

HOLDING OUR SCHOOL TO ACCOUNT

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WHAT WE'RE GOING TO COVER

- Welcome and introductions
- Purpose and functions of governance; relationships and accountabilities in a MAT
- Outstanding governance
- Holding the school to account: overview
- Using data for challenge and support
- Improvement planning
- Monitoring and evaluation; asking the right questions; the audit trail
- Self-evaluation and accountability
- Q and A

PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS OF GB

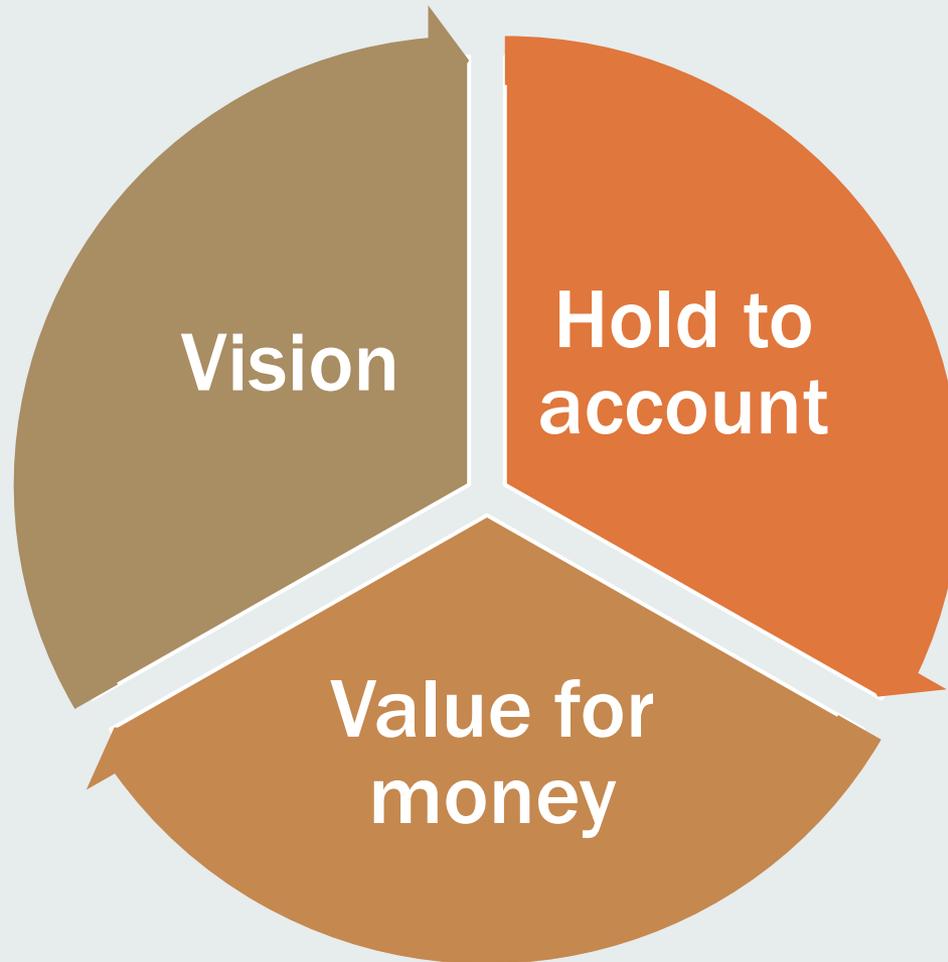
Purpose:

to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school'

