Education & Skills Funding Agency

Understanding your data

A guide for school governors and academy trustees

June 2018

Contents

Who is this publication for?

This information is for:

- Academy Trustees
- Maintained school governors
- Executive leaders
- Local Authorities
- Local Governing Boards and Clerks

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before March 2019.

Foreword

Access to high quality data is the hallmark of any successful organisation. We believe that your school or academy trust is no different. This resource sets out what is reasonable to expect to see from your executive leaders when looking at the performance of your school or academy trust.

This is not about collecting more information, but about collecting the right information, understanding it, discussing it and using it to inform your actions. You can use this resource to refine your board reporting and to actually reduce the amount of data collection and associated work – remember, when collecting any information, it is important to be aware of the potential burden this may place on executive leaders and teachers.

The use of this resource is your own professional judgement; however, we hope you will find it useful to support your existing processes. There is no need for any additional reporting mechanism here. This resource can be used alongside your existing approaches such as your school improvement/development plan or help to create a new one.

We asked a number of experienced non-executive directors who serve on boards and local authorities across the country to share best practices and learning. These have been summarised in to this document to help you to have productive conversations with your executive team, and analyse the educational performance and financial sustainability of your school or trust. We have signposted to resources, which, we think you will find useful to support with constructive conversations with your executive leaders.

Eileen Milner

Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency

Your evidence base

It is the board's responsibility to guide, support and challenge your executive team to ensure your school or academy trust is:

- setting the right strategic direction
- improving outcomes for the communities it serves
- discharging its duties responsibly
- taking proper account of effective use of the tax payer's money
- ensuring probity

You should already be challenging and evaluating what your data is telling you for your school or academy trust. By having regular sight of key data, this will enable you to establish the 'root causes' behind problems and drivers behind success. To facilitate further improvement in your school or academy trust's performance, we have developed a set of key themes (annex A) for you to use as an evidence base and discuss your school or academy trust performance with your board.

The key themes bring together a broader range of information to help guide discussions and provide a basis for challenge to ensure value for money is achieved, whilst, focusing on educational outcomes. They should be used in conjunction with each other, and in the context of your organisation and its wider operational strategy.

It is important that you take in to consideration the:

- size of your organisation
- type of school/ type of school(s) within you trust e.g. primary/ secondary/ alternative provision/ special school
- key stage
- curriculum offer
- pupil wellbeing and resilience
- pupil behaviour
- quality of career guidance

In all cases, you should consider what the data is telling you:

- What is going well?
- What learning can you apply from one area to another?
- What are the concerns?
- What changes need to be made?
- What can be done about it?
- How will this effect productivity for your school or academy trust?
- What is the impact on educational outcomes?

It is important the data obtained is the most recent, which is available.

The data required for your evidence base should be easily accessible, and should be used in the format in which it is routinely presented.

Your evidence base will support you to develop, monitor and deliver your organisation's strategy, for robust decisions about teaching, improvement and the deployment of resources in your school or academy trust.

It should be used to identify underlying reasons where you might expect performance to be better, and challenge any mitigating actions, analysing the risks/benefits of each, clearly documenting the changes/ progress made since the last discussion.

As board and executive leaders, you should be benchmarking against comparators and analysing trends that bring together quality of leadership, financial health, resource management and pupil educational outcomes into one place.

We recommend boards agree the frequency of discussions and nominate an individual to be responsible for compiling the evidence base. The frequency of discussions can be determined by when data is currently collected, analysed and reviewed in the academic year.

Exceptions reports

An exceptions report should form the basis for structured discussions. It allows the board to easily understand the issues of concern, and to question and challenge leaders to understand, and contribute towards the improvement actions. These discussions will support your organisation and its board to take a critical look at future risk and future planning.

We have provided an exceptions report template (annex B), with guidance notes and examples (annex C), which can be used to do this.

Other tools available

Annex D provides links to guidance and tools, which outline the skills, knowledge, and behaviours, required by the board to help schools and academy trusts improve their financial planning, resource management, and compare data with other similar schools or academy trusts.

