

# Skills audit for governors based on the DfE competency framework

This document is 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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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 | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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** |
| --- |
| **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 legislationFor academies, the Academies Trust Handbook (formerly the Academies Financial Handbook) and their own funding agreementsEqualities, and health and safety legislationData 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** |
| --- |
| **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 | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |