National Governors' Association

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The independent organisation for school governors and trustees

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National Governors' Association

The National Governors' Association (NGA) is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees and clerks in maintained schools and academies in England. The NGA's goal is to improve the well-being of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. It does this by providing information, guidance, research, advice and training. It also works closely with, and lobbies, UK government and educational bodies, and is the leading campaigning national membership organisation for school governors and trustees.

The NGA online Guidance Centre is the information hub for governors. It supports you in your role as a governor, giving you access to up to date guidance and advice covering all aspects of school governance, including finance; staffing; Ofsted; curriculum; special educational needs; legislation and school improvement.

Practical governance resources include sample documents; templates; checklists; information summaries; insights; case studies and much more.

To join NGA and receive regular updates, contact:
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Glossary

Academy Academies are publicly funded independent schools. Academies have different governance arrangements from other schools

Academy committee A committee of the trust board in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The role and responsibility of any committee is defined in the MAT's scheme of delegation

Academy converter A school which converted to academy status voluntarily (usually high performing at the time of conversion), having previously been a local authority maintained school

Academy sponsor led A school which converted to academy status with the support of a sponsor (usually lower performing at the time of conversion)

Admissions Code A document providing statutory guidance on schools admission with which all schools must comply

Articles of Association The Articles of Association is the formal governing document for an academy and sets out its rules for operating, including the composition of the governing board

ASCL Association of School and College Leaders – a headteacher union

Associate members Individuals appointed by the governing body of a maintained school. They are not part of the governing body, but are allowed to attend meetings and sit on committees and can be given voting powers. They are appointed for 1-4 years, with the opportunity for re-appointment. An associate member could be a pupil, member of staff or someone with expertise in a particular area. Academies' Articles of Association allow them to appoint non-governors to committees and give them voting rights

A level General Certificate of Education Advanced level – usually completed by some 16-18 year olds after GCSE

ATL Association of Teachers and Lecturers – a union for education professionals

Assessment without levels A common phrase to describe changes to the primary curriculum. Grade descriptions and levels have now been removed from the national curriculum and it is up to primary schools to decide how they track pupil progress and attainment. Children will still sit SATs exams in KS1 and KS2 as a national benchmark, however they will no longer be given a grade. Instead, they will be given a scaled score, with a score of 100 or above showing that a pupil has met national expectations

Attainment 8 A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. Measures the achievement of a pupil across English, maths and six further qualifications (three of which must count in the EBacc measure)

Attainment targets These establish what children of different abilities should be expected to know and be able to do by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum

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AWPU Age-Weighted Pupil Unit – the sum of money allocated to the school for each pupil according to age. This is the basic unit of funding for the school

Baseline assessment Assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to year 1 – it is not statutory, but many local authorities encourage schools to carry it out. Schools may now decide to conduct baseline assessments in reception, but again this is not a statutory requirement

Capital funding Spending on projects, improvements, and extensions to the school's land and buildings

Chair's action In maintained schools the chair is allowed to take decisions without asking the governing body if a delay will be detrimental to the school, a member of staff, a pupil or a parent. In academies, this power is not automatic and must be delegated to the chair

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) The lead professional and head of the executive branch for a group of academies known as a multi-academy trust (MAT). Although not being a headteacher in any school, they will be ultimately accountable to the governing board for all aspects of the MAT as a whole

Coasting school A school or academy whose performance falls within the government's coasting definition and is therefore eligible for intervention

Clerk The Clerk is the 'constitutional conscience' of the governing board. They provide advice on governance, constitutional and procedural matters. They also offer administrative support to the governing board and relay information on legal requirements

Collaboration An agreement between two or more schools to work together on one particular issue. They keep their individual governing boards, but may set up a joint committee to which they can delegate powers

Community schools Maintained schools at which the Local Authority (LA) is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria. The LA also take a proportion of income known as 'top slice' for the provision of central services such as HR, legal etc.

