



Welcome to our governance news update

Welcome back to the second half of the academic year. It would seem that signs of spring are finally emerging from a very wet winter.

The long-awaited government white paper was published this week and you will find links to all the relevant documents in this update, along with some useful summaries.

As always, if you have any questions about the contents of the newsletter, please do get in touch.

Contact us

For **governance** queries
email: governorservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Phone: 0330 0249 046
For **clerking** queries
email: clerking.service@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Jeremy Masson
Interim Service Manager
for School Effectiveness
and Governance



Helen Tate
Governor Support
Officer



Ruth Pangu
Clerk to Governors
Team Lead

News Update

Welcome Back message from Jeremy Masson

Welcome back to the new term – I hope that both you and all those in the schools you are working with, managed to get a well-earned rest over the half term. Having been OCC for a term now, it has been a real pleasure to be able to visit so many schools in person and see the wonderful work being undertaken in each of these settings. I have already booked a number of other visits for the term ahead and look forward to building those important partnerships between Schools and the Local Authority.

As I explained in my initial welcome, the post of Service Manager for this area was subject to a national recruitment process to find a permanent post holder. I am delighted to share that we had significant interest in this, and it is my pleasure to announce that **Tricia Bunn has been successfully appointed and will take up post on the 20th April.**

Tricia is currently working in the school improvement team with Birmingham City Council, she is a highly experienced ex Headteacher of both maintained and academy schools, has a strong track record in school improvement and has an extensive governance portfolio, including the formation and attendance to IEB's. She is also a trustee of a Multi-Academy Trust.

I have already begun to work closely with Tricia as part of a phased hand over and will continue to support both Tricia and Kim Wilson for a longer period of time as we ensure that structures, systems and approaches are ready for the new academic year. I know that Tricia is looking forward to working with you all and she will be made to feel equally welcome as I have in recent weeks.

It has certainly been a busy time not only in our local authority, but in the wider political landscape. We are acutely aware of the significant pace and scope of recent legislative announcements that affect schools and we will be making onward announcements regarding these via our different communication method. We stand alongside you in delivering the very best educational experience for every young person we serve. To that end, I would like to wish you all a successful and happy term 4 and my continued thanks for all that you and your teams each and every day.

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National Updates

Government White Paper published

The government has published the schools' white paper, [Every child achieving and thriving](#), and the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) consultation document, [SEND reform: putting children and young people first](#).

Key areas covered by the white paper include:

- Overall ambitions for pupils
- SEND system reform
- Support for disadvantaged pupils
- Formal collaboration and MATs
- Parental collaboration and engagement
- An improved complaints process
- Exclusions and behaviour

There is a wide variety of documentation available to support these publications, including blogs and summary documents for specific audiences.

[Specialist SEND support in every school and community - GOV.UK](#)

[SEND reform: putting children and young people first - GOV.UK](#)

[Sir Kevan Collins appointed as Delivery Adviser to the Secretary of State for Education - GOV.UK](#)

Here is a 3-page summary of the key points of the white paper from the NGA: [NGA Schools white paper summary](#).



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Other Government updates this week



[Neurodivergence Task and Finish Group](#)

The conclusions and recommendations of the independent review into ways to support neurodivergent children and young people in mainstream education settings.

[The role and experience of support staff in schools - GOV.UK](#)

Research on the school support staff workforce in England across primary, secondary and special schools.

[Connect the classroom - GOV.UK](#)

Find out about the programme to upgrade Wi-Fi networks in schools and who can take part.

[Ventilation and air quality in education and childcare settings - GOV.UK](#)

How schools and other education and childcare providers should monitor and manage ventilation and air quality.

[Improve and renew your long-term estates plan - GOV.UK](#)

Guidance providing a process to help schools and colleges plan, prioritise and deliver estate improvements that address condition, suitability, resilience and decarbonisation in a clear, logical and proportionate way.

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News Update

Oxfordshire Updates



Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business – feedback please

We are about to start our annual refresh of our Oxfordshire [Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business](#) and want to ensure that it is still meeting your needs. All suggestions will be gratefully received and taken into consideration.

Please complete the form in the link below. It should take no more than 5 minutes.

Many thanks for your feedback

[Oxfordshire Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business Feedback Survey – Fill in form](#)



For all those involved in school governance in Oxfordshire

Introduction

Effective governance provides strategic direction and control to schools, academies and multi-academy trusts (MATs). It creates robust accountability, oversight and assurance for their educational and financial performance and is ambitious for all children and young people to achieve the very best outcomes.

The DfE published two new Governance Guides on 7 March 2024 – [Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#) and the [Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#). These replaced the Governance Handbook, the Competency Framework for Governance and the Clerking Competency Framework.

