

**MAT of the
Year 2021**



WELLSPRING

We Make A Difference

Handbook for Academy Governors

2022–2023



Contents

Introduction	3
Wellspring Governance	4
Why is Governance Important?	6
Core Functions	8
The Trust Charity	8
Local Governing Bodies	9
Local Governing Body Meetings	9
The Governor Portal	9
Term of Office	10
Chair's and Vice Chair's Role Explained	10
Academy Performance and Development	11
Governor Guidance on Areas of Responsibility	13
School First, Trust Always	14
The Power of Community	14
Our Duty	15

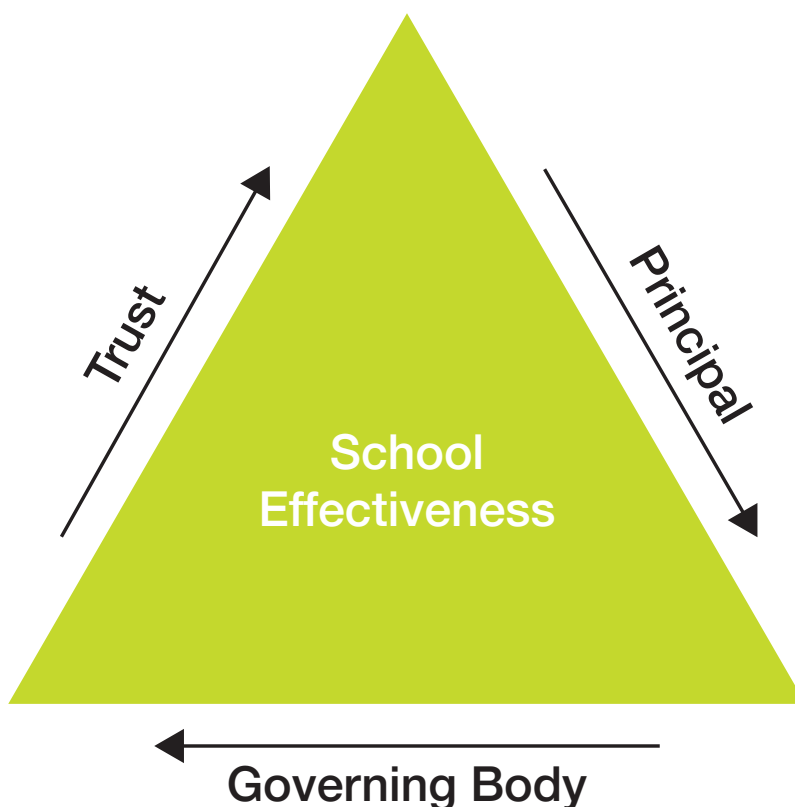


Introduction

‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has’ – Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist/author.

Welcome to Governance with Wellspring. We believe that great schools are built on the firm foundations of great leadership. Governance is an essential and integral part of leadership in our Academies.

The journey towards expertise inevitably takes time. We are grateful for your time and your commitment. Always bear in mind... everybody starts somewhere and we are here to help.



Academy effectiveness is the result of the three-way partnership between the **Trust**, the **Principal** and the **Governing Body**.

Wellspring Governance

Picture a triangle. Make it an equilateral triangle. Sides of equal length. Equal angles. Without one of the sides or angles, the triangle... is no longer a triangle. This is how we think it best to picture the role of governance within Wellspring.

Those equal sides and angles in our reality are; the Professional, the Governing Body, and the Trust.

All are required in equal part and equal measure to effect good governance under our model. None can operate without the other any more than two sides/angles can gang-up together to be 'Us,' pitched against the other side/angle - 'Them.'

The Trust is the legally accountable body. All decisions taken and actions taken are done so under the name and on account of the Trust. In light of their legal responsibilities, some Trusts have made the decision to centralise key decision-making powers, thus removing authority from Governing Bodies.

It is our very strong belief that the needs of children and young people in schools are best understood by the professionals (and those who support them) at ground level. Context is everything.

This belief leads to an approach that delegates as many decision-making responsibilities as possible to the Lead Professional and their Governing Body. For reasons that will be obvious to you given the above, certain policies have to be in common everywhere. There are certain duties and responsibilities that also have to be held in common, as actions/decisions taken in one place necessarily affect everyone else within the Trust (e.g. a budget deficit).

