

# The Governor Accreditation Programme

A competency framework for school governors

Explanatory Booklet – September 2015



## Governor Accreditation Programme (GAP)

*“A fresh and innovative approach to governor induction and development. GAP introduces the concept of accreditation, professional development and a robust set of competencies that all governors in academies and maintained schools should aspire to if they are to fulfil the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century governor.”*

- GAP is a holistic programme that systematically develops and validates the competencies that are expected of school governors. School leaders and chairs of governors can be confident that new colleagues who undertake the GAP programme will become confident rounded governors with the skills and knowledge to discharge their roles well.
- GAP defines 20 competencies that are applicable to all school governance. They are organised into three groups each aligned with one of the core strategic functions of governance (*Governors’ Handbook, Department for Education January 2015*). Collectively, they cover Ofsted’s expectations of governing bodies from September 2015 (*School inspection Handbook, Ofsted, June 2015*).
- The first set of competencies are about “ensuring the vision, ethos and strategic direction”. They recognise that the governing body is the key strategic decision-making body of the school and it is their role to set the school’s strategic framework and ensure that all statutory duties are met.
- The second core function encompasses “holding the headteacher to account” and the competencies here focus on teaching, learning and outcomes.
- The governing bodies of schools are entrusted with the expenditure of large sums of public money and this is incorporated in the third core strategic function of “overseeing financial performance”. Competencies here are about the effective management of the considerable resources allocated to governing bodies.

## The 20 GAP Competencies

### Ensuring vision, ethos and strategic direction

1. I understand our school's vision and context together with its ambition for all learners
2. I engage with the school's major stakeholders
3. I understand my role as a governor and the statutory duties of governing bodies
4. I understand the legal structure of the school and the organisation of the governing body
5. I understand the accountability structures internal and external to the school
6. I know how the school's keeps children safe at all times
7. I understand the school develops the motivation and well-being of all members of the school community
8. I understand how the school celebrates diversity and promotes equality and British values

### Holding the headteacher to account

9. I know how well our pupils achieve compared to schools nationally
10. I understand how high quality teaching and assessment contribute to excellent achievement by learners
11. I understand how a broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of all learners
12. I understand how school self-evaluation and strategic planning processes lead to higher standards
13. I can use data to track the progress of different groups of children
14. I understand how the school promotes behaviours which support effective learning, development and well-being
15. I can exemplify how governors have challenged and supported school leaders to drive improvement