Annex A – Key themes table

1. Pupil numbers/attendance and exclusions	
Pupil numbers	Pupil numbers drive the vast bulk of your income. Understanding the growth or decline in numbers is vital to safeguard the financial health of your organisation. Look at recent past trends, current numbers and the construction of the pupil number projections. This should include a break down to show first, second and third choices, and in-year churn in all year groups. Consideration should be given to: • Engagement with feeder schools. • Transition from primary to secondary schools. • Pupil projections/future financial planning. • Number of service pupils/pupils from traveller families/seasonal employment trends. • Liaising with Local Authorities where required on pupil places.
Pupil absence levels (including persistent absence)	Benchmark authorised and unauthorised absence against comparators, e.g. over time, to other organisations/other academies within a MAT/schools within the local authority, against a national average, to similar performing schools or to comparable but better performing schools. Comparative data is often a spur to improvement, including for high-performing organisations. Consideration should be given to: • Absence levels between boys and girls. • Absence levels in different year groups.
Pupil exclusion levels	Look at numbers of fixed term and/or permanent exclusions to be tracked as a cost implication. Boards should deploy maximum challenge to school and academy trust management teams on any permanent exclusion; such an event is very likely to have a highly detrimental impact on that child's future. This should be the context in which any such decision is taken. Consideration should be given to: • Instances of repeat exclusions. • Rolling average of permanent exclusions to ensure that it is used very sparingly. • Numbers of pupils educated off-site and safeguarding arrangements.

	The school exclusion statutory guidance provides information on the exclusion of pupils from local-authority-maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units.
2. Attainment and progress	
Pupil education outcomes	The measure will reflect the type and phase of the school, for example key stage 2, key stage 4 forecasts and attainment.
	Review breakdown of current numbers, for example, by boys/girls, free school meals, pupil premium, English as an additional language, special education needs and disability, looked after children.
	Track and monitor the progress made to close the attainment gap.
	Consideration should be given to:
	- Progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium tracked with pupil premium spend. - Progress of disadvantaged pupils by key stage/year group against that of their peers. Include difference between disadvantaged pupils in school, MAT, local authority and nationally. - Progress 8/attainment 8 scores. - Destination/career data.
	The school performance tables: how to interpret the data, provides information on how to use school performance data to interpret pupil attainment and progress, and compare with similar schools
3. Curriculum planning - staffing and class sizes	
Curriculum planning (integrated with financial planning)	It is vital that curriculum planning is coordinated as a joint exercise with your budget planning to produce a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and is affordable.
	A curriculum-led and data-informed approach to financial planning will help establish a staffing structure that can deliver the greatest impact. Boards should challenge leadership teams on the effective organisation of the curriculum and deployment of staff with reference to a key set of metrics relating to factors like:
	- Teacher contact ratio. - Average teacher cost. - Pupil to teacher ratio. - Average teacher cost. % of total spend on teaching/non-teaching staff. % of total spend on senior leadership team.
	Consideration should be given to:

	• Current and future pupil forecasts to identify any changes in staffing requirements. • Succession planning/staff turnover. • Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) and on costs e.g. National Insurance. Further information can be found in the school resource management: top 10 planning checks for governors, which, provides information to help make sure schools manage their resources and money more efficiently. The school workforce planning guidance provides information for all school and will help school leaders to review their staff structures regularly, as part of annual school improvement, curriculum and financial planning.
4. Financial management and governance	
Financial management	All schools and academy trusts should have robust systems and processes in place to manage their finances securely and effectively and provide assurance of this. As a minimum we recommend you should: • Highlight any material divergence from initial budgets set and ongoing forecasts. • For maintained schools provide the authority with details of anticipated and actual expenditure and income, in a form and at times determined by the authority.[1] • For academy trusts, management accounts <u>must</u> be prepared monthly. These must be shared with the chair every month, with other trustees six times a year and be considered by the board when it meets. The board must ensure appropriate action to ensure ongoing viability.[2] • Use the school's financial benchmarking service to compare your school's income and expenditure annually against that of similar schools and investigate further. • Identify and challenge trends and inefficiencies to understand what is happening in your school or academy trust. • Track income versus planned expenditure and actuals against budget forecasts, revenue

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[1] Schemes for financing schools: statutory guidance for local authorities 2.1.2

