



## **A Guide to Effective Governance**

## Induction of New Governors – Checklist

Have you received these documents or have access to this information?	Tick
• School Prospectus	
• School Website	
• Previous Ofsted Inspection Report	
• Minutes of previous Governing Body meetings and Head Teacher's report to Governors	
• Summary of most recent SATs or exam results	
• School Improvement or School Development Plan	
• List of staff with their responsibilities	
• Copies of school policies relating to Governance	
• Previous Denominational Inspection Report (if relevant)	
• List of Governors and their roles	
• The agenda for forthcoming meeting/s	
• A copy of "A Guide to the Law for School Governors"	
• Forthcoming training events for Governors	
• Information about the school budget	
• Information about any other groups linked to the school e.g. The Parent-Teacher Association, Nursery, SureStart centre.	
• Map of the school building and grounds	
• Calendar of school and Governor events	
• Previous Denominational Inspection Report (if relevant)	
• Meet the Head Teacher and senior staff?	
• Visit the school for an introductory tour?	
• Discuss with the Chair of Governors your personal qualities and attributes that will benefit the Governing Body?	
• Meet with an experienced Governor who may act as a mentor for a period of time?	
• Consider which sub-committee/s (if relevant) you may be best suited to supporting?	

Good practice at a new Governor's first meeting:

- Welcomed by the Chair person
- Introduced to all present
- Check they have an agenda and minutes of the previous meeting
- Check they have been able to access relevant documents and resources
- A reminder of the location of toilet facilities, refreshments and fire procedures
- An approximation of timings for the meeting
- Opportunities to ask questions
- An informal chat after the meeting if possible to clarify any issues and evaluate the induction process so far.

Quick self-audit for new Governors:

Question	Response
What skills and knowledge do I bring to the role?	
What additional information do I feel I need to fulfil my role?	
Which aspects of the school am I particularly interested in?	
How do I get fully involved as a Governor?	
Actions:	

## **The Role of the Governing Body**

The governors' role is vitally important. It is not about rubber stamping decisions or about fundraising! School governors provide strategic leadership and accountability. Governors appoint the head teacher and are responsible for the performance management of the head teacher. In some schools and settings the site is actually owned by the governing body. It is governors who are responsible for the finances in schools and in ensuring that these are used to the maximum benefit of all pupils.

Governors have three key roles in raising and maintaining standards in school:

- Setting strategic direction.
- Ensuring accountability.
- Monitoring and evaluating school performance.

These three areas are explored in more detail in this section of the book

The effectiveness of the Governing Body is inextricably linked to the effectiveness of a school as a whole. Ofsted has found that the most effective schools can normally demonstrate the greatest positive impact of governance on leadership and management.

### **The Role of the Governing Body – Setting Strategic Direction**

#### Strategic Direction

Responsibility for the day to day management of the school lies with the Head teacher or Principal. The Governing Body is responsible for working with the leaders in school to ensure there is a longer term view, or strategy, for school improvement.

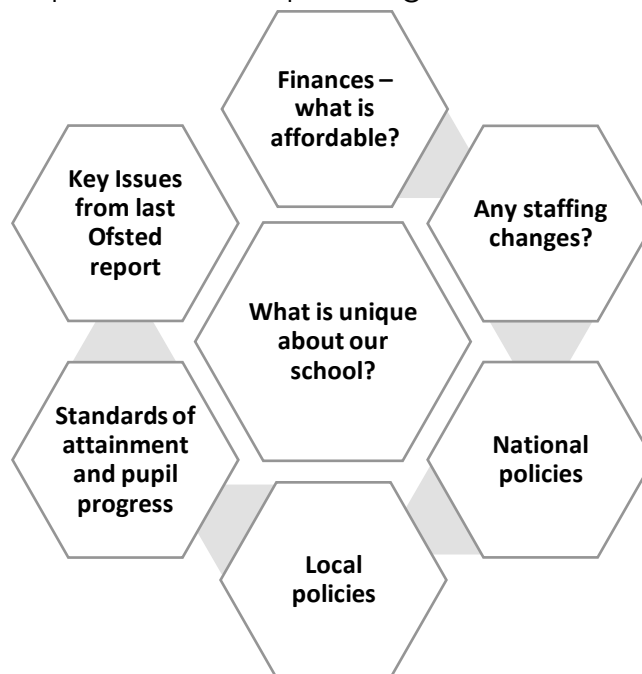
To fulfil this function, Governors will need to have a very clear view of where their school or setting is now. Background on the 'journey' of the school so far is also very useful, so that any planning is in context.

