow projections to the ESFA.)

The board should challenge the assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures to ensure they are realistic.

You should consider:

- the school's funding formula for additional needs and the available data on the pupils it will support (for example, those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, those who are eligible for free school meals, looked after children, and those who are eligible for pupil premium and recovery premium)
- consult the school's published pupil premium plan and recovery premium (RP) (DfE) strategy and check with the senior team the rationale for the spending decisions and the impact on outcomes
- planning to expenditure on pupil premium, including the rationale for any expenditure, and accessibility plan the content of which **must** include plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the physical environment

Schedule of contracts

Your school or academy trust should have a contracts log to identify which contracts are due for renewal. It is important that contract renewals is planned in to avoid expiration. You should allow time to review (or renew) the commercial options, which are available to ensure value for money and to avoid unnecessary costs.

All schools and academy trusts should have in place a register of business interests (gifts or services (such as energy and water supplies and devices such as printers, scanners, and copiers).

The buying for schools guide provides resources for buying goods and services and flagging DfE recommended suppliers for schools.

The Sold in DfE approved framework for your school guidance helps you to find quality assured suppliers of goods and services for your school.

Estate management

Estate management

Estate management

The school estate should be managed strategically to reflect both short and longer-term needs and priorities, including disability access.

We recommend you:

- produce an estate vision, strategy, and asset management plan to support your education vision, aligning this with your published accessibility plan (that under equality law you have to publish and keep updated)
- ensure you have the right data to support and enable short/ longer term planning and help strategic decision making about your estate
- analyse what you spend on your estate now, and what you need to spend to keep it safe, watertight and to provide for the future
- prioritise expenditure and investment accordingly

You can find further information about managing your estate strategically including performance measures and data needs in good estate management for schools.

The find a DfE approved framework for your school guidance helps you to find quality checked suppliers of goods and services for your school.

Financial governance

To ensure effective financial governance boards need to have:

- appropriate financial skills and the ability to understand and interpret data
- clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's financial position
- access to an adequate level of financial expertise from either the school business professional or finance specialist, including where those staff are shared, for example on sick leave
- robust plans/ policies/ procedures in place to set, monitor and authorise spend and manage the risks of overspend
- adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds
- adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors, and suppliers
- a regularly maintained register of the business interests of boards and staff to avoid conflicts of interest

Academy trusts:

- **must** have an audit and risk committee to oversee and approve the trust's programme of internal scrutiny, ensure risks are addressed and report to the board on the adequacy of the trust's financial and non-financial controls and management of risks
- **must** include a report to the board on non-compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook, which should also cover the trusts' publications requirements

The Academy Trust Handbook describes the financial requirements for academy trusts.

The school resource management self-assessment tool can be used to reassure trusts that they are managing resources effectively and to identify any adjustments they need to make.

Establishing and developing your trust provides guidance and resources for academy trusts, including those establishing new trusts and existing trusts planning to grow.

LA maintained schools

The schools financial value standard (SFVS) provides assurance that good financial management is in place and can be used to identify where they may be able to make changes to improve their management of resources.

The schemes for financing schools sets out the financial relationship between local authorities and the schools they maintain.

Remuneration

It is essential that we have the best people to lead our schools if we are to raise standards. Boards should exercise strong governance around CEO pay or other highly paid staff. Boards should evidence and validate the decision-making processes used when setting and increasing pay and associated packages and there should be strong challenge to ensure it is appropriate. High pay can only be justified by delivering exceptional education and financial performance.

Academy trusts:

- the setting executive salaries guidance for academy trusts outlines the contextual factors that boards should consider when setting or reviewing executive salaries

LA maintained schools:

- the school teachers' pay and conditions guidance applies

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly wage of all men and women across a workforce. Schools and trusts with 250 or more employees are legally required to publish their gender pay gap figures annually, on the Government's reporting portal and on their own websites. The statutory deadline for public bodies to publish their data is 30 March each year. More information on the reporting requirements is available on the GLAA website.

Note: due to the impact of Covid-19 (Coronavirus), the deadline for reporting 2020/ 21 data is postponed to 5 October 2021. Guidance relating to this can be found at Gender pay gap reporting: changes to enforcement. Reporting of 2019/ 20 data was suspended entirely.

We recommend that boards challenge leadership teams to identify potential causes of the gender pay gap in their schools or trust and develop an effective action plan to tackle it. The Government Equalities Office has published guidance to help employers understand their gender pay gap figures and take the right actions to address any gender pay differences, including advice on using evidence-based actions to close the gap, eight ways to understand your gender pay gap and a Nursery guide for developing an action plan.

5. Quality assurance

Ofsted judgements

Boards should review the last Ofsted inspection report, taking note of any areas for improvement that are highlighted in the findings, alongside planning reports on action taken to address issues.

The education inspection framework sets out Ofsted's inspection principles and the criteria for judgements made.

Audit ratings

Boards should review internal and external audit ratings and identify areas for improvement, ensuring there is clear ownership of actions and timescales for completion.

Academy trusts:

- **must** comply with their responsibilities for internal and external audit as set out in the Academy Trust Handbook. The academy trust financial management good practice guides provide information on academy trust management letters, choosing an external auditor for an academy trust and internal scrutiny for academy trusts.