[2] The Academies Financial Handbook 2018 2.2.4.

	expenditure and non-staff costs as a percentage of total expenditure (and of income). • Analyse cash flow. • Ensure pupil number projections have been accurate and if not, immediately re-budget accordingly. Multi Academy Trusts should ensure there is clarity around the services that are provided centrally to its schools (e.g. through Service Level Agreements). There should also be robust processes in place for assessing the quality of these services and their value for money. The school resource management: checklist provides help with planning school finances and resources.
School and academy trust improvement activities	The budgetary process should be embedded within the strategic leadership function. It is an integral part of the planning cycle, not an isolated activity that is the sole responsibility of the finance manager. Consideration should be given to: • Are school or academy trust improvement initiatives prioritised, costed, and linked to the budget? • Are all new initiatives fully costed before the school or academy trust is committed to the proposal?
Long and short-term financial/budget planning	Ensure there is a 3-5 year financial/budget plan, including balance sheet and for academy trusts cash flow projections. Trusts are required to submit a 3-year budget forecast to ESFA in their annual budget forecast return (BFR). The board should challenge the assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures to ensure they are realistic (see section 1). This should include planning for expenditure on your estate.
Schedule of contracts	Your school or academy trust should have a contracts log to identify which contracts are due for renewal. It is important that contract renewal is planned for and aligned with your school or academy trust's requirements. All schools and academy trusts should ensure they are getting the best deals on all goods or services (e.g. energy and water supplies and devices such as printers, scanners and copiers). • The buying for schools guide provides information on the national deals that are available to help schools save money on some of the things they buy regularly.

Estate management	The school estate should be managed strategically to reflect both short and longer-term needs and priorities, including disability access. We recommend you: • Produce an estate vision, strategy and asset management plan to support your education vision. • Ensure you have the right data to support and enable short/longer term planning and help strategic decision-making about your estate. • Analyse what you spend on your estate now, and what you need to spend to keep it safe, watertight and to provide for the future. • Prioritise expenditure and investment accordingly. You can find further information about managing your estate strategically including performance measures and data needs in good estate management for schools.
Financial Governance	To ensure effective financial governance we recommend boards should have: • Appropriate financial skills and the ability to understand and interpret data. • Clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position. • Access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, e.g. on sick leave. • Robust plans/policies/procedures in place to set, monitor and authorise spend and manage the risks of overspend. • Adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds • Adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors and suppliers. • Business interests of boards and staff properly registered and taken into account to avoid conflicts of interest. For academy trusts: Include a report to the board on non-compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook (AFH), which should also cover the trusts' publications requirements. The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) helps schools to manage their finances and to provide assurance that they have good financial management in place. For all schools: the Governance Handbook provides guidance on the roles and duties of governing boards, and advice on the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be effective.

Remuneration	Boards should exercise strong governance around CEO pay or other highly paid staff. Remuneration committees should evidence and validate the decision-making processes used when setting and increasing pay and associated packages. There should be strong challenge to ensure it is appropriate/justified.
	Consideration should be given to:
	- Assessing the roles and responsibilities of the individual. - Level of challenge to the role: educational, financial, and geographical challenges locally. - Reviewing performance activity against objectives. - Other benefits paid in addition to the salary base. - How pay decisions are documented. - How value for money is achieved.
	For academies: 'The board of trustees **must** ensure its decisions about levels of executive pay follow a robust evidence-based process and are reflective of the individual's role and responsibilities'.[3]
	Don't forget common sense: high executive pay can only be justified by delivering exceptional education and balancing the books.
	The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions guidance provides information for maintained schools.
5. Quality assurance	
Ofsted judgements	Review the last assessment and future expectations.
Audit ratings	Review internal and external audit ratings and identify areas for improvement.
Other reviews	For example, look at outcomes of annual reviews including but not limited to: school improvement reviews, pupil premium reviews, safeguarding reviews, and denominational inspections (for organisations designated with a religious denomination).
6. Safeguarding and well-being	
Safeguarding	Look at number of current safeguarding cases dissected by nature of concern, duration of safeguarding action, impact on pupil.

