



Defence
Children
Services

Induction Pack

Thank you for stepping up and joining the School Governance Committee (SGC). An SGC is a board of committed members working together to provide collective oversight of Schools and Settings. You join a force of over a quarter of a million people who volunteer to govern in state schools, academies or independent schools across England. Defence Children Services (DCS) as an organisation is similar to, but not the same as, a local authority or a large multi-academy trust. DCS Schools share many similarities with state schools but there are important distinctions because we operate outside of England for the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

If you have been a governor or a trustee of a school in England you will notice there are differences compared to being a board member for DCS. Those differences bring both positives and negatives. For example, on the positive side, the portfolio of duties is significantly and substantially less (for example finance, recruitment and curriculum). However, on the flip side, board members have less delegated responsibility and less authority to enact change, or to hold individuals to account. Ultimately, SGCs do not hold the accountability, or ultimate decision making powers, as this follows the chain of command.

We rely on volunteers for secondary duties to make their local communities work even better together. Often it will be one of the more demanding additional duties. Success in this endeavour is dependent upon members being self-starting and active participants, giving time and energy to help the school or setting provide the best education for Service children. Loyalty and integrity are paramount to build trust and understanding. We all make a commitment to offer an excellent educational experience to every child in our care. The role can also be enormously rewarding too. Supporting the Schools and Settings brings a true sense of achievement to local communities. We know that most of our board members have never experienced school governance before.

The purpose of governance in UK education changes every few years. Once upon a time it centred around being a critical friend, holding strategic views and accountability. These then morphed into setting a vision, being accountable for school performance and providing financial integrity to ensure that resources were well spent. Now, an educational focus looks more at strategic leadership, accountability and assurance, as well as strategic engagement. We also must bear in mind that DCS is subordinated under Army and is not purely educational. Army governance encompasses the system by which an organisation is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account.

Throughout this induction pack some terms will be used interchangeably. Examples include 'governors' or 'learners'. The term learners can cover all of our Service children. In education, we tend to use 'children' for the early years, those aged five and under. The

term 'pupils' is commonly used for primary and secondary schools up to the age of sixteen. In post sixteen, or sixth forms, 'students' is a more common term. Similarly, the term 'those with responsibility for governance' can be used for the various boards, including the top-tier or Assurance Board. Learners may have 'additional needs' or 'special educational needs' or maybe described as 'disadvantaged' or 'vulnerable'. The main areas the SGC consider include:

1. Safeguarding - Monitor Safeguarding practice, ensuring compliance with the DCS directive and statutory responsibilities.

2. SEND - Ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need and seek promises that staff are adequately trained.

3. Standards - Monitor school performance – reviewing data, including exam results, attendance and achievement. Work with Schools and Settings to identify areas for improvement.

4. Stakeholders - Develop communication channels, consult stakeholders and work in partnership with the local community. Ensure stakeholder views such as learners and staff are accounted for.

General advice:

1. Take the role seriously, it really matters and makes a difference. Keep to the Code of Conduct at all times.
2. Listen attentively, even when things do not make sense instantly. You do learn very quickly but you are not expected to be a subject matter expert in education.
3. Ask questions, lots of them! Not just the suggested ones in handrails but the simplest questions are often the best place to start. For example, 'What is this telling me?' or 'Does this really make sense?' or 'What more do I need to know?'
4. Questions can help you begin to see if things stack up. Sense check with those around you, reflecting on what you have read and been told. Don't be afraid to say, 'So, I think I am hearing...I think that means that...how can we be confident...?'
5. Don't apologise for not knowing something. You may not have learned it yet.
6. Bear in mind Hitchen's Razor – 'that which can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence.'

Things to bear in mind:

1. Simple does not mean easy
2. Keep the main thing the main thing (Stephen R. Covey)
3. Good relationships that are based on trust
4. Doing the right thing to keep learners' best interests at heart
5. Having the right people around the table with a range of skills and backgrounds
6. Engage in courageous conversations and welcome curiosity
7. Know the school or setting and its context, journey or challenges
8. Ask the right questions for the right reasons
9. Avoid getting sucked into 'managing upwards' – follow the chain of command






































There is a bigger resource pack (PSB), with all the documents here and extras. Each of these documents are available as an single pdf document (usually a one pager) plus an audio file, for those who prefer that format. The library of resources evolves all the time and can be supplemented by requests from SGCs. Current library includes:

SGC Training Pack Complete

Army Safety and Environmental Management System Audit (ASEMSA)
Asking the right questions
Assurance
Attendance
Behaviour management
Careers
Chair role
Code of Conduct
Data
Defence Accident Investigation Branch (DAIB) Recommendations
Early Help (Safeguarding)
Early Years role
Education and Care Strategy
Effective Governance
External Inspection (3LoDA)
Governance and Performance Lead
Health and Safety
Holding to account
Induction
Keeping Children Safe in Education summary
Monitoring educational performance
New to governance
Paper ROSE (2LoDA)
Pupil mental health and well-being
Pupil Voice
Risk
ROSE Visit (2LoDA)
Safeguarding
Safeguarding role
Safeguarding sub-committee TORs
Safer working practices
School Improvement
Secretary role
Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)
SEND role
SGC Terms of Reference
Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)
Stakeholder engagement
Stakeholders sub-committee TORs
Standards sub-committee TORs
Supporting Service children
Watch words and buzz words
Well-being