That said, through its' Scheme of Delegation, the Trust Board delegates budget setting - including prioritisation - responsibilities to the Governing Body. It delegates the responsibility to agree the staffing structure. It delegates responsibility for agreeing School Development priorities. It delegates responsibility for agreeing those policies that do not for legal reasons need to be common to all, for overseeing Performance Management and pay progression arrangements including that of the Lead Professional, and for adjudicating on

the normal business of any school that includes complaints, hearings, and the like.

Governance Support

The Trust Support Centre provides the support of a Governance Professional to your Body. It is that person's duty to advise you of your powers, responsibilities and permissions. They support the effective working of the Body by co-ordinating meetings, preparing the papers and recording what is said.

They, in turn, are supported by an array of colleagues who collate Information Packs designed to make the job of Governance easier, which includes data from Trust technical teams (HR, finance, estates, H&S, IT, School Improvement) that assure the school's ongoing effectiveness.

Three angles and sides of a triangle working together as one whole to ensure ongoing, sustainable effectiveness.

Support and challenge

Eyes on, hands off. These are the things that we ask of a member of our Governing Body. Local Governance is a key component of our Assurance approach. A Governing Body should (e.g.) be the eyes on that ensures budget spend is as agreed and that the agreed staffing structure indeed remains the staffing structure... unless a revision is agreed by the Body, having considered all of the implications in the round. In this guise, the Body acts as a Sounding Board for the Lead Professional and an assurance against what could potentially be under-cooked decision-making. **We are custodians of public funds. We have a duty to ensure effective spend.**

Assurance. Sounding Board. Supporter. Consultant. A Governor wears a number of hats and it is not always easy to remember which hat to wear at which time.

This is the case with governance at every level and in every institution. Happily, there are professionals around it to help you and everything can be resolved with the aid of good relationships. Neither crooks, cronies nor cowards should governors be. We certainly have none. Striking the right balance of the relationship can sometimes be a challenge. We have professionals around it to help you.

Within Wellspring, the Board delegate the very important role of consulting on the curriculum that operates in your school. Again, this is something that we very strongly believe should be within the domain of the professionals (and those who support them) at ground level.

This and/or other responsibilities delegated by the Trust Board may see you involved with the Ofsted inspection of the school when that happens. There are professionals all around it to help you.

We believe in the importance of local governance. We want all of our schools to be the very best versions of themselves possible. We do not do this work to be ordinary.

I encourage you to bring all of your knowledge, experience and creativity to the role. You have a crucial contribution to make to the sum of what we can be individually and as a community. It is right that we hold ourselves and one another to account and it is right that we support one another to be our very, very best.



Why is Governance Important?

Over the course of a governors' term of office, a school will have spent somewhere in the order of £4m- £40m of public funds (dependent upon annual budget). The sector as a whole spends 4.4% of the total national taxable income (£104bn per year). It is crucial that there is real public oversight of that spend.

Schools exist in the here-and-now while equally being our country's most important investment in the future. Both factors require healthy dialogue and debate in order to make them maximally effective.

Schools, like every other sector, largely think according to sector-norms. Different experiences, viewpoints and perspectives are crucial to growth. **Your role as a governor is critical to our ongoing effectiveness.**

What power do I have?

Governance is a shared responsibility rather than a power. There are (typically) twelve governors, a Headteacher and the Trust. The Trust is the legally responsible party. The Headteacher is the salaried Lead Professional. The Governing Body shares a status in that triangle with the other two. It holds to account and is held to account. It advises, challenges and supports as it is advised, challenged and supported. All three parts of the triangle are focused on the school performing optimally and on its duty to the future. **The real power is in that triumvirate working harmoniously together.**

What can I actually contribute?

Your unique perspective. Your experience and expertise. Your counsel. Your viewpoint. A Headteacher is best-equipped to be at their best if they have strong and trusted additional capacity around them.

What's the benefit to me?

You can be certain that your duty as a Governor directly impacts upon provision for young people in school both now and into the future. You will see tangible outputs from the time you invest. You will meet new people from different backgrounds and will encounter new and novel challenges. You will gain a deeper insight into the world of education and the operation of a Board. **You will make a real and lasting contribution to that community.**

Isn't governance just box ticking?

