

Welcome to our governance news update

It is hard to believe that we are already in the final part of the summer term, with exam season almost behind us and, hopefully, warmer weather, sports days, and the holiday season still to come. This is always a busy and reflective time for schools and governing bodies alike.

The educational landscape continues to evolve rapidly. Here in Oxfordshire, we are progressing our School Effectiveness work, including the development of our Regional Education Partner (REP) model, strengthening links with schools, and ensuring timely and proportionate support where it is most needed.

Nationally, the picture is also shifting. There are continued developments linked to Ofsted's evolving framework, wider reforms and discussions around accountability, curriculum, and SEND provision, as well as ongoing expectations around transparency and strong governance. These changes, both local and national, bring opportunity but can also create complexity.

We hope that we are able to support you through this changing landscape, and that this newsletter continues to play a helpful role in keeping you informed, confident, and connected in your governance role. As ever, thank you for your ongoing commitment to our schools and, most importantly, to our children and young people across Oxfordshire. Your work makes a genuine difference and is very much appreciated.



Tricia Bunn

Service Manager for
School Effectiveness and
Governance



Helen Tate

Governor Support
Officer



Ruth Pangu

Clerk to Governors
Team Lead

Contact us

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

News Update

Governor Updates

Update on the new School Improvement and Governance Team

We are really pleased that our new Regional Education Partners (REPs) structure is now in place. Our REPs bring a wealth of experience from across the education system and a deep understanding of the realities of school leadership and governance. We're looking forward to governors getting to know their local REP over the autumn term and building strong, supportive relationships.

The REP role is intentionally broad and collaborative. They will work alongside schools to support improvement, help strengthen local networks so schools can learn from one another, and lead on specific areas of expertise across the county.

For governors, this should mean more joined-up conversations, clearer points of contact, and access to trusted professional insight when it's needed. At its heart, this is about strengthening partnership working and ensuring we are all connected in our shared ambition to achieve the very best outcomes for children and young people across Oxfordshire.

Tricia Bunn

Service Manager: Schools and Governance

Children, Education and Families



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DfE publish Experts at Hand guidance

The DfE has released [new guidance](#) on the forthcoming Experts at Hand service. As part of the SEND reforms outlined in the Schools White Paper, the programme will launch in September 2026 and is intended to bring specialists—such as educational psychologists and occupational therapists—into closer day-to-day working with school staff to strengthen support for pupils with SEND. The guidance explains how local authorities should implement the offer, alongside setting out what school leaders can expect and how to access support for their pupils. There is also a useful [blog](#) to sit alongside the guidance.

DfE attendance push

[New guidance](#) has been released this week to support schools in strengthening how they communicate about attendance. This follows [new data](#) showing that pupils are more likely to miss school for reasons such as birthdays, concerts, agricultural events, or due to disrupted weeks at the beginning or end of term. The guidance offers practical advice and ready-to-use templates to help improve attendance messaging, alongside videos from attendance and behaviour hub schools sharing effective approaches.

Updated exclusion guidance

The Department for Education has recently published [updated statutory guidance](#) on suspensions and permanent exclusions, which comes into effect from July 2026. The revised guidance reflects changes in legislation and provides greater clarity on areas such as off-site direction, safeguarding-related separation, and the use of managed moves, reinforcing that exclusion should always be a last resort. Governors should ensure they are familiar with these updates as part of their oversight of behaviour, safeguarding, and statutory compliance.

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News Update

OCC Clerking Service is expanding – join us!

Demand for our Clerking Service continues to grow and we are seeking more new recruits to join our team across Oxfordshire, but particularly around the city of Oxford area.

If you, or someone you know, has governance or school experience or strong transferrable skills, please refer to the Clerk to Governors vacancy on the [OCC jobs page](#). If you would like an informal chat or have a question, please do contact me, Ruth Pangu, at Clerking.Service@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

This role offers great flexibility and can fit around other commitments. We provide training to ensure you are ready to professionally support school governing boards from 1st September, with ongoing training provided to ensure you develop the knowledge you need to be successful and keep up-to-date with legislative and regulatory changes.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Contact us

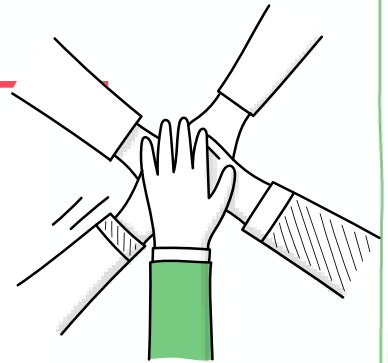
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News Update

Governor Services Training

Governor Services Training programmes

Our summer term training programme continues. Full details are available on the Schools website here: [Governor training | Oxfordshire Schools](#) and all sessions are available to book on [GovernorHub](#)



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

Summer Term Governance Professionals' Briefing Thursday 30th June

FREE to attend

If you are a Governance Professional (Clerk) in Oxfordshire, you are welcome to join us for our **free summer term Briefing**. This virtual session will run next Thursday from 1pm – 2.30pm on Teams and can be booked through GovernorHub: [Book Here](#).

We look forward to seeing you there.

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

OXFORDSHIRE GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION SUMMER CONFERENCE
Saturday 27th June 2026 - 10.00am – 3.00pm



SEND Reforms - Preparing for change

Margaret Mulholland is a specialist in inclusivity and Special Educational Needs. She is a leading advocate for the role schools play in improving understanding of inclusive leadership and teaching, an adviser on SEND policy for the Association of School and College Leaders and recently the Whole School SEND Project Director, leading an evaluation for the Education Endowment Foundation. She is also an Honorary Norham Fellow at the Department of Education, University of Oxford and is a columnist for the TES.

Why Citizenship Education Must Start Early

Association for Citizenship Teaching supports all those engaged in leading, teaching and supporting high quality Citizenship education in schools and colleges. High quality citizenship education has never been more important. Following the Curriculum Review requirements are changing. Citizenship education will be compulsory for primary schools and significantly strengthened across Key Stages 3 and 4. The proposal to reduce the voting age, potentially before the next general election, will impact children who are in our schools now.

While this free meeting is aimed primarily at school governors / trustees, others in education or with an interest in these topics will also be most welcome.

Buffet lunch included.

To book email: Judith.bennetts@outlook.com including any dietary requirements

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