The following advice and steps are laid out by the National Governance Association (NGA). The NGA is the most recognised and respected organisation for governors, local authorities or trustees overseeing state schools in England. The NGA is a web-based subscription service that provides valuable resources to shape stronger governance. This induction pack blends the best of the NGA guidance, with adaptations for the Ministry of Defence and Army approaches. However, a selection of NGA documents are available on request. Examples include:

NGA Resources

 20241001_dfe_understanding_data.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-careers_programme.pdf	✓
 20241001_gfs_well-being_governor-role.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-careers-link-role-description.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_asking_questions_about_behaviour.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-Chair-role.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_being_strategic.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-complaints-checklist-maintained.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_being_strategic.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-complaints-checklist-trusts.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_engaging_with_parents.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-effective-behaviour.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_governor_induction.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-governance-workload.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_guide_ofsted_october_2024.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-health-safety-checklist.pdf	✓
<input type="checkbox"/>  20241001_nga_guide_to_school_visits.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-managing-complaints.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_how_to_govern_efficiency.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-send-checklist.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_improving_attendance.pdf	✓	 20241001_nga-terms of reference-committee.pdf	✓
 20241001_nga_improving_staff_wellbeing.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_navigating_ofsted.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_pupil-mental-health_well-being.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_questions_educational_performance.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_questions_improving_attendance.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_risk_management.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_safeguarding.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_safeguarding-governor-role.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_SEND_guide.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_SEND-governor-role.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_SEND-monitoring-evaluation_tool.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_supporting-service_children.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_using_pupil_voice.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_what_governing_boards_should_expect.pdf	✓		
 20241001_nga_whole-school_equity.pdf	✓		

NGA Step one – an introductory visit or meeting. Explore an early invitation to visit the school or setting as an opportunity to:

1. Be welcomed by the Chair, Head Teacher or the Setting Manager
2. Have a guided tour, experience the culture, meet the staff and talk to learners
3. Complete any preliminary tasks such as appointment verification, photos for the staff board, or perhaps completing a biography
4. Discuss any support new members may need to participate fully. Talk about individual needs and circumstances. These could include caring responsibilities, attendance limitations, email details for attending meetings virtually, any disabilities or any prior experience

Step two – introduce other contacts. This could include:

1. Other board members, who may be parents or from the local command
2. The Governance and Performance Lead who can help with training, advice or support
3. A mentor board member who may be assigned to help answer questions or explain responsibilities
4. Members are never alone – there is always someone to help or to ask

Step three – provide essential information:

1. Terms of Reference, including roles and responsibilities
2. Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles
3. Current context, challenges and priorities

4. A high level summary of the performance of learners
5. How things work – such as calendar of meetings, terms of reference, access to previous minutes
6. Access to useful resources for example via the NGA Glossary, example questions, local handbooks produced by some schools, ground rules for meetings

Step 4 – informal discussion with the Chair for what to expect in meetings:

1. Observing protocols, records of visits or providing feedback
2. Discuss wider staff from the School Improvement Team who often attend meetings. These include:
 - the Assistant Head (ROW or Cyprus) – (line manages the Head Teacher)
 - School Improvement Adviser (line manages the TLA)
 - Early Years Adviser – (line manages the Setting Manager)
 - Teaching and Learning Adviser (TLA)

Composition

There are various boards with different functions. At the top is a single Assurance Board, chaired by a two-star General Officer Commanding and supported by Director IGDN(E), previously known as Director Overseas Bases. There are more local boards or committees, currently called SGCs, who work closely with their local school and or setting. A successful board will draw on a range of expertise to accomplish its aims. Therefore it is important to seek collaborative and consultative working. The Chair is nominated by the local Garrison Commander. However, in NATO-facing schools, this model does not exist. The National Military Representative (NMR) typically appoints the Chair. The Vice Chair is selected from the board and should be in a position to lead meetings if the Chair is absent. It is advantageous for the Vice Chair to be in a non-deployable position. Other members include a secretary (to record the minutes), *ex-officio* members (usually the Head Teacher and Setting Manager), staff, parents and community representatives (such as the Padre or Unit Welfare Officer).

Terms of Reference (TOR)

These set out the purpose, roles and responsibilities. They also include further details of what should be included in a termly report from Head Teachers or Setting Managers, standing items for agendas and responsibilities that do not fall to the board. These include payroll, performance management, human resources, leadership and professional development, assurance, contracts etc. The current TORs require updating to reflect changes e.g. Assurance Board, NATO-facing localities etc.

What exactly does Defence Children Services do?