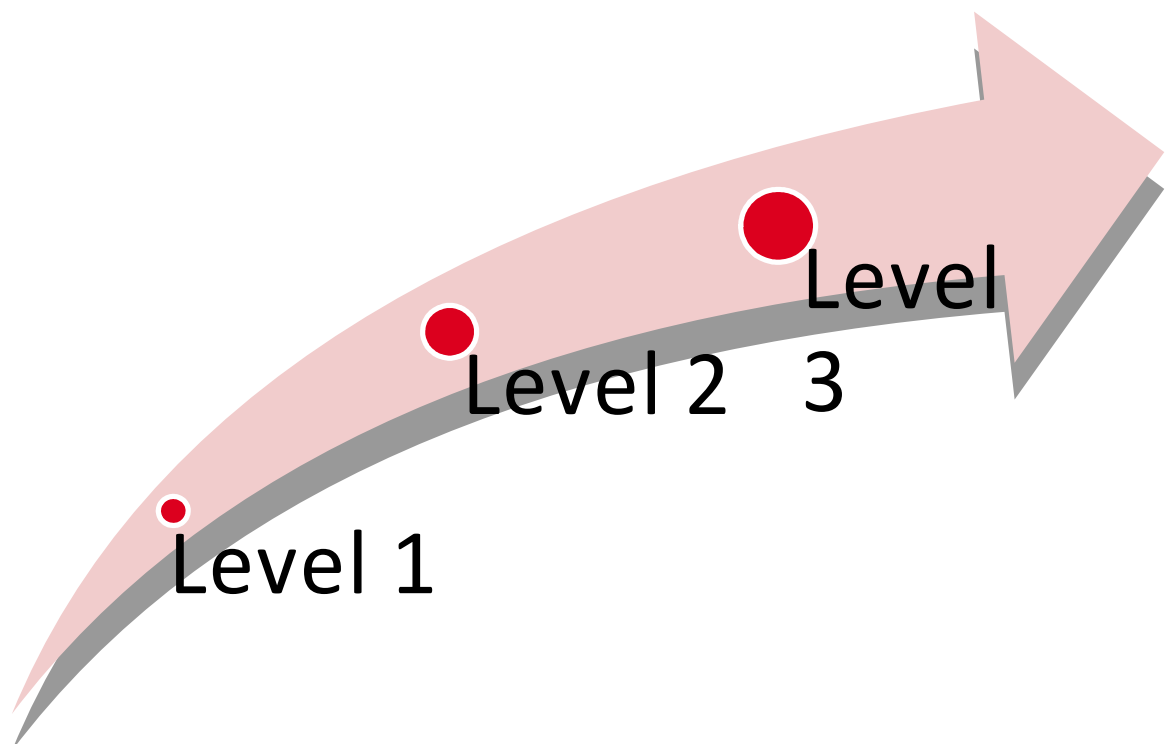
### Overseeing financial performance

16. I understand the impact of the Pupil Premium and other dedicated grants on outcomes for learners
17. I understand remuneration and performance related pay in my school
18. I know how the school is spending its money and ensures probity
19. I understand how the school recruits and develops high quality professional staff
20. I reflect on my performance to improve my effectiveness as a governor

## The 3 levels of GAP

Each GAP competency is defined at three progressively more advanced levels as follows;

- Level 1 addresses the core concepts and competencies of governance. It provides the core understanding expected of all governors about learning in their school and the governance process itself.
- Level 2 builds on the knowledge gained at Level 1 by applying the key skills of school governance at the standard expected of an effective governor who can effectively hold school leaders to account for learner achievement, keeping children safe and responsibly using the resources provided to the school.
- Level 3 is designed for those who will be leading governance processes by considering the systems that effective governing bodies need to put in place to have positive impacts on learners. Typically, those participating at this level will already be senior governors, possibly chairing committees, aspiring to chair governing bodies or chairs seeking to develop their leadership.
- Governors can proceed through the levels at their own pace. Each level has an assessment booklet that governors complete to demonstrate their knowledge and impact. Completed reviews can be submitted for certification and feedback. In the event that there is insufficient evidence to meet the standard then development suggestions will be made and the assessment can be updated and resubmitted.



# Training and Completion of Self-Assessments

There are accompanying training courses that cover material for each of the three levels. This can be delivered to whole governing bodies but can also be undertaken by governors individually. In both cases governors will also need to draw upon their work and make enquiries within their schools. These enquiries are exactly the type of questions that pro-active governors will be naturally asking in the course of their work.

## Level 1

Level 1 examines the role of the 21st century governor through the 20 key competencies set out in GAP. There are three 2 hour training modules.

- **Module 1** 'Good Governance - Knowing my School'
- **Module 2** 'School Data – What it all Means'
- **Module 3** 'Managing the Budget – Value for Money'

## Level 2

This involves two further training modules, each lasting two hours, and experience of a full year of governing a school to evidence the skills and experience needed to be an effective accredited governor.

- **Module 4** 'School Improvement – How Governors Contribute'
- **Module 5** 'RAISEing the Bar – Bringing Data to Life'

## Level 3

This provides a platform for those wanting to undertake the National College of Teaching and Leadership's Development Programme for Chairs and Aspiring Chairs.

- **Module 6** 'Accountability – The Value of Positive Challenge'
- **Module 7** 'Managing Relationships – We are in this together'
- **Module 8** 'Inspection Ready – Waiting for the Phone Call'



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