Community special schools Maintained schools which make special educational provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or education, health and care plans (EHCs), whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision. The LA is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria

Competency framework for governance A document developed by the DfE, setting out the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for effective governance

Competitive tendering Obtaining quotes or tenders from alternative suppliers before awarding contracts

Co-opted governor/trustee Appointed by the governing board, generally on the basis of their skills

CPD Continuing Professional Development for school staff or the governing board

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DDA Disability Discrimination Act

Delegated budget Money provided to schools, which governors can manage at their discretion

Delegated powers Authority given to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher to take action on behalf of the governing board. In multi academy trusts this also refers to powers delegated to academy committees

Designated person Liaises with other services on behalf of young people in care and has a responsibility for promoting their educational achievement

DfE Department for Education – the government department responsible for schools and children (formerly DCSF)

Directed time Time when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parent meetings, under the direction of the headteacher – a maximum of 1265 hours in a school year

Disapplication A term used where national curriculum requirements may not apply to a pupil

DSG Dedicated School Grant – funding from central government to the LA, the majority of which is then delegated directly to individual schools through the LA's funding formula

EEF Education endowment foundation

EAL English as an Additional Language

EBacc A school performance measure based on achievement of GCSEs in 'core academic subjects' of English, maths, history or geography, the sciences and a language

EBD Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Education Forum Established by the government as a consultative group including the National Governors' Association (NGA), the Local Government Association (LGA) and all the teaching and headteacher unions

EFA Education Funding Agency – it is responsible for all revenue and capital funding for schools and is part of the DfE

EHC plans Education, health and care plans – the document which replaces statements of SEN and Learning Difficulties Assessments for children and young people with special educational needs

ESO Education Supervision Order, which LAs may apply for to deal with cases of poor attendance at school

Ethos The morals, values and beliefs that do, or at least should, underpin the school culture

EWO Education Welfare Officer – a professional worker who visits pupils' homes and deals with attendance problems and other welfare matters in co-operation with the school

Ex officio Able to attend meetings by virtue of holding a particular office

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Exclusion The temporary or permanent removal of a pupil from school for serious breaches of the school's behaviour and discipline policy

Executive headteacher Unlike a traditional headteacher who leads one school only, an executive headteacher is the lead professional of more than one school; or a lead professional who manages a school with multiple phases; or who has management responsibility significantly beyond that of a single school site

Extended schools/ services Schools that provide a range of services and activities often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the wider community

Federation Two or more local authority maintained (or community) schools governed by one governing body

FFT Fischer Family Trust – a non-profit company that provides data and analyses to LAs and schools in England and Wales

Form of entry The number of classes of 30 children that a school admits each year

Foundation governor/trustee Appointed by the foundation board

Foundation schools Maintained schools in which the governing body is the employer, owns the land and buildings and sets the admission criteria

Foundation special schools Maintained special schools, which have the same freedoms as foundation schools (see above)

Foundation stage Curriculum followed by children below statutory school age, in schools and nursery/pre-school provision

Free school A type of academy, either a new school set up in response to parental demand or a fee-paying school joining the state education system

FSM Free school meals – pupils are eligible for FSM if their parents receive certain benefits

Funding agreement The document which sets out the relationship between an academy/MAT and the Education Funding Agency (EFA)/Department for Education (DfE)

GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education

Governor services May be 'in-house' in larger MATs but often externally commissioned, governor services provide essential support to the governing board which may be in the form of training, advice or clerking services. This has historically been offered by the local authority through a service level agreement. Academies and maintained schools are free to buy into their local authority's governor services or seek alternative arrangements.

Governing board Refers to the board of maintained schools (governing body) and academies/MATs (board of trustees)

Governing body Refers to the governing body of a maintained school only

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Headteacher Board Each Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has a board of elected headteachers of academies in their area to advise on and scrutinise their decisions

HLTA Higher Level Teaching Assistant

HMCI Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

HMI Her Majesty's Inspector

HSE Health and Safety Executive

IEP Individual Education Plan for pupils with special educational needs

IGCSE International GCSE

INSET In-Service Education and Training – courses for practising teachers and other school staff

Instrument of Government A legal document setting out the composition of maintained school governing bodies

KS 1–4 Key stages 1-4. The four stages of the national curriculum: KS1 for pupils aged 5-7; KS2 for 7-11; KS3 for 11-14; KS4 for 14-16. KS5 applies to 16-19 year-olds but is not part of the national curriculum

Local association A group of governors and trustees from different schools in the local area. Local associations vary in size and capacity. The smallest local associations may offer an informal support network for local governors whereas larger local associations may organise useful local events and provide formal support and training opportunities

LA Local authority – the LA has certain responsibilities regarding education, for example the educational achievement of looked-after children and for school places planning. It will also provide other services to schools, which may be provided via a service level agreement to maintained schools and in many cases academies

LA Governor Nominated by the LA but appointed by the governing body

LAC Looked After Children – Children who are in care provision. May also refer to children who have been in care at any time in the last six years

LGA Local Government Association – national organisation supporting and representing local government

LGB Local governing body – a term often used to describe a committee of a trust board for an individual school within a MAT. See LGC, academy committee

LGC Local governing committee – a term often used to describe a committee of a trust board for an individual school within a MAT. See LGB, academy committee

LACSEG Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant – the funding academies receive to meet their additional responsibilities

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Maintained schools Publicly funded schools overseen by the local authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national pay and conditions guidelines.

