

Inspection and governance



Purpose of this slidepack

- This slidepack comes from a series of webinars for schools in 2022.
- We want you to take information about Ofsted directly from us rather than relying on third-party and often expensive sources.
- This slidepack is about inspection and governance in maintained schools and academies.

Outline of the session

- Understanding governance
- What is effective governance?
- Meeting governors on inspection
- How does governance inform our judgements?
- How do inspectors provide feedback on governance?

Understanding governance



How we find out governance arrangements in different types of school

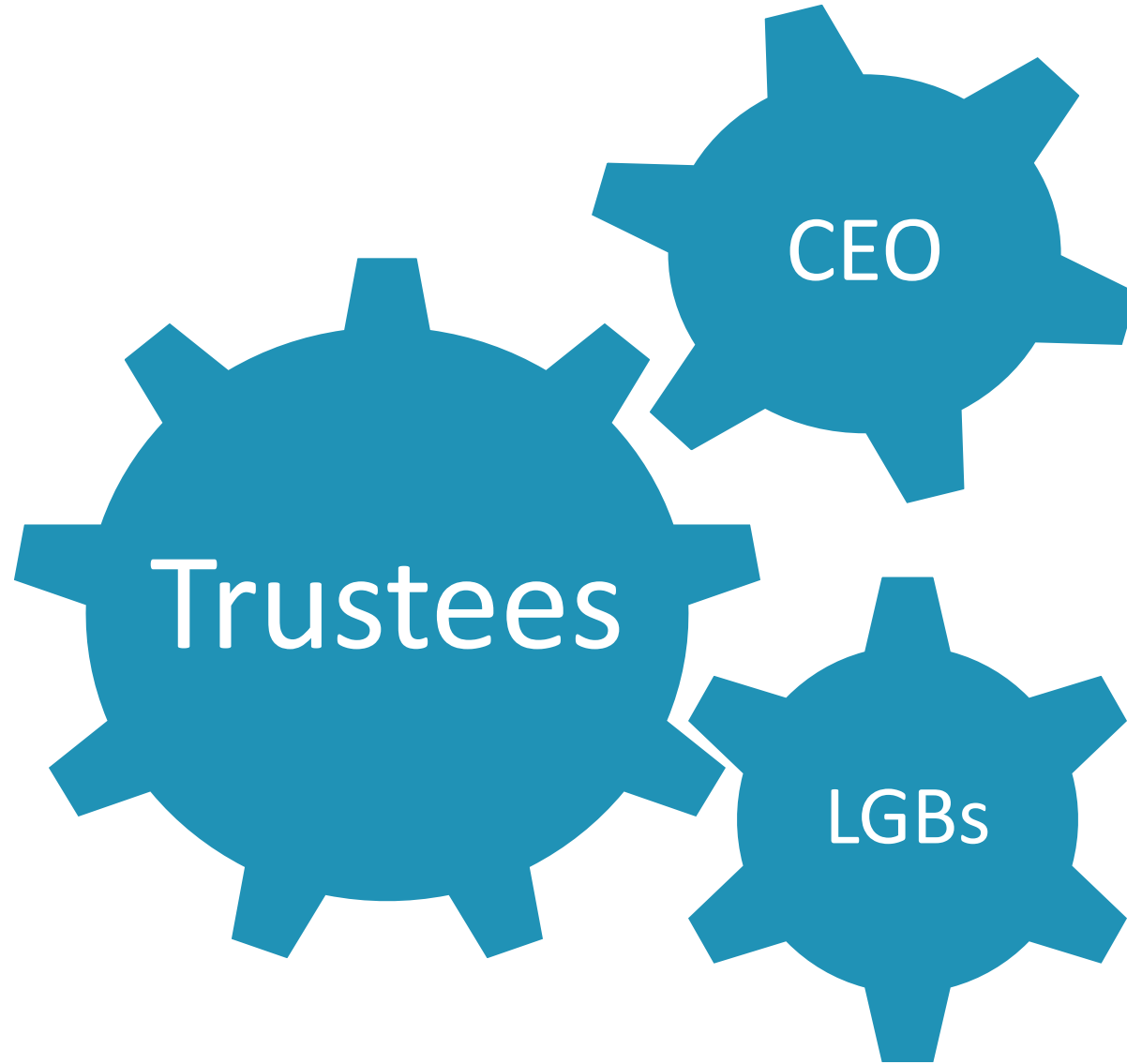
- Schools, and especially MATs, operate a wide variety of leadership and governance models. It's therefore essential that inspectors establish who is responsible and accountable for leadership and governance.
- It's also really important that inspectors speak to those responsible for leadership and governance during an inspection.

