

Annual Report 2020-21

100% of service users (volunteers and schools)
would use us again

Net Promoter Score **93**

41%
of our
applicants
are under 35

29%
of our
applicants
are from BAME
backgrounds

8.5%
increase in
volunteers
applying

4.5%
increase in
volunteers
appointed

“

Governors for Schools provides an excellent service – we now have 6 governors on our governing board recruited through Governors for Schools... and the quality of governor candidates they provide is outstanding.



Jo Winters,
Chair of Governors, Ealing Grange Primary
School, Ealing

“

I was contacted promptly after submitting my application form with a phone call and an email with all the information I needed. I was then placed in one of my local schools swiftly. I am grateful for the speed and professionalism of your staff.



Adil Dirie
Governor, Grange Primary School, Ealing

“

A great service provided promptly, was responsive to queries and accommodated the inevitable delays caused by COVID issues. We now have a really strong addition to our governing body. I will definitely recommend your services to other governing bodies.



Kevin Burke
Chair of Governors, Penworth Priory
Academy, Lancashire

“

The skills set quality of the governor suggested for my school were perfectly matched to the gaps within the full governing body. I am delighted with the appointment because I'm confident this governor will strengthen the FGB moving forwards.



Joanne Maher
Head Teacher, Abbey Village Primary School,
Lancashire

Legal and administrative information

Trustees who served the charitable company during the year

Linda Wilding (Chair)
Ian Armitage
Jane Higgins
Martin Lawrence MBE
Anne Punter
David Rowsell
Henry Colthurst (resigned 13th October 2020)
Mark Twigg
Dominic McGonigal
Adrian McLean (appointed 14th October 2020)
Anita Ralli (appointed 2nd March 2021)

Company Secretary

Tara Hill

Chief Executive

Hannah Stolton

Registered Office

St Magnus House
3 Lower Thames Street
London
EC3R 6HD

Company Registration number

3879854

Charity Registration Number

1078330

Auditors

AGP
Chartered Accountants
Sutton Quays Business Park
Sutton Weaver
Runcorn
WA7 3EH

Bankers

Lloyds Bank
PO Box 1000
Andover
BX1 1LT

Solicitors

Allen & Overy LLP
One Bishops Square
London

The trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021, which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

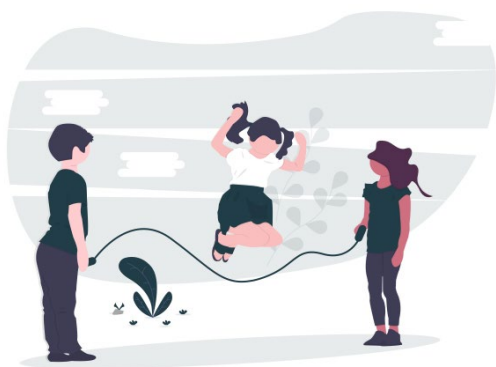
Structure

Governors for Schools is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents.

Who are we?

Governors for Schools is a national education charity that finds and places skilled people on governing boards across England and Wales. We have over 20 years' experience recruiting high-calibre volunteers from a range of backgrounds, so that they can bring their knowledge to school boards – and make a difference to how schools are run.

We're part of our volunteers' governor journey and are committed to playing an active role in their development in the role. We believe that placing skilled volunteers from diverse backgrounds on school boards contributes to effective governance. A strong and diverse board enables a school to provide pupils with the best education possible, helping children and young people reach their full potential.



Our mission

We're committed to providing those responsible for appointing governors with the best governor and trustee recruitment service in the sector.

Our vision

We're working to ensure that every school in England and Wales has excellent governance, driving improved educational outcomes for all children and young people.

Our Objectives

We facilitate the recruitment and placement of people with business and management skills who are willing to act as governors with the aim of strengthening the governing boards of schools. We believe this is of benefit to the public through the advancement of education by making available advice and assistance to all schools.