The Governing Body will also need to be aware of any changes in both national and local education policies so they are well placed to adapt and plan for the future. The landscape is always changing! This does not mean that every governor must necessarily be an expert, but the Governing Body as a whole should have processes in place to make sure they have up-to-date and relevant information that is shared.

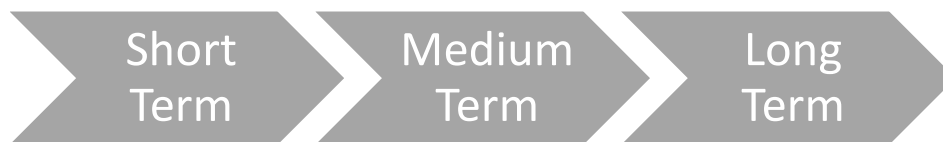
## The Role of the Governing Body – Setting Strategic Direction

### Strategic Direction

Factors that will help inform future planning:



### Strategic Direction



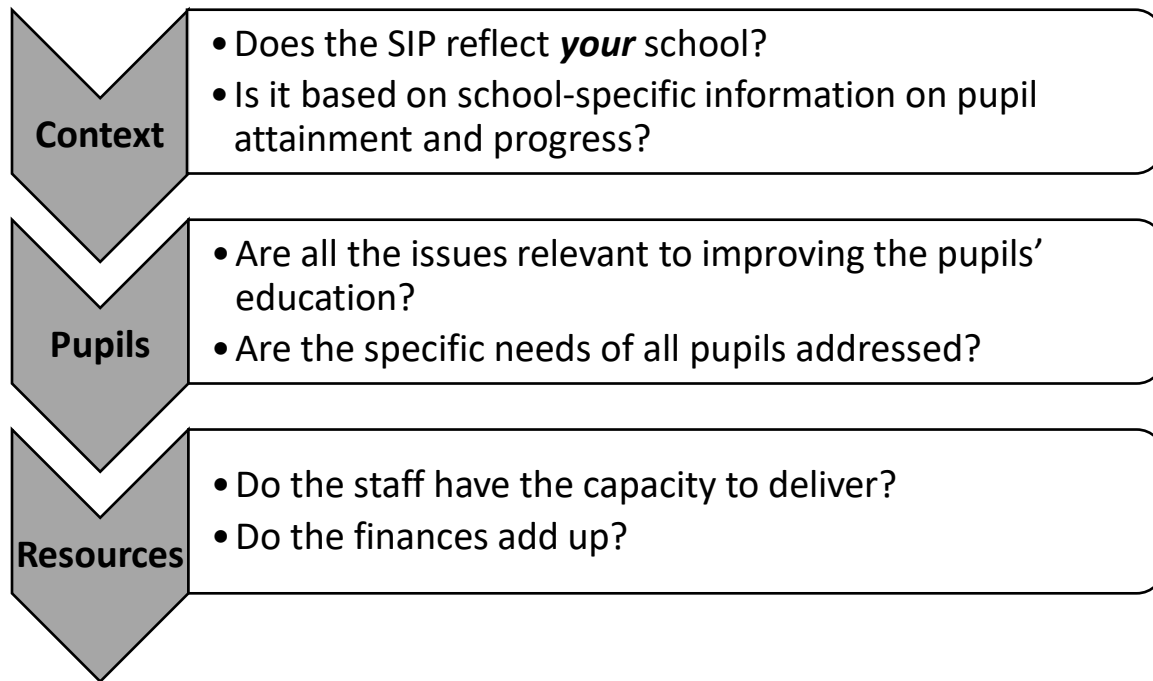
One of the most important documents for governors is the School Improvement Plan (SIP) or School Development Plan (SDP). This will include the targets for improvement, timescales and costs in terms of both time and money.

