

**Being a 'critical friend'
 suggestions for asking appropriate challenging questions**

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Introduction

“Governing boards are the strategic decision makers and vision setters in every school and academy. They play a vital role in ensuring the best possible education for every child by creating robust accountability for school leaders. Crucially, that means using and being familiar with objective data on the performance of pupils, teachers and finances to ask the right questions and ensure resources are allocated to school priorities. It also means ensuring that schools prepare pupils for life and the workplace by building their character and resilience and by implementing their Prevent duty to protect them from the risks of extremism and radicalisation.” **John Nash** Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, Extract from the Governance Handbook (November 2015)

There are three core functions for a governing board:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governors evidence their work through the records of the meetings that are held. Whether they be committee meetings or full board meetings, the minutes should reflect governors support of and challenge to the school.

Evidence of challenge is hard to document, especially when governors are not sure of the questions they should be asking – and whether their questions are straying into the ‘operational’ rather than the strategic.

- Example – Governors agree a staffing establishment and appropriate budget at the beginning of the financial year that will support the delivery of the school improvement plan. It is up to the Head Teacher to choose how to deploy that establishment / budget. Governors should then concern themselves with the outcomes and impact on the pupils.

The suggested areas of challenge in this paper have been sourced from the NGA website – if your school is a member of the NGA you can find a wealth of information there to help in in your role of ‘critical friend’.

There are no ‘correct’ answers – it is for governors to determine that the answers given are the right ones for their pupils, staff and school. Many of these questions will be answered automatically as part of the papers / reports / discussions that take place. Governors need to ensure they read their papers before meetings so that they can ask the most appropriate questions at the right time. You are not looking to extend the meeting into the small hours.....however at the end of the meeting you should come away feeling that you are better informed about what is happening in your school and the impact that these actions are having on the young people.

From the NGA - Health warning: the questions in this paper need to be used appropriately. You need to consider the best time and place to ask any questions – it may be at the relevant committee meeting, rather than in a full Governing Board meeting, and must be pertinent to the discussion at hand. It is absolutely **NOT** intended that these questions should be handed over to the headteacher and an answer to each one sought. This is not a test for school leaders, but a tool to help governors.

Vision, Strategy and Values - Do governors have a clear vision and strategy for the school?

- Is there a vision for where governors want the school to be in 3-5 years' time?
- Is the vision ambitious but achievable?
- Does the vision set out what governors want pupils to have left the school having achieved (e.g. in terms of personal development, attainment, progress etc.)?
- Have the views of parents, pupils and staff been taken into account when developing the vision?
- Is there a strategy in place to achieve the vision?
- Are there clear key performance indicators/outcomes against which to measure success?

What are the school's values?

- When did the board last review our ethos/values statement?
- Are the school's values reflected in its development plans?
- How are the values publicised (e.g. are they on our website)?
- How do staff and governors promote the school's values in their conduct?
- Do pupils know what the school's values are?
- How do governors ensure that pupils leave school equipped for the next stage of life?
- Does the school curriculum reflect and develop the stated values?
- How do staff embed the school's values into their teaching? (see also question 5)
- In faith schools – How are the school's religious/faith values promoted?

Standards - What are we doing to raise standards for all children?

- The governing board should be able to find the answers to many of these from data sources, such as:
 - RaiseOnline,
 - School Performance Tables
 - the Ofsted dashboard
 - Fischer Family Trust dashboard,
 - internal data provided by school leaders, including the headteachers' report

- Evidence in the reports should answer the questions below:
 - How does attainment at this school compare to national averages and the government's floor standards?
 - What, if any, impact does the context of our school have on pupils' attainment?
 - How is the school performing in English and maths?
 - How do children in our school progress compared with expectations?
 - How does the school's performance compare to those for other similar schools?
 - Which groups of pupils in terms of gender and ethnicity are the highest and lowest performing?
 - How are Pupil Premium (ever-six Free School Meal), SEND and EAL students progressing compared with other students in this school, and compared with Pupil Premium students in other schools?
 - How are low, middle and high ability children progressing and attaining?
 - Which subjects are highest and lowest performing?
 - Do we know how these results have been changing over the past three years: are we improving or not?
 - How does attendance in each year group compare with national averages, and what are the trends over time?

- Other things that governors should look for include:
 - Do the reports presented give a clear indication of progress towards meeting the targets/objectives in the school development/improvement plan?
 - Do the reports give a clear indication of pupil progress for all year groups and subjects in the school?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of this school?
 - How do governors know that the information they have about the school is robust and accurate?

Supplementary questions for the board to ask senior leaders if not evident in the reports presented:

- Why is progress in some subjects under national expectations ?
 - What is your strategy for improving the areas of weak performance?
- Why is progress in some subjects or year groups better than others in the school?
 - What is being done to raise performance specifically in those areas which are under-achieving?
 - What has worked well and can we use it more widely?
 - How does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school?
- Why are some groups of pupils (as identified above: by gender, ethnicity, EAL, socio-economic status, ability) progressing less well than in other schools?
 - What is being done to raise performance for those children?
 - Are staff aware of which pupils and groups of pupils are underachieving?
- Why are some groups of pupils progressing less well than others in the school?
 - What is being done to close this gap?
- How will you demonstrate to the governing board that improvement is taking place?
 - Who in the staff group has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of different interventions, and how is this done?
 - Which interventions offer the best results and how does this compare with the cost?
 - Are we learning from other schools?
- For pupils with Education, Health and Care plans, are we meeting all of the requirements on their EHC?
- How much progress are pupils with e.g. SEN, EAL, FSM making in relation to:
 - The expected level!
 - The national average?
 - The school average?
 - Equivalent schools?
- What is the attainment for pupils with e.g. SEN, EAL, FSM in our school in comparison to:
 - The expected level
 - The national average?
 - The school average?
 - Equivalent schools?
- How do are pupils assessed?
 - How are individual targets set for pupils?
 - What proportion of pupils are meeting their personal progress targets?
 - How do you know the targets are ambitious enough?

- What is being done to help the individual pupils that aren't meeting their targets?
- What is the impact of that and how do you know?
- How is assessment and feedback used to help children progress and meet their targets?
- What strategies are in place to ensure the most able pupils are stretched?
 - How do you know they are working?
- Is low attendance having an impact on pupil outcomes?
 - Are there any persistent late-comers – if so, what impact is that having?
 - Are there particular groups affected, such as children on ever-six Free School Meal?
 - What is being done to improve attendance and is it having an effect?
- Does the number of children arriving at the school after the usual intake affect their attainment and what are we doing to improve outcomes for those children?
- How are children supported when arriving at the school to settle in and learn?
- How are children prepared for the next stage of their education?

Pupil Premium - Is the school making best use of the Pupil Premium funding?

- Can governors identify how much money is allocated to the school for the Pupil Premium?
 - Is it identified in the school's budget planning?
 - Can governors identify the Pupil Premium funding separately to any other funding for disadvantaged pupils?
- In determining the strategy for spending the pupil premium have governors considered the Ofsted/Education Endowment Foundation information about what methods are effective in raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils?
- Do the school's improvement/action plans identify whether there are any issues in the performance of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium?
- Do the actions noted for improving outcomes for Pupil Premium pupils:
 - give details of how the resources are to be allocated?
 - give an overview of the actions to be taken?
 - give a summary of the expected outcomes?
 - identify ways of monitoring the effectiveness of these actions as they are ongoing and note who will be responsible for ensuring that this information is passed to governors
 - explain what will be evaluated at the end of the action and what measures of success will be applied?
- Will governors know and be able to intervene quickly to request remedial action if outcomes are not improving in the way that they want them to?

Supplementary questions for the board to ask senior leaders about Pupil Premium if not evident in the reports presented:

- Have you checked the **KeytoSuccess** website to ensure that you have a full list of all eligible pupils – given that some of the children will not currently be claiming FSM.
- Are staff aware of which pupils are Pupil Premium children and the possible support and expected intervention? Have all staff received the training they need to effectively support disadvantaged children?
- Is the school using its best staff (teachers and support staff) with Pupil Premium children?
- What processes have you put in place to evaluate whether the intervention strategies are working?
- Are the progress and outcomes of eligible pupils identified and analysed by the school's tracking systems? How will you report this information to governors in a way that enables them to see clearly whether the gap in the performance of eligible pupils and other pupils is closing?
- On the school website, how good is the account of PP spending? In particular, does it describe the impact of PP strategies?
- Do the school's systems enable you to give a clear picture to governors about the progress and attainment of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium in all year groups across the school, not just those at the end of key stages?
- Are there gaps in the attainment of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium and those who are not, and if so, are eligible pupils making accelerated progress – to allow the gaps to close?
- Are you tracking the attendance, punctuality and behaviour (particularly exclusions) of this group and taking action to address any differences?

