

School Governance in Oxfordshire

Part of the Governor Services *Introduction to Governance* Series

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For school governors, trustees, academy committee members and school governance boards

Welcome to governance in Oxfordshire

As part of the county's largest volunteer group, you have an exciting and important role to play in ensuring that our schools are fantastic places for all children to learn and grow.

This introductory module will provide you with information that will help put your new role in context and with information about the support available from the Oxfordshire County Council Governor Services team.

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- The role of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
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- How do our schools do?
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Oxfordshire County Council

The County Council (or local authority) has an overall responsibility to its schools. This statement summarises its statutory duties:

Oxfordshire County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient places are available within its area for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one; to promote diversity, parental choice and high educational standards; to ensure fair access to educational opportunity; and to help fulfil every child's educational potential.

Consider how you as a governor can help to ensure that these responsibilities are met?
Which areas could you and your board have a direct impact on?



Additional responsibilities

It does not matter which type of school you are a governor at, the local authority has a regard for **educational outcomes, ensuring fair access to educational opportunities and for safeguarding** of all children in state funded education. This includes all maintained and academy schools.

Governors are crucial in this process to ensure:

- **Positive educational outcomes**
- **Inclusion and equality for all children**
- **Robust safeguarding**

Governors are the champions for their children.

The local authority then provides additional support based on need, identified through key performance indicators or by school self-referral. Local authority school reviews are ongoing so that all schools can be appropriately supported and all pupils in Oxfordshire can thrive.

Oxfordshire schools

Oxfordshire is a diverse county with many rural and city schools. It is home to:

240 mainstream **primary schools**. These are for children who are between 4 and 11 years old.

- 3 are infant schools (for children from 4 to 7)
- 2 are junior schools (for children from 7 to 11)
- 7 maintained nursery schools (for children from 3 to 5)

41 mainstream **secondary schools**. These include academy and maintained secondary schools.

15 schools providing **specialist provision** for children with special educational needs or disabilities.

- There is 1 Alternative Provision Academy (Pupil Referral Unit)
- There is 1 Hospital School
- There are 8 community based special schools providing for children aged 2 to 19



Oxfordshire primary schools performance information

How does your school compare to these countywide results? Do you know your school’s priorities for this year?

| Year Group | Oxfordshire Performance in 2024 |
|--|--|
| Early (Children in Reception or Early Years) | 68.8% achieved the expected good level of development (GLD) . The national level was 67.2% in 2023. |
| Phonics Screening Checks in Year 1 (5 and 6 year olds) | 79.5% achieved the phonics standard at the end of Year 1. This was in line with national outcomes in 2023 (79%). |
| Key Stage 2 – reading, writing & maths (The percentage of Year 6 children achieving the expected level in all three areas) | 59.6% achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths. This was in line with national outcomes in 2024 (59%). |

The role of the school governor

What governors do:

Governors are strategic leaders within schools and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. They provide accountability and assurance as well as having strategic responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.

Governing boards have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring the vision, ethos and strategic direction are clearly defined
- Ensuring the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school
- Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

In academy schools, the board must also comply with the trust's charitable objectives, any statutory requirements and their own funding agreements.

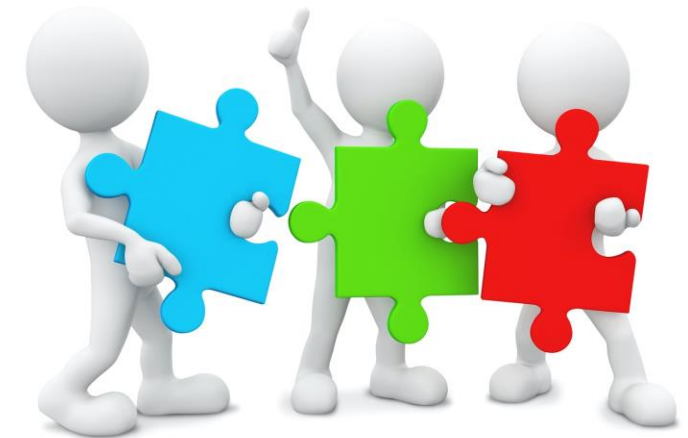
The role of the school governor is demanding but very rewarding and is a great way to give back to your local community. **Good schools need good governors.**

Benefits of being a governor

Being a school governor is a very rewarding role.

Here are some benefits that others have found:

- the knowledge that you are helping schools and pupils
- the satisfaction of giving something back to the community
- a sense of purpose and achievement
- new skills which may be transferable elsewhere
- broader horizons
- new friends and workmates
- training opportunities to help you fulfil your duties and responsibilities



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Time

This can vary depending on the work of the board, but we would suggest about 20 to 30 hours per term is usual. This work can often be undertaken in the evenings and at weekends and may include a range of activities such as:

- Prior reading of paperwork and the preparation of questions before meetings
- Attendance at whole governing board and committee meetings
- Visits to school and other forms of governor monitoring
- Special projects
- Staff recruitment
- Reviewing policies and monitoring the school's budget
- Undertaking training