DCS was created following the separation of the policy and delivery elements of the Directorate of Children and Young People in 2021. Head of DCS is Beverley Martin, a one star Senior Civil Servant who is also the head of profession. She also holds the responsibilities of the Chief Education Officer (as of 1-November 2024). Currently, Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS) oversee policy. DCS is the delivery organisation established to:

- Deliver education and care for Service and Entitled children for approximately 20 DCS Schools and Settings, either in Cyprus or the Rest of the World (ROW)
- Provide expert advice and guidance for Service and Entitled personnel regarding education and care in the United Kingdom and overseas
- Provide professional advice, intervention and challenge to support education and care in DCS Schools and Settings, and other commissioned locations

- Provide guidance, intervention and supervision to safeguard children
- Provide professional oversight of MOD contracts, licences and policies related to the delivery of education, care and Safeguarding of children

DCS is divided into three pillars and has two additional supporting teams. DCS is enabled and assured by the DCS Executive team and retains a focus on the future through the DCS Projects team.

Schools and Settings are responsible for the provision of high-quality education and care in MOD funded establishments on overseas bases. An Assistant Head (ROW) oversees Schools and Settings outside of Cyprus, except for Queen Victoria School, Scotland. This is overseen by an Assistant Head (Education-Standards-Professional Development). The Assistant Head (Cyprus) oversees establishments on island, including the secondary schools.

School Interface Services are responsible for the provision of a range of enabling services who act as the interface between DCS Schools and Settings, the Army and Strategic Command. They cover aspects such as infrastructure, health and safety, information management and pupil data, information technology, human resources, finance and asset management. It is also run by an Assistant Head.

Specialist Support Services are responsible for the provision of interventions to support and inform Service children's education, care, Safeguarding, health and well-being. They also evaluate overseas supportability for families with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The service includes overseeing elective home education for families posted overseas. It also provides advice and guidance for Service families in the UK. It is also run by an Assistant Head.

There are a variety of commissioners, sometimes described as the intelligent customer. They decide what the requirement for education and care is. They provide infrastructure and life support in location and manage the risk to the deployed force. General Officer Commanding (Regional Command) is directly responsible for Sennelager and Brunei. Commander Home Command oversees Queen Victoria School. Stratcom (Director IGDN(E)), Cyprus British Forces, Gibraltar and British Forces South Atlantic Islands. More recently, the NATO NMR commissions activity for the four schools in NATO-facing locations (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and Italy).

DCS provide commissioners with subject matter expertise (SME). This guidance covers education and care, standards and risk. They determine how education and care will be provided. They also assure the quality of education and care. They report to the two star Assurance Board twice a year.

In overseas bases or stations, heads of establishment are sometimes described as the user or the intelligent customer's representative. They provide life support, including support services, and appoint the Chair of the local board.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Keeping Children Safe in Education should be read annually and understood by all with responsibility for governance, paying particular regard to Part 2, which sets out the management of Safeguarding.

Part 2: the management of Safeguarding

This part is for Head Teachers or Setting Managers, Safeguarding teams, designated Safeguarding leads or their deputies and those with responsibility for governance. Boards have strategic leadership responsibility for the Safeguarding arrangements.

The board must:

- Make sure it complies with its duties under legislation
- Make sure the directives, procedures and training are effective, comply with legislation and are in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

They should also:

- Appoint a board member responsible for Safeguarding arrangements (sometimes called a nominated governor or Safeguarding link)
- Receive appropriate Safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which is regularly updated, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge. This is so they can be confident that Safeguarding documents and procedures are effective, and support establishments to deliver a robust approach to Safeguarding
- Be aware of their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) or their Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP)
- Support a whole-school or setting approach to Safeguarding – making sure that Safeguarding and child protection are 'at the forefront' and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. It is not enough to say that 'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' and not demonstrate it

Make sure your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Is from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Takes the lead responsibility for Safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place. This should be explicitly set out in their job description
- Has the appropriate status and authority, and additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out their role effectively
- Has the authority to check and challenge the impact of training
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately trained to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse and what exactly they should do. This includes identifying low-level concerns about adults working in schools or settings
- Ensures children are taught about Safeguarding, including online safety and, where necessary, that teaching is adapted for those with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including victims of abuse and some pupils with SEND
- Ensures any systems, processes and directives operate with the learners' best interests at heart

Asking the right questions

There exist, and have done for many years, banks of questions to assist those with responsibility for governance to know its schools or settings well. They were intended to support monitoring and evaluation procedures and begin to hold people to account. Such lists are not exhaustive or a checklist for coverage. Neither are they intended to be handed over to a Head Teacher or Setting Manager to provide an answer, either verbally or in writing. It is not a test for leaders but a tool to help board members.

Visits

These should be strategic, rather than operational. In practice, this means:

1. Strategic priorities – for example, linked to the Education and Care Strategy
2. Evaluation of progress (are the things leaders say are happening, actually are happening and is there any impact?)

3. Seeking confidence that the needs of all pupils are being met – for example, transitions for new arrivals, Safeguarding needs or educational needs for vulnerable learners

Helpful hints on how to conduct yourself as a visitor

School and setting leaders have responsibility for, and ownership of, official monitoring. All monitoring that takes place is in accordance with policy regarding the focus, feedback and any necessary support for individual staff. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher or Setting Manager to share the overall results of internal and external monitoring via the termly report. This feedback will not contain information about individuals. All board members are welcome to observe teaching and learning in order to further develop their individual role. It is not to make judgements of learning and teaching or of individuals. All such visits will be facilitated by leaders, through learning walks or meetings.