- Have you looked at the websites of other similar schools to see what interventions they are using?
- How do you promote awareness of FSM eligibility to encourage all eligible pupils to claim?

Staffing and Staff Development - Have we got the right approach to staffing?

Questions for the board to ask itself:

- How effectively is the head teacher's appraisal carried out?
- Are her/his objectives set in line with school priorities?
- Does the GB/relevant committee receive good quality information about the performance appraisal outcomes of staff?

Questions for the board to ask senior leaders:

- If you could change the staffing structure, would you and why?
 - What changes would you make?
 - Are there any areas (including business management) we need more/less staff in?
 - Is the support staff to teaching staff ratio right?
 - Do we have the right line-management structure in place?
- Have we got an effective pay structure in place?
 - When did we last review our pay policy?
 - Is it clear how performance and pay are related?
 - Are we able to use the pay structure to reward our best staff?
 - Maintained schools – does our policy reflect the new rules on leadership pay?
- How effectively are all the staff managed and appraised?
 - Do all line managers meet regularly 1:1 with their staff?
 - How do you go about setting objectives?
 - Do all classroom based staff (teaching and non-teaching) have performance objectives which relate to the school development priorities?
 - What moderation does the SLT undertake in relation to performance management objectives?
 - How many staff achieved their objectives for the past year?
 - What additional support is being offered to staff struggling to meet objectives and is that working well?
 - Are any teachers subject to capability proceedings?
- Is there correlation between appraisal outcomes, pay and the quality of teaching and learning?
- What percentage of teaching is outstanding/good/requires improvement/inadequate?
- Do you have a programme of staff development for succession planning to ensure the school has a good supply of middle and senior leaders?
- What is the staff retention like in reference to similar schools?
- What is staff absence/sickness like in reference to similar schools?
- Are you carrying out 'exit' interviews for staff who leave – are there any common themes?
- Have we got Human resources expertise which is high quality and how do we know?
- Have we got the skills and knowledge in the staff team to manage personnel matters well, and how is this demonstrated?

Continuing professional development:

- How much money is being spent on the full variety of CPD activities? Do we need to increase this?
- How much time is allocated for staff to engage in professional learning? Is time allocated for all staff, including non-teaching staff?
- Is this time sufficient, or so we need to plan to extend this?
- Do CPD activities have specific outcomes, including where possible pupil outcomes, associated with them? Is the impact of each activity being evaluated upon these outcomes?
- What is the programme of CPD activities for the year? How long is each CPD focus being sustained for – are these one off activities or long-term approaches?
- Is the school building on the expertise and skills of its own staff, and how is the school working with other schools, including Teaching School Alliances?
- How is the school ensuring that it is engaging with quality providers? Is it strategically comparing courses and consultancy on a national database (such as Good CPD Guide.com)?
- What steps is the school taking to ensure that up-to-date, evidence-based approaches to teaching are being actively sought and embedded?
- Is every member of staff (including non-teaching staff) being proactively supported in their career development?
- Are appraisal and mid-year reviews used with all staff to discuss specific development needs and set a personal development objective?
- Does every member of staff feel supported and constructively challenged? Do they feel trusted and valued?
- How are school leaders ensuring that top-down quality assurance processes aren't hindering a culture of professional learning?

The Curriculum - How well does the curriculum provide for and stretch all pupils

Questions for the board to ask senior leaders:

- **What is our curriculum rationale? What are the key curriculum drivers in this school? (e.g. The National Curriculum, local curriculum, league tables, Ofsted, pupil needs. What is the balance of these?)**
- **How do we ensure our pupils receive a broad and balanced education?**
 - **How do we know that the curriculum meets the particular needs of each of our pupils?**
 - **How do we ensure there is an appropriate balance in terms of subjects?**
 - **How do we ensure students gain the skills they need (as well as the knowledge) and develop appropriate attitudes to enable them to flourish in and outside of school?**
 - **How do we ensure that every colleague/every team plays their part?**
- **If there were no rules, how would you change the curriculum?**
 - **If so, what's stopping you?**
- **How do you ensure that the curriculum across the school promotes**
 - **the ethos of the school**
 - **the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?**
- **What do internal assessments by staff tell us and parents? I.e. is it just pupils' progress through the curriculum? Or does it tell us about the skills, values, and personal qualities they've developed? How does it help parents support their child's learning?**
- **How could the curriculum be made more exciting/stand out more?**
- **Have you asked the pupils what they want from the curriculum? And what did they say?**
- **What do other local schools offer in their curriculum which is different from ours?**
- **How does the school use partnerships with other schools/businesses/the local community to enhance the curriculum?**
 - **have you developed links with the infant/junior/middle/secondary school(s) and FE /tertiary institutions?**
- **How are staff encouraged to be more innovative about the teaching of the curriculum?**
 - **Is there sufficient lesson differentiation to provide for students of all abilities?**
- **How are you encouraging different key stage staff to collaborate and inter-department collaboration?**
- **How do you know that our assessment systems are robust and accurately measure pupils' progress?**
- **Have all staff received training on how to make best use of our assessment system? Are all teachers using the assessment system consistently and how do you know?**
- **Do you meet with other schools to moderate assessment levels – e.g. those which use the same assessment system?**
- **Have you explained to parents that the way in which children are assessed is changing/has changed?**
- **How are teachers communicating the results of their assessment to pupils and parents?**
 - **What feedback have we had from parents about how well this is done?**

- What information do you hold about the destinations of our pupils when they leave this school?
 - What use do you make of this information?
- If the school has purchased an assessment system from an external provider:
 - Does this meet our school's individual needs?
 - How do we know the system is robust?
 - What has the impact been on teacher workload?
 - How do we know it is good value for money?

Academies:

- Have you chosen to continue to teach the National Curriculum? If so, why?
- Have you considered moving away from the National Curriculum? Why? How?

For schools using the National Curriculum:

- How do you ensure all teaching staff are clear about the National Curriculum requirements – especially given the impending changes?
- What proportion of the week do pupils spend on the National Curriculum?
 - Is this too much? Too little? Or about right?
 - How have you developed the offer for the remaining time?
- What skills or competencies do we want our children to leave with?
 - To what extent are they being developed?
 - How can this be improved?

Primary schools only:

- Are we meeting the requirements for computing, as part of the new National Curriculum? Have our staff received training on how to deliver the new programmes of study?

Qualifications:

- Do we offer a broad range of qualifications?
 - If not, have we considered ways we could broaden our offer, such as collaborating with other schools?
- What influences our decision about which qualifications to offer? (e.g. government policy, performance tables, pupils' needs, staffing, resources) Is this the right balance?
- What guidance is available to pupils about which qualifications they should take? Is this impartial and in the best interests of pupils?

For schools with sixth forms:

- Do we know how much each post-16 course costs to run compared to take-up?
 - Do we know why some courses are less popular than others?
 - Are less popular courses achieving good value for money, specifically regarding quality of education?

Behaviour - How does the school promote good behaviour to enhance learning?

The answers to some of these questions will be found in the behaviour policy, but as part of the review and monitoring process, these can be useful:

- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
 - What is the overall picture of behaviour in this school – how does it compare with other schools?
 - How is good behaviour rewarded? And how often?
- How are pupils, parents and staff made aware of the school behaviour policy
 - What measures are in place to ensure good behaviour, discipline and respect is communicated to pupils?
 - Are staff clear about the school's behaviour policy and the extent of their disciplinary authority/powers?
 - What steps do we take to inform parents about how they are expected to behave while on school premises?
- What impact does the behaviour policy have on classroom practice – how do you know?
- How do you monitor whether the behaviour policy is being applied consistently across the school?
- How do you assess/monitor pupils' attitudes to learning?
- What information do you have about
 - the levels of attendance,
 - incidents of bullying (including cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying),
 - levels of poor behaviour?
 - What are you doing to address any issues?
- What measures are in place to deal with persistent poor behaviour? E.g. systems to identify and address the needs of pupils who continuously display disruptive behaviour.
 - How do you monitor pupils causing concern?
 - Do you/the staff know the root causes of poor behaviour?
 - What external support do the staff have for dealing with any behaviour issues?
 - Have all staff received appropriate training in relation to dealing with aggressive pupils where restraint may be required?
- How many pupils have been excluded (fixed term and permanently) in the last term/year/three years?
- How many managed moves have taken place this term/year?
- How do you deal with poor behaviour that takes place beyond the school gate?
- How do you deal with cyber bullying?
 - What steps do we take to educate staff about the issues of social media
 - What steps have you taken to inform/educate parents about the potential pitfalls of social media, for example, cyber-bullying, 'grooming' and 'unfriending'?
- How do you deal with poor behaviour that occurs during a school organised or related activity/trip?