It shouldn't be. Governance, done well, brings healthy debate, different and helpful perspectives and experienced extra capacity to a school. Headteachers are experienced, effective senior salaried Lead Professionals who know what they are doing. They chose to do what they do because they believe in public service. Public service brings with it the accountability duty that they welcome from a Governing Body. **No great endeavour was ever achieved just through box ticking nor through simply being told what to do.**

Greatness is the result of difference, debate, dialogue, desire and determination. We take it as an entitlement to our communities that their schools are great.



The Challenges Ahead

The challenges ahead are many, are complex and are ever-evolving. Publicly-funded schools consistently face funding challenges.

It would always be desirable to have more, yet that is never the issue. The issue is always; how do we provide the optimum we can with what we have available to us? What we have available to us is almost inevitably the output of where we've been and that is not necessarily the same place as where we need to go. This is the crux of the ever-evolving landscape within which schools operate.

The percentage and complexity of need of children/young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) increases year-on-year. The funding system and support infrastructure designed to support them is not fit for purpose. Despite this, those children/young people require and are entitled to our support and care pursuant to the furtherance of their education and skills development for life.

We require our schools for today and for tomorrow. Maintaining appropriate investment in buildings and estate cannot simply be ignored or deferred onto Someone Else's Watch. We are currently seeing windows into what our weather will be like consistently in the years to come.

We have to respond now to higher temperatures and increased rainfall intensity because waiting until it happens all the time will be too late.

Developing curricula, experiences and learning programmes that will enable all our children/young people - with all of their differences and capabilities - to prosper in an uncertain tomorrow is the greatest challenge of all. Children are the future of society. Necessarily, their education should look forward. We have to make discerning choices.

And we cannot ignore the ideological challenge. There are many versions of what a good and effective education looks like. It is not a consensus. Positions can be polarised. We have to be clear in our vision, principles and values and have the character to stand our ground for the type of education that we believe in.



Core Functions

Strong and effective governance underpins the most effective Academies. Wellspring is committed to supporting the highest quality of governance in all its Academies.

There are **three core functions of Academy Governance**:

- Ensuring clarity of **vision, ethos and strategic direction** at academy level and with reference to the Trust
- **Holding the leadership at all levels to account** for the educational performance of the academy and its pupils and the performance of management staff
- Overseeing the **financial performance** of the Academy, making sure that money is well spent.

The Governing Body should ensure that the school has a clear vision for the future and that there is a robust plan in place for achieving its vision. This plan should address the fundamental questions of ‘Where are we now?’, ‘Where do we want to be?’ and ‘How are we going to get there?’

The plan should be considered in detail by the Governing Body and progress reviewed. It should provide a robust framework for setting priorities, creating accountability and monitoring progress in achieving the school’s vision. The focus should be on significant strategic challenges and opportunities for school improvement.

Governing Bodies have a direct responsibility to:

- Understand their **strategic role** - building a productive and supportive relationship with the Headteacher whilst holding them to account for educational outcomes and taking hard strategic decisions in the light of objective data
- Ensure Governors have the necessary skills and commitment.

The Trust Charity

Wellspring Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and is also (under the terms of the Academies Act 2010) and ‘exempt charity’, i.e. it has charitable status but is exempt from registering with the Charity Commission due to it being accountable to the Department for Education (DfE).

Trust Boards are responsible to the Secretary of State for the effectiveness of their Academies. Wellspring Trust Board has three Board Scrutiny Committees. Each Committee is delegated significant responsibility by the Trust Board, as outlined in its Terms of Reference. Although the majority of

members of each Committee are also members of the Trust Board, the Trust’s Constitution provides for there being up to two additional (co-opted) members, who are appointed to bring additional expertise and scrutiny to the work of the Committee on behalf of the Board.

Local Governing Bodies

Academy Governing Bodies are often referred to as Local Governing Bodies (LGB's). Each LGB is, in effect, a committee of the Trust Board.

