

Your DfE-aligned Estate Assessment Results

Your Trust · Estates Lead · 3 June 2026

C

66% overall

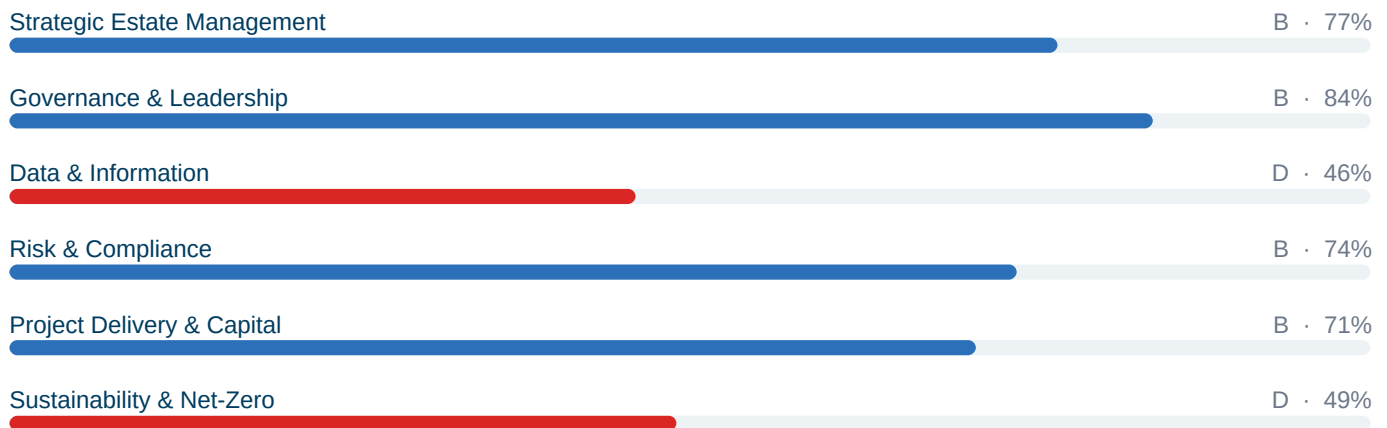
Level 1 — Baseline

Your average score is 66%, but Data & Information and Sustainability & Net-Zero are sitting at Level 1 — Baseline. The DfE's School Estate Management Standards expect every area to reach a level before an organisation can claim it overall, so Data & Information and Sustainability & Net-Zero are currently setting the ceiling. Closing that gap is the single biggest unlock to a higher overall rating.

CRITICAL COMPLIANCE FLAGS (1)

- Estate data not in a structured format

Your six pillar scores at a glance



Pillar breakdown

How each pillar scores, with the top priorities to act on first.

Strategic Estate Management

B · 77% · Level 2 — Transitioning

1. [Project] Extend your estate strategy's planning horizon to at least 3-5 years

Short-horizon planning leaves you reactive to condition and capacity changes, and undermines credibility with funders; the DfE expects Level 1 organisations to plan investment and renewal over at least a 3-5 year horizon. Engage your finance team to align medium-term financial planning with the estate strategy and re-issue documents with the extended horizon.

GEMS: Strategic estate management on GOV.UK >

2. [Quick win] Establish a formal strategic review cycle

A regular (ideally annual) strategic review of estate performance keeps your vision, strategy and AMP current and demonstrates SEMS Level 3 (Fully Effective) practice. Add a standing review item to your governance calendar with a clear template covering condition, compliance, sufficiency, sustainability and financial performance.

GEMS: Strategic estate management on GOV.UK >

3. [Project] Develop a documented estate vision

The DfE expects every Responsible Body at SEMS Level 1 to have a clear estate vision setting out how your buildings and grounds support your educational outcomes. Building Spatial Intelligence offers a tool that uses your self-assessment results as the starting point to help you build an estate vision document; book a free consultation to see it in action.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

GEMS: Strategic estate management on GOV.UK >

4. [Project] Develop a current estate strategy

An estate strategy translates your vision into a multi-year investment and maintenance roadmap; the DfE expects this at SEMS Level 1 as the link between educational ambition and the physical estate. Building Spatial Intelligence offers a tool that uses your self-assessment results as the starting point to help you build a strategy document; book a free consultation to see it in action.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

GEMS: Strategic estate management on GOV.UK >

5. [Quick win] Get your estate strategy formally approved

Formal board or trustee approval of the estate strategy is a Level 1 baseline expectation under the DfE's Estate Management Standards and signals that estate decisions have institutional backing. Add the strategy to your next board agenda for ratification and minute the decision. If your strategy is outdated or you need help building one, Building Spatial Intelligence offers a tool that uses your self-assessment as the starting point; book a free consultation to see it in action.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >

6. [Quick win] Get your asset management plan formally approved

Formal board or trustee approval of the AMP is a Level 1 baseline expectation under the DfE's Estate Management Standards and unlocks the resource decisions that flow from it. Add the AMP to your next board agenda for ratification and minute the decision.