- Dress smartly and comfortably - no jeans, strappy tops, skirts or dresses should be knee length
- Agree the focus when you request a visit. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager will then make necessary arrangements with staff and keep in contact with members
- Keep your commitment and be on time. Let the school or setting know in advance if you are unable to attend unexpectedly. Remember to sign in upon arrival
- When in the classroom – smile and look interested! Avoid interrupting the lesson or teaching. If you would like to speak to a child, perhaps wait until they are working independently. Leave the teacher to focus upon the children's learning and needs – if you have any questions for the teacher, please ask them when the lesson has ended
- Be open minded. All establishments and all learners are different. There are many different teaching styles, and they are used in different ways, according to the needs of the children
- Wait until after your visit to write up your record or notes. Writing notes in class can be daunting for any adults in the room, and will make them feel that they are being judged
- If you have a question or query regarding what you have seen, ask the leader or whoever is accompanying you, for further explanation or clarification
- Use the visit as an opportunity to highlight and share the positives that you see.
- Thank the teacher you are visiting and the accompanying member of SLT or wider teaching team
- When visiting the school, your observations are confidential. Any concerns regarding a pupil or member of staff should always be raised with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager immediately. This is an important part of your role, in order to maintain the trust and integrity of the board

Planning and preparation

Boards should consider a schedule of visits each academic year. When making plans, boards should consider:

1. Milestones (things that the board expects to have happened) outlined in school development or improvement plan (sometimes called the SDP or SIP)
2. How the visits schedule fits with board meetings
3. Avoiding visits clashing with important events e.g. sports day or trips
4. The board's capacity to fulfil the schedule – is it manageable and realistic?

Assurance

Assurance is the mechanism by which the Army satisfies itself, that the processes in place enable the delivery of objectives and support managing risk. It is about providing confidence that it is operating effective internal control. Army assurance is defined as an evaluated opinion on:

1. Governance
2. Risk management
3. Internal control
4. Resources

These are based on evidence gained from reviews, processes and audit activities.

Lines of Defence Assurance (LoDA)

The dynamic that drives the assurance model is that the level of independence increases as activity moves along the LoDA, from first to third. It also moves further from management of actions and control. Each level of assurance provides evidence of the overall assurance assessment.

First LoDA

School or setting leaders are responsible for delivering specific processes or objectives. They provide assurance that performance is monitored, risks are addressed, and core objectives are being achieved. This type of assurance comes from those who know the business and the day-to-day challenges. Principle first LoDAs in DCS include the Head Teacher or Setting Manager. An example process is the self-evaluation form (SEF).

Second LoDA

Principle second LoDAs in DCS are the chain of command of first LoDAs. They are responsible for conducting, monitoring or directing assurance of their subordinate areas. This includes School Improvement Advisors, Early Years Advisors, Assistant Heads etc or members of the Headquarters Executive team. Secondary second LoDAs include the Assistant Heads of Service who provide chain of command for the first LoDA. Example processes include the termly Core Visit Programme (CVP).

Third LoDA

This includes external processes such as Ofsted inspections, as set out in JSP 815 Assurance. Currently there is a pause in 3LoDA, Ofsted has not inspected any Schools or Settings since before the pandemic.

Code of Conduct

You may discuss the Code of Conduct in your first board meeting, or it be included in your induction. You may also be asked to sign a copy to say you agree to follow it. The board contributes to the setting-up and review of the operational framework, focusing on raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning. As a member of the board, you agree to:

1. Fulfil roles and responsibilities assigned by the Chair
2. Accept that the role is strategic and so will focus on core functions rather than involve themselves in day-to-day management
3. Develop, share and live the aims, ethos and values
4. Adhere to directives, practices and procedures as set out by the MOD and DCS
5. Work collectively and collaboratively for the benefit of all learners

6. Be candid but constructive and respectful when holding leaders to account
7. Strive to uphold the reputation in the community and in private communications, including on social media or online
8. Not discriminate against anyone and work to advance equality of opportunity

To demonstrate our commitment to the role, members will:

1. Involve themselves actively in the work of the board and accept a fair share of responsibilities, serving on sub-committees if required or as a link, for example SEND, Early Years or Safeguarding
2. Make every effort to attend all meetings or explain in advance why not
3. Arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution. It includes asking questions, listening attentively and observing protocols
4. Get to know the school or setting and become involved in activities where practicable
5. Visit the school or setting and when doing so will arrange this with the relevant staff in advance

To build and maintain relationships, board members will:

1. Develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents, headquarters DCS and other relevant stakeholders from the local community or command
2. Express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings
3. Work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally

To respect confidentiality, board members will:

1. Maintain confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential, or where they concern individuals
2. Ensure all confidential papers and electronic documents are held and disposed of appropriately
3. Maintain confidentiality even after leaving the role

To declare conflicts of interest and be transparent, board members will:

1. Declare any business, personal or other interest that they may have in connection with the board business
2. Declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion
4. Act in the best interests of the school or setting as a whole, and not as a delegate of any group or individual, including for their own children
5. Accept that in the interests of open governance that names, dates of appointment, terms of office, roles on the committee, category of board member and photos may be published on the website or staff noticeboards

Nolan Principles of public service:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness

6. Honesty
7. Leadership

Members of the board fully accept that the Chair may cease their role if the Code of Conduct or Nolan Principles are not upheld consistently.