MAT Multi academy trust – where two or more academies are governed by one trust (the members) and a board of trustees (the trustees)

MAT board Common term for the board of trustees overseeing a multi academy trust

Mixed ability A teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together

NAHT National Association of Head Teachers – a headteacher union

NASBM National Association of School Business Managers

NASUWT National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers – a teaching union

National College National College for Teaching and Leadership – the organisation responsible for national training programmes for school leaders, aspiring school leaders and the development of leaders of Children's Services. In particular, it is responsible for the National Professional Qualification for Headship, the Chairs of Governors' Leadership Development Programme and National Clerks' Development Programme

National curriculum This was established by the 1988 Education Reform Act to ensure that all pupils receive a broad and balanced education, which is relevant to their needs. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, but many still choose to

National Schools Commissioner (NSC) A civil servant responsible for co-ordinating the work of the eight RSCs

NFER National Foundation for Educational Research

NGA National Governors' Association. The national membership organisation for school governors

Non-teaching (support) staff Members of the school staff employed to provide services in a school, such as teaching assistants, cleaners and office staff

NOR Number on roll

NPQH National Professional Qualification for Headship – training for new or aspiring headteachers

NQT Newly Qualified Teacher

NUT National Union of Teachers – a teaching union

Ofqual Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Register – the regulator of examinations and qualifications

Ofsted Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – the body which inspects education and training for learners of all ages and inspects and regulates care for children and young people

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PAN Published Admissions Number – the number of children the LA (or governing board of a foundation or voluntary aided school or academy trust) determines must be admitted to any one year group in the school

Parent governor/trustee Member of the governing board elected by the parents of the school's pupils

Partnership governor In schools with a religious character these governors must be appointed with the purpose of preserving and promoting the religious ethos

Peripatetic teacher One who teaches in a number of schools, to give specialist instruction, e.g. in music

PE and sports premium Funding for years 1 to 6 to provide additional PE and sport beyond that already provided in the curriculum

PFI Private Finance Initiative – enables local authorities to enter into contracts with the private sector for the provision of new and/or improved capital assets (infrastructure for example) and related services

PGCE Post-Graduate Certificate of Education

PGR Parent Governor Representative – elected to serve on a local authority committee discharging the education functions of the LA

PI Performance Indicators (sometimes called key performance indicators). Used to evaluate the success of a school or of a particular activity in which it engages

PPA Planning, Preparation and Assessment – 10% guaranteed non-contact time for teachers

Progress 8 A headline measure of school performance at GCSE introduced from 2016. It aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4

PRP Performance Related Pay – schools following the STCPD must now ensure teachers' pay is linked to their performance

PRU Pupil Referral Unit – alternative education provision for pupils unable to attend a mainstream school or special school

PSP Pastoral Support Programme for pupils at serious risk of permanent exclusion

PTA Parent Teacher Association – or PSA (Parent Staff Association)

PTA UK National membership organisation for parent teacher associations – formerly NCPTA

PTR Pupil/Teacher Ratio – this is calculated by dividing the number of pupils in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers

Public Sector Equality Duty decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010

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Pupil premium Funding allocated to schools to support pupils eligible for FSM, in care, or who have parents in the armed forces

Pupil profile Broad evaluation of a pupil's personality, interests and capabilities – this forms part of the pupil's Record of Achievement

QTS Qualified Teacher Status

Quorate A meeting is quorate if a sufficient number of members are present. Decisions can only be ratified if a meeting is quorate

Quorum The minimum number of members present at a meeting before decisions can be made

RAISEonline Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation is the web-based system to disseminate school performance data to schools

Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) Civil servants that act on behalf of the Secretary of State. Their responsibilities include intervening in underperforming academies and free schools, making decisions on conversion to academy status, and encouraging and deciding on applications for academy sponsors. There are eight RSCs serving different regions, reporting to the Schools Commissioner.