- Does the school have links with other schools in relation to behaviour initiatives?
- How many CAFs (Common Assessment Framework) reports have been filled in on pupils in this school?

Finance and Resources

Do we have a sound financial strategy, make the most efficient use of our resources, obtain good value for money and have robust procurement and financial systems?

Questions for the board to ask itself:

- Do we understand how the delegated budget received from the local authority or the General Annual Grant from the Education Funding Agency has been calculated?
 - Are we clear what items of expenditure this budget is meant to cover?
- How often do we receive reports from the headteacher/school business manager about spending across different departments within the school?
 - Is this sufficient enough to allow the governing body to effectively monitor and review spending?
- Do we have the necessary skills on the governing body to effectively monitor the finance and procurement processes effectively?
- Are there clear terms of reference for any committee(s) dealing with finance?
- Are there a clear financial procedures, including procedures for procurement, in place?
 - Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure that the agreed procedures are being followed?
 - Have we taken/received advice from the local authority/our auditors on our financial systems?
 - Do we have sound procedures in place for fraud detection?
- Are we allocating funding in line with development/improvement priorities?
- Are we making efficient use of all our financial resources?
- Are there areas in which we could obtain better value for money from our budget?
- Are we under or over spending in any areas of the budget? Why is this?
- Do we have a deficit and do we have a clear plan for eliminating it?
- Do we have any reserves and do we have a clear plan in relation to spending them?
- Budget forecasting
 - Have we/our business manager produced forecasts for the next 3 years?
 - Do we know the cost to the school of the pension increase in the coming and future years?
 - Do we know the cost to the school of the NI increase in 2016 and future years?
 - Do the forecasts take account of the impact of annual salary increases?
 - Have we considered all avenues of income generation?

Questions for the board to ask senior leaders:

- Does the school have the necessary skills in the staff team to manage finance and procurement well?
- Do you think that the governing body has the necessary skills to effectively monitor the finance and procurement processes effectively?
- Have you benchmarked our spending on (e.g. learning resources and energy) against similar schools?
- Have you considered joint procurement with other schools?
- Do you have a hospitality policy?
 - Have all governors and members of staff been made aware of it?

Local authority maintained schools:

- Is the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return a regular item on the relevant GB/Finance Committee agenda?

- Have the governing body put in place an action plan to address any issues found when completing the SFVS
- Have all members of the governing body seen a copy of the SFVS?

Academies:

- Has the academy a plan to ensure all required returns are submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA)?
- Do we need a separate audit committee as set out in the Academies Financial Handbook?

Primary schools only:

- Can we identify how much funding is allocated to the school for the sports premium?
- How have we spent our sports premium funding?
 - What impact has this spending had on pupils' achievement in PE?
 - Will our spending ensure a long term impact for pupils, beyond that of the funding itself?
- Have we continued to encourage eligible parents to apply for pupil premium funding regardless of the introduction of universal free school meals?
- Are the buildings and other assets in good condition and are they well used?
 - Is there a systematic cycle of planning and review of the state of our buildings and other assets?
 - Do we have a priority list of buildings and assets in need of repair/replacement?
- How will projected pupil numbers affect the building requirements for the next three years?
- Are all parts of our buildings used to their maximum potential and, if not, do we have a plan in place to improve this.
- What process does the school use to identify possible building development funds?
- Have we identified all the obvious risks (including asbestos) associated with our buildings and do we have a plan for managing them?
- Have we got adequate levels of insurance?
- Do we know employ someone to maintain the buildings/manage repairs?
- Do we have a plan for investment in learning resources (including IT systems)?
 - Do we invest adequately in comparison to other schools?

Safeguarding, Health and Safety - Do we keep children safe and healthy?