There is no one recognised best format, but whatever version is adopted it should be clearly focused on what will *improve the education for the pupils*. Plans are usually extremely focused for the current year, slightly more flexible for the next two or three years and may include a very broad strategic picture from three to five years.

Key Issues from Ofsted inspections must be addressed in this planning.

Best practice is to always refer to the SIP or SDP in Governors' meetings to monitor progress but also to ensure the school is adapting and planning for the future in the light of any changes to circumstances or policy. Some head teachers structure the main body of their report to Governors against SIP targets, i.e. evaluating impact, to ensure relevance.

### Strategic Direction – Summary Checklist



## The Role of the Governing Body – Ensuring Accountability

### The Governing Body holds the school to account via:

- Undertaking the Performance Management of the Headteacher. This is normally allocated to two or three Governors who carry out a review in the Autumn term (beginning of the academic year) often with external professional support. An over-view is reported to the full Governing Body.
- Referring to the Head Teacher's Report to Governors. This is normally a termly agenda item and will follow a set format. It is an opportunity for Governors to then seek clarification, offer challenge and refer information in the report to the School Improvement/Development Plan. The report should contain information on school developments; any staffing changes; assessment procedures, test and exam results; records of bullying and any safeguarding issues

### The Governing Body also holds the school to account via:

- Using the **School Improvement Plan or School Development Plan** to monitor developments and ensure actions are carried out on schedule. This should be referred to regularly in Governing Body meetings
- **Monitoring and checking the budget and allocation of funds.** Often a sub-committee will have an over-view of finances and will report to the full Governing Body.
- **Visiting the school to monitor the work that goes on,** normally with a focus on specific issues linked to school improvement.
- **Using data produced by the school and from National Publications** to compare attainment and achievement against national standards.

### The parents and community hold the school to account in a number of ways:

- Parent Governors are elected by the other parents and carers.
- Faith organisations in the community appoint their governors in faith schools.
- Parents often choose a school for their children based on Ofsted reports and the views of other parents. Poor leadership, including governance, has a strong influence.

- The Secretary of State has the power to remove delegated powers and /or a Governing Body if school performance is not deemed acceptable.

Governing bodies should seek the views of parents/carers and be seen to respond.

**Some ideas for gaining the views of parents and carers:**

Questionnaires (often based on the Ofsted model)

Governors meet with parents at Parents Evening (prepare questions before if useful?)

Dedicated email address to contact governors.

Governor "surgeries" when they are available in school

Facility on the school website for parents to respond to Governors

Governor-on-the-Gate where a rota of governors meet parents on arrival or exit, maybe once a week/month

**Possible ways Governing Bodies can inform parents of their work and respond to their concerns or ideas:**

- Regular newsletter
- Governing Body page on the school website, perhaps with minutes of meetings
- Governor presence at events such as parental consultation evenings, school productions, sporting events and assemblies
- Twitter or Facebook account
- Posters around school about any major developments

## **The Role of the Governing Body – Monitoring and Evaluating School Performance**

### **Monitoring and Evaluating School Performance**

**“It is essential that a governing body knows if all the pupils in their school are making progress as expected or better (*than all schools nationally*) and that the school focuses on improvement appropriately. Governing bodies play a central role in challenging and supporting schools to set a strong vision and provide the best service they can for children and parents in their communities.”**

***‘Stronger Governance Systems’ – DCFS (now the DfE) 2009***

### **Monitoring and Evaluating School Performance**

The first step is to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are being monitored. This includes the statutory subjects (The National Curriculum and RE) for non-academy schools/settings as well as the non-statutory elements. The curriculum can also include extra-curricular activities such as trips and after-school clubs etc.

All schools should be able to provide Governors with an overview of their curriculum.

## Staff Roles and Responsibilities.

Teachers	Role	Support Staff	Role	Lunchtime staff	Role
Jane Burns	Head Teacher, RE			Cressida Spencer	Supervisor
Angela Cheyne	Assistant Head, SENCO, RE, Y5	Catherine Smith	PPA/Breakfast Club Supervisor, HLTA	Angela Barton	Supervisor
Laura Dowd	Assistant Head, Teaching & Learning, Maths, Y5/6	Cath Heaney	LSA/Breakfast Club/Lunch	Theresa Browne	Lunchtime Assistant
Nicky Fox	Deputy Head, Reception Class Teacher, Child Protection	Gemma Griffin	LSA	Janet Ruiz	Lunchtime Assistant
Claire McMahon	Reception (NQT) Temporary				
Michelle Haigh	Foundation Class Teacher, Science	Maria Noad	LSA/Breakfast Club	Cath Heaney	Lunchtime Assistant
Siobhan Wyrill	Key Stage 1 Teacher, Phonics lead, PSHE/SRE (p/t.6)	Diane Cox	LSA	June Wilson	Lunchtime Assistant
Kim McNeill	Year 1 Class Teacher, Maths				
Emily Chatt	Year 1/2 Class Teacher, Art/DT	Mel Fisher	LSA/ Breakfast Club	Catering Staff	
Bronte Pearson	Year 2 Class Teacher, Child Protection, (RQT, Computing)	Karen Hutchinson	PPA/LSA	Donna Evans	Supervisor
Laura Harris	Year 3 Class Teacher (RQT)History & Geog	Karen Newsome	LSA	Jane Minns	Kitchen
Jade Smith	Year 3/4 Class Teacher (RQT, PE)			Bridget Hollyoak	Kitchen
Kate Wallis	Year 4 Class teacher				Kitchen
Katie McBride	Year 5 Class Teacher (NQT)	Jackie Larkin	LSA/ Breakfast Club		Kitchen
Claire Rivers	Year 5/6 Class Teacher (Music & MfL)				Kitchen
Abi Hills	Year 6 Class Teacher, English, Child Protection	Analise Spurr	LSA	Rosemary Boyle	Kitchen
		Ashlie Stringer	Nursery Nurse	Caretaking/Cleaning	
Other Staff		Alice Fisher	LSA/Lunch	Dave Cox	Superintendent
Maria Wright	Business Manager /Lunch	Farah Haines	HLTA	Angela Barton	Cleaner/Breakfast Club
Pat Dunleavy	Admin			Janet Ruiz	Cleaner/Breakfast Club
Wendy Musson	Admin			June Wilson	Cleaner
Emma Dwyer	Attendance/LSA			Jane Minns	Cleaner

**The Role of the Governing Body – Monitoring and Evaluating the curriculum  
Extra-Curricular Activities Audit**

**Is there a balance across all age groups? Is there equal access?**

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Trips</b>	<b>Clubs</b>	<b>% uptake by girls</b>	<b>% uptake by boys</b>	<b>% uptake by FSM pupils</b>	<b>% uptake by non-FSM pupils</b>
Reception						
Year 1						
Year 1/2						
Year 2						
Year 3						
Year 3/4						
Year 4						
Year 5						
Year 5/6						
Year 6						

## Extra-Curricular Activities

### Additional questions regarding school trips and visitors:

- Does the school have a trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)?

*This is a person who can sign-off risk assessments for trips and has access to up-to-date health and safety information etc.*

- Are visitors to the school who work alone with the children (e.g. sports coaches and any adults running clubs) DBS checked?

*This information should be on the school's Single Central Record (SCR)*

- Is the Governing Body aware of all residential trips organised by the school?

*Governors should have this information and be aware of critical incident procedures in case any incidents or accidents occur whilst staff and pupils are away.*

Many Governing Bodies assign a Governor to a specific curriculum area or subject, although this is not essential for all subjects. Some schools assign Governors to specific classes; some to specific targets on the SIP. Governors then monitor and report back to the full Governing Body either at full meetings or through the relevant sub-committee.