The LGB is responsible for the strategic overview, scrutiny and challenge at the academy within the context set by the Trust Board. The LGB's role and responsibilities within Wellspring are outlined in the LGB Constitution. This is a key source of information for all governance and constitutional matters relating to the Trust's LGB's. The LGB Constitution and Standing Orders are located in the Documents section on the Governor Portal.

The day to day operation of the Academy is the responsibility of its staff under the leadership and management of the Lead Professional. It is not the Governor's role to be involved in this.

The Wellspring Board expects Governors to govern and to conduct themselves according to the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as 'The Nolan Principles' and requires governors to accept and adhere to the Trust's Code of Conduct.

Local Governing Body Meetings

Local Governing Bodies are required to meet at least five times a year to consider the range of business relating to their role. In order that all LGB business is covered within the academic year, the Trust uses a 'Cycle of Business' which is updated annually and reviewed by the LGB.

LGB's may also wish to hold additional informal meetings, where the agenda is determined entirely by the Governing Body itself.

The Governor Portal

Governors are asked to use The Governor Portal. This is a cloud-based platform which provides a paperless meeting environment. The portal can be accessed using a laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

Selflessness
Integrity
Objectivity
Accountability
Openness
Honesty
Leadership



Local Governing Bodies (contin)

Term of Office

Governors usually serve a four-year term, excluding the CEO (or their representative) and Principal/Executive Principal. A governor who has served two consecutive terms needs the advance approval of the Trust Board in order to serve a third term. Parent Governors must resign in that capacity at the end of the term of office which follows their child leaving the school.

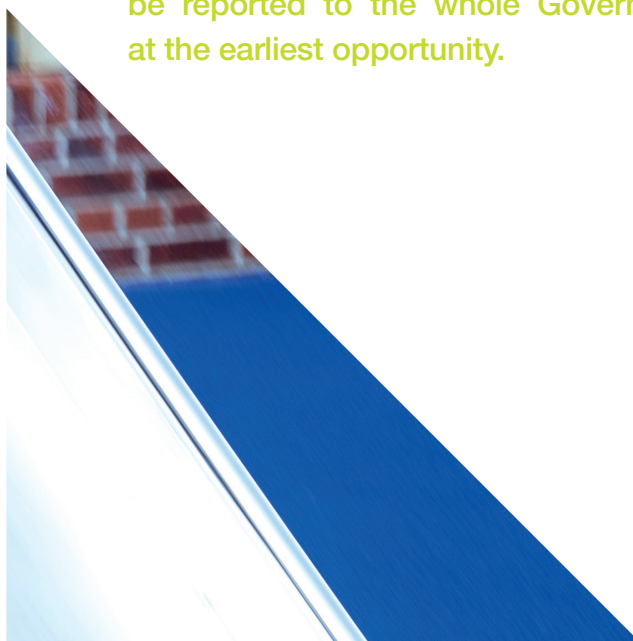
Chair's and Vice Chair's Role Explained

It is the Chair's responsibility to liaise regularly with the Lead Professional and Clerk in order to ensure that the Governing Body conducts its business and is able to report to the Trust Board effectively. Vice Chairs are expected to Chair meetings in the absence of the Chair. Chairs are encouraged to delegate some responsibilities to Vice-Chairs, in order to build capacity and continuity.

The Chair of Governors (and Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair):

- Works with the Principal to promote and **maintain high standards** of education.
- Is a 'critical friend' to the Principal, offering **support, challenge and encouragement** whilst holding them to account and ensuring that the Principal's Performance Management is rigorous and robust.
- Ensures that the Governing Body sets a **clear vision, ethos and strategic direction** for the Academy.
- With the Governing Body, **holds the Lead Professional to account** for the educational performance of the academy and its pupils and for the Performance Management of all staff.
- Ensures **oversight of the financial performance of the academy** and effective use of the academy's resources.
- Gives the Governing Body a **clear lead and direction**, ensuring that the Governors work as an effective team and understand their strategic role.
- Helps to attract governors with the **necessary skills** and ensuring that tasks are delegated across the Governing Body.

The Chair plays a crucial role in setting the culture of the Governing Body and is 'First Among Equals', though has no individual power. The Governing Body is an entity in itself. Its powers rest with the Governing Body as a whole. On occasions, the Chair may need to take 'Chair's Action' in an emergency, but any such action must be reported to the whole Governing Body at the earliest opportunity.



