

Termly Bulletin: Autumn 2018/19

This termly bulletin is available free of charge to non-members and is designed to keep all governors up to date with some of the key issues affecting school governance in England.

It is emailed directly to corporate and local association members of NGA to distribute to their wide network of governors. If you have any feedback, comments or questions about the content of the bulletin, please email kirstie.ebbs@nga.org.uk

Become a pathfinder for the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

For the past year Emma Knights, NGA's Chief Executive has been involved in an [Ethical Leadership Commission](#), with a number of other commission members. The [report](#) published at the ASCL Annual Conference in 2018 set up a draft framework and the final report will launch on the 25 January 2019. The commission is working on a number of ways to support ethical leadership into schools, including setting up an ethical forum, and integrating the framework into Initial Teacher Training and existing school leadership.



NGA has been working to create resources to help school leaders and governors/trustees evaluate the ethical leadership in their schools. Whilst the resources are yet to be finalised, we hope that they will offer a range of options for school leaders and governors/trustees to work together to improve their schools. We hope that you will join us in this new venture by becoming pathfinders to test out our resources and engage in ethical leadership.

Great reasons to be a pathfinder:

- continuing professional development for school leaders and governing boards
- access to pathfinder resources and support
- networking with similar-thinking schools
- lead the way as an exemplar of ethical leadership and inspire other schools with good practice
- engage in the ethical leadership debate

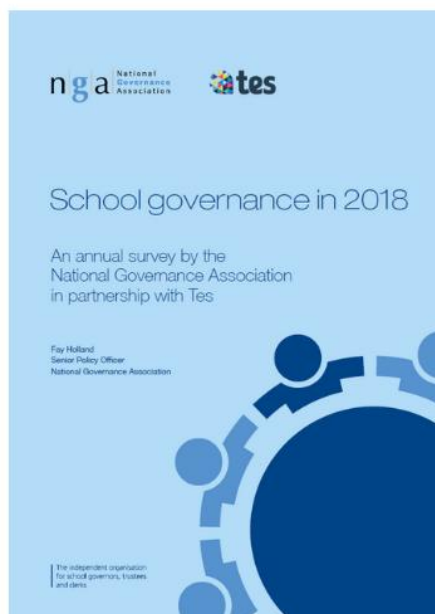
Pathfinders will be required to:

- be interested in improving their governance and have an interest in ethical leadership
- commit to complete one of the 'paths' to explore ethical leadership (this could be an ethical audit, discussion of case studies provided in resource pack, review of school values and ethos in light of the framework, or running your own case studies provided by the governing board/trust through the ethical framework)
- commit to two future events (one in July 2019 and one in January 2020) or give written feedback on the programme

To submit your interest or find out more information please email Carys Ward at Carys.Ward@nga.org.uk, or you can read more information [here](#). If you do so before the 4 January 2019 then you will be invited to join the Ethical Commission Launch event in London on the 25 January 2019. You are more than welcome to register anytime throughout the year, but will be expected to complete some of the ethical resources before January 2020 in order to report your feedback.



School governance in 2018: what did you tell us?



Sharing the experiences
of **5,218 school
governors and trustees**
on education policy and
governance practice.

#SchoolGovernance2018

In September, NGA published the report from our annual survey on all things school governance, which we carry out in partnership with *Tes*. Over five thousand governors, trustees and academy committee members responded this year, and their answers provide invaluable insight into the current issues affecting school governance.

The key findings from the report were:

1. Three quarters of governors and trustees have a negative view of the **government's performance** in education over the past year, with those governing calling for more funding and more stability in education policy.
2. **Funding** is the biggest issue for governing boards, especially being felt in secondary schools, sixth forms and in early years. Just one in five are confident that they can manage budget constraints without compromising the quality of education. Indeed, only half of respondents said that they were balancing income and expenditure with almost a third drawing on reserves. 75% of those drawing on reserves said these would be exhausted within two years.
3. **High needs funding** is a big concern, with 74% of respondents saying they disagree that current funding is sufficient; secondary schools especially are reporting being particularly badly hit.
4. **Diversity on governing boards** is a major concern, including when it comes to who is elected chair, and not enough boards are actively considering the issue.
5. Almost half of schools covered by the survey are providing **additional services for families in need**, including washing school uniforms, meals outside of term time, food banks and emergency loans. 38% of schools are providing financial support with purchasing school uniforms. This follows NGA's [Spotlight on Disadvantage](#) research report, released in June 2018, finding that 46% still allocated funds above and beyond the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils in their school.
6. Volunteering to govern a school or group of schools is a **form of professional development**, yet the majority of governors and trustees are not getting paid time off work for governance.
7. The **time commitment** involved in governing roles is a potential barrier to some volunteers taking on or continuing governance roles, particularly when it comes to stepping up to chair.
8. Despite a trend towards smaller governing boards, **recruiting volunteers to govern schools** remains challenging with the number reporting two or more vacancies rising to 38% in 2018.