Resolution A formal decision which has been proposed, seconded and agreed – not necessarily by a vote – at a meeting

Revenue funding Revenue funding can be spent to provide services and buy items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment

ROA Record of Achievement

SACRE Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – local statutory board which advises on religious education and collective worship

SATs Standard Assessment Tasks – used for national curriculum assessment

Scheme of delegation A document defining the lines of responsibility and accountability in a MAT, sometimes referred to as a Roles and Responsibilities document

School business manager A professional employed by a school with responsibility for financial management and often other areas such as human resources and health and safety management. Usually part of the senior leadership team

School census A statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms. Maintained schools and academies should take part in the census

School development plan The operational document describing how the school will work towards the strategic priorities set by the governing board

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Schools Forum A Schools Forum has been established in each LA area to advise on the allocation of the funding for schools – the majority of places on this board should be filled by governors and headteachers, preferably in equal numbers

Secondment The release of staff on a temporary basis for work elsewhere

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – learning difficulties for which special educational provision has to be made

SENCO SEN Co-ordinator – the teacher responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision in the school

SENDIST Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Service level agreement A contract between a service provider (the local authority or another private sector provider) and a school that defines the level of service expected from the service provider

Service premium Funding allocated to schools to support pupils whose parents are serving in HM armed forces, or have at any time since 2011, or who are in recipient of a child's pension from the ministry of defence

Secretary of State for Education The senior government minister with responsibility for education. Leads the Department for Education

Setting A system of organising pupils into ability groups for particular subjects

SFVS Schools Financial Value Standard – a means for the governing board to assess its financial processes, capabilities and skills

Short inspection A one day Ofsted inspection carried out at 'good' schools (or special schools, nurseries, and PRUs judged 'outstanding')

SIMS Schools Information and Management System – a computer package to assist schools in managing information on pupils, staff and resources, provided by Capita

Special school Pupils with a statement of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or an education, health and care plan, whose needs cannot be fully met from within mainstream provision

Special Unit (or Resourced Provision) A unit attached to a mainstream school to cater for children with specific special needs

Sponsor An organisation or person who has received approval from the DfE to support an underperforming academy or group of academies. Examples of sponsors include academies, businesses and charities.

SSAT Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

Staff governor/trustee Elected by those who are paid to work at the school

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Statementing Officially assessing a child as having special educational needs. In 2014 this procedure was replaced by education, health and care plans

STPCD School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document – an annually published document which forms a part of the contract of all teachers and headteachers in maintained schools in England and Wales. Many academies will also follow the STPCD

Strategic plan The school's strategic document which sets out a small number of key priorities for the school over the next 3-5 years. The governing board should take the lead on developing the strategic plan

STRB School Teachers' Review Body – makes recommendations to the Secretary of State on teachers' pay

Streaming Placing pupils in classes according to their ability across a range of subjects

TA Teaching Assistant

Teaching schools Schools that work with others to provide CPD for school staff

Teaching school alliances Led by teaching schools and include schools that are benefiting from support as well as strategic partners

Terms of reference The scope and limitations of a committee's activity or area of knowledge

TLR Teaching and Learning Responsibility – payments made to teachers for an additional responsibility

Trust Deed The deed by which a voluntary aided or a voluntary controlled school has been established

Trustee board The governing board of a single academy trust or MAT

UNISON Union of Public Employees. Many school support staff will be members of tis union

Virtual school headteacher Looked after children are on a virtual school roll, and each local authority will employ an experienced teacher to oversee the educational progress of all children under the care of that particular LA. The virtual school headteacher will have the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers. They will also work with professionals in the Children's Services department of the council and with all schools in the area to promote the education of children in care

VA Voluntary Aided - A school set up and owned by a voluntary board, usually a church board, largely financed by the LA. The governing board employs the staff and controls pupil admissions and religious education. The school's buildings and land (apart from playing fields) will normally be owned by a charitable foundation. VA schools set their own admissions criteria in line with the admissions code.

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Value Added (VA) The progress schools help pupils make relative to their individual starting points – rather than looking at raw results VA also takes into account the prior attainment, thus enabling a judgment to be made about the effect of the school on pupils' current attainment

VC Voluntary Controlled: usually a denominational school wholly maintained but with certain residual rights regarding religious worship

Vertical grouping Classes formed (in primary schools) with children of different age groups

Virement The agreed transfer of money from the budget heading to which it has been allocated to another budget heading

Vision The school's vision should, in a few sentences, describe what the school will look like in three to five years' time

VOICE A teaching union

Vocational A subject that would not be considered academic in the traditional sense. Students in key stage 4 and key stage 5 may undertake a vocational apprenticeship or qualification as a viable alternative to GCSEs or A levels

Work experience A planned programme as part of careers education, which enables pupils to sample experience of a working environment of their choice in school time

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