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[3] The Academies Financial Handbook 2018 2.4.3

	Regularly challenge data around the percentage of staff who are DBS cleared, in particular any outstanding vetting in new employees.
Health and safety	Analyse health and safety reports, review areas of non-compliance, audit concerns.
Accidents	Monitor number of notifiable accidents/dangerous occurrences.
	Monitor near misses and assess what can be learned/what improvements can be made.

7. The school community – staff, pupils and parents	
Staff views	Consideration should be given to: • Staff feedback to measure levels of satisfaction, staff surveys, and exit interview summary reports.
HR	Consideration should be given to: • Reasons for high staff absence/turn over. • Staff performance/objective setting and appraisals. • Succession planning. • Skills shortages for teaching/non-teaching staff and at board level. The professional development for school leaders provides information on professional development for school leaders and governors.
Pupil views	Academy trusts are charities and must operate in the public interest. They are accountable to the pupils they teach and the communities they serve. Establish a mechanism to measure pupil satisfaction.
Parent views	'As the strategic leaders of their organisations it is vital that boards are connected with, and answerable to, the communities they serve, particularly parents/carers. Boards should never become detached, distant or unanswerable to parents or carers. All boards should assure themselves that mechanisms are in place to engage meaningfully with all parents/carers and enable them to put forward their views at key points in their child's education. They should aim to build productive relationships, creating a sense of trust and shared ownership of the organisation's strategy, vision and operational performance. The board should be able to demonstrate the methods used to seek the views of parents and carers and how those views have influenced their decision making' (Governance Handbook, 2.4).

	A feedback mechanism should be established to measure the levels of parent engagement and satisfaction. Schools should use indicators such as the trend in numbers of first choice applicants for school places or an annual parental questionnaire to provide such data.
	Consideration should be given to:
	• Attendance rates at open days or parents evenings • Number of complaints received - what are these about/is there a common theme, what action is being taken to address these?
	Ofsted Parent View is a mechanism available to parents/ carers to provide feedback regarding their child's school. Schools can sign up for regular feedback alerts.

Annex B – Exceptions report template with guidance notes

Organisation: *Specific academy/trust/school details.*	Last Ofsted rating and year: *Specific details.*
Key theme: *One key theme per template based on the principle of reporting by exception and on the trust's performance summary. The most problematic, serious or persistent issues to be prioritised for discussion with the trust senior leadership team.*	Key theme RAG rating: *Based on your organisation's RAG rating framework.*
Source of information/data: *Capture the source of the information/data for a clear line of sight. If possible, include a link to the data source. Ensure that it is evidence and accurately reflects the position of the organisation.*	
Specific issues related to this key theme since last the last discussion: *A summary of movement or change in the nature of the issue/problem since it was last discussed with the board and executive leaders. E.g., Has the issue improved or deteriorated?*	RAG rating at last CEO report: *The last RAG rating for this key theme.*
Explanation of movement from previous discussion: *An assessment of the reasons for this change. E.g. If the issue has improved or deteriorated – how/what has been considered?*	

Critical assessment of risk: *An explanation of the key risk factors from organisation's risk register, based on the organisation's risk assessment framework.*
Overall impact on school/pupils: *A consideration of the impact on your school/pupils: E.g. Impact to finances, pupils, educational outcomes, teachers/non-teaching staff.*
Interdependent issues: *What are the factors/issues that impact on this performance indicator? This may be both internal and external to the organisation. Examples may include implications with school resources, response to demographic change and interaction with other performance indicators or the wider performance summary.*
Comparison to key benchmarking data *This can include comparisons with:* *For all organisations:*   *Aspirational benchmarking data for education outcomes*   *Compliance with the requirements set out in the Governance Handbook*   *Degrees of tolerance, for example those set out in the top 10 planning checks for governors or:*   *Pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) including all staff*   *Class sizes*   *Teacher contact ratio*

- *Key example national and regional benchmarking data*

For trusts only:
- *Strong and robust baselines for financial accountability trusts, for example:*
  - *Staff pay as percentage of total expenditure*
  - *Average teacher cost*
  - *Proportion of budget spent on the leadership team*
  - *Spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines compared to similar schools*

What is the mitigating action?
Mitigating actions should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound (SMART).
Consider the immediate action needed as well as the longer-term action required – this will often be two different approaches. You should attempt to understand the 3-5 year plan. Information, tools, training and guidance to help organisations improve their financial management and efficiency can be seen here.
Are there issues with the governance, leadership and accountability of the organisation? An assessment of the effectiveness of governance can be made using a maturity matrix to ensure the desired outcomes are being achieved and actions/ progress is logged.