Complaints briefing and resources



Thank you to all who attended our Complaints briefing this morning. We hope to have the recording and slides available for you shortly, with answers to any questions put in the chat.

We have produced the attached resource which you may also find useful

[Maintained School Complaints Feb 2026](#)

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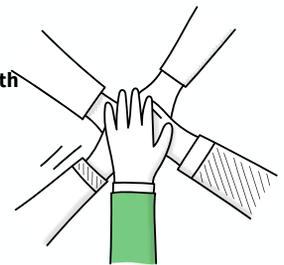
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News Update

OCC Clerking Service Annual Quality Assurance Survey

Our Clerking Service Annual Quality Assurance Survey was emailed directly to Chairs of Governors on Friday 20th February. Thank you to those of you who have already taken 5 minutes to respond to our survey which is designed to support us in making improvements and developing our service to meet school governance needs. If you are a Chair who has not yet responded, here is the link for your ease of access: [Annual Clerking Service Survey 2026](#)

We would be grateful if all Chairs would kindly manage this by **Friday 13th March**. Thank you.

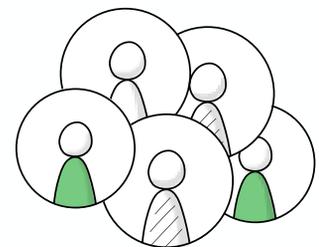


2026/27 Budget details and letter

2026/27 budget details have now been sent out to maintained schools [Formula funding letter](#)

“...The statutory deadline to submit your school’s Governing Body approved budget to the local authority via Education Financial Services (EFS) is **2 May 2025** (for **Special schools 9 May 2025**), as agreed with Schools Forum. *Where a school believes it is not able to submit a balanced budget, it must contact and submit a draft budget plan to EFS **by 31 March 2025**, or earlier if possible. The local authority will work with those schools in seeking a balanced budget....”*

Please ensure that you plan and allow enough time to scrutinise your draft budget before approving it for the chair to sign off online. This should be evidenced in the minutes of committee and FGB meetings.



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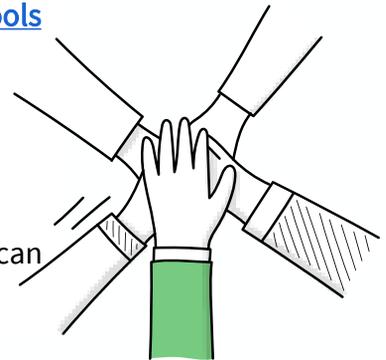
Governor Services Training

Governor Services Training programmes

Our Spring training programme continues until the Easter holidays. Full details of our Spring term training programme are now available on the Schools website here: [Governor training | Oxfordshire Schools](#) and all sessions are available to book on [GovernorHub](#)

Our summer term training programme has now been added to GovernorHub and sessions are available to book.

Don't forget to have a look at our **free Bitesize training** which you can access at any time [here](#)



Charging for training – a reminder

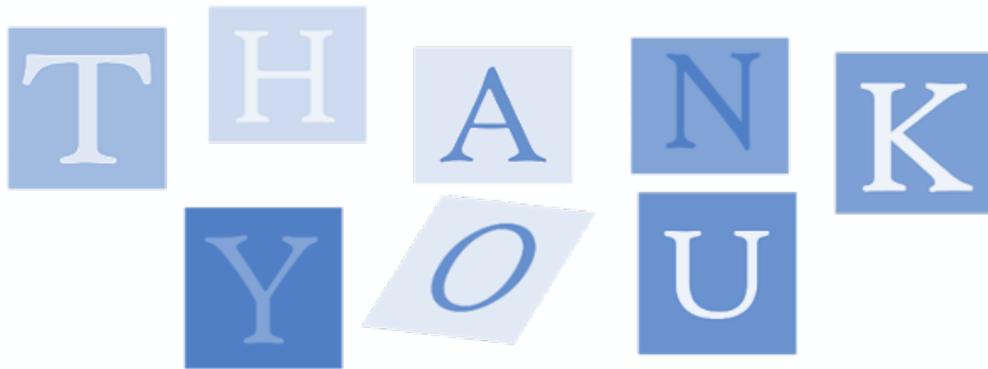
Please check if your board has subscribed to the Governor Services training package before booking. Governors at schools that subscribe can register for as much training as you like at no additional cost.

For governors at schools that do not currently subscribe, there is a charge to attend, and schools will be invoiced after the event. Any free briefings or events are clearly indicated

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News Update



...for everything you do for children in Oxfordshire

Our next newsletter will be published on 13th March 2026.

With best wishes

The Oxfordshire Governor Services Team -

Jeremy, Helen and Ruth

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