

Governing for Impact

AUTUMN TERM
2026
11th September
Issue 1

THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS

A confident start to the school year

Practical support, local insight and strategic thinking for Oxfordshire governors.

Welcome back

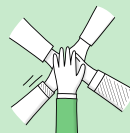
We hope you have all had a restful summer break and return to the new school year feeling refreshed and ready for the opportunities ahead. Thank you for the time, insight and commitment you give to our children and young people across Oxfordshire. Your role as governors and trustees is vital in helping schools stay ambitious, inclusive and focused on what makes the greatest difference for pupils.

As boards settle into the autumn term, we hope this newsletter offers inspiration, clarity and practical support to help you lead with confidence, ask thoughtful questions and make best use of the guidance, training and advice available through Governor Services.

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Supporting strong, strategic and compliant governance



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Our communications

This first edition of **Governing for Impact** brings together team updates, practical local support and clear routes into Governor Services, helping boards focus on strategic leadership, best practice, constructive challenge and making sure every pupil can thrive. This publication will alternate roughly fortnightly during termtime with a more practical paper, **Governing For Assurance**, which will concentrate on updates from Ofsted and the Department for Education, as well as statutory focuses for the time of the year.

Changes within the team

Governor Services: the same team, with one important update

Your Governor Services team remains the same. However, we are delighted to announce that **Rachel Caseby** has now joined the permanent team as Governor Development and Compliance Lead, working alongside **Ruth Pangu** and **Helen Tate**. Contact us via GovernorServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk



Rachel Caseby

Governor Development and
Compliance Lead



Ruth Pangu

Clerk to Governors Team
Lead



Helen Tate

Governor Support Officer

The Clerking Service: Welcoming 7 new members, bringing the team to 32 governance professionals

Our clerking team is looking forward to supporting governing boards for the new academic year. Our new members are undertaking training to be ready for their first meetings. Whilst they settle into their new roles and build up their governance knowledge, they will be supported by the wider clerking team and Governor Services. We look forward to supporting your governing boards in your crucial work with schools. We strive to achieve the highest professional standards to support quality governance, school improvement and the best possible outcomes for children in Oxfordshire.



Clerking Service Level Agreements for 2026-2027 are currently being sent out to Chairs and Schools to ensure governing boards are clear on the service being provided and the role of the governance professional.

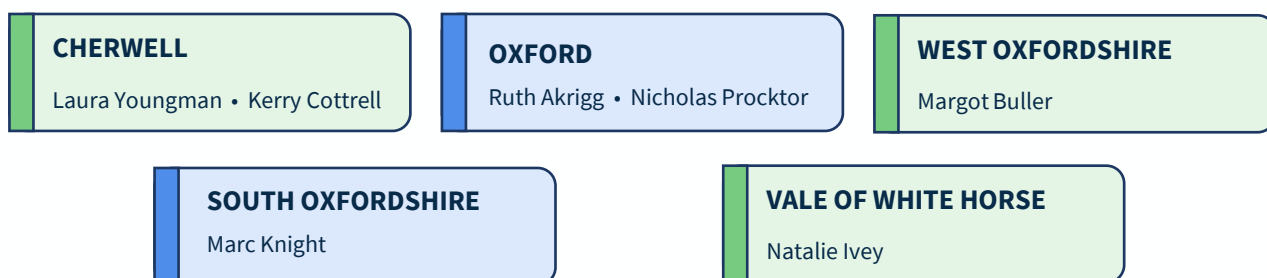
If you have any questions about the service, please contact Ruth Pangu at Clerking.Service@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Our local offer: clearer, more joined-up support

Governor Services is part of Oxfordshire's wider Schools, Settings and Governance team for 2026–27. Our new **School Effectiveness Framework** is now being implemented. The aim is simple - to connect school improvement, governance, compliance and local intelligence so that schools receive support that is proportionate, timely and useful.

- **Regional Education Partners (REPs):** Each district of the county has a REP. They will be the first point of contact with the local authority for maintained schools. Each new REP brings wide ranging school leadership support.

Our new REPs and their regions are:



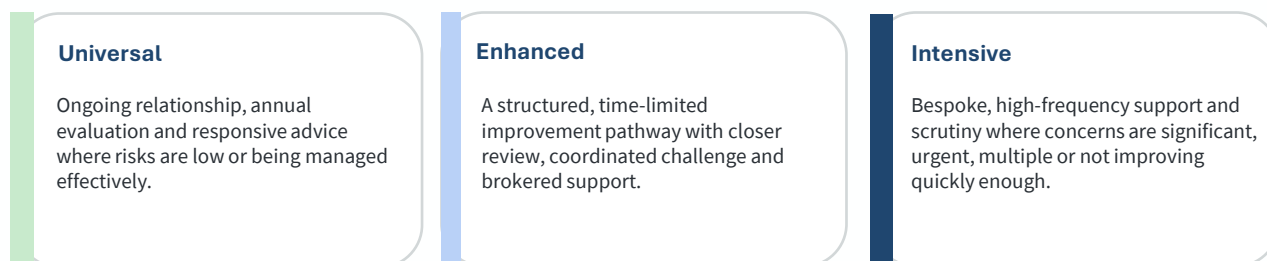
- **Governor Services continuity:** advice, guidance, compliance support, training and clerking expertise remain central to the local offer.
- **National Governance Association (NGA) standard membership:** Giving you access to their Knowledge Centre resources and weekly updates with other benefits
- **Governor voice:** your feedback will help shape the implementation year as the model is tested, refined and embedded.