School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >

Governance & Leadership

B · 84% · Level 3 — Fully Effective

1. [Quick win] Schedule routine board review of estate performance

Boards that review estate performance at least termly are better placed to challenge, prioritise and resource estate work; less frequent review tends to mean estate issues only surface in a crisis. Add a standing "Estate" item to your board agenda with a brief written update covering condition, compliance, capacity and capital programme status.

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

2. [Quick win] Document key estate decisions in board minutes

Routine minuting of estate decisions provides an audit trail for funders, inspectors and successors, and demonstrates the board's role in estate stewardship; SEMS Level 1 expects this. Brief your clerk to capture estate decisions explicitly, including the reasoning, financial envelope, and accountable individual, and review the minute template at the start of each governance cycle.

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

3. [Project] Build the information and expertise base for confident estate decisions

Low leadership confidence on estate decisions typically reflects gaps in either the data your team has access to, or the expertise to interpret it. Invest in CPD mapped to the DfE's Competency Framework and audit the estate data flowing to your board; Building Spatial Intelligence can help with the data side, book a free consultation to see how.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[Estate Management Competency Framework on GOV.UK >](#)

Data & Information

D · 46% · Level 1 — Baseline

Capping your overall level — closing this gap is the unlock to a higher overall rating.

1. [Project] Set up structured energy, water and carbon data capture

Tracking utilities at the meter level (ideally half-hourly), combining it with floor-area and degree-day data and reporting on it monthly, is the foundation of both sustainability decisions and accurate utility budgeting. Building Spatial Intelligence can help establish the data structure and reporting.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[GEMS: Sustainability of your estate on GOV.UK >](#)

2. [Project] Get current, scaled digital floor plans

Current, scaled digital floor plans are the foundation of space utilisation analysis, fire safety planning, accessibility audits and capacity assessments. Building Spatial Intelligence creates floor plans from a full 3D scan that can be uplifted to a 3D BIM model when you're ready.

[Learn more about our CAD plans service >](#)

[GEMS: Land and buildings on GOV.UK >](#)

3. [Programme] Restructure your estate data against the DfE-aligned common dataset

Ad hoc spreadsheets and inconsistent naming conventions are the silent killer of estate decision-making; a standard, DfE-aligned, common dataset across asset, condition, compliance, energy and tenure data unlocks query-ability, reporting and funding-bid readiness. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with this.

[Read our guide to the minimum viable dataset >](#)

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

4. [Project] Establish baseline estate data to reach SEMS Level 1

Routinely using estate data to inform decisions requires Level 1 (Baseline) data under the DfE's School Estate Management Standards: condition, compliance, planning and skills foundations that the rest of the framework builds on. Building Spatial Intelligence can help you establish this baseline data.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

5. [Quick win] Nominate a named owner for your estate data

Estate data without a single accountable owner gets stale quickly; one person (typically the estates lead or school business professional) should be responsible for its accuracy, currency and quality. Define the role in writing and give them the authority to require updates from contractors and colleagues.

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

6. [Programme] Move from ad hoc tools to a single source of truth

Spreadsheets and folder-based filing don't scale beyond a single school; a CAFM helpdesk system, a bespoke database, or an estates GIS gives you query-ability, audit trail and reporting that the DfE's data direction increasingly assumes you'll have. Building Spatial Intelligence can help you implement a fully integrated dashboard across your entire estate.

[Learn more about our facility management solutions >](#)

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

7. [Programme] Bring Building Information Modelling into operational use

The SEMS Level 3 standard expects digital BIM to support estate management; newer schools typically have a BIM model from handover, while older buildings need a retrospective BIM built from a 3D scan. Building Spatial Intelligence can build a retrospective BIM for schools that don't have one, or update an existing model that has fallen out of date.