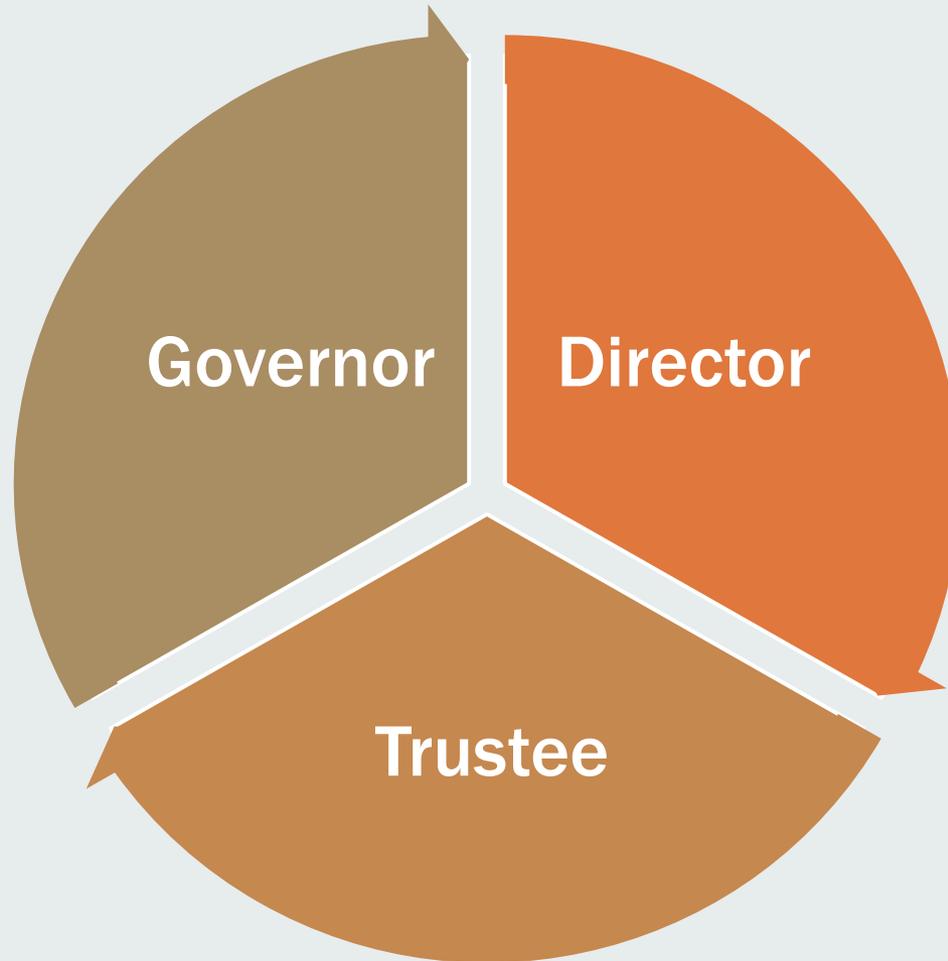
Core functions:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- DfE Governors Handbook 2015

THREE CORE FUNCTIONS



ACADEMY GOVERNANCE: THREE ROLES IN ONE



MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST (MAT)

- one legal entity to run a number of schools
- Board of Directors: Education Fellowship Board
- run the MAT strategically
- delegate day-to-day running to each academy's Local Governing Body (LGB)
- level of delegation to LGBs can vary

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS IN AAB

- To advise, support and challenge where appropriate
- Represent various groups including parents, staff and community
- To monitor progress of the academy and pupils against key plans
- Commit to regular full governing body meetings, core and actions groups
- Use areas of expertise to support within the academy through visits and links to key areas within the academy

EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP BOARD IS:

- ultimately responsible and accountable to the Secretary of State for the education and financial arrangements within its academies
- the governing body of all academies within the trust

AAB IN EACH ACADEMY

- challenges, supports and advises the Headteacher and fellowship executives
- has minimised delegated responsibilities
- has freedom to carry out duties as governors whilst the fellowship board carries the responsibility
- leads on:
 - *Pupil behaviour*
 - *Safeguarding and Welfare*
 - *Admissions appeals*
 - *Health and safety*
 - *Staff discipline appeals*

OUTSTANDING GOVERNANCE

- Effective governing bodies systematically monitor their school's progress towards meeting agreed development targets
- Governors are well informed and knowledgeable because they are given high-quality, accurate information that is concise and focused on pupil achievement
- Governors in the schools visited, use the skills they bring, and the information they have about the school, to ask challenging questions, which are focused on improvement, and hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes.
- School governance: learning from the best Ofsted 2011