Data

Those with responsibility for governance have access to a range of data to help them evaluate educational performance. This includes:

1. Internal data that tracks the attainment, progress, attendance or behaviour. This may be for individuals or different groups, such as learners with SEND or who may be EAL
2. Analysis of School Performance data provided by the Department for Education, which provides headline and comparative performance measures. The data can be filtered to show the performance of different groups of learners in the school and be compared to national averages over time. However, this is usually done annually in November, when the summer published outcomes are validated
3. Data analysis provided by software such as Bromcom or Nexus. Bromcom is used by schools to capture internal data and is analysed by headquarters DCS staff. Nexus is a web-based portal to support Local Authorities with responsibility for many schools, in their quality assurance role. DCS use this tool for educational oversight

When looking at data, those with responsibility for governance should consider where that data is coming from, what it's based on and consider both progress and attainment. Given the transient nature of our learners, progress is arguably the most important determiner. Wherever the data comes from, it should be as complete and up-to-date as possible. It should be presented in a simple format that non-subject matter experts understand and contains the right level of detail. This means thorough enough to tell what it needs to know, but not so in depth to make it difficult to interpret. Data should help readers answer simple questions about how well learners are performing.

External data

Those with responsibility for governance need information about how different Schools and Settings perform to ensure that DCS as a whole is successful, or not. This does not mean that all Schools and Settings will achieve the same Key Stage or GCSE results. This is because cohort quality and quantities vary year-on-year. Indeed, it is the quality of the teaching that is arguably the biggest determiner of success. Those with responsibility for governance should receive reports about the quality of teaching and be able to see evidence of improvement or sustained high-quality. Those with responsibility for governance particularly need to be aware of the following indicators:

1. In Early Years (children aged 4 or 5), the proportion achieving a good level of development
2. In Year 1 (age 6), Phonics Screening Check or the retake success rate for Year 2 (age 7) pupils who did not pass the first time around
3. Key Stage 1 (age 7) data in primary schools. This will appear in DfE data (ASP) but is not externally published
4. Key Stage 2 (Year 6 or age 11), Key Stage 4 (Year 11 or age 16) or Key Stage 5 (Year 13 or age 18) data for progress and attainment
5. There will also be attendance and absence rates. We know that poor pupil attendance will almost certainly have a negative effect on performance. Those with responsibility for governance should seek to hear leaders' reasons and ask what

strategies are in place to improve attendance. Ultimately, are leaders doing all that they reasonably can?

Internal data

Internal data is comprised of assessments generated by teachers on how pupils are progressing or learning the curriculum. This is just as important as the external data, which is historical by the time it appears. Once the exam results are published, it's too late to change the outcome as learners may have already left the school. Those with responsibility for governance need to be clear with the Chief Education Officer (this is currently Hd DCS from 1-November 2024) at the outset, what internal data information it requires to carry out its oversight function. The level of detail may vary depending on the size of schools and what local arrangements or capacity exists. Given that attainment and achievement data is so key to the performance of both individual schools and the organisation itself, this is an area where it is easy for duplication to creep in. Reducing staff burdens is a key focus for the UK government, and data collection and reporting is a main area of concern for staff workload and well-being. There is a balancing act for those with responsibility for governance and the Chief Education Officer. They both must ensure they provide or receive the right level of data to fulfil their duties, without overloading teaching and support staff. Those with responsibility for governance could ask the following questions:

1. Am I clear on the purpose of the data being collected?
2. How will it help improve our decision making?
3. Are learners doing well or not? Are things improving or declining?
4. Are we confident that the data is accurate?
5. Are predictions about how 'on-track' learners are accurate?
6. Are leaders accurate - do they over-estimate or under-estimate outcomes?
7. What impact on staff workload or well-being does data collection have?

Whatever system is adopted, it needs to be capable of producing useful comparison information for all levels. When looking at data, a classroom or a subject teacher has different needs to the Head Teacher or Setting Manager, who in turn has different needs to the Chief Education Officer. Typically, schools use Bromcom to collect data four times in the year. Typically in the first two weeks in September for on-entry or 'baseline data', then in December, in March and then June for end-of term judgements. This serves to check how 'on-track' pupils are to meet particular standards for core subjects such as reading, writing or mathematics.

Progress vs Attainment

There are lots of words that are often used interchangeably regarding performance. These include **outcomes, standards, achievement, progress and attainment**. However, they do not mean exactly the same thing. The education landscape has undergone significant transformation over the years, striving to provide pupils with the best possible learning experience. Progress and attainment are two crucial aspects that define the effectiveness of this system. Progress refers to the continuous improvement of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding throughout their educational journey. Attainment is the actual level of achievement, and their outcomes pupils achieve at various stages of their education. This is captured via exams and testing and the awarding of grades and scoring through GCSE's or A-levels etc. The foundation of progress and attainment in the education system, lies in the carefully crafted curriculum offered by Schools and Settings.