[Learn more about our BIM services >](#)

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

8. [Project] Get your data ready for funding applications

Without a credible, query-able data position, Responsible Bodies risk dropping down the queue for the Renewal and Retrofit Programme, capital maintenance allocations, and the replacement for the Condition Improvement Fund. Building Spatial Intelligence can help you build that data position.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[DfE Education Estates Strategy on GOV.UK >](#)

9. [Project] Prepare for the DfE annual return on Estate Management Standards

The annual return requires Responsible Bodies to evidence Level 1 compliance across condition, compliance, planning and skills, and the data demands of this return will scale up over the coming years. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with the data and evidence side.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

10. [Project] Capture all five building area types

Site Area, GEA, GIA, GIFA and TUFA each serve a different purpose: insurance valuations, capacity assessments, utilisation studies and funding bids all rely on having them correctly measured and held in structured form. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with this.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

[GEMS: Land and buildings on GOV.UK >](#)

11. [Project] Build a comprehensive digital asset register

A modern asset register captures every site, building and major plant item with location, condition, age, replacement cost and statutory inspection cycles, organised into a structured format that becomes the foundation of every other estate decision. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with this.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

GEMS: Land and buildings on GOV.UK >

12. [Quick win] Pull and review your Condition Data Collection report

Every state-funded school in England has a CDC report; the DfE expects Responsible Bodies to have read theirs as a baseline. Request the report via your DfE account and use the priority condition findings as the starting point for your maintenance and capital planning; Building Spatial Intelligence can help interpret the data.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

DfE Condition Data Collection programme on GOV.UK >

13. [Project] Build a complete digital tenure and title register

Without complete records of leases, freeholds, easements, rights of way and shared-use agreements, you can't safely make capital decisions, dispose of surplus space or respond to planning challenges. Engage your legal team or a property specialist to compile, verify and digitise these records.

GEMS: Land and buildings on GOV.UK >

Risk & Compliance

B · 74% · Level 2 — Transitioning

1. [Project] Document cyber risks to estate-connected systems

Building management, access control, CCTV, heating controls and IoT-connected estate systems are increasingly common attack surfaces; the DfE's 10-Year Estates Strategy explicitly calls out cyber resilience for buildings. Engage your IT or cyber lead to audit estate-connected systems, document the risks, and integrate them into your business continuity plan.

NCSC: Cyber security for schools >

2. [Project] Bring your legionella risk assessment into compliance

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, the duty-holder must hold a current legionella risk assessment, with inspections of water systems logged and actioned. Engage a Legionella Control Association-registered contractor for the risk assessment and ongoing monitoring schedule.

HSE: Legionella and Legionnaires' disease on GOV.UK >

3. [Project] Bring your statutory inspection regime back into compliance

Gas, fixed electrical, lifts, fire systems, pressure systems and other regulated equipment must be inspected on statutory cycles by competent persons, with certification held; gaps create both immediate safety risk and audit exposure. Audit your current certification, schedule the overdue inspections immediately, and put a forward calendar in place to prevent recurrence.

GEMS: Health and safety on GOV.UK >

4. [Quick win] Update your written health and safety policy

Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires every employer with five or more employees to have a written H&S policy that clearly defines responsibilities; for estate management this should name the responsible person and cover the key estate-specific risks. Use the HSE template or your sector lead body's template, get the policy reviewed by your H&S advisor, and re-publish it through your governance structure.

GEMS: Health and safety on GOV.UK >

5. [Project] Develop an estate business continuity plan

A business continuity plan covers what you do when estate incidents disrupt operations: flood, fire, structural failure, prolonged loss of utilities, or cyber attack on building systems. Map your critical functions, identify alternative arrangements (relocation, off-site working, mutual aid), and rehearse the plan at least annually.

GEMS: Planning your estate resources on GOV.UK >

Project Delivery & Capital

B · 71% · Level 2 — Transitioning

1. [Quick win] Adopt a formal option appraisal process for capital decisions

Without a structured option appraisal, capital decisions get made on hunch or politics; the DfE expects Level 1 Responsible Bodies to demonstrate a robust appraisal process that compares options on cost, risk, educational benefit and whole-life implications. Use a structured template that captures these factors and apply it consistently to all capital decisions above your threshold; GEMS guidance includes examples appropriate for school settings.

GEMS: Managing your estate projects on GOV.UK >

2. [Project] Shift the balance from reactive to planned maintenance

Reactive-heavy maintenance regimes are routinely 1.5 to 2 times more expensive per pound of work than planned regimes, and tend to mean compliance work happens late; the DfE expects Responsible Bodies at Level 2 (Transitioning) to demonstrate this balance. Audit your last 12 months of work orders, map them against your condition data, and shift routine items into a forward-planned schedule.