OUTSTANDING GOVERNANCE

- Governance is very strong
- Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas needed for development
- Governors have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and how underperformance has been tackled. They visit the school to ensure they maintain an accurate picture
- They are involved in writing and monitoring the school development plan, are aware of the assessment information and challenge the headteacher to drive improvements. They receive regular reports on the progress made on the school development plan
- They are aware of how the pupil premium money is spent, and are closely monitoring its impact. They know that teachers' performance is linked to pay. They rigorously and frequently check the school's finances
- They have ensured safeguarding meets statutory requirements. They attend training provided by the local authority when needed
- Ofsted report on an outstanding GB 2014

OFSTED INSPECTION SEPT 2014

- Inspectors must evaluate the extent to which governors **provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account** for:
 - improving the quality of teaching
 - pupils' achievement
 - pupils' behaviour and safety
 - **by using:**
 - the data dashboard
 - other progress data
 - examination outcomes and test results

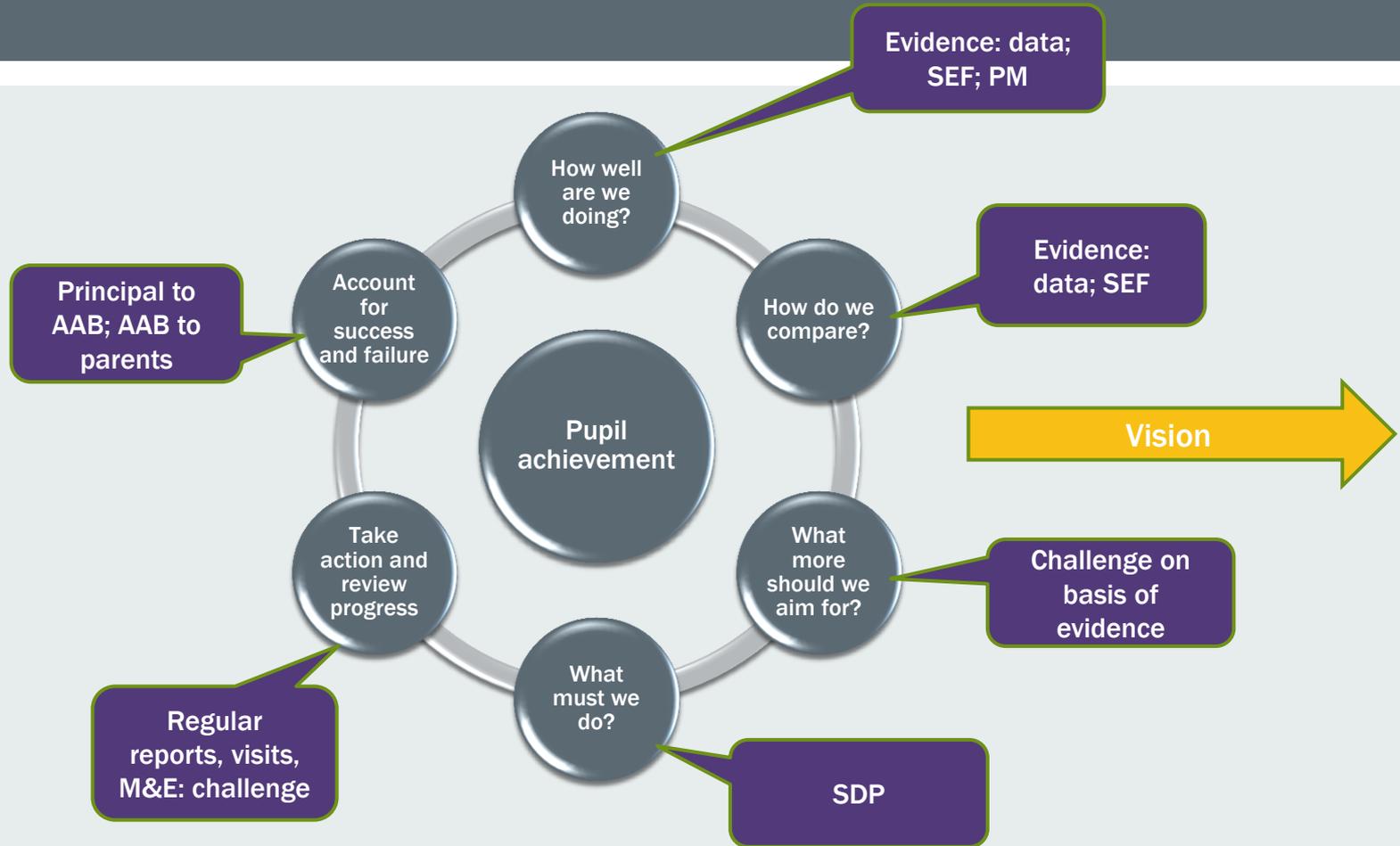
HOW CAN WE “HOLD THE PRINCIPAL AND OTHER SENIOR LEADERS TO ACCOUNT?”