The company reviews its aims, objectives and activities each year ensuring they remain focused on the stated purpose of the charity. The Trustees refer to the guidance given by the Charity Commission on public benefit during this process and assess how successful each activity has been and what benefits have been brought to the groups of people the charity is set up to help

Our values:

Excellence

- Attention to detail and a desire to continually improve by seeking and using feedback
- A 'can do' attitude and sense of pride in delivering high-quality work at all times

Integrity

- Know when to challenge assumptions and suggest better approaches
- Question actions inconsistent with our values

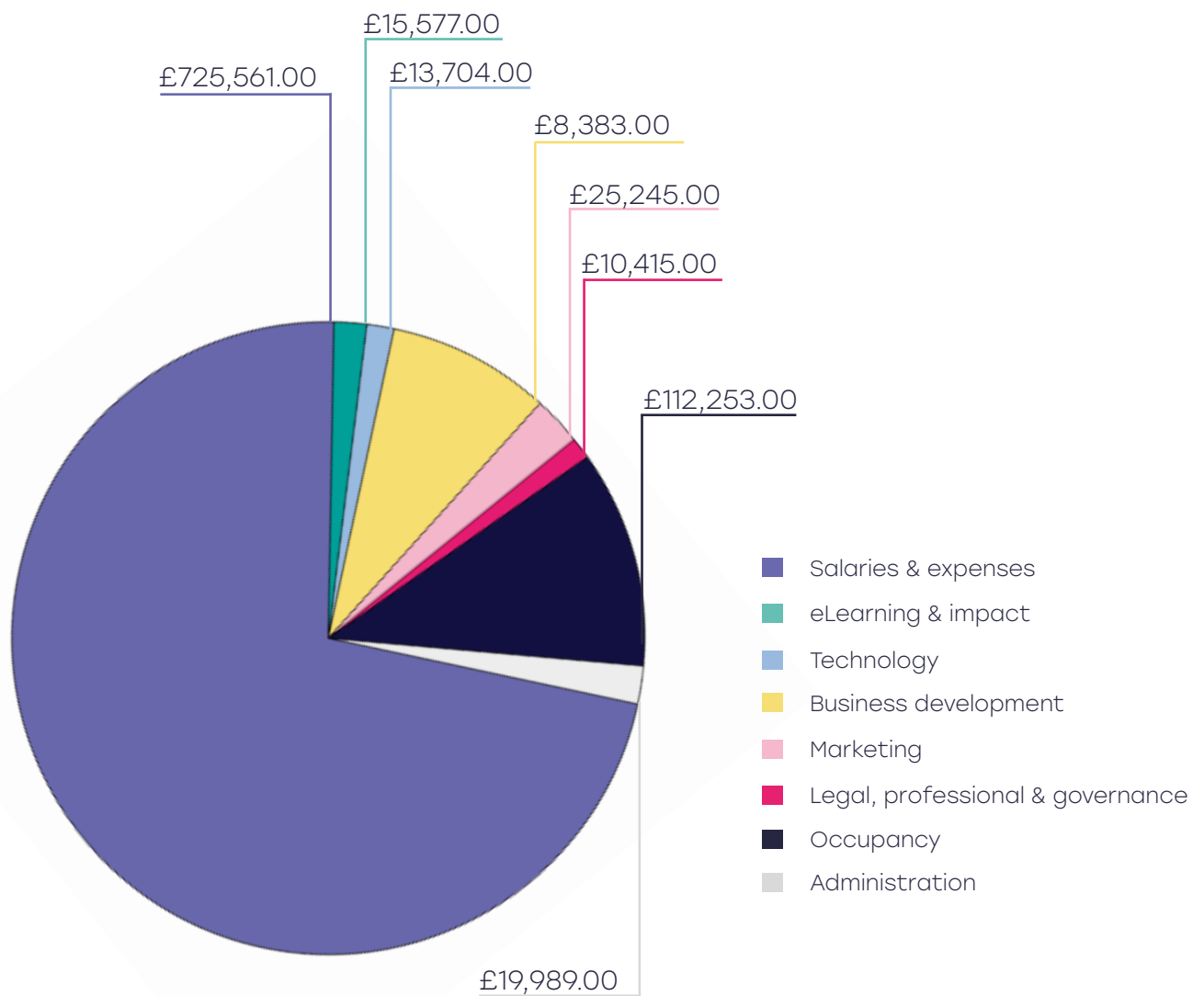
Collaboration

- Work with other organisations to provide the best service possible to all our stakeholders
- Encourage agile, cross-team working to use all available skills and resources

Pioneering

- Take initiative and find creative and effective ways to get things done

Expenditure 2020-21



Why is our work needed?

In times of immense challenge and change, governors have provided support and guidance to school leaders. The role of governor or trustee will be no less important as schools navigate the Covid recovery landscape. With the drive to academisation, the need for skilled governing boards is as important as ever. Our links to a diverse group of professionals will be essential to ensure that governing boards are serving their schools in the best way possible.

Governors for Schools aims to:

- Increase the number of governors placed in schools and trained to be effective
- Raise our profile in education and business sectors
- Understand and report our impact
- Broaden the funding base of the charity