This year your maintained school will be supported at one of three different levels

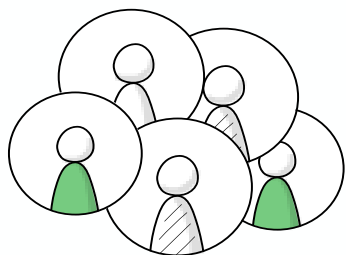


Check with your headteacher which region you are in and which level of support your school will be receiving

A graduated offer with the relationship at its heart



Support levels provide clarity about engagement and assistance. They are not labels or judgements on a school's quality.



Changes to the wider Schools, Settings and Governance Team

There have also been some changes to the wider Schools, Settings and Governance team over the summer.

As you may be aware, Tricia Bunn, Service Manager for Schools, Settings and Governance, has moved on from her role due to family circumstances. Oxfordshire County Council would like to thank Tricia for her contribution and wish her and her family all the very best for the future.

We have begun the recruitment process for the permanent Service Manager for Schools, Settings and Governance role.

In the meantime, **Jane Spilsbury** has joined Oxfordshire County Council as Interim Service Manager. Jane brings extensive experience in school leadership, school improvement and inspection, having served as one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) for five years.

Jane can be contacted at Jane.Spilsbury@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Early Years support has been restructured ahead of the new academic year. Quality Improvement Advisers are now part of the Schools, Settings and Governance team and the Early Years specialist team will be working with many of your schools this term.

NGA support for Oxfordshire maintained schools



From September 2026, Oxfordshire maintained schools are being supported through access to National Governance Association standard membership. This includes practical governance resources, model documents and access to governor conferences and events.

All maintained schools have now been set up with the **Standard membership**. See link below to register your account. If you are having difficulty registering, please contact us.

**BOOK
NOW!**



**REGISTER HERE to access
you account:**
[Register with your
organisation – National
Governance Association](#)

FIND OUT MORE – 2nd Oct 2026 10am

Join Matthew Swann from the NGA for a short **FREE** online session introducing the features of the NGA Standard Package, available to all Oxfordshire maintained schools this year.

Booking now on [GovernorHub](#)

Training and development: make it part of the rhythm of governance

Training works best when it is planned, purposeful and linked to board priorities.



Chairs and governance professionals may wish to add a short training review to the autumn agenda to identify the board's training needs. A key question is what training does your board need to impact on its effectiveness?

The Governor Services Autumn term training programme can be found here: [Governor Training Programme Autumn Term 2026](#).

All subscribers have unlimited access to sessions and we offer a pay as you use service too. If you would like your board to buy into this service, please contact:

GovernorTraining@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Understanding the pathways

This year we have organised the training programme into three pathways to help governors select training that matches their experience, responsibilities and development needs.

Governors do not need to follow only one pathway though; they may choose sessions from across the programme according to their role, board priorities and interests.

Pathway	What it means
Explore Pathway	For new governors and governors wanting to refresh their knowledge. These sessions introduce essential governance responsibilities and support governors to build confidence in understanding their role.
Develop Pathway	For governors exploring the role in greater depth. These sessions support governors who are developing specialist knowledge, taking on link governor responsibilities or strengthening their contribution to board monitoring and discussion.
Lead Pathway	For governors leading either the board or a committee. These sessions support chairs, vice-chairs, committee chairs and governors undertaking formal leadership or panel responsibilities. They are also an excellent way of developing governor knowledge and confidence to support board succession planning.

- Book Governor Services training through GovernorHub or via GovernorTraining@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Please send any training suggestions to this email address too so the programme continues to reflect what boards need.

GovernorHub HOT TIP!



Admins can now assign sessions from our training programme to your governors. This Help article will tell you how:
[Training: Assign training feature | GovernorHub Help Centre](#)

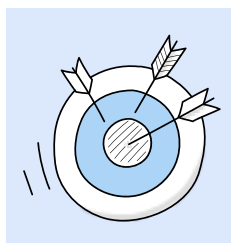
Governing for Impact: Starting the year

The autumn term begins with a focus on readiness, assurance and strategic direction. The first full governing board meeting provides an opportunity to confirm governance arrangements, review safeguarding and compliance, understand the school's priorities and establish how progress will be monitored throughout the year.

THE BIG QUESTION

HOW WILL OUR
BOARD TURN ITS
PRIORITIES INTO
VISIBLE
IMPROVEMENTS
FOR PUPILS?

These five questions can help shape a focused and impactful discussion at your first governing board meeting of the year.



PRIORITIES

What are the school's top three priorities this year, and how will governors know whether progress is being made?



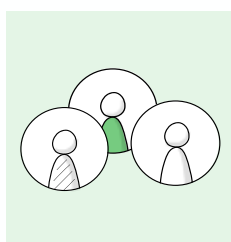
SAFEGUARDING

How are we assuring ourselves that safeguarding is effective in practice, not just compliant on paper?



ATTENDANCE

What does attendance data tell us about barriers for different groups of pupils, and what support is making a difference?



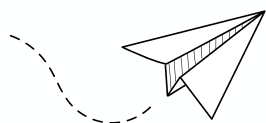
INCLUSION

How are leaders ensuring inclusion, SEND provision and behaviour approaches are working together?



BOARD DEVELOPMENT

What training, skills or external support does this board need to govern confidently this year?



Taking time to explore these questions will help your board to set a clear, shared direction for the year ahead