Annex C – Worked anonymised examples

Example A

	Last Ofsted rating and year: Grade 2: Good 2014
Organisation: XXXXXXXXXX	
Key theme: Attainment and Progress	**Key theme RAG rating:** Red
Source of information/data: 2017 national school performance data	
Specific issues related to this key theme since last the last discussion: KS2 reading progress The 2017 progress score in reading for this academy is 23% below national figure and when zero referenced is below average at -2.8 (compared to national average at 0). Analyse School Performance (ASP) progress measures with confidence intervals show that this academy is below national average and this is statistically significant. The 2016 progress score in reading was -4.4 so although improving a trend is developing that is a cause for concern. Most notably within this, there is relative underperformance of boys reading and disadvantaged pupils reading.	**RAG rating at last CEO report:** Red
Explanation of movement from previous discussion: This issue was first noted in September 2017 and discussed at that point. It continues to be an item for an Exceptions Report as although there are reasons to believe progress is being made there is not enough data for there to be a robust judgement that we made all the required adjustments. That point should be reached and confirmed in September 2018. A range of interventions was considered in September 2017. These were fully costed and the educational merits and financial risk of each were considered and discussed.	

Following discussion with the Principal of the school the following interventions were agreed:

- secondment of an outstanding year 6 teacher from XXXXX
- observation of outstanding practice at other Trust academies
- implementation of a comprehensive assessment cycle, resulting in accurate evaluation of pupil progress and teaching to age related expectations
- cross-trust moderation which has ensured pitch and expectations are at age related expectation
- the use of the Trust Primary Data Manager to provide analysis and reports which has enabled academy staff to use data more effectively

Indications from latest (December) internal assessment is that current year 6 (KS2 cohort 2018) are making good progress and are on track to reach 0 overall.

Progress of disadvantaged pupils has also improved to be in line with the attainment of disadvantaged pupils nationally, however, boys, although improving, are still lagging behind by a factor of -0.15.

Critical assessment of risk:

Risk number 36: failure to raise and maintain academy standards in line with expectations. This could lead to a low Ofsted judgement and/or a letter of concern from the RSC.

Current assessment of risk continues to be *1 (low)* for Probability and *5* for Impact. At this stage we want to see if the Spring term data drop, (available in February 2018) continues positive trend before we amend the risk rating.

Overall impact on school/pupils:

Very clear impact on pupils in current year 6 cohort and specifically boys.

Data indicates that progress for current year 5 cohort is in line with national expectations and current year 4 are trending ahead of national expectations.

Possibility of parents having a negative perception of the school – pupil numbers may decline – may have an impact on funding.

Interdependent issues:

We have known since the school joined the Trust that pupil catchment contains a very large estate with significant social housing and that literacy levels among parents on the estate are relatively low.

The school has also seen a gradual change in demographic over the last 5 years, from being 88% white European; to being 71% white European. Of the 29%, non-white European 20% are from Gujarati speaking homes and 5% from Urdu speaking homes.

The corresponding level of English as an additional language has risen from 5% to 22% across the school population.

The school has one very strong teacher in year 6, with teacher observations typically outstanding, and one who is mainly good. This teacher has stepped up from year 5, and is finding the adjustment to year 6 is taking some time – lesson observations have been good, but there are some specific areas this teacher is working on.

The school is now creating opportunities for some team teaching and an additional group has been created within year 6 to target disadvantaged pupils and those with language acquisition issues.