During a difficult year for schools, who have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of every pupil, we're proud to have provided support by finding volunteers who bring skills and passion to drive improvement – even in challenging times.

Chair of Trustees Report



Linda Wilding

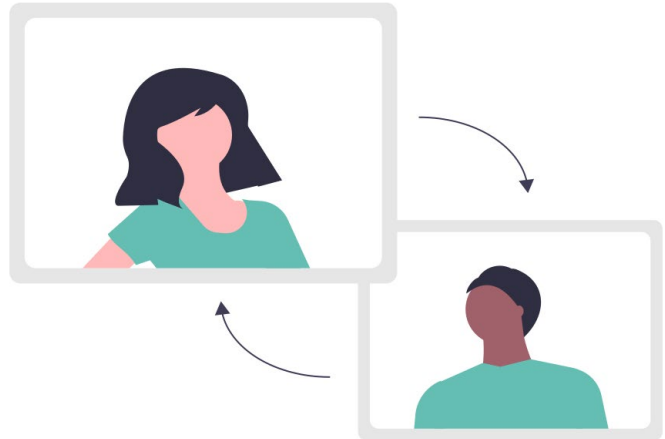
Chair, Governors for Schools
Trustee, GEP multi-academy trust, Surrey

This year has seen immense challenges across the whole of the education sector, and I am proud of the way Governors for Schools has continued to support school boards. Despite the uncertainty, the number of volunteers applying to become a governor has increased by 9%.

Governing boards have of course had to adapt their ways of working, with meetings being held online. Establishments that have never worked remotely have quickly adjusted, and it is a testament to their adaptability that we have seen another year on year increase in the number of volunteers appointed. Our thanks go to all the hardworking chairs of governors, headteachers, and clerks, who have used our service.

We continue to focus on reaching volunteers with essential skills from diverse backgrounds and encouraging them to apply for the role. We are delighted that this year, we have seen so many applications from both those under the age of 35 and those from a BAME background. As boards move to a blended approach, with a mixture of online and in person meetings, we will be able to open up the role to an even more diverse group of people.

We have worked hard to increase our reach in areas where it is a challenge to find suitable volunteers. Through extensive social media outreach, we have put more rural and deprived locations under the spotlight and seen a correlated increase in placement numbers. 15% of our volunteers have been placed at schools that are rated Requires Improvement by Ofsted. These volunteers bring their skills to the schools that need it most, and we're there to support them on their journey.