9. It is concerning that despite the prominence of the need for **effective clerking** rising in recent years, 9% of respondents still either did not have – or did not know if they had – a clerk who could provide the board with advice on governance, constitutional and procedural matters.
10. **Staff recruitment** is particularly challenging in regions surrounding London and in schools with lower Ofsted grades; many secondary schools are struggling to recruit teachers to core subjects.
11. Only a little over a third of standalone schools are currently considering or in the process of **forming or joining a multi-academy trust or federation**, meaning that, in the absence of any clear direction from central government, maintained schools are likely to make up a substantial proportion of the schools sector for the foreseeable future.
12. The majority of **multi-academy trusts** delegate significant responsibilities to their academy committees; this finding appears to contradict other reports in the sector that local governance is increasingly being overlooked by MATs.
13. Most multi-academy trusts have overlap between people involved in different **layers of governance**, which poses a risk to effective governance as individuals are effectively responsible for holding themselves to account.
14. NGA's proposal for a fourth core function of governing boards - ensuring effective **engagement with stakeholders** – has the support of a majority of governors and trustees with only 17% saying they did not support the proposal.

NGA will continue to use the findings from the report to inform our discussions with policymakers, guidance and training offer. To read the report in full, visit www.nga.org.uk/schoolgovernancein2018.

Latest edition of the Chair's Handbook available now

Now in its seventh edition, [The Chair's Handbook](#) is a valuable resource for new and established chairs alike. The role of the chair of a governing board in a state-funded school in England should be viewed in the same light as that of the chair of the board in any other sector, and this guide draws on practice from across a range of sectors to apply to governing boards of all schools and trusts, from the smallest to the biggest.

Sections with significant updates in this new edition include those on ethical leadership, organisational culture, building the relationship with the senior executive, and the chair's role with Ofsted. The handbook also includes tips for making the role of chair manageable, such as working well with the vice chair and the possibility of having co-chairs.

[GOLD members](#) of the NGA will receive an email explaining how to claim their free copy of The Chair's Handbook.

It is available to all other NGA members for £6 per copy and on [general sale](#) at £12 per copy.

Participants of NGA's Leading Governance for Chairs development programme will also receive a free copy of The Chair's Handbook.





Not long left to enter the Outstanding Governance Awards!

School governing boards and clerks are set to gain recognition for their outstanding practice in the National Governance Association's biennial [Outstanding Governance Awards](#), which are open for nominations until Monday 3 December.

As the only national education awards to recognise the contribution of governing boards, and the clerks that support them, the Outstanding Governance Awards provide entrants with a unique opportunity to gain recognition through a rigorous judging process, lead the way as an exemplar of good school governance and reflect on their practice against the award criteria. The awards also identify best practice in school governance and clerking, and facilitate the sharing of this across the school system.

The awards will recognise achievements in four categories:

- **Outstanding governing board in a single school:** Exploring how the governing board fulfils its core functions along with NGA's eight elements of effective governance, this award recognises a governing board that delivers effective governance and outstanding leadership in a single school.
- **Outstanding governing board in a group of schools:** Accounting for the different challenges and opportunities in governing a group of schools, this award will recognise a board governing a multi academy trust or federation that has demonstrated effective governance and outstanding leadership to create positive outcomes in their school.
- **Outstanding vision and strategy:** Setting vision and strategy is a core function of the governing board, and this award recognises a board governing a single or group of schools that has an inspiring vision and is able to demonstrate how progress is being made towards achieving that vision with a clear strategy in place.
- **Outstanding clerk to a governing board:** For over a decade, the Outstanding Governance Awards have recognised the importance of a professional clerk to the effectiveness of the governing board. This award will recognise a clerk who has shown outstanding practice and made a demonstrable impact on the work of the board.



People from across the education sector are being encouraged to nominate a governing board or clerk that merits celebration for the significant impact they have made on their school or group of schools. Whilst governing boards and clerks can self-nominate for an award, a third party such as their executive leader, a national leader of governance, or a governor support service can also nominate them.

The awards are open to all state funded schools in England including maintained schools, single academy trusts, free schools and schools within multi academy trusts and federations, and to all phases of schools. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a prestigious ceremony at the House of Commons in May 2019 where awards will be presented to the winners.

Entries to the awards can be submitted until 23.59 on 3 December 2018 using the nomination forms available at www.nga.org.uk/awards.