Ofsted, for example use a different approach to determine progress. In essence, they seek to find if learners know more, remember more and are able to do more? This is a simple

and useful question to bear in mind. This is because a well-designed and sequenced curriculum is the progress model itself. If pupils' are successfully learning the curriculum, step-by step, they are by definition making progress. This is especially true for foundation subjects such as history or geography, where expected standards per year group do not exist. Making statements about x percentage of learners achieving the expected standard in geography is disingenuous and misleading. Over time, certain words change their meaning or importance. Up until 2016, it was usual to hear the phrase 'x percentage of pupils are making expected progress in this subject'. This has now been debunked from multiple sources and has discontinued. To help measure performance, schools can use:

- National Foundation for Education Research tests (Primary only)
- Phonics Screening Check tests (Primary only)
- Work in exercise books (book looks or work scrutiny)
- Practice tests and past papers - including online versions, such as Testbase
- End of Key Stage test papers
- Termly or end-of-unit internal summative data
- Tests linked to purchased schemes of work
- Pupil voice to see what they know, remember or can explain to their peers
- Pupil Progress Meetings to consider individuals or groups, including updating individual support plans or provision maps for learners with SEND
- Monitoring information from learning walks or subject scrutinies

Those with responsibility for governance can access Ofsted's Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) via the DfE portal, where Analysing School Performance can be found. The Head Teacher can access this, or the Governance and Performance Lead can find it for you. Read the guidance from Ofsted on how to use the IDSR. To analyse your IDSR:

- Use the data to identify variations between cohorts, and spot emerging trends that may need to be considered when planning the curriculum – for example, if there's an increasing number of children with SEND entering the school
- Look for the outliers (where you're significantly above or below the national average), and ask questions about why this is, and what's being done about it

Effective Governance

Boards demonstrate effective practise through:

Vision and strategy

- Collaborative working with leaders and stakeholders to develop a clear and ambitious vision
- A strategy document that sets out how the vision will be achieved
- Evaluating data that helps to monitor agreed strategy outcomes

Quality of Education

- Monitoring the impact of what pupils are taught, including the impact to the curriculum on all pupils, particularly those with SEND
- Checking the school's performance or what is to be learned
- Asking questions about standards or how well something should be done
- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems – for example, Phonics Screening or Key Stage 2 tests; as well as the school's own system of non-statutory assessments, for example internal tests

Stakeholder engagement

- Engaging with staff, parents, pupils and the wider community
- Using stakeholder insights to support triangulation of information
- Monitoring staff workload and well-being
- Ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to engage with all parents and the community

Responsibilities

- Building board awareness of legal and compliance responsibilities through induction, attending meetings, carrying out board-business
- Ensuring the school is compliant with all aspects of discrimination law

Self-evaluation process (optional)

- An induction programme that helps new board members to understand their role and responsibilities, and how they differ from governance in UK state schools
- Regular governance self-evaluation and engagement with reviews help improve the quality and impact of governance
- Conducting a skills audit and addressing any gaps where practicable

Safeguarding

- Ensuring that Safeguarding directives, practices and procedures are effective
- There is an embedded Safeguarding culture that complies with the law
- Ensuring that learners know how to keep themselves safe, including when online
- Engaging in induction training, update exercises and remaining vigilant
- Monitoring the types of Safeguarding incidents to see if there are patterns or trends

Safeguarding is an overarching term that covers all matters relating to pupil safety and welfare. It encompasses child protection arrangements and anti-bullying policies. Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance from the Department for Education that Schools and Settings must follow when carrying out their duties. It prioritises promoting and Safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. Those with responsibility for governance fulfil their Safeguarding duties by providing strategic leadership. This supports an overarching culture of Safeguarding and checking that the culture is embedded. The duty for those with responsibility for governance must comply with is threefold:

1. Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people
2. Follow statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, wherever practicable in MOD establishments overseas, whilst complying with local laws etc
3. Ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors

The roles and responsibilities for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), Safeguarding teams and SLTs, have become more demanding and complex in recent years. This is because of shifting landscapes, advances in technology and evolving Safeguarding risks. This has resulted in more guidance for schools. There exist more categories of harm, resulting in more children and young people being identified as being at risk and/or requiring specialist support. The growing prominence of online harm has exacerbated longstanding risks, such as child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and increasing levels of mental-ill health concerns.

Prevent Duty

The official definition is the legal obligation to our children and young people from being drawn into terrorism or radicalisation. This includes actively promoting fundamental British

values of democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance towards those with different beliefs. Board's must ensure that DSLs are familiar with the Prevent Duty guidance and that all staff complete Prevent training on a regular basis.