Academy Performance and Development

A Governing Body must have good, timely data if it is to know the questions it needs to ask to provide challenge, strengthen the school’s leadership and answer any questions asked of the Governing Body.

The Trust provides Governors with this information in the form of the **Academy Information Pack**. The pack provides the most recent data, performance statistics, Wellspring Assurance Framework (WAF) ratings and financial data in addition to information regarding the school’s compliance. Each Academy should have an **Academy Development Plan** and **Vision** which reflects the values and aims of Wellspring Academy Trust. Any financial arrangements beyond the Academy’s own resources that are required to fulfil the plan should be agreed with the Trust.

Overseeing Financial Performance

Governing Bodies are responsible for the proper stewardship of public funds and for ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use - the three key elements of value for money. Governors must ensure they use their discretion reasonably, taking into account all relevant guidance on accountability or propriety. **The Trust provides a suite of financial information for consideration by LGB’s.** This includes proposed budget and monthly budget monitoring reports. In addition, governors are provided with annually updated copies of the ESFA Academies Financial Handbook and the Trust Financial Handbook which set out the financial framework for Academy Trusts, reflecting their status as companies, charities and public bodies. Compliance with the Handbook is statutory.

Assurance by the Trust

Wellspring has sophisticated mechanisms for providing assurance to the Trust Board and Governing Bodies regarding various aspects of each Academy. **The Wellspring Assurance Framework (WAF)** provides feedback to Trust Management, LGB’s and the Trust Board regarding a series of measures relating to core areas of activity, such as financial controls, school standards and Estates Management. The WAF reports are shared with governors in the **Academy Information Packs**. WAF reviews are conducted three times per year, with outcomes being the subject of discussion between the Trust CEO and Support Centre Heads of Service, the Chair of the LGB and the Headteacher/Principal/ Executive Principal.

Operational Risk Registers are also produced at least termly, in order that the Trust, Academy leaders and LGB’s are fully aware of all risks. These risk registers are also included in the Academy Information Pack.



Information Section	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
IT Data Security (inc GDPR) (Data Protection)	Assured	Assured	Assured
ISD Data Breach Management (Data Breach Reports)	Assured	Assured	Assured
ISD Freedom of Information (Data Breach Reports)	Assured	Assured	Assured
ISD Subject Access Requests (Data Breach Reports)	Assured	Assured	Assured
ISD Data Integrity (Annual Data Quality Checkpoint)	Assured	Assured	Assured
ISD Information Governance (Data Quality)	Assured	Assured	Assured
Challenges of Governance	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
ESD Strategic Leadership	Assured	Assured	Assured
ESD Accountability	Assured	Assured	Assured
ESD People	Assured	Assured	Assured
ESD Structures	Assured	Assured	Assured
ESD Compliance	Assured	Assured	Assured
ESD Evaluation	Assured	Assured	Assured
Financial Management	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
FMSD Financial Management	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD Financial Planning	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD Financial Monitoring	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD Financial Performance and Controls	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD Value for Money	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD Asset Strategy	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD People	Assured	Assured	Assured
FMSD Insurance	Assured	Assured	Assured
Human Resources	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
HRD Staff Recruitment Process	Assured	Assured	Assured
HRD Staff Sickness Absence Levels	Assured	Assured	Assured
HRD Disciplinary Governance and Capability	Assured	Assured	Assured
HRD Staff Retention	Assured	Assured	Assured
Health & Pupil Welfare	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
HSD Safeguarding - Health & Safety	Assured	Assured	Assured
HSD Safeguarding - Child Protection	Assured	Assured	Assured
HSD Safeguarding - Mental Health	Assured	Assured	Assured
HSD Safeguarding - Behaviour & Attendance	Assured	Assured	Assured
HSD Safeguarding - Safeguarding	Assured	Assured	Assured
HSD Safeguarding - Safeguarding	Assured	Assured	Assured
HSD Safeguarding - Safeguarding	Assured	Assured	Assured
IT IT Strategy	Assured	Assured	Assured
ITD IT Technical Support	Assured	Assured	Assured
ITD IT Infrastructure Resilience	Assured	Assured	Assured
Quality of Education	Jan 2022	July 2022	Term 3
QED Quality of Education	Assured	Assured	Assured
QED Behaviour & Attendance	Assured	Assured	Assured
QED Personal Development	Assured	Assured	Assured
QED Leadership & Management	Assured	Assured	Assured
QED Early Years Education	Assured	Assured	Assured
QED The Skills Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A

Academy Performance and Development (contin)

Visits to Schools

Governors need to know their school as an accountable body. Through **pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus**, Governors can see whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice.