LA maintained schools:

- local authorities (LAs) are responsible for the financial monitoring and audit of maintained schools. LAs are required to publish schemes for financing schools setting out the financial relationship between them and the schools they maintain. This guidance is required to include information about auditing.

Risk register

Boards should regularly review the procedures, processes and controls which are in place, to effectively manage risk and any actions to mitigate them.

Academy trusts:

- **must** manage risk and maintain a risk register setting out the challenges and threats that the trust is facing, together with the action that the trust's management team should be taking to mitigate negative outcomes. The academy trust risk management good practice guides provide further information on risk management

Equality

Review data relevant to your published equality objectives and the material you have published to demonstrate how you are complying with the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Other reviews

You should look at outcomes of annual reviews including but not limited to school improvement, pupil premium, safeguarding, and denominational inspections (for organisations designated with a religious denomination).

Consider whether data highlights a need to commission a SEND review, which looks at how education settings provide for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. There is a suite of review guides available on the SEND Gateway, which can help you review SEND provision within your setting and identify areas of improvement. This includes preparing for adulthood from the earliest years review guide, which helps you consider if your establishment is sufficiently preparing pupils with SEND for adulthood/ employment.

6. Safeguarding and well-being

Safeguarding

All schools, academies and academy trusts must comply with keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) and working together to safeguard children (WT) statutory guidance.

Boards should ensure their schools have effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. These include an effective:

- child protection policy, which:
  - describes procedures in accordance with government guidance
  - references any locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the safeguarding partners
  - includes policies such as peer on peer abuse, online safety, serious violence, and is available publicly either via the organisation's website or by other means
  - is both reviewed and updated annually (as a minimum) so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt
- behaviour policy
- staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)
- policy setting out arrangements for when a child goes missing from education

You should consider:

- the types of concern recorded including the subsequent action taken including referrals to children's services or other LA support to identify emerging trends and mitigate the risk of re-occurrence
- the effect of the concern on pupil(s) and impact of intervention taken as a result of the concern
- complaints received from parents or others, including staff grievances
- relevant external sources such as local media, Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- the behaviour sanctions record
- inviting regular pupil and parent feedback such as termly pupil/ parent views
- reviewing the staff safeguarding training plan, and arrangements for updating staff on changes to safeguarding and child protection matters
- ensuring regular audit checks are being carried out effectively on pre-employment checks
- regularly challenging data around the percentage of staff who are DBS cleared, this should include if clearance is at the right level, prohibition checks; any outstanding vetting in new employees and the intervention put in place to mitigate risks to pupils until clearance is received; ensuring written confirmation is received from third parties (if used) that relevant checks have been carried out

Academy trusts:

- **must** also comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Health and safety

Boards should analyse health and safety/ accident reports and review areas of non-compliance and audit concerns.

Contingency plans should be in place which cover a range of potential incidents that could occur.

You should consider:

- number of notifiable accidents/ dangerous occurrences
- near misses and assess what can be learned/ what improvements can be made
- the emergency planning and response guidance provides information on how schools and other educational settings should plan for and deal with emergencies, including severe weather and floods
- the health and safety: responsibilities for schools guidance summarises the health and safety law relevant to all schools
- the supporting pupils at school with medical conditions guidance provides information on how statutory requirements should be met

7. The school community – staff, pupils, parents and the governing board

Human resource considerations

You should consider:

- reasons for high staff absence/ turn over
- staff performance/ objective setting and appraisals
- succession planning
- skills shortages for teaching/ non-teaching staff and at board level.

The professional development for school leaders collection provides information on professional development for school leaders and governors.

Staff views

You should consider:

- staff feedback to measure levels of satisfaction, staff surveys, and exit interview summary reports

You can find examples of staff workload surveys in the reducing teacher workload toolkit. The toolkit provides practical advice and tools to help school leaders and teachers review and reduce workload, including in relation to data management.

The reducing teacher workload: data management review group report provides recommendations on how schools can reduce workload when managing data. The reducing data work impact sets out recommendations and principles to reduce unnecessary workload associated with data and evidence collection.

Pupil views

Boards should engage with pupils and be responsive to their views. They should establish a feedback mechanism, for example, student surveys or focus groups to collect and measure pupil satisfaction.

Parent views

Boards should ensure that their organisation regularly communicates/ seeks the views of parents and carers and the local community, including disadvantaged families or those families where English is not the first language.

A feedback mechanism should be established to demonstrate how the views of parents/ carers and others has informed their decision making and measure the engagement and satisfaction levels of parents, carers, and others.

You should consider:

- trend in numbers of first choice applicants for school places
- attendance rates at open days or parents' evenings
- number of complaints received – what are these about/ is there a common theme, what action is being taken to address these?
- an annual questionnaire

Ofsted Parent View is a mechanism available to parents/ carers to provide feedback regarding their child's school. Schools and academy trusts can sign up for regular feedback alerts.

Academy trusts:

- **must** appoint two elected parent trustees to the trust board or alternatively include two elected parents on each local governing body.

Governing board composition

Your board should ensure it understands the full diversity of the cultural and religious context of the school and the community it serves. It is important your board reflects the diversity of the organisation's community, understanding and following its responsibilities under the Equalities Act, whilst promoting equality and diversity throughout the organisation including in relation to its own operation.

Boards should review their membership at various points in your school or trusts journey to ensure that it is has the skills, experience, and diversity the board needs to be effective. Diverse and skilled boards provide sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable strong decision-making and promote inclusive school environments.

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