Specifics:

1. Are expected to provide strategic challenge to senior leadership and be confident that the policies, procedures and practices in place are effective in the delivery of a robust approach to Safeguarding
2. A member of the board must be appointed as the Safeguarding link or nominated governor
3. The board will facilitate a whole-school approach to Safeguarding, ensuring that safety and welfare underpin the ethos, values and culture. All members of the board will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety and attend Safeguarding training and relevant updates. They will pay particular attention to Part 2
4. The Chair or Safeguarding link, will work with the DSL, Head Teacher or Setting Manager to undertake an annual self-assessment to ensure that all arrangements and functions are carried out in line with s175 of the Education Act 2002
5. Where an Early Years Setting is linked to the school, the oversight and responsibility of the board for Safeguarding matters may extend to the Setting as well

Those with responsibility for governance need to protect pupils from the risk of any types of radicalisation, as part of wider Safeguarding duties. This is in addition to promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners. To do this, boards should:

- Promote the fundamental British Values in your curriculum
- Make sure school is a safe space for pupils to discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and extremism
- Ensure robust Safeguarding procedures to identify children at risk
- Engage with any risk assessments to determine the potential risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism in the local area
- Make sure measures are in place to protect pupils from harmful online content, including setting up appropriate filtering and monitoring systems
- Make sure staff receive training to help them identify pupils at risk, challenge extremist ideas, and know how to act in overseas locations if they have a concern
- As a minimum, your designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) should have Prevent awareness training. But it's best practice for all staff to be trained in the Prevent duty as part of their Safeguarding training and annual updates

Safer working practices

All adults who come into contact with children in their work, have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. References made to staff and adults refer to all those who work or have responsibility, in either a paid or unpaid capacity. To be clear, this would include DCS staff, headquarters staff, sports coaches or supply teachers, parent volunteers and various board members. Although, this summary is based on the update practice, it is not statutory guidance from the Department for Education. However, as an employer, the organisation has decided to use it as the basis for their Code of Conduct and staff behaviour guidelines. The principles and guidance should be followed by all those whose work brings them into contact with children, both officially (on-site, during term-time) as well as off-site. This is because of the unique circumstances where members of the board may live or work. It is likely to be in such close proximity to children and staff on camp or bases.

If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable schools to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour (including comments in person or online) and minimise any risk of abuse. A culture of vigilance will help ensure that adults working on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, in accordance with the ethos and values of the school and DCS.

It is recognised that the vast majority of adults behave impeccably, securing the well-being and best outcomes for learners. However, achieving those aims are not always straightforward, as much relies on relationships and interactions where misunderstanding or tension can occur. This summary, and the updated guidance, seeks to reduce the risk of these. The underlying principles also cover staff consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of any substance - including medication, as it may affect their ability to care for children. Given the close proximity, complex friendship groups and essential social occasions, adults should be mindful of their behaviour and that of others.

The Safeguarding culture of the school is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and children. Indeed, the behaviour and choices by the adult that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. Legislation also imposes a duty on employees to care for themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions, inactions or failings. This includes those with responsibility for governance. Safe practice can be demonstrated through the use and implementation of these guidelines. This includes having clear processes in place to raise concerns and ensure that any adult is not placed in a situation which render them particularly vulnerable. All adults should be aware of the expectations, responsibilities and systems to protect everyone. Members of the board have a duty to protect children, themselves and the community they serve. Therefore, if a member becomes aware of impropriety, concerns of a Safeguarding nature or information that could bring an individual or the school into disrepute, they should act quickly. This means contacting the Chair, in the first instance, as well as the Head Teacher or Setting Manager. If the concern is about the Head Teacher or Setting Manager, as the most senior member of staff, they should contact the district AH. Regardless of how intelligence is gathered - for example overheard conversations in a neighbour's home or by direct disclosure, they must pass on the information verbally and follow up by email to create an audit trail.

Managing your relationship with other parents can become tricky once you join a board. You are not their personal spoke person and do not have special access. This includes special privilege that could benefit your own child. If a parent has a concern, then the duty is to encourage them to follow the procedures, either via the class teacher, Head Teacher or Setting Manager. You cannot and must not circumvent this, or offer to do so, even if it sounds important or urgent. Please refrain from discussing the school or setting in a negative way either in person or online. If members have any concerns, they should follow the appropriate channels to raise concerns. Members are advocates and should seek to positively promote the school or setting in the community.

Watch words and buzz words?

Several 'buzz words' exist that are used interchangeably. Sometimes they may not be fully understood. These include:

1. **Culture.** The way things are done or the customs of the organisation
2. **Ethos.** Guiding attitudes and aspirations that characterise the organisation
3. **Identity.** Unique qualities that the organisation is recognised for
4. **Mission.** Declaration of core purpose
5. **Strategy.** Priorities needed to achieve the vision

6. **Values.** Principles that guide actions and behaviours

7. **Vision.** What the organisation wants to achieve

Those with responsibility for governance need to know the difference. They should endeavour to use them appropriately, responsibly and consistently. The DCS vision is set out on the new website that covers every School and Setting. From the DCS website:

Educate the Child, Support the Family, Defend the Nation

Our Mission

- To provide **guidance, intervention and supervision to safeguard children** in DCS Schools and Settings, and other commissioned locations.
- To deliver **education and care for Service and Entitled children** in DCS Schools and Settings.
- To provide **expert advice and guidance for Service and Entitled personnel** regarding education and care in the United Kingdom and overseas.
- To provide **professional advice, intervention and challenge to support education and care** in DCS Schools and Settings, and other commissioned locations.
- To provide **professional oversight of MOD contracts, licences and policies** related to the delivery of education, care and safeguarding of our children in DCS Schools and Settings and other commissioned locations.

Our Vision

Demonstrating best practice for the education and care of children of military personnel.

Our Values

The values of DCS directly align with the core civil service values which we all strive to meet.