GEMS: Maintaining your estate on GOV.UK >

3. [Project] Embed whole-life costing in capital decisions

Capital decisions made on capex alone consistently underestimate true cost; the DfE expects Level 4 Responsible Bodies to consider running, maintenance, disposal and revenue costs alongside the initial build. Engage your finance team and estates lead to build a simple whole-life cost template, and apply it to every capital business case above your threshold.

GEMS: Managing your estate projects on GOV.UK >

4. [Quick win] Engage with the DfE's Renewal and Retrofit Programme

The Renewal and Retrofit Programme is the DfE's flagship funding stream for tackling poor condition and improving climate resilience, with significant capital being deployed over the coming years; eligible Responsible Bodies should be actively engaging. Read the latest DfE guidance, identify candidate buildings on your estate, and ensure your data position can support an application; Building Spatial Intelligence can help with the data side.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

DfE Education Estates Strategy on GOV.UK >

5. [Quick win] Run post-project reviews on capital work

Without a structured post-project review, the same procurement, design and contractor mistakes recur on every project; the DfE expects Level 4 Responsible Bodies to track project outcomes and demonstrate value for money. Run a brief post-project review 3-6 months after each completion covering budget, schedule, defects, contractor performance and lessons learned, and feed the findings into your next procurement.

GEMS: Managing your estate projects on GOV.UK >

6. [Quick win] Prepare for the forthcoming Condition Improvement Fund replacement

The DfE has signalled a replacement for the Condition Improvement Fund as part of its 10-Year Estates Strategy, with a stronger emphasis on data-backed allocation and condition-led prioritisation; eligible Responsible Bodies should be tracking the consultation now. Read the latest DfE guidance, anticipate what the new application process will need, and ensure your condition and asset data are ready; Building Spatial Intelligence can help with the data side.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

DfE Education Estates Strategy on GOV.UK >

7. [Project] Develop a phased backlog reduction plan

A material maintenance backlog indicates accumulated deferred work that grows more expensive the longer it sits, and the DfE expects Responsible Bodies to know their backlog accurately and have a credible plan to reduce it. Triage by risk and statutory compliance, sequence the work over a 2-5 year horizon against likely funding streams, and link the plan into your AMP and budget cycle; Building Spatial Intelligence can help quantify the backlog from your condition data.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

GEMS: Maintaining your estate on GOV.UK >

Sustainability & Net-Zero

D · 49% · Level 1 — Baseline

Capping your overall level — closing this gap is the unlock to a higher overall rating.

1. [Quick win] Nominate a sustainability lead

The DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy expects every education setting to have a nominated sustainability lead by 2025, with the role embedded into your structure (often a senior leader, trustee, or trained school business professional). Define the role in writing, allocate time, and link it into your governance cycle.

DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >

2. [Project] Build the data infrastructure for sustainability decisions

Tracking energy use, water use, carbon emissions and waste at a frequency that informs decisions (typically monthly or better) is the foundation of every other sustainability action; without it, you are guessing about progress. Building Spatial Intelligence can help establish the data capture, structuring and reporting that makes sustainability decisions evidence-based.

[Book a free consultation >](#)

GEMS: Sustainability of your estate on GOV.UK >

3. [Project] Assess overheating risk and identify adaptation measures

Building overheating is a growing risk as UK summers warm, with serious implications for pupil wellbeing and academic performance; the DfE's 10-Year Estates Strategy explicitly calls out climate adaptation. Engage a qualified building services or sustainability engineer to assess each site against industry overheating criteria and identify adaptation measures; Building Spatial Intelligence can deploy multi-sensors across your estate to monitor temperature, CO2, humidity and pressure as live data in your BIM dashboards.

[Learn more about our facility management solutions >](#)

GEMS: Sustainability of your estate on GOV.UK >

4. [Quick win] Engage with national sustainability programmes for schools

The DfE and partner organisations support schools through several national programmes, each offering funding, training or expert support; sign up to the ones relevant to your priorities.

- [Sustainability Support Programme](#)
- [National Education Nature Park](#)
- [Climate Ambassadors](#)
- [Great British Energy Solar Partnership \(GBESP\)](#)
- [Let's Go Zero campaign](#)

DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >

5. [Project] Develop a climate action plan for your estate

The DfE expects every state-funded school in England to have a climate action plan in place, covering decarbonisation, climate adaptation, biodiversity and pupil engagement, with completion targeted by 2025. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with the data foundation (energy use, building fabric, asset data); the plan itself is typically led by a sustainability lead or external sustainability consultant.