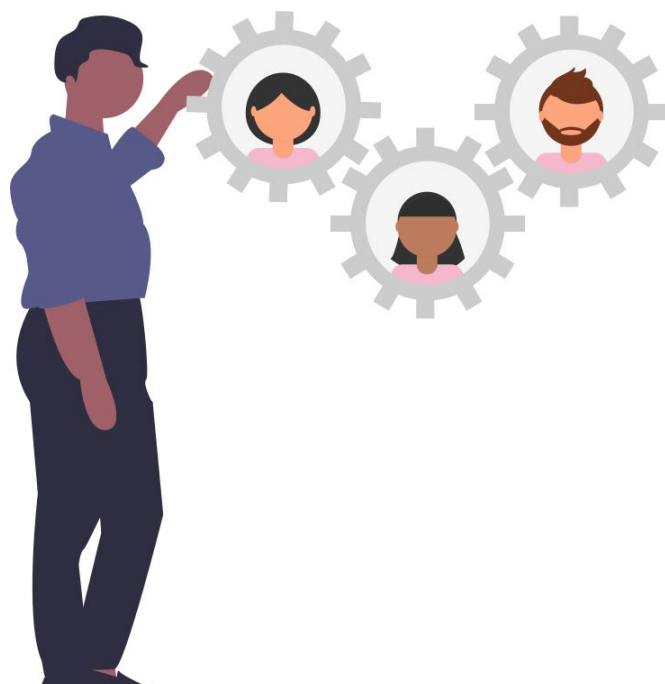


This year we have made progress against our goal to increase our funding from corporate supporters, reducing our reliance on funding from donations. Through spreading our sources of income we aim to become a more sustainable organisation. Our model is based on all employees engaging with fundraising - working with our partners to build relationships that last. We have been delighted to welcome additional corporate supporters into partnerships which benefit schools, their pupils and the volunteers through ongoing professional development. Our thanks go to all those that support us financially meaning we can continue the work we do to support schools across England and Wales.

Our initiative to extend our model into Wales this year has been a success. Through our work with universities and local businesses, we have engaged new people, and by building partnerships with local authorities, we have quickly placed them into long held vacancies.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the staff at Governors for Schools and the trustees who give their time so freely. We are grateful for the service provided by Henry Colthurst who stepped down in October, after 2 and a half years as a trustee. We were delighted that Adrian and Anita joined the board of trustees recently and we have already benefitted from their expertise and passion for education.

Finally, our thanks go to the thousands of volunteers who have started their journey to become a school governor with us this year. The community spirit has shone through in difficult times and we're optimistic, having seen more people coming forward to support their local schools that have been the bedrock of communities. Over the next year we will look to build on this further. We'll also incorporate remote governance into our work, enabling schools to access skills and a more diverse pool of volunteers.



“

Governors for Schools made the application and placement process manageable. The Partnerships Manager provided great support as he was in regular contact with me effectively managing my expectations on the application and placement process. Really happy with my placement and service provided by Governors for Schools!



Madawa Chirikeni

Governor, Joseph Turner Primary, Sandwell

CEO Report



Hannah Stolton

CEO, Governors for Schools

Chair of governors, Nazeing Primary School, Essex



We've been delighted to see growth across our organisation this year, despite all the challenges that have come with Covid. I have been proud to lead the team who have continued to work with dedication to ensure more volunteers are placed as governors.

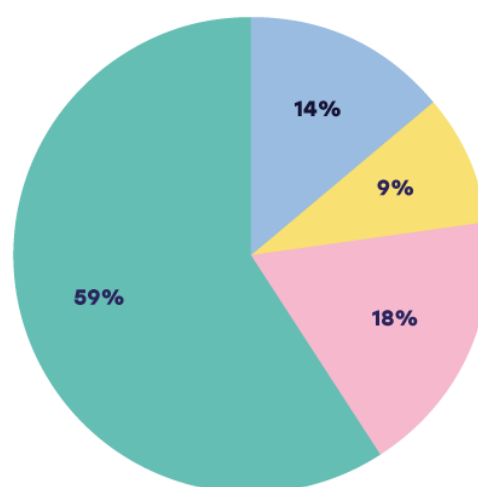
Unsurprisingly, we had a slow start to the year, as schools adjusted to working in new ways. During this time, governing boards moved to online meetings. However, these changes didn't result in a reduction of applications. In fact, more people applied to volunteer as governors than the same period last year. We increased the number of people we appointed to boards across England, particularly outside of London.