- **Integrity:** putting the obligations of public service above personal interests.
- **Honesty:** being truthful and open.
- **Impartiality:** acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions.
- **Objectivity:** basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence.

Schools and Settings currently have their own vision and values, that support and complement the organisation's over-arching approach.

Watch words

Those with responsibility for governance should be vigilant about key functions and remember to stay in their lane. This could include holding school leaders to account through monitoring activities. Their job is to work closely with leaders to **ensure** something happens, or not. This is different to the word '**assure**'. Assurance is provided in other ways e.g. Core Visit Programme, ROSE Visits etc.

Board members must keep their thinking strategic and not operational; that is the responsibility of school and setting leaders. The job in a nutshell is to hold leaders to account by asking questions, listening carefully and considering if it stacks up or not. Board member opinion matters, and it should be recorded in the minutes. However, please remember that **empowerment** and **power** differ deliberately. The accountability lays elsewhere. Whilst this means board members do not 'go to jail' if things go wrong, the authority to enact change, provide resources etc also lays elsewhere. This can cause undeniable tension. This is because the organisation is currently funded by the Army, yet the requirement for education and care is set by the commissioner. Defence Children Services is only a delivery unit, not a budget holder. Be vigilant about 'continental drift' when it comes to documents, policies, practices and accepted norms. Over time, these can diverge from current practice or expectation e.g. Safeguarding expectations

Holding to account

Firstly, it cuts both ways. Secondly, this is not always rooted in authority, power or liability. Finally, it is based on respect. It means to make someone accept responsibility for their actions, inactions or decisions and explain them satisfactorily. It is usually wise to be clear in how you are going to play your parts so that there are no surprises or blind-siding. Empty threats about telling the line manager or simply stepping down rarely serve the greater good i.e. children's education. Some examples of holding to account, which can apply within a school or setting as well as for Governors:

- Help them understand their goals (what they want to achieve and why)
- Support their capabilities (tools and space to ask for what they need)
- Measure their results (acknowledge when meaningful things are achieved and offer advice or feedback if they do not; similarly, ask why not – it helps understanding and empathy and is not intended as confrontational)
- Discuss how to succeed (be clear on what success looks like, what the indicators are and what the impact should be)
- High expectations of the goals or tasks (ensure they know what you expect of them to meet their goals and act if required*)
- Conflation caution (do not be seduced by checklists of actions e.g. staff meetings held, training attended etc. Inputs are clearly not outputs)
- Reflect and take some time (ambition is important, but unrealistic expectations or workload help no one). Sometimes, incremental improvement that is sustainable is more desirable. For example, value for money is the effect not the cost.

Many School Governance Committees can only meet three times a year due e.g. capacity, recruitment challenges, high turnover etc. Therefore, time is precious, every moment counts. Sometimes, important work can be completed and checked in the down beat such as monthly or fortnightly meetings with school or setting leaders. Remember, the minutes or ROADS are summative and not always formative. It is never a bad idea at the end of any meeting for the Chair to summarise what has been done or learned, what decisions were discussed and the next steps moving forward. This helps to focus the mind of attendees to check and challenge at the next event. Triangulation is not about a lack of trust in an individual's perception. It can, if framed properly, confirm a position using other sources of evidence to build a stronger perspective that builds confidence.

Review of School Effectiveness (ROSE Visit) explanation

Ofsted has not inspected Ministry of Defence (MOD) Schools or Settings since long before the pandemic. Indeed, some establishments have not been visited for up to ten years. However, frequent quality assurance work has continued from regional school improvement teams. To supplement this, a ROSE Review Team visits schools to check on the quality of education and care.

As you may know, Ofsted continues to evolve and make changes to its own practice. For example, it removed the overall effectiveness grade from September 2024. The ROSE Visit is not an inspection. It is not seeking to replicate what Ofsted would do or how they would complete their processes. Instead, it is a robust two-day audit process completed by a large team of professionals from outside and inside the school.

At the end of the two-day visit, judgements are either agreed as 'effective' or 'working towards being effective'. The process considers the following main headings:

- Quality of leadership at all levels
- Quality of provision and outcomes
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Overall

Each element has a series of descriptors that consider many factors, including mobility and transition. The team collects, connects and considers evidence gathered against these descriptors. If the three elements are judged as effective, then overall the school is judged to be effective. If any elements do not meet the high standard, its overall outcome cannot be effective. A school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are taught well and consistently meet the clear aims of the curriculum and the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The process also considers:

- what it is like to attend this school
- the extent to which standards are being met and that learners are safe
- if all learners, including those with additional needs get a good deal too
- if learners are achieving as much as they can and are ready for the next stage
- the quality of pupil care, such as well-being and personal development,
- quality of provision and outcomes for learners
- the fulfilment of aims and the distinctiveness of each school, including its unique offer in the location

The audit process is carried out impartially by trained professionals with sufficient expertise and experience. The assurance process provides helpful information to schools and accurate evidence-based judgements to those who hold them to account. In the absence of an external inspectorate such as Ofsted, it provides an enhanced second level of defence assurance (2LoDA) to the two-star assurance board.

If any of the elements did not meet the high threshold to be effective, additional support and challenge would be triggered from within the locality or regional school improvement teams (SIT).