- Establish common aims and aspirations
- Agree and acknowledge roles
- Understand the annual improvement cycle
- Use facts and evidence: the data
- Agree what needs to improve and by when
- Restrict the number of issues to focus on
- Leave professional solutions to the professionals
- Monitor and evaluate proactively – don't leave it till the end of the year

HOW DO YOU KNOW HOW WELL YOUR SCHOOL IS DOING?

- Doing...in what areas?
- How well should it be doing?
- How do we know?
- What should we be looking for?
- Where might we find it?
- What questions should we ask?
- Who can we ask?
- How do we know if the answers are reliable and honest?
- What do we do if we find they're not?

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT CYCLE



CHALLENGE

- hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching
- understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, particularly the use of the school data dashboard
- be aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
- understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression
- performance manage the headteacher rigorously
- ensure that the school's finances are properly managed, including how the school is using the Pupil Premium
- DfE Governors Handbook 2015

SUPPORT

- carry out your statutory duties
- be good at what you do
- reward and praise staff when praise is due
- provide a two-way communication channel between parents and community and the school
- through the chair, offer a listening ear to the head
- encourage an outward-looking attitude

WHERE DOES YOUR AAB SIT?

High support

Supporters Club

'We're here to support the head'.

Partners or critical friends

'We share everything –good or bad'.

Low challenge

Abdicators

'We leave it to the professionals'.

High challenge

Adversaries

'We keep a very close eye on the staff!'.

Low support

WHAT OFSTED INSPECTORS FOCUS ON...

- Inspectors focus sharply on those aspects of schools' work that have the greatest impact on raising achievement. They report on the quality of education provided and cover:
 - Achievement of pupils
 - Quality of teaching
 - Behaviour and safety
 - Quality of leadership and management

GATHERING EVIDENCE

Inspectors

- Data analysis
- Validation of self-evaluation
- Triangulation: asking questions - teachers, parents, youngsters, governors, head and comparing the answers...
- Observation
- Work sampling
- Discussion between inspectors

Governors

- Which techniques are appropriate for us?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Historical:

- School data dashboard
- Fischer Family Trust governor dashboard
- School and college performance tables
- Value Added (VA) data – RAISEonline ; Fisher Family Trust
- Ofsted report

Current:

- Self-evaluation
- Pupil tracking data (anonymised)
- Principal's report
- Performance management
- School Improvement or Development Plan (and related progress reports)
- Feedback from stakeholders

SCHOOL DATA DASHBOARD

- The School Data Dashboard is an online tool providing a clear picture of how the school is performing in relation to similar schools with the same intake profile. This dashboard raises the stakes...there are now no excuses. Inspectors will be critical of governing bodies who, despite the dashboard, still don't know their school well enough and don't take the necessary action in good time.

Sir Michael Wilshaw - Creating a step change in school accountability: Equipping parents and governors with the information needed to assess school performance 27 February 2013

FFT GOVERNOR DASHBOARD

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Search.aspx?searchtext=governor+dashboard&searchmode=anyword>

- Primary and secondary governor versions
- Briefing guides
- E-learning modules
- Video demo

RAISEonline

- a secure web-based system that provides schools, local authorities and inspectors with a range of analyses including:
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4;
- Progress from Key Stage 2 to 4;
- Absence and exclusions; and
- The characteristics (often referred to as ‘context’) of pupils.
- For each type of analysis, your school is compared to national averages for primary schools. Some analyses also show you where your school sits in the national distribution of schools (e.g. top 20%, bottom 5% etc.). Tests of statistical significance are used to highlight results that are atypical.