During the telephone call inspectors will:

- **establish** what the governance structure of the school is
- **clarify** where the responsibility and accountability lies
- **confirm** arrangements for meetings the school and MAT leaders
- **request** that a governance representative is present at the final feedback meeting

Governance structures

- Throughout our handbooks we use the phrase 'those responsible for governance', I just wanted to take this opportunity to clarify that these will be different people in maintained schools and academies.
- In a maintained school this will usually be the school governors.
- In a standalone academy, it will usually be trustees and sponsors.
- In an academy that is part of a MAT the situation can be even more complex.



Governance accountability

- In schools that are part of MATs, the board of trustees are the accountable entity and governance body. In some cases, trustees may have devolved some of these responsibilities to local governing bodies (LGBs).
- Inspectors must meet with trustees as they have the overall responsibility for governance. However, they may also meet with LGBs where relevant.
- It is the role of those responsible for governance to help inspectors ensure they are speaking to the right people.
- **It is really important for LGB members to be familiar with their scheme of delegation.** If you are a governor in a school and you're unclear what your role would be in an inspection, it might be helpful to have a conversation with your school about what they anticipate your involvement to be.

What is effective governance?



Governance handbook: three core functions



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 effective and efficient performance management of staff.



Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and **making sure its money is well spent**.



Core functions

- On inspection, we will explore how governors carry out each of these functions.
- For example, the clarity of the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction will have a significant impact on the decisions that leaders make about the curriculum.
- Inspectors will consider whether the work of governors in this respect is supporting the school to provide a high-quality education for its pupils.

Statutory duties

- Those with governance/oversight roles are responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its **statutory duties**. For example:
 - under the Equality Act 2010
 - in relation to the Prevent duty
 - for safeguarding.
- Note that when inspectors look at statutory duties, they are not checking compliance; they need to find out how governors ensure that the school is compliant.
- For example, though we would not expect governors to be 'checking' the schools single central record, we would look at whether they are seeking the assurance from the school that they are keeping it up to date and that the designated safeguarding lead is carrying out their duties.

Governance documents

- By 8am on the day of the inspection, schools must provide inspectors with:
 - minutes of governors meetings (for maintained schools)
 - minutes of trust board meetings (for academies)
- Inspectors will review these documents to look at how governors fulfil their core functions and statutory duties.
- These documents do not need to be in any specific format.

Examples of how a trustee or governor fulfils their role

- Maintaining strategic oversight of a range of education issues within the school including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special needs, staff workload and teacher recruitment.
- Looking at data and evidence to ask questions and have challenging conversations about the school.
- Engaging with pupils, staff, parents and the school community.

A few examples of how a trustee or governor fulfils their role

- Addressing a range of education issues within the school including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special needs, staff workload and teacher recruitment.
- Checking on the school's performance. Looking at data where necessary to ask questions about standards and have challenging conversations with school leaders about the school. Ofsted doesn't look at internal data, but that doesn't mean that governors should not be looking at it as part of their oversight of the school.
- Engaging with pupils, staff, parents and the school community.
- In your governance meetings, think about what that is telling you and what else you need in order to understand what is going on in the school.

Meeting governors on inspection



Ofsted will:

- Ask the school to inform members of the governing body that the inspection is happening.
- Expect to meet those directly responsible for governance. In academies, this will include the CEO or their delegate.
- Encourage the school to invite as many governors or trustees as possible to meet inspectors.
- Take account of the specific context of the school in deciding who to speak to.
- Carry out virtual meetings where necessary.

The purpose of these meetings

- The purpose of meeting governors or trustees is to find out how they fulfil the core functions outlined in the previous section of this slidepack, and demonstrate the key features of effective governance.
- Inspectors are likely to explore the following:
 - How do you ensure that the core functions of governance are carried out effectively?
 - What is your strategic vision for your school?
 - How do you hold executive leaders to account?
 - How do you ensure the school complies with its statutory duties?

How does governance inform our judgements?