There are a number of ways that monitoring can take place:

- Watching lessons (with other staff so it can be discussed afterwards?).
- Meeting with subject leaders and teachers.
- Looking through examples of pupils' work (work scrutiny).
- Analysing relevant exam or test results (attainment).
- Analysing and discussing the progress pupils make from their starting points (achievement).

## **The Role of the Governing Body – Monitoring and Evaluating School Performance**

### **Health Warning!**

**Remember** – The day-to-day management of teaching staff and non-teaching staff is the responsibility of the Head Teacher. He or she is also responsible for the quality of teaching and the staff's performance management.

Governors who visit school are *not* there to make judgements on the quality of teaching and this should not form any part of their reports.

It is essential for both parties if the focus of any monitoring visit is agreed before hand.

### **Lesson Visits**

When organising lesson visits it can help if the focus for the visit is phrased as a question. The “answers” can be fed back to the full governing body or relevant sub-committee. 'Full' lesson visits are not always possible or the best use of time. A great deal of information can be gathered from a 'walk about' into different lessons.

Possible foci for lesson visits:

- How are new resources being used to help learning?
- How is a new area in a subject being taught?
- How are Teaching Assistants deployed to help pupils learn?
- How do teachers use questions to help pupils learn?
- How are vulnerable pupils supported?
- Is the school policy on marking and feedback used consistently?
- Are pupils given opportunities to work collaboratively in lessons?

**For more details see policy and reporting proforma**

## **Subject Leaders**

Governors should prepare specific and focused questions when meeting with subject leaders. Initially these may be about how their area of the curriculum is organised. Governors should use this opportunity to gain as much knowledge as possible about how the curriculum works. Questions should also challenge staff.

Possible questions:

- Can you explain how your subject is organised in the school?
- What impact have you had over the last year?
- What are the school's strengths and areas for development in your subject?
- What impact has any training had on the quality of learning?
- Is your subject sufficiently well resourced?
- How do you monitor standards and progress?
- Are pupils given opportunities to work collaboratively in lessons?

A pro forma for meeting subject leaders is overleaf.

### Meeting Subject Leaders Pro Forma

<b>Governor:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Staff Member:</b>	<b>Time:</b>
<b>Focus for Discussion:</b>			
<b>Questions:</b>		<b>Responses:</b>	
<b>Questions to follow up?</b>		<b>Any links to other monitoring?</b>	<b>Thanked staff? Y/N</b>

## **Work Scrutiny**

Looking through pupils' books is a good way to see evidence of progress over time – just look at the first page and then where they are now for a snapshot! A work scrutiny is based on a sample of work and should have a clear focus. Work may be in exercise books, folders or displayed around the school. Governors should ask for a sample of books representing the work of pupils of differing abilities. It is better to carry out a work scrutiny with the member of the school staff. Remember that a work scrutiny could be carried out at Governors' meeting if getting into school during the working day is difficult.

Possible foci:

- Does marking follow school policy?
- Is there clear progression in pupils' work?
- Is work differentiated for ability?
- Are handwriting and presentation to a high standard?
- Do pupils have opportunities to improve their work?
- Are standards in writing high across all subjects?

**A pro forma for a work scrutiny is overleaf.**

## Work Scrutiny Pro Forma

<b>Governor:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Age Group/Class Sample:</b>	<b>Number of books/pieces of work:</b>
<b>Focus for Scrutiny</b>			
<b>Observations:</b>			
<b>Consistencies</b>		<b>Inconsistencies</b>	
<b>Questions to follow up?</b>		<b>Any links to other monitoring?</b>	<b>Thanked staff? Y/N</b>

## **Analysis of Pupil Results**

The first area to monitor is pupil *attainment*. This should initially be based on the levels that pupils gain in the final year at school. This will normally be their Key Stage Two SAT results in primary schools

Governors should have access to National Data which shows how attainment compares between their school and all schools nationally. The new RAISEonline is a complex document and governors are recommended to undertake training in understanding and interpreting the data.

The data will enable the Governing Body to see the national comparison between their setting and all schools in English and mathematics.

Using this data Governors should have a far clearer understanding of how the school is performing. They are then well placed to offer support and challenge.

Possible questions when analysing attainment:

- How does our school compare to all schools nationally?
- Does attainment in our school differ between subjects and why?
- Are there differences in attainment between groups of pupils e.g. boys and girls; FSM and non-FSM pupils. And if so why?
- What do trends over three years show?

As well as the end of Key Stage data in the new RAISEonline, schools should be tracking attainment for all pupils in all year groups. Asking school leaders to present this information to the Governing Body can be an effective way of monitoring standards, offering support and having the opportunity to challenge where appropriate.

A pro forma for analysing attainment is overleaf.

## Analysis of Attainment Proforma

<b>Governor:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Age Group/Class</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Focus of Analysis</b>			
<b>Attainment in our school:</b>		<b>Attainment Nationally:</b>	
<b>How do we compare?</b>		<b>Is this a trend? (How does it compare to previous two/three years?)</b>	
<b>Questions to follow up?</b>		<b>Any links to other monitoring?</b>	<b>Thanked staff?</b> Y/N

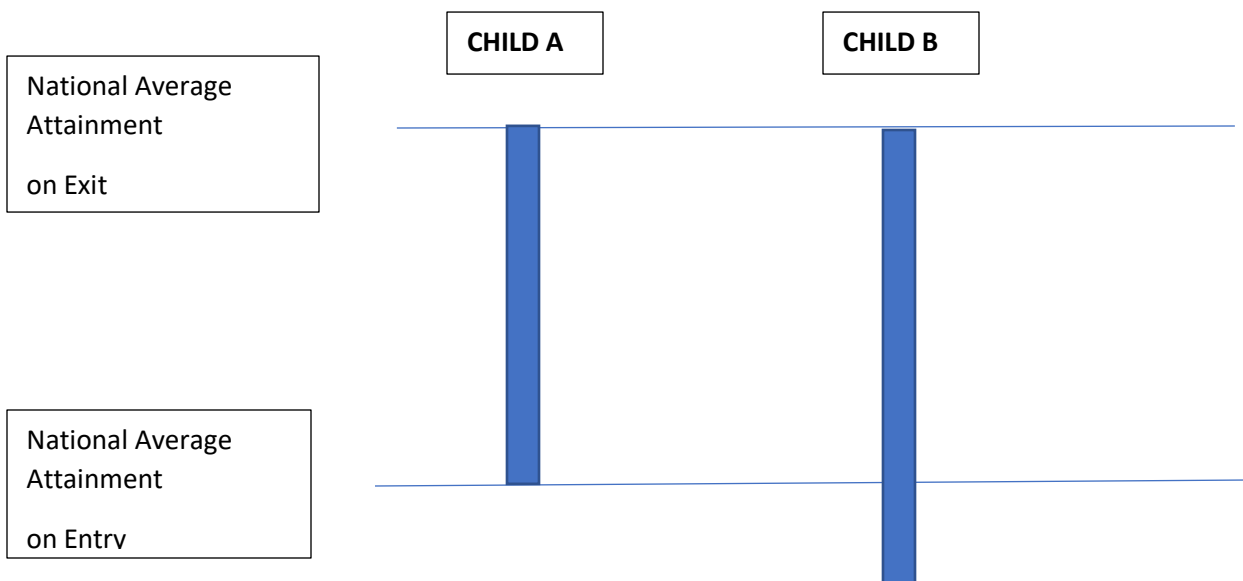
## Analysis of Pupil Results – Achievement/Progress

The second area to monitor is pupil *achievement/Progress*. This is the progress pupils have made from their starting points when they entered the school and how this progress compares with national averages.

Governors should ask the school, normally via the Head Teacher, about Attainment on Entry (AOE) as this will give a clear picture of achievement. It may vary for different year groups (cohorts) or it may be relatively stable. Either way, knowing the levels of attainment at which pupils enter the school and any relative strengths and areas for development will enable Governors to have a clear understanding of achievement.