Our pivot towards working from home was easily made. Some team members were already working regionally and so we rolled out the same model to our office workers. We avoided the need to make any redundancies, nor put anyone on furlough. Our staff continue to focus on finding suitable skilled people to join school boards and to provide support to our volunteers. We've maintained the momentum necessary to achieve our goals. By continuing to adapt and work at pace, we've been able to effectively serve the schools and volunteers who give their time to improve education for the pupils in their care.

It's important that volunteers are prepared for the role and can contribute from their first meeting. Our resources are available for all volunteers to access before they join a board. These resources, covering a range of key governance topics, go hand in hand with our Introduction to School Governance eLearning and monthly webinars. The whole support package means that even first-time governors begin their governor journey well-equipped and ready to hit the ground running.

In September, we launched our year-long 'Wellbeing Governors' campaign. Working with partners, we have created and shared resources to encourage boards to put whole school wellbeing at the heart of what they do. The campaign focused on pupil mental health and wellbeing in the autumn term as all children and young people returned to school. In the spring term, we focused on staff mental health and wellbeing as schools faced a second period of lockdown, juggling an increased number of children still attending in person, along with a more comprehensive remote offer. Throughout these times, we ensured governors had the right questions to ask, balancing the line between support and challenge. Throughout the summer term, we'll focus on the importance of being active and the impact physical activity has on wellbeing.

Staffing responsibilities



- Support & training of volunteers
- Exec team
- Partnerships development
- Recruitment & placement

A key milestone this year was launching our service in Wales. Working closely with Governors Cymru, Welsh Universities and Welsh Local Authorities, we are delighted to have already placed over 10 governors on school boards. We look forward to forming relationships over the course of the next year to build on our initial success.

We have been delighted to welcome new corporate and university partners on board. These organisations recognise the need for skilled professionals on governing boards and the correlation between volunteering as a governor and professional development. Volunteers gain experience outside of their usual remit, bringing new skills back to the workplace. Our partner organisations give employees time off to attend board meetings, enabling them to give back to their communities. We thank all our corporate partners for the financial support they provide which enables us to continue our work.



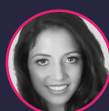
69% of
volunteers
placed in
primary
schools

21% of
volunteers
placed in
secondary
schools

8% of
volunteers
placed in
special schools
& PRUs

“

I have had a wonderful experience with Governors for Schools and it has resulted in my becoming a governor at a fantastic school that is an excellent fit for me. I really appreciate the efforts of the organisation to this end. They have been very professional throughout the search process, provided excellent support & advice and provided an exceptional level of service.