Governors are not inspectors. It is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. Governors are not school managers. They should not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.

Both are the role of the Lead Professional. This must be respected and championed by Governors. **The Trust has a key partnership role: always.**

Apart from attending meetings of the LGB, Governors might visit school:

- To meet with staff in relation to their Link Governor reporting role
- To meet with the Headteacher/Principal/Executive Principal for a general discussion about the school
- To undertake a pre-arranged tour
- To attend a school event

Governors should follow the same approach to making a visit as any other visitor.

Before the Visit

- Be clear about the purpose of the visit
- Agree a date and time for the visit with the Headteacher/Principal/Executive Principal

During the Visit

- Governors should be accompanied at all times during the course of their visit, especially if they are moving around the school and visiting classrooms and/or speaking to groups of pupils
- Respect confidentiality
- Recognise that sometimes it might be appropriate to leave a classroom should a situation arise which might become more problematic, e.g. a behaviour outburst

On occasion, Governors may have reason to visit school for reasons not related to their role as a Governor (e.g. as the parent of a pupil). These are not Governor visits and should not be conducted as though they are.

Safeguarding

All Governors are required to undertake a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The Trust Board requires DBS checks to be renewed every 5 years.

The statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' clearly states the requirements for Governing Bodies to ensure that their school has policies and procedures in place which also make reference to, and comply with, any Local Authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

The Local Governing Body (LGB) has a duty to ensure that the academy meets its statutory responsibilities and that the children and young people attending the school are safe. This is a statutory responsibility as outlined in Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

Each LGB must have a named Safeguarding Link Governor who liaises with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the School/Academy.

Link Governors

Wellspring strongly encourage the adoption of a Link Governor arrangement in order to ensure LGB scrutiny of key areas. The Link Governor is tasked with a responsibility on behalf of the full Body. Link Governors perform an extremely important quality assurance role on behalf of their Local Governing Body (LGB). Each LGB must have link governors for:

- Safeguarding
- SEND

Other link roles can be closely aligned with the academy's Vision.

Committees/Panels

LGB's will require the following committees/panels in place to meet only as and when required:

- **Remuneration Committee** - normally meets once a year in November to take recommendations about pay progression on the basis of appraisal/performance review and to make decisions.
- **Appeals Panel (HR and/or Complaints)** - convened to consider and make decisions on a range of matters requiring Governing Body input. In the event of HR panels, the support of the HR Business Partner will also be available.

Governor Guidance on Areas of Responsibility

Academy Vision & Development Plan

All governors are accountable for ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction at academy level and with reference to the Trust. **Consider the following:**

- Where are we now? Where do we want to be? and how are we going to get there?
- What are our holistic aspirations for our pupils? Are we ambitious enough? What makes us unique? Are we serving our community effectively?
- What challenges do we face? How will we address them while remaining on track?
- How do we support everyone's wellbeing and development?

Educational Performance

Supporting and holding leaders at all levels to account for the educational performance of the academy and its pupils is the Governing Bodies responsibility. **Consider the following:**

- Is the school's curriculum rooted in the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life? Are we addressing and actively challenging social disadvantage?
- Is the school's curriculum building towards its clearly defined end points?
- What percentage of pupils performed in line with expectations and what percentage exceeded expectations? How does this compare with national and similar schools? Which groups are doing particularly well?
- What impact is the pupil premium funding having? What are the main challenges in the use of the pupil premium, and how are you working to overcome them?
- What do leaders see as the three main priorities for further development?

SEND

All governors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the SEND Code of Practice and the SEND Link Governor is expected to have a deeper understanding and to be able to feed back to their colleagues. **Consider the following:**

- What strengths and areas for development have been highlighted through inspection and self-evaluation? How are these being addressed?
- What does the data show about pupils with SEND, and have any trends been identified in relation to attendance, fixed term exclusions and progress and attainment?
- What training do staff receive?