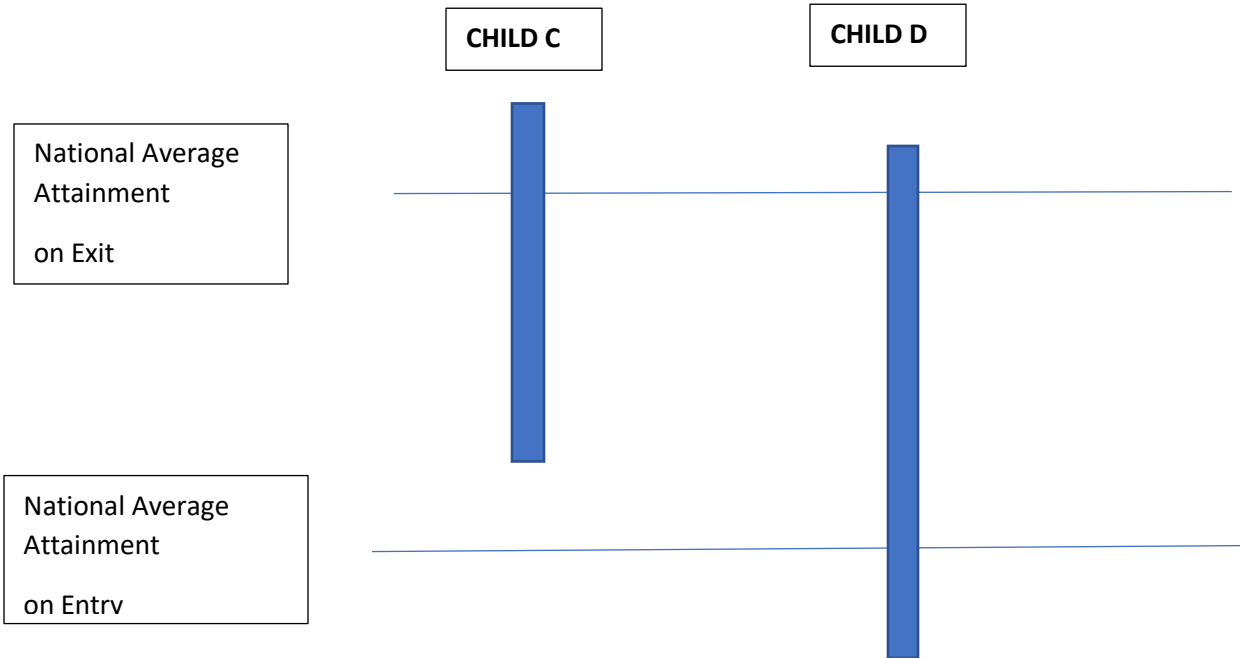
Knowing a pupil's level of attainment on entry is vital in making a judgement on achievement. The examples below show this, with the blue bars indicating the progress each child has made in relation to their attainment.

On leaving school Child A and Child B both have met the national level of attainment, but Child B entered at a far lower level. Therefore her achievement is above average, whereas Child A has only made expected progress so his achievement is average.



## Analysis of Pupil Results - Achievement

Similarly, a child may attain well above the national average, but if his/her attainment on entry was also well above average his/her achievement will only be average. This is the case with Child C below. With Child D, although attainment is lower on exit, achievement is above average.



**The school and Governing Body should be analysing the achievement of groups and cohorts in the same way. How do groups and cohorts compare with each other and with national data?**

***Groups to analyse:***

- Girls v Boys
- Free School Meals v Non-Free School Meals
- SEN/D pupils v Non SEN/D pupils
- By ethnicity
- Any other groups relevant to your school?

**Governors should then use the evidence from their monitoring to evaluate the school' performance:**

How does the school's data compare against national data?

What are the areas of strength to celebrate?

What are the areas for development?

Do Governors know what is happening and why?

Are the Governors holding the school leadership to account for performance?

**End of year summary**

What went well last year?	
What do our findings tell us?	
Our priorities for next year:	