RAISEONLINE: QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How does attainment and progress at my school compare to national averages and the Government's floor target?
2. Are we relatively stronger or weaker in English compared to mathematics?
3. Do we have any under-performing groups of pupils, or are there wide gaps in attainment between some groups of pupils?
4. How might the context of our school affect our performance?
5. How does pupil attendance compare to national averages?

See **Knowing your school: RAISEonline for governors**

www.nga.org.uk

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

- Ongoing process – updated regularly
- Should reflect many views, not just those of Principal/SMT
- Governor input – regular monitoring and review
- Informs improvement and development plans

PUPIL TRACKING DATA

- A continuously updated system for collating the progress and achievement of pupils
- Predictions
- On or off target?
- Analysis of trends
- Information for teachers, pupils and parents

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

- It is the Principal's job to give governing bodies all the information they need to do their job well.
- This means they should help governing bodies access the data published by the department and Ofsted.
- They should also provide regularly whatever management information the governing body requires to monitor different aspects of life in the school throughout the year.
- DfE Governors Handbook 2015

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

- In particular, governing bodies will need to see information relating to the priorities they have identified for improvement. This might include data on:
 - pupil learning and progress;
 - pupil applications, admissions, attendance and exclusions;
 - staff absence, recruitment, retention, morale and performance; and
 - the quality of teaching.
- Governing bodies, not Principals, should determine the scope and format of Principal's reports.
- DfE Governors Handbook 2015

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Principal's performance management
- Teacher appraisal
- Anonymised data
- Objectives set and percentage achieved
- Correlation between performance and pay

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Inspectors should:
- ask the Principal about the proportion of teaching staff that has passed through to the upper pay spine
- compare this with the overall quality of teaching
- find out whether there is a correlation between the two, and if there is none, find out why, taking into account the length of time the Principal has been in post

AGREE WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

- Strategic and operational planning
- Keeping it manageable
- Delegation or abdication?

THE BAKE-OFF ANALOGY



- Top layer: *looking into the future: long term*
- Middle layer: *strategic plan: medium term*
- Bottom layer: *the school improvement plan: short term*

LEAVE PROFESSIONAL SOLUTIONS TO THE PROFESSIONALS

For example...

- If our focus is to raise achievement in English and maths so that it is typically good or better
- If we need to Improve attendance to at least average levels

MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROACTIVELY

- **Monitor** – regular checks on progress
- **Evaluate** – assessing impact – what difference did it make?
- Current data sources: eg pupil tracking and Principal's reports
- School and classroom visits; learning walks; lesson observations
- Questions, questions, questions...
- Recording challenge and support – the role of the clerk and the audit trail

MONITORING

- Allocate actions in the plan to named governors
- Traffic light system?
- Agree specific dates for monitoring
- Report back to relevant committee
- Take action as required...

EVALUATION

- Formal process – governors' day?
- Key questions:
 - Did we achieve what we set out to achieve?
 - If not, why not?
 - Assess significance
 - Excuses or explanations?
 - What goes into the next plan?
 - Assess progress towards medium-term plan

APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

- Principal's statement:
- *We recently took the children on a field trip. The staff stayed over the whole week although pupils stayed for half a week in two cohorts.*

Possible questions:

- What did the children learn from their experience?
- How do you know?
- How does this relate to the curriculum?
- Was it good value for money?
- How do we know?

APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

- Principal's statement:
- *I recently trained some colleagues on the impact TAs can have on pupil progress. We covered the What, Why, How system and discussed how TAs will support pupils' personalised targets using the new system.*

Possible questions:

- What did the TAs think of the training?
- Has it helped them improve their practice?
- How?
- What is the “What, Why, How system”?
- Would you recommend that other TAs attend the same training?
- What would you do differently next time?