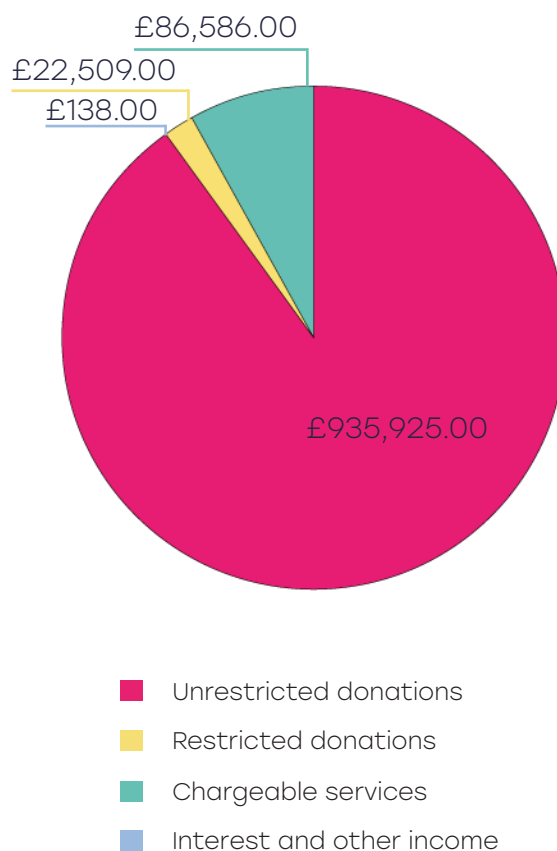


Shenila Rawal,
Governor, Gordon's School, Woking, Surrey

Key achievements for the year

- 9% increase in volunteers applying
- 4.5% increase in volunteers placed on boards
- Increase in funding from corporate supporters
- 4652 accessed one or more of our eLearning modules
- 7172 attendees at our training webinars
- 30 university partners
- Wellbeing Governors campaign

Income 2020-21



Expanding into Wales

In September we decided to expand our reach into Wales. To ensure a quick roll out that meant we started to have an impact straight away, we:

- Reached out to Local Authorities to determine need
- Formed a partnership with Governors Cymru to gain local insight into governance issues and provide Welsh-specific support to new governors
- Engaged with universities to reach their staff and alumni, and support existing staff networks
- Appointed a local member of staff on a part time basis to respond to requirements
- Spoke to our current partners to engage with their employees in the area

By April

- * 6 LA partnerships
- * 2 university partners
- * 163 vacancies registered
- * 50 volunteer applications
- * 11 governors placed onto governing boards



The year ahead

In 2021/22 we aim to:

- Continue to increase the number of volunteers applying for the role and placed on boards across England and Wales
- Increase the number of companies we work with to access even more volunteers and further diversify our funding
- Work towards our Decade of Diversity pledges to ensure governing boards provide effective governance
- Refresh our Skills Development Tracker to ensure that our governors can track their development easily and effectively
- Continue our Wellbeing Governors campaign and commence our new campaign All Pupils, Every Ambition, which will focus on social mobility and how governors can ensure that all the pupils in their schools are reaching their potential
- Hold our first governance conference, where we can share information and ideas with governors online across England and Wales
- Carry out research with Nottingham Trent University into the impact our governors have
- Diversify our funding so that we are a more sustainable organisation, by securing funding from our supporting partners and the Department for Education as well as Donations from Trusts and Foundations

Supporters

Our supporters make our work possible. By working with businesses, public sector bodies, charities, professional bodies, and universities, we're able to expand our reach and find more skilled people to become governors.

Thank you to all the organisations we've worked with this year, including:



Business partners

Many of our volunteers come from partner organisations – those who see the value their employees can provide to schools through sharing their expertise, experience and time and also recognise the skills and experience their employees gain through their governor role.

The volunteers we recruit from these organisations, bring the skills that boards request most:

- 61% of volunteers from partner organisations bring finance skills
- 49% bring prior knowledge of the education system
- 40% bring HR skills

Throughout 2020-21, we developed a number of new partnerships and we look forward to working with these organisations over the coming year. These are Barclays, Deloitte, Wesleyan, Credit Suisse, Northern Powergrid, Mishcon de Reya, and Vitality, with more partners set to launch in the months ahead.



Governors for Schools have been great to work with so far - clear, personable, professional, proactive and responsive. They respond to my questions with useful answers and solutions. The resources they've shared have also been relevant and helpful for our growing network.



Alison Walker,
Partnerships Manager, Deloitte

University partners

We now work with over 30 university partners – nearly a third of all the universities in England and Wales – to encourage staff and alumni to become school governors. Through these partnerships, we have engaged with over 500 potential volunteers, securing hundreds more applications ready to support schools this year.