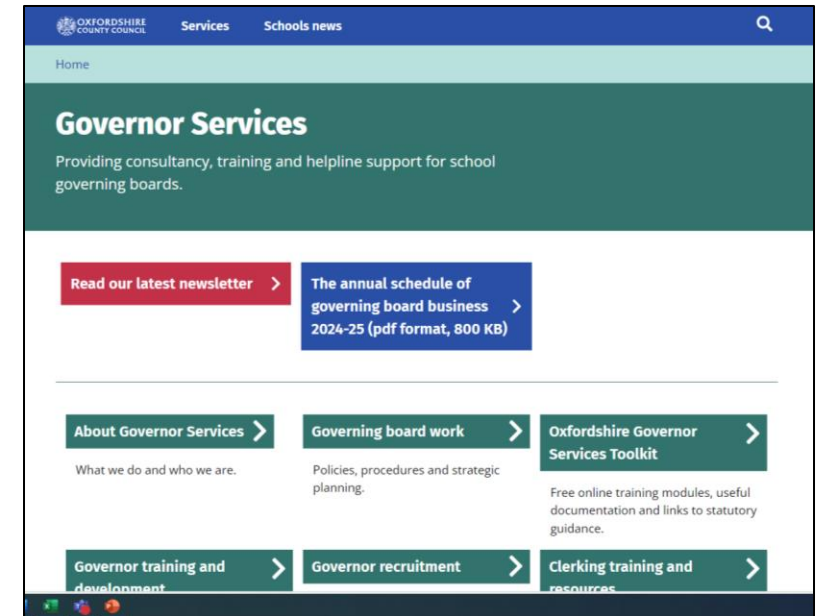


Governor Services

Oxfordshire County Council's Governor Services Team provides consultancy, training and a support helpline for all school governors within our county.

Along with your board's chair, more experienced governors, the clerk and of course the headteacher, we are here to help you. You may be a new governor, an experienced chair of governors or a governor with a question. Whatever, we are here to help.

Governor Services sits within the School Improvement Team at the County Council. Our clear focus is on improving outcomes for all children. Our part in this is achieved by striving for excellence in terms of supporting compliance and in building a culture that nurtures and enables effective governance.



Governor Services Team

About Us

Zaheer Ahmed

Head of Learning and School Improvement

Helen Tate

Governor Support Officer

Ruth Pangu

Clerk to Governors Team Lead

Governor Services oversees the statutory responsibilities of the Local Authority concerning governing boards and, in addition, is a traded service. Currently, 76% of all Oxfordshire schools subscribe to our services.

Support and guidance

Governor Services offers a fast, reliable, and friendly support and advice service to governors, headteachers and clerks.

Contacting us is easy if you have a query:

- By **phone** Tel: 03300 249046
- We also answer queries by **email**:
governorservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Additional support and guidance

Schools' News

- This is a weekly reminder in term time of important educational news
- You can register to receive this email on the bottom of the Schools' Insite home page: [Schools' News Request](#)

GovernorHub Pages

- Our pages on **GovernorHub** are updated regularly in order to highlight good practice and to signpost any changes to legislation or guidance.
- You can access these pages by clicking on the **OCC link on your GovernorHub *washing line***.
- Here you will find resources, documents, training and frequently asked questions.

Website

- Our website offers an information and advice service which is available at any time. This includes access to our **fortnightly newsletters** which are also emailed to all GovernorHub subscribers.
- You can access this information here: [Oxfordshire Governor Services | Schools](#)

Governor Training

We have a reputation for excellence in providing advice, support and training to governing boards, advisory boards, headteachers and clerks on governance matters.

Our diverse programme of **live online training** covers all aspects of the governance role including:

- **general development courses for governors from maintained and academy schools**
- **specialist courses for clerks, chairs of governors and lead governors**
- **Induction and safeguarding courses to support best practice by boards**

Our courses are regularly updated in response to changes affecting governance and to ensure they meet the needs of both existing and new governing boards. Every course is evaluated and we achieve an average rating of 4.8 (where 5 is excellent and 4 is good).

In addition, we have a growing range of **e-learning courses** that are available via our website or GovernorHub. These allow governors to undertake training at a time and location of their choice.

The Clerking Service

We offer a comprehensive **clerking service** to governing boards.

The importance of professional clerking has never been greater. Schools have been given increased freedoms and greater accountability and the government has recognised that the contribution professional clerking can make to effective governance of schools is significant.

The **Local Authority (LA) Clerking Service** provides your school with a trained clerk to attend and support your governing board and committee meetings. Our subscription includes support and attendance at 6 full governing board meetings and additional meeting cover can be requested.

We also offer training packages for clerks who are not part of the LA Clerking Service.

More information can be found here: [The Clerking Service | Oxfordshire Schools](#) or by emailing the service directly on: clerking.service@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Useful links and feedback

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| Maintained Schools Governance Guide: | Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) |
| Academy Trust Governance Guide: | Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) |
| Governor Services Core Training Programme. <i>This is currently remote, via MS Teams.</i> | Training and development Schools (oxfordshire.gov.uk) or through GovernorHub. |
| Governors for Schools: a charity that seeks to identify, recruit and support new school governors. | Governors for Schools - Effective Governors, Excellent Schools |
| Oxfordshire County Council webpages | https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/our-work-schools and Oxfordshire Governor Services Schools |

We hope you have found this information useful. Please click on the link to complete a short feedback form to help us develop and improve our training going forward. *Thank you.*

Feedback