**Strategic
leadership**

Accountability

People

Structures

Compliance

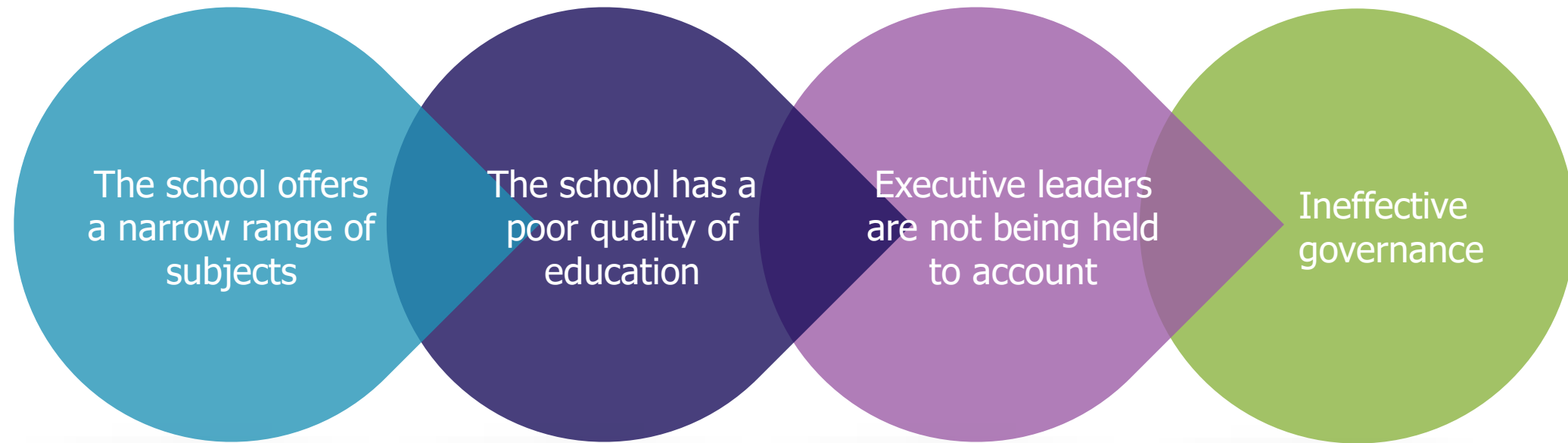
Evaluation



Leadership and management judgement

- The leadership and management judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education that the school provides has a positive impact on its pupils.
- The effectiveness of governance will impact on the leadership and management judgement of the school.
- At the core of this judgement is whether those responsible for governance ensure that the education that the school provides has a positive impact on its pupils, an important factor in this is whether governors understand their respective roles and perform these in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school.

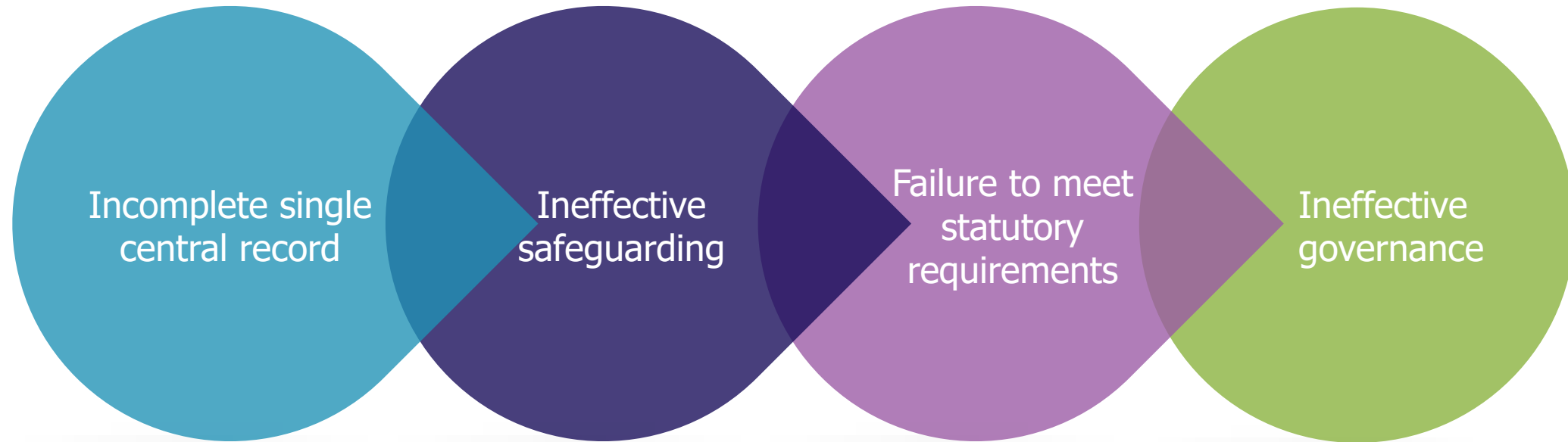
Ineffective governance example – curriculum narrowing



Ineffective governance example – curriculum narrowing 2

- As well as establishing how effective governance is, inspectors will triangulate the information gained through discussions with the information they are seeing on inspection.
- If a school offers a narrow range of subjects that do not prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain, the quality of education the school offers will be poor.
- If this is the case, the school leaders are not being effectively challenged about decisions they have taken about the curriculum.
- The governors are therefore not holding them to account effectively.