The Department for Education's statement of intent to improve the diversity of the schools workforce – including governing boards

Coinciding with the government's announcement on the Race Disparity Audit, the Department for Education (DfE) has set out a [statement of intent on the diversity of the teaching workforce](#), which highlights that "today the teaching workforce is more diverse than ever before" but "data shows that amongst others, women and minority ethnic teachers remain under represented at senior levels".

The statement also addresses the lack of diversity on governing boards: according to [School Governance in 2018](#), 5% of school governors and trustees are from an ethnic minority compared to 14% of the general population and 26% of the pupil population.

Setting out its vision for diversity in the school workforce, the DfE says, "diversity within schools is valuable in fostering social cohesion and most importantly, in supporting pupils to grow and develop in an environment of visible, diverse role models" and wants schools to be an "inclusive environment for teachers and pupils to be themselves".

To progress this aim, the DfE is calling for everyone in the school sector to play their part in driving this important change by "supporting the progression of all teachers and removing any biases in recruitment practice". Over the coming months it will be consulting with schools, teachers, MATs and governing boards to understand what needs to happen to drive this change.

NGA will continue to deliver the [Everyone on Board campaign](#), in partnership with Inspiring Governance, in pursuit of improving diversity in school leadership. Recognising the long-term issue of the under-representation of people from ethnic minorities on school governing boards, earlier this year NGA launched a campaign that set out to highlight to governing boards why it is important that they are diverse, and provides resources to governing boards to enable them to create this change. The campaign also encourages people from ethnic minorities and those aged under 40 to become a school governor or trustee by demonstrating how their skills and lived experience can make a valuable and significant contribution to schools and the pupils and staff within them. Since its launch in June 2018, over 300 people have volunteered because of the campaign.

Funding the Future: make your governing board's voice heard

Ahead of next year's comprehensive spending review, NGA will continue to campaign alongside others in the sector for increased investment in the education of children and young people. Governors and trustees tell us that this is the biggest issue facing their schools and, in many cases, poses a risk to the quality of education they are able to provide.

NGA will be making the case that the basic per-pupil funding is not enough at primary, secondary or post-16. We will be calling on the government to protect pupil premium funding and to ensure that wider services for children and families are well funded. We will be calling for more money to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in school.

The voices of those governing will be central to the success of the campaign. We are encouraging governing boards to get in touch with their MP and ask them to keep up the pressure on the Department for Education and the Treasury.

Visit www.nga.org.uk/fundingthefuture for information and resources.



Dates for your diary

You can keep up to date with and book places at events at www.nga.org.uk/events. NGA events are only available to members.

Special Schools' Advisory Group

The group provides those governing with an opportunity to discuss issues relating to special educational needs and disabilities in schools and informs NGA's work in relation to special schools. It also gives governors and trustees the chance to exchange information and practice working well in their schools.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 28 November in central Birmingham. A light buffet lunch will be provided during registration from 1.00pm. If you would like to attend, please contact Rani Kaur rani.kaur@nga.org.uk by Thursday 22 November 2018 detailing any dietary requirements you may have.

Clerks' Advisory Group

The next meetings of the Clerks' Advisory Group are now open for bookings:

- **Manchester** on Tuesday 4 December 2018: [click here to book](#)
- **London** on Wednesday 5 December 2018: [click here to book](#)

These meetings give clerks an opportunity to share good practice and highlight issues they have encountered in their role as clerk.

The discussions at meetings will also help inform NGA's Clerking Matters campaign which aims to raise the status and professionalism of clerks: www.nga.org.uk/clerkingmatters.

Clerks' Conference

Save the date for our next clerks' conference, which will take place in central Birmingham on Wednesday 20 February 2019. Booking will open shortly at www.nga.org.uk/events.

Spring regional meetings and conferences

NGA hosts events for governors and trustees in each of England's nine regions every spring and autumn. In spring 2019, conferences will take place in the West Midlands, South East and North West while meetings will take place in the other regions.

For dates and further details, keep an eye on the NGA website at www.nga.org.uk/events

Membership of NGA

If you have found this bulletin useful and are not currently a member of NGA, please consider joining. We have two levels of membership for schools: Standard (£90 per year) and GOLD (£260 per year).

Both cover the school for up to 25 governors or trustees, giving them access to a wealth of online resources and an e-newsletter tailored for governance every Friday in term-time. Group, multi academy trust and local association memberships are also available. GOLD members have access to our GOLDline Advice Service and receive free guides.

Full details can be found at www.nga.org.uk/membership. If you have any questions about membership, give us a call on 0121 237 3780 or email our membership team on membership@nga.org.uk.