Comparison to key benchmarking data

KS2 Results - % At or Above Age Related Expectation Compared to National

	2016					**2017**				
	GPS	**R**	**W**	**M**	**R+W+M**	**GPS**	**R**	**W**	**M**	**R+W+M**
National	72	66	74	70	57	77	71	76	75	61
XXXXX	68	52	88	46	40	88 +11	84 +13	90 +14	88 +13	82 +21
XXXXX	64	73	86	80	64	69 -8	81 +10	84 +8	81 +6	74 +13
XXXXX	78	41	67	78	33	56 -21	48 -23	72 -4	68 -7	44 -17
XXXXX	64	61	73	95	50	86 +9	81 +10	81 +5	98 +23	67 +6

What is the mitigating action?

Work to address underperformance in reading is ongoing and in 2017/18 it includes:

- continued monitoring of the position for all year groups through termly internal assessments.
- termly trust wide moderation activity across R/W/M but with specific attention to reading for this school.
- addition of Executive Principal (Primary) support one day a week from February 2018.
- termly reviews with the Principal and the Executive Principal to track progress and consider further interventions if necessary
- support from a Trust lead practitioner in reading for half a day a week from 5th March 2018.
- implementation of the XXXXX School reading scheme – completed January 2018.

- Specific readings schemes for boys – completed January 2018.
- Introduction of the XXXXX Club for boys reading on literature heroes – completed January 2018.
- Two focussed sessions for parents to support reading at home – planned for March and June 2018.
- Ongoing targeted interventions from the Family Liaison Officer with specific families.

Example B

Organisation: XXXXXXXXX	Last Ofsted rating and year: Not applicable
Key theme: Compliance and Governance	Key theme RAG rating: Amber overall across the trust but with one school currently rated at Red
Source of information/data: Internal review of quality of governance by Trust Head of Governance in conjunction with the CEO and the Deputy CEO, plus the Executive Principal (Primary). Ofsted reports have been considered but there have been no inspections of Trust schools in the last 12 months. Review indicates that the breadth of skills in governing bodies continues to be poor in 3 out of 4 primary schools in the trust and is exacerbated further by having 5 vacancies at XXXXX School.	
Specific issues related to this key theme since last the last discussion: This issue continues to be an area of concern. Last discussed with the Board in October 2017 at which point it was agreed that we would: • Provide training to each governing body through the Clerks and Governors training programme. • Recruit and develop a wider pool of governors with sufficient skills who can operate across the Primary Schools across the trust where needed. • Assess opportunities to draw in further National Leaders of Governance (NLG) support. Although the actions are being carried out, the time lag for impact is slower than expected. XXXXX has since lost two more governors and although this school is not due to be inspected if it were to be so it would be likely to attract an adverse judgement on quality of Leadership.	RAG rating at last CEO report: Amber
Explanation of movement from previous discussion: Additional governors recruited to XXXXX despite this it has not yet bridged the gap as more vacancies arise at XXXXX.	

Ability to formally deploy governance oversight is severely restricted at XXXXX and needs to be addressed.	
Across all 4 primary schools, there is still a lack of breadth of skills at governing body level, which is hampering high-level strategic oversight, guidance and challenge.	

Critical assessment of risk:

Risk 6 – ineffective organisational structures – current assessment of risk is 1 (low) for Probability and 3 for Impact. At this point, we do not propose changing the rating until discussion at the next Trust board meeting in March 2018.

Overall impact on school/pupils:

Oversight of the school via the Trust Executive Team continues to be strong and there has been no adverse effect upon pupil attainment outcomes.

Recent external review by Challenge Partners gave the school an 'outstanding' rating for pupil outcomes and quality of teaching and learning (Note: Challenge Partners review does not look at governance).

Progress at KS 1 and 2, plus termly internal assessments within each Primary school indicate that all schools continue to make good progress with the exception of one Primary academy XXXXX that has issues relating to KS2 attainment and progress in reading.

This key theme issue is not impacting on attainment and progress at XXXXX and we believe there is sufficient challenge and support through the Trust School Improvement Framework.

The governance handbook states in addition to strategic leadership, the boards other two core functions are about creating robust accountability for executive leaders. This means holding them to account for both educational performance and for financial and organisational performance, and ensuring money is well spent.

Without stable governance, the executive leaders may not be held accountable; there may be a lack of robust challenge to decisions, which are being made. This has the potential to impact on both educational outcomes and financial performance.