Ineffective governance example – single central record



Ineffective governance example – single central record 2

- If the single central record is not completed or checked well enough, then the school is not effectively safeguarding its pupils.
- If this is the case, the school is failing to meet its statutory requirements.
- Governors are directly responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties. If they are not doing this, governance is ineffective

Governors and the single central record

- We know there are misconceptions around governor roles when it comes to the single central record.
- When it comes to their statutory duties, we expect governors to perform a strategic function, not an operational one.
- Their duty is to make sure these processes are happening and that the school is fulfilling its duties – but it is not their role to check it themselves.
- Governors must assure themselves that the SCR is being kept up to date and is compliant with requirements. A way of assuring themselves may be through regularly talking to leaders about their processes and how they keep the record up to date.

To clarify:

- We do not expect governors to be checking the single central record themselves.

Governance on monitoring inspections

- The purpose of monitoring is to support and challenge leaders and those responsible for governance.
- Through monitoring, inspectors will evaluate how leaders and those in governance roles are improving the school.
- Inspectors will focus on the extent to which those responsible for governance understand their roles and perform them in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school.
- Inadequate schools and schools that have received a grade of requires improvement in their two most recent inspections will receive monitoring inspections.

Governance on monitoring inspections 2

- On monitoring inspections, we do not grade leadership and management.
- Inspectors focus on the extent to which those responsible for governance understand their roles and perform them in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school.
- They focus on the actions taken by leaders and those responsible for governance to tackle the areas that led to the school being judged to require improvement or be inadequate.
- In the report letter, they make a judgement on whether leaders have made sufficient progress to improve the school.

Spotlight areas in alternative provision and special schools

- The inspection framework is the same for AP and special schools as it is for mainstream schools. However, there are some areas we may focus on when looking at the governance of these settings.
- If the school is not teaching the national curriculum we would want to see that the governors understand any adaptations to the **curriculum** and how it meets the needs of the pupils as well as any statutory responsibilities.
- We would want to see that they are looking at a wide and appropriate set of **outcomes** and challenging where necessary.
- Lastly like in all settings we would want to see that they are carefully monitoring **attendance** and **exclusions** and addressing any issues with these.

How do inspectors provide feedback on governance?



Final feedback meeting

- Inspections usually end with a final feedback meeting with the school. This is the lead inspector's meeting, where the LI will discuss the provisional grades for each judgement and the key findings of the inspection, including any recommendations for improvement.
- If you can't attend the final feedback meeting, any findings from it may be shared with you so long as they are clearly marked as confidential and provisional.

Attendance at the final feedback meeting

- As expected, the headteachers and other senior leaders are invited to attend this meeting, as well as the CEO of the MAT (if there is one), a representative from the local authority and those responsible for governance.
- Who may attend this meeting in a governance role depends on whether the school is a maintained school or an academy.
- In maintained schools, governors and the clerk to governors are invited to attend.

Reporting on governance

- The impact of governance will be reflected in the reporting of what the school does well and what it needs to do better.
- The lead inspector will make reference to the work of governors when writing about leadership and management.
- If governance is particularly effective or has particular weaknesses, the lead inspector will explain this fully.

Thank you

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Key resources

www.gov.uk/ofsted

- Blogs and press releases
- Contact us



www.youtube.com/ofstednews



www.slideshare.net/ofstednews



Where you can find our information

- The only guidance and materials you need for an inspection is the guidance and materials that Ofsted produce. We publish a variety of content to support you.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>
 - our inspection handbooks which outline our policies and processes on school inspections (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>).
 - other guidance documents intended for schools and our own inspectors

Where you can find our information 2

- Other resources to support school leaders and teachers:
 - Ofsted's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/Ofstednews>)
 - SlideShare (<https://www.slideshare.net/Ofstednews>)
 - Education inspection blog for schools and further education and skills (<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/>)