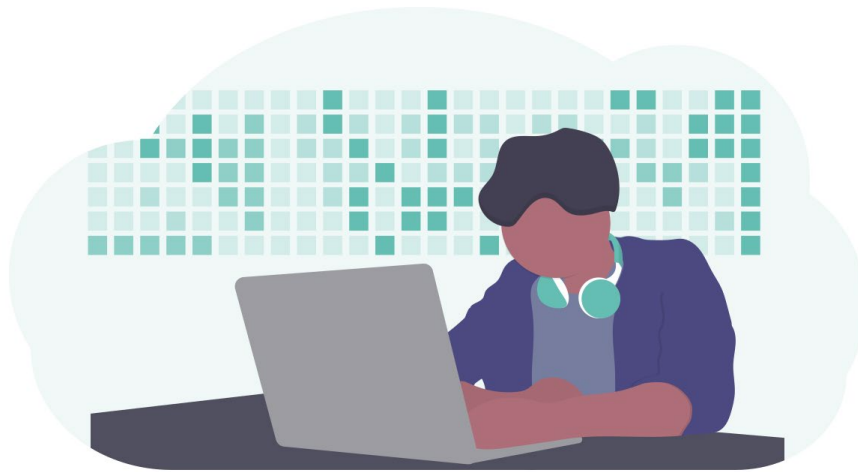


Working with Governors for Schools has been a very positive partnership. The team are excellent to work with and the resources they provide such as webinars and online training are a great form of support for our staff who are governors. They have always been keen to support us in delivering information sessions for staff and attending our governor staff network events. My experience with them has been very professional and I enjoy working with them greatly.



Ashley Callard,
Access and Engagement, Durham University

This year we have focused on our collaborative approach. Our thanks go to The Key, What Works Wellbeing, Place2Be, Anna Freud Centre, NAHT, HELOA, EdSupport, Thank and Praise, Bounce Together, Welbee, Sport England and Active Partnerships, Schools Advisory Service, Teach Active.



Training

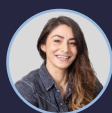
Throughout 2020-21, we've focused on creating resources to make sure our volunteers are fully prepared for their role and can hit the ground running.

All our volunteers receive access to:

- Introductory information about the role, including key information about what they can expect, useful documents and an overview of the governor position
- An invitation to join our monthly webinars where they can learn more about timely governance topics and ask questions
- A dedicated point of contact to provide support throughout the application process, matching volunteers with a school in need
- Access to our current eLearning modules, including the Introduction to School Governance
- 12 months free access to The Key for School Governors, including the new Induction Module

“

“Having had other safeguarding training, I appreciated that this one kept relating back to the current context that we are in. Also information was concise and gave helpful pointers to what governors should be looking for and questions they may want to ask their schools.”



Juliette Ruiz,
Governor, Co-op Academy Woodslee, Liverpool

“

“The webinar clarified the role of a governor and the appropriate questions to ask and how to support the school and teachers we represent in the best possible way.”



Shari Lewison-Frisch,
Governor, Ridgeway Secondary School, Worcester

Sustainable Development Goals - Our commitments and progress

Responsible consumption and production

From mid-2019, we moved away from our London-centric hiring strategy and hired people in regional roles so that they were based in the areas they covered thus reducing travel across the country. We insist all employees travel by public transport where possible.

In February 2020, we stopped sending physical welcome packs to our new volunteers each month and moved all the content online. This saved hundreds of sheets of paper and over 200 plastic pens each month.

We're committed to putting the environmental impact front of mind when making decisions, and choosing a route with the smallest environmental footprint.

Improving education

Central to all we do is our goal to improve education for children through effective governance.

We recognise the importance of placing governors on boards who have the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and actions required to create a sustainable world, starting with education. Over the next 5 years, we'll grow our partnerships to include organisations dedicated to improving the world