GOOD PRACTICE

- Following regular reports from heads of department in a secondary school, the governors asked a range of questions about each department, including:
- *Is it a contradiction to say that leadership and management are strengths while reporting several areas of inconsistency in the subject?*
- *Would there be such inconsistencies if the leadership was stronger?*
- *What does the department consider to be the main factor for the improvement in results this year?*
- *Could we learn more about the direct impact of our specialism on the motivation and achievements of students?*
- *Are there any examples of the impact of this subject on the rest of the curriculum?*

HOW GOOD IS MY GOVERNING BODY?

- Set high expectations of governing bodies; support and challenge them to reflect honestly on their effectiveness; and stimulate them to **think creatively and ambitiously about their constitution, structure and membership**
- Is the board's constitution and membership **not just fit for purpose, but dynamic and highly professional** in its approach?
- GBs should be no bigger than they need to be to secure all the skills they need, with every governor making an active contribution: **governing bodies cannot afford to carry passengers**
- I believe many are **currently too large** to provide the effective, cohesive and dynamic non-executive strategic leadership our schools need
- Letter from Lord Nash to DSCs 2014

FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

- **Purpose**
- to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school'

- **Fitness**
- The right skills
- The right shape and size
- Efficient
- Effective
- Chairing
- Clerking
- Self review
- Accountability

SELF-EVALUATION

- **In preparation for inspection, governing bodies should evaluate regularly their own effectiveness.**
- **The chair of governors has a particular responsibility for ensuring the effective functioning of the governing body.**
- **Good chairs also ask for regular feedback from their governing bodies to improve their own effectiveness and have an annual conversation with each governor to discuss the impact of their contribution to the work of the governing body.**
- **DfE Governors Handbook 2015**

SKILLS, ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOUR AND EXPERIENCE

■ **Individual:**

- Commitment
- Team work
- Integrity
- Up to date
- Reliability
- Open to learning
- Basic literacy, numeracy, IT, data

■ **Collective:**

- Experience of chairing/leadership
- Strategic planning
- Change management
- Data analysis
- Appraisal
- Finance
- Premises/facilities
- Community links
- Education background

READY MADE TOOLS

- Self-evaluation tools on the web
- Ofsted's questions for governors
- External governance reviews
- APPG 20 questions
- Governor Mark – including supporting and validating partner GB's self-evaluation

20 QUESTIONS

- **Right skills:**

- Do we have the right skills on the governing board?
- 1. Have we completed a skills audit which informs the governor specification we use as the basis of governor appointment and interview?

- **Effectiveness:**

- Are we as effective as we could be?
- 2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?
- 3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing board's induction and development needs?
- 4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?
- 5. How do we make use of good practice from across the country?

20 QUESTIONS

- **Role of the chair:**
- Does our chair show strong and effective leadership?
- 6. Do we carry out a regular 360 ° review of the chair's performance and elect the chair each year?
- 7. Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than two terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every six years?
- 8. Does the chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the board's performance?

20 QUESTIONS

- **Vision, ethos and strategy**
- **Strategy: Does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?**
- **9. Does our vision look forward three to five years, and does it include what the children who have left the school will have achieved?**
- **10. Have we agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?**
- **11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing board's activities and agenda setting?**

20 QUESTIONS

- **Engagement:**
- Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?
- 12. How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?
- 13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing board to our parents and local community?
- 14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?

20 QUESTIONS

- **Effective accountability**
- **Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?**
- **15. How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data) so we can properly hold school leaders to account?**
- **16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?**
- **17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?**
- **18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?**
- **19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?**
- **Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?**
- **20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing board's contribution been to this?**

ACCOUNTABILITY

- responsibility rests with the academy trust which delegates some or all of the responsibility to the AAB
- local accountability to parents and the trust board

DEFINING ACCOUNTABILITY

Be accountable for

- School performance
- AAB's actions

Take account of

- Performance data
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Self-evaluation

Give an account

- To parents and the community
- To Ofsted
- To the Trust
- To Companies House
- To the Secretary of State for Education