
Skills audit for governors based on the DfE competency framework

* Use this KeyDoc to help you consider your own confidence with regard to the 6 key competencies in the [Department for Education (DfE)’s competency framework for governance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook). You can also use this to identify any potential areas for training and development
* This audit can be used as part of your governing board’s self-evaluation
* You’ll be asked to rate your confidence against a series of statements in the following 6 key competencies:
* Strategic leadership
* Accountability for educational standards and financial performance
* People
* Structures
* Compliance
* Evaluation

Strategic leadership

| Setting direction |
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| **Do you understand…?** | **Yes** | **no** | **unsure** |
| National and local education policy and news |  |  |  |
| What the key features of good governance should be |  |  |  |
| The difference between strategic and operational decisions |  |  |  |
| How to carry out strategic planning, and what tools you need to do this |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU...?** |  |  |  |
| Think strategically about your school’s development |  |  |  |
| Explain your school’s strategic priorities and goals, and how these will be monitored |  |  |  |
| Champion the reasons for changes, and explain how these benefit the school’s community |  |  |  |

| Culture, values and ethos |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **uNSURE** |
| Your school’s values and ethos |  |  |  |
| Your school’s strategic improvement plan |  |  |  |
| Your governing board’s code of conduct, and how it reflects the school’s vision and ethos |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Act in a way that reflects your school’s culture and values, and ensure that policies are in line with these |  |  |  |
| Agree the school’s distinctive characteristics and culture |  |  |  |

| decision making |
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| **Can you…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| Identify the decisions that are likely to achieve your school’s goals |  |  |  |
| Put aside your own interests to make decisions in the best interests of the school |  |  |  |
| Act with honesty, objectivity, and integrity |  |  |  |
| Ensure your decisions are well-informed and impartial |  |  |  |
| Recognise when your governing board will require external advice  |  |  |  |
| Stand by the decisions of the governing board, and respect collective decision making |  |  |  |
| Accept challenge and encourage open discussions |  |  |  |

| Collaborative working with stakeholders and partners |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| Who your main stakeholders are |  |  |  |
| How to work with stakeholders and members of the school community |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Proactively consult with a range of views, and welcome feedback and challenge |  |  |  |
| Work with other organisations where necessary |  |  |  |
| Be clear, honest and open when communicating with parents, pupils and staff |  |  |  |
| Consider how the decisions governors make affect the school community |  |  |  |
| Act as an ambassador for your school |  |  |  |
| Support community cohesion and challenge your school’s leadership team to do the same |  |  |  |

| Risk management |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| What risk management is and how it applies to your school |  |  |  |
| How risks are managed in your school and how concerns are escalated |  |  |  |
| How conflicts of interest and breaches in confidentiality lead to risks for the school |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Identify the main risks facing your school, and the contingency measures that are in place |  |  |  |
| Ensure your school’s risk management systems are robust and regularly reviewed |  |  |  |
| Advise on how to achieve the right balance of risk and how to mitigate the impact of risk |  |  |  |
| Actively avoid and manage conflicts of interest |  |  |  |

Accountability for educational standards and financial performance

| Educational improvement |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| How teaching and learning is evaluated in your school |  |  |  |
| The importance of a broad and balanced curriculum |  |  |  |
| How the curriculum in your school promotes the school’s ethos and values |  |  |  |
| Relevant national standards and assessment systems for your school |  |  |  |
| The rationale behind your school’s assessment procedures |  |  |  |
| How behaviour and safety are monitored in your school |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Set expectations for school improvement with your senior leadership team (SLT)  |  |  |  |
| Let your SLT know what data you need to fulfil your role |  |  |  |
| Request evidence of the effectiveness of proposed improvement initiatives |  |  |  |

| Rigorous analysis of data |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| The DfE’s performance tables and school comparison tool |  |  |  |
| Analyse School Performance (ASP) for school and pupil data |  |  |  |
| Your school’s context on a local and national basis |  |  |  |
| Where the data you receive comes from and is quality assured |  |  |  |
| Information about attendance and exclusion in your school |  |  |  |
| How you should use a range of sources of information, such as guidance, parents or staff members |  |  |  |

| RIGOROUS ANALYSIS OF DATA |
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| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Analyse and interpret data to evaluate how pupils in your school are performing |  |  |  |
| Use data to inform decisions about school improvement |  |  |  |
| Challenge the SLT to ensure that the data you receive is valuable and efficiently collected |  |  |  |

| Financial frameworks and accountability |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| Your school’s financial policies, funding arrangements and methods of assuring financial accountability |  |  |  |
| Your school’s internal control processes, and how value for money is secured |  |  |  |
| Your school’s financial health and efficiency, and how it compares with other schools |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Be confident in the financial information you receive |  |  |  |
| Interpret budget monitoring information, and communicate this to others |  |  |  |
| Take part in financial self-evaluation activities |  |  |  |
| Rigorously question how the school is approaching financial efficiency |  |  |  |