- Do we meet the statutory health and safety requirements?
 - How does the school ensure it keeps up to date with relevant health and safety regulations and guidance?
 - Is there a designated health & safety co-ordinator; are governors and staff aware of who this person is?
 - How often are safety inspections carried out and are the outcomes reported to the governing body.
 - Are the school's procedures for dealing with a breach or incident clear?
 - Are staff clear about the procedures for dealing with health and safety emergencies?
- Does the school have clear and proportionate procedures in place for approving (risk assessing) school trips/outdoor activities?
- How are child protection issues monitored, do we have a child protection coordinator (name, contact details)?
 - Are staff aware of the procedure that needs to be followed when they have concerns about child protection?
 - Have staff and governors received appropriate child protection/safeguarding training?
 - Do we run e-safety awareness training for staff, governors, pupils and parents?
 - Have we ensured we have sought information to identify any members of staff who may be disqualified under the new disqualification criteria in early years?
- Is the school offering a good range of sports, and other outdoor activities
 - How many pupils are participating in these?
 - What could be done to get more pupils involved?
- Does the school food meet the School Food Standards (which came into force in January 2015)?
 - Has there been any change in take-up of school meals as a result of the introduction of universal infant free school meals?
- Has the school applied for Healthy School Food Standard/Artsmark/Eco-Schools etc?

Communication with parents - How well do we keep parents informed and take account of their views

- Are we meeting the statutory requirements on publishing information?
- How does the school communicate with parents?
 - How often? Who? For what purpose?
 - How good is the school website as a source of information for parents? How do you know and how could it be improved?
 - Should the governing body be communicating with parents?
- Do we ensure that parents are made aware of any changes taken place in school?
- When and how were parents last asked for their views about the school?
 - What did the results show?
 - What action was taken as a result?
- How does the school development plan take account of parents' views?
- Is it easy for parents to get in touch with the school?
- Are parents directed toward Ofsted's parent view website?
- What is done to encourage parents to help their children learn?
 - What is the school doing to provide support to/for parents to do this?
- How are parents informed about their child's behaviour (bad/good) and what methods are used to engage them (parents)?
- Why are parents choosing – or not choosing – our school?
 - How do you know that? Are there better ways of learning this?
- Why do children leave the school before their final year?
 - How do you know that? Are there better ways of learning this?
- Should governors be carrying out focus groups to find out more?
- What complaints have we had from parents and what action was taken as a result?

Extra – Curricular - Does the school offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities which engage all pupils?

- Do the extra-curricular activities on offer complement the school's values?
 - What do the pupils gain from the extra-curricular activities on offer?
- Are extra-curricular activities integrated into the school improvement plan? If not, how could this be done?
 - How do the extra-curricular activities contribute to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- Is the range of activities broad, including a wide range of arts, sports and other out-door pursuits?
- How are extra-curricular activities organised?
 - Could this be done more effectively?
 - How are extra-curricular activities funded?
 - Could this be done more efficiently?
 - Are the activities sustainable?
- Are the extra-curricular activities physically and financially accessible to all pupils?
 - Are extra-curricular activities part of the plan to close the gaps in attainment between different groups of children, particularly those from poorer families?
- What efforts are made to involve/engage parents in extra-curricular activities?
 - How could this be done/done better?
- Is there any local community involvement in extra-curricular activities?
 - How could this be done/improved?
- How do you monitor the impact of extra-curricular activities?
 - Is this used to improve and adapt them?

British Values - Are we actively promoting British values in our school?

Questions for the board to ask itself:

- Do we understand what British values are as they are defined by the government in the *Prevent Strategy*?
- Do we understand what we need to do to meet the Government's expectations in relation to promoting British values as outlining in the DfE for maintained schools and academies?
- Have we discussed British values at a governing board/governing board committee meeting?
- Do we have a strategy for "embedding" British values and does this form part of the ethos of our school

Questions for the board to ask senior leaders:

- What are the provisions in place in our school for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils?
- How do we encourage pupils to show mutual respect towards their peers, including individuals with a protected characteristic?
- How do we encourage pupils to show tolerance and respect for different faiths and beliefs?
- Are teaching staff aware of the duty to promote British values?
- Does our curriculum already meet the requirement to promote British values?
 - If no, what steps are we taking to meet the requirements?
- How would we demonstrate to Ofsted that we promote British values?

Questions to consider when joining a MAT

As part of its Zurich Municipal school governor's series, *The Guardian* has produced a list of questions that governing boards should ask if they are joining a multi-academy trust (MAT). Although only five questions, they are nonetheless a useful starting point for governing boards to start considering the broader issues around joining a MAT:

- Are we a good fit?
- What will it cost?
- Does the trust have the right resources?
- Is everything above board?
- What's the plan for the future?

[Read the article](#) for more context behind each of the questions.