Interdependent issues:

Most potential interdependent liabilities are already mitigated by either the Trust Executive Team or the Trust Board. The XXXXX central finance team under the direction of the Head of Finance will continue to ensure that there are appropriate financial controls.

One area that is beginning to cause difficulties is the ability to hold governor panels for exclusions.

Comparison to key benchmarking data

The two relevant KPIs set by the XXXXX board that relate to this theme are:

- Quality of governance is at least good in all Trust Governing Bodies
- All Trust Governing Bodies, including the Trust Board, will have 100% skills coverage (i.e. at least one governor scoring four or above on each of the National Governance Association audit questions).

At the moment, we are clearly not achieving either of these KPIs and therefore falling below the standard of expectations set by the Trust Board.

The Governance Handbook identifies three core functions of governance:

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

It goes on to say that effective governance is based on six key features:

- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

We believe that currently we are able to supplement the roles of governance through the deployment of Trust Executive Team challenge and support and through oversight of the overall Trust Board however there should be the additional layer of independent challenge operating at a point and in a manner that is closer to the actual operations of the Primary schools.

What is the mitigating action?

Action	Owner	Target Date	Progress	Completed Date
Continue with the Clerks and Governors Training programme to increase skills and knowledge.	**XXXXX**	**Ongoing**	**Ongoing**	**Ongoing**
Conduct a skills assessment to support training plans and provide assurance that achievement of all Trust Governing Bodies, including the Trust Board, will have 100% skills coverage.	**XXXXX**	**31/03/18**		

Conduct a review of roles and responsibilities and discuss this at the Trust Board meeting.	**XXXXX**	**XX/03/18**		
Group together some/all of the Primary schools under one governance board (this would address the issue at XXXXX) discuss this at the Trust Board meeting.	**XXXXX**	**XX/03/18**		

Annex D – Other aids you may find of use

Other aids you may find of use include:

- The [Academies Financial Handbook](#), which is updated annually, describes the financial requirements for academy trusts.

- For [multi-academy trusts: establishing and developing your trust](#) provides guidance and resources for academy trusts, including those establishing new trusts and existing trusts planning to grow.

- The [Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)](#) helps schools to manage their finances; it is mandatory for maintained schools but is seen as best practice for other schools.

- The [School resource management: top 10 planning checks for governors](#) provides information to help schools manage their resources and money more efficiently.

- [Educational benchmarking](#) and [financial benchmarking](#) to support benchmarking effectiveness and efficiency with similar schools.

- [School resource management](#) provides information, tools, training and guidance to help with schools' financial planning and resource management.

- [School workforce planning](#) guidance for schools and academy trusts reviewing staff workforce structures.

- [Reducing teacher workload: Data Management Review Group report](#) about eliminating unnecessary workload for teachers when managing data, including principles and recommendations.

- The [governance handbook and competency framework](#) provides guidance on the roles and duties of governing boards, and advice on the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be effective.

- The [academy and school governance professional development](#) programme provides training for school governors and clerks to governing boards.

- The [buying for schools](#) guidance on how to plan and run an efficient procurement process to buy goods, works or services for your school.

- The [good estate management for schools](#) provides information on the policies, processes and documents that schools, academies and multi-academy trusts should consider when managing their estates.

- The Charity Commission's publication ['The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do (CC3)'](#) sets out what is required of a charity trustee.

- The Ofsted [school inspection handbook](#) describes the main activities that are undertaken during inspections of schools.

Annex E – Terminology

Throughout the guide, references to:

• *the board* should be taken to mean the accountable body for the school or group of schools: in local authority (LA) maintained schools, this will be the governing body and in an academy trust this will be the board of trustees (committees to whom the board has delegated functions should take account of guidance to *the board*, in so far as the relevant function has been delegated to them);

• *the organisation* means the school or group of schools being governed;

• *executive leaders* should be taken to mean those held to account by the board for the performance of the organisation. This may be the CEO, executive headteacher, headteacher or principal, as well as other senior employees/staff, depending on the structure of the organisation;

• *academy trusts* should be taken to include free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs), studio schools and MATs;

• *trustees* means those that sit on the board of an academy trust (who in some trusts are known as directors);

• *maintained school governors* means those that sit on the governing body of a maintained school.

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