Safeguarding

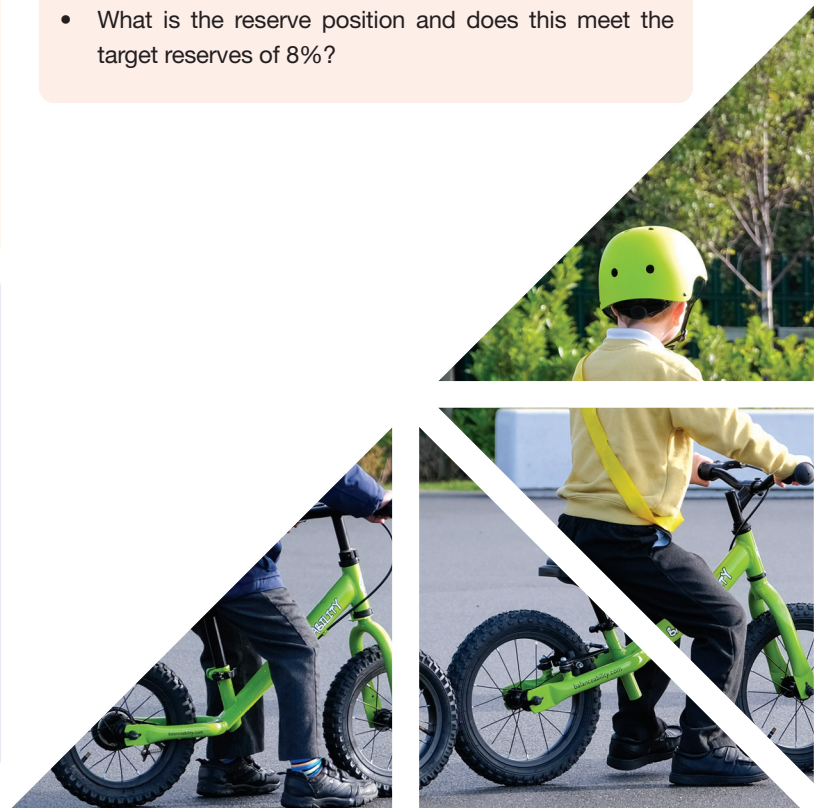
Governing Bodies are responsible to ensure that the academy meets its statutory responsibilities and that its young people are safe as outlined in the Education Act 2002. **Consider the following:**

- What actions were agreed as a result of the recent safeguarding audits and how are these being addressed?
- What risks are pupils in school likely to face? How is this reflected in the development of the child protection policy?
- What arrangements are in place to enable pupils to share any concerns? How are pupils supported to report concerns about harmful sexual and/or other behaviours and are any barriers to reporting identified and addressed? e.g. amongst children with additional communication needs.

Financial Performance

Governing Bodies are accountable for the proper stewardship of funds and for ensuring solvency, efficiency and effectiveness. **Consider the following:**

- What are the priorities and how can they be achieved with available resources?
- Is there a material difference from the original budget plan? What impact do any differences have on future year plans – are variances one off or recurrent issues?
- What are the key risks? and understand what mitigating actions might be taken if risks materialise.
- What is the reserve position and does this meet the target reserves of 8%?



School First, Trust Always

There are Trusts, we know, who think ‘from the Trust outwards’.

Everything thereafter is informed by that worldview: the name of the school itself carries the name of the Trust (and the Trust name usually comes first). The school badge/logo/‘branding’ follows a consistent (or identical) formula, the colour scheme is the same everywhere, and so on.

Thus, systems can be standardised. Policies can all be the same. The curriculum can be standardised everywhere. Because, according to that worldview, standardisation is rational and comes as close as is possible to guaranteeing a consistent level of service delivery everywhere. Like McDonalds French Fries. When applied to schools and seen through a narrow standards lense, we know some of the perverse outputs of this approach.

Rather than the McDonalds approach to dining, we took the Michelin approach. Michelin starred restaurants are each unique. Their magic is in the creativity and ingenuity of that team, there, in that place. They are celebrated and valued for their difference.