Book a free consultation >

[DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >](#)

6. [Project] Develop a decarbonisation plan aligned with national net-zero targets

The UK's legal commitment to net-zero by 2050 (and the DfE's interim targets for the education estate) require schools to plan a credible decarbonisation pathway; SEMs Level 4 expects this to be embedded in the estate strategy. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with the data foundation (energy baseline, building fabric, asset condition); the plan itself is typically authored by a sustainability lead or specialist consultant.

Book a free consultation >

[DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >](#)

7. [Project] Pursue solar PV or other on-site renewables

On-site renewable generation reduces operating costs, supports carbon reduction and demonstrates climate leadership; the Great British Energy Solar Partnership (GBESP) and Sustainability Support Programme actively support schools to deploy. Building Spatial Intelligence delivered as a trusted partner across all three GBESP consortia and can help you scope feasible options including Power Purchase Agreements as a no-capex route; book a free consultation.

Book a free consultation >

[DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >](#)

Your top priorities

Ten specific things to act on first, ranked by the gap between your current answer and what the DfE expects at Level 3 (Fully Effective).

1 critical compliance flag listed earlier.

Non-negotiable. Start there before working through the rest.

Start with your data position

The DfE's data-led funding direction makes these the highest-leverage items. Building Spatial Intelligence can help with each.

1. **[Project] [L1]** Data & Information
Set up structured energy, water and carbon data capture
[Book a free consultation >](#)
2. **[Project] [L1]** Data & Information
Get current, scaled digital floor plans
[Learn more about our CAD plans service >](#)
3. **[Project] [L3]** Data & Information
Establish baseline estate data to reach SEMS Level 1
[Book a free consultation >](#)
4. **[Project] [10YS]** Sustainability & Net-Zero
Build the data infrastructure for sustainability decisions
[Book a free consultation >](#)

Then close the other gaps

Ranked by urgency. L1 = baseline (mandatory), L2 = transitioning, L3 = fully effective, L4 = advanced, 10YS = 10-Year Strategy direction.

1. **[Project] [10YS]** Risk & Compliance
Document cyber risks to estate-connected systems
[NCSC: Cyber security for schools >](#)
2. **[Quick win] [L1]** Project Delivery & Capital
Adopt a formal option appraisal process for capital decisions
[GEMS: Managing your estate projects on GOV.UK >](#)
3. **[Quick win] [10YS]** Sustainability & Net-Zero
Nominate a sustainability lead
[DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >](#)
4. **[Quick win] [10YS]** Sustainability & Net-Zero
Engage with national sustainability programmes for schools
[DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy on GOV.UK >](#)

5. [Project] [L1] Risk & Compliance
Bring your legionella risk assessment into compliance
[HSE: Legionella and Legionnaires' disease on GOV.UK >](#)

6. [Quick win] [L1] Governance & Leadership
Schedule routine board review of estate performance
[School Estate Management Standards on GOV.UK >](#)

Alignment with the DfE 10-Year Estates Strategy

The strategy commits the DfE to a more data-led, climate-resilient estate run by capable, professionally-supported Responsible Bodies. Here's where you align with that direction, and where you don't.

ON TRACK (5)

- Asset management plan covering maintenance, investment and renewal
- Named senior leader accountable for the estate
- DfE Estate Management Competency Framework applied
- RAAC position surveyed and documented
- Flood risk assessed across every site

FALLING SHORT (17)

- Complete, up-to-date asset register
- Energy, water and carbon use tracked across the estate
- Named owner accountable for estate data quality
- Estate data held in a structured, DfE-aligned format
- Using digital tools or BIM to manage the estate
- Data-ready for funding applications
- Ready for the DfE's annual estate management return
- Energy, water and carbon data driving estate decisions
- Documented estate strategy in place
- Cyber risks to estate-connected systems documented
- Engaged with the Renewal and Retrofit Programme
- Prepared for the replacement of the Condition Improvement Fund
- Climate action plan in place
- Sustainability lead nominated
- Overheating risk assessed and adaptation measures identified
- Decarbonisation plan aligned with net-zero targets
- Solar PV or on-site renewables installed or in procurement

Want to talk this through?

Book a free consultation with our team.

We'll walk through your biggest gaps and the fastest wins.

Book a free consultation >

or call us on 01253 376376