| Financial management and monitoring |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **UNSURE** |
| How your school receives funding and how this funding is spent |  |  |  |
| The importance of a robust financial strategy and plans to ensure sustainability |  |  |  |
| How your school allocates resources, and how these translate into outcomes for pupils |  |  |  |
| How the budget is set and monitored  |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Make decisions about funding, based on your school’s priorities |  |  |  |
| Interpret data relating to finances |  |  |  |
| Ask informed questions about income and spending |  |  |  |

| Staffing and performance management |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **MAYBE** |
| What your school spends on staffing, and how to benchmark this against other schools |  |  |  |
| How staff are recruited |  |  |  |
| How staff performance management and pay progression works in your school |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Ensure that staffing structures are fit for purpose |  |  |  |
| Take responsibility for maintaining a robust pay policy |  |  |  |
| Be confident in how you apply procedures to the performance management of senior staff members |  |  |  |
| Identify how pay decisions will affect the budget |  |  |  |
| Have due regard to the work-life balance of staff members |  |  |  |

| External accountability |
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| **DO YOU UNDERSTAND…?** | **YES** | **NO** | **MAYBE** |
| The purpose of formal scrutiny and accountability (for example, by Ofsted) |  |  |  |
| How national performance measures are monitored and reported, and the minimum standards at which intervention is triggered  |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Ensure appropriate structures are in place to support external scrutiny |  |  |  |
| Ensure that the board is open and accessible to members of the school community |  |  |  |
| Use your understanding of data to inform responses to external scrutiny |  |  |  |

People

| Building an effective team |
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| **can you…?** | **yes** | **no** | **maybe** |
| Show your commitment to your role through active participation |  |  |  |
| Find the information you need to support you in your role |  |  |  |
| Accept constructive challenge and feedback |  |  |  |
| Raise doubts and differences of opinions in an appropriate way, and encourage others to do the same |  |  |  |
| Acknowledge your mistakes, and the lessons learnt from these |  |  |  |
| Influence others and build consensus through persuasion |  |  |  |
| Demonstrate professional ethics and values, and sound judgement |  |  |  |
| Recognise the importance of the clerk’s/governance professional’s position and advice |  |  |  |

Structures

| Roles and responsibilities |
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| **do you understand…?** | **yes** | **no** | **unsure** |
| The role of the board and its three core functions |  |  |  |
| How the strategic role of governance is different to operational leadership |  |  |  |
| **For academies**, the role of members and how this is different to the role of trustees |  |  |  |
| The governance structure of your school and how decisions are delegated |  |  |  |
| How the governing board and its committees are constituted |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Help your governing board design a committee structure that is appropriate to your school, and make changes where appropriate |  |  |  |

Compliance

| Statutory and contractual requirements |
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| **do you understand…?** | **yes** | **no** | **unsure** |
| The governing board’s legal, regulatory and financial duties |  |  |  |
| The importance of having regard to statutory guidance, such as the Governance Handbook |  |  |  |
| The governing board’s obligations under:* Education and employment legislation
* For academies, the Academies Trust Handbook (formerly the Academies Financial Handbook) and their own funding agreements
* Equalities, and health and safety legislation
* Data protection and freedom of information legislation
 |  |  |  |
| The governing board’s duties with relation to safeguarding and the Prevent Duty |  |  |  |
| The governing board’s duties with regard to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) |  |  |  |
| Your instrument of government, or in academies, your articles of association |  |  |  |
| Your school’s whistleblowing policy, and how these relate to the governing board’s responsibilities |  |  |  |
| The importance of observing the school’s policies, for example, with regard to parental complaints |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Speak out when you are concerned about non-compliance |  |  |  |
| Explain the governing board’s legal responsibilities |  |  |  |
| Recognise when the governing board may need specialist advice |  |  |  |

Evaluation

| Managing review and self-development |
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| **do you understand…?** | **yes** | **no** | **unsure** |
| Your own strengths and areas for development |  |  |  |
| **CAN YOU…?** |  |  |  |
| Be ‘outward facing’, and learn from others |  |  |  |
| Maintain your own personal development plan |  |  |  |
| Be ready to accept opportunities for training and development  |  |  |  |
| Accept a wide range of feedback, and use this to inform your development |  |  |  |
| Carry out self-reviews, and reflect on your own performance |  |  |  |

| Managing and developing the board’s effectiveness |
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| **can you…?** | **yes** | **no** | **unsure** |
| Evaluate how the governing board’s decisions affect pupil outcomes |  |  |  |
| Use feedback from inspections to inform decisions about the governing board’s development |  |  |  |
| Contribute to the board’s self-evaluation |  |  |  |