The Wellspring worldview can equally be seen patterned throughout our way of being. We chose to see the world through

the eyes of the school. To put that first. We did so because we believe that every school’s magic is a crucial component of its success. We do not mandate uniform, colours, curriculum or internal systems. We delegate the maximum decision-making possible to the people closest to the action. With support, guidance, expertise and experience in the background to ensure, assure and insure.

These things are equally critical. The Trust is after all the legally responsible body. With autonomy comes responsibility, opportunity and challenge. Again, critical factors. We describe the relationship often with reference to the triangle: The Principal, Governing Body and Trust represent the corners of the triangle. Without any one (functioning effectively), the triangle is out of shape. It is the Trust’s role to keep the triangle permanently in shape, which includes the power of intervention should the risk of losing shape become too high.

We encourage Governors to think ‘School First’ as that is the primary focus for your work.

‘Trust Always’ is an ever-present reality also. We are all component parts of the same whole. This fact itself gives many safeguards, assurances, risk-mitigations and comforts to the school – it is not and is never alone.

The Power of Community

In some ways, working together will always be the rational and most cost-effective choice. In some cases, developing practices and activities alone are, of course, the best choice. The challenge in this sphere is the challenge to understand autonomy as an enabler of creativity. Seeing the world through the schools’ eyes; we are committing to the principle of innovation from the ‘bottom-up.’ We believe that the people at the frontline are the ones best placed to drive our practice forward, to maintaining our success, energy, dynamism and creativity. In education, if you are not going forward, you are in reverse. The world of education is that fast-moving and is that unforgiving.

The power and value of our community is the ability to rapidly network that innovation, creativity and dynamism as power to us all. And we should expect an equal contribution over time from everybody.

So... Think ‘School First’. Think ‘Trust Always’. Think ‘Empowered Autonomy.’ Think ‘Energy, Creativity and Dynamism’. An entire school community, facing in the same direction, aspiring to be the very best that they can be: what a very powerful model of community that is!

Our Duty

It is our role as leaders to set the conditions, to be clear on expectations and to explicitly exercise our duty of care towards all.

We want colleagues at all levels, be that Head teacher or part-time cleaner, to be clear that they are valued by our organisation, that their welfare and wellbeing are on our agenda and that we are playing a long-game that sees effective and successful schools as one and the same thing as a collective of successful and effective individuals who work within it.

Even better performance over time is the likely output of a community of people being explicitly clear that their interests lie at the heart of the organisation's mission.

We expect Governing Bodies to support and fund Professional/Performance Coaching as an entitlement for senior professionals. Our leaders in schools are dealing with unprecedented complexity. They need support. As a minimum, this should be an entitlement for and an expectation of the three most senior positions in school.

Effective leadership in any industry or sector requires optimal self-awareness, agility of mind and personal wellness.

We cannot responsibly ask of senior colleagues that they manage all of these things optimally for themselves from within only their own resources while managing for everyone else in these times. We cannot responsibly rely on just one individual's own reserves of resource when we know that they are responsible for so many other people. We must learn lessons from other high-performing sectors/industries and make Professional/Performance Coaching a permanent entitlement for and expectation of our senior professionals.

We can be absolutely certain that the learning gained will benefit others throughout the organisation. If – in their own parlance – leaders are reticent to do it 'for themselves,' they should then do it for the benefit of others.

Our ideal would see everyone benefit from additional coaching and / or other support. It is our job always to help people to do their job even more effectively.

The wellness of our colleagues, retaining motivated people in role in order to give them the necessary time to gain experience and expertise to grow, and our strategies for developing all of our people towards their optimum capacity are crucial for us, particularly during challenging times, and crucial for long-term sustainable school effectiveness.

Please:

- Enquire after leaders in school and ask the question: is there anything we, the Governing Body, can help with/ support
- Satisfy yourself that your senior professionals are actively engaged with a professional/performance coach
- Secure your understanding of how your school is using our JosieTV resource as a key strategic driver to enable and continually upskill colleagues at all levels.





WELLSPRING

We Make A Difference

Wellspring Trust Digital Media Centre,
County Way, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 2JW
T. 01226 720 742
E. info@wellspringacademies.org.uk

Discover how we make a difference at
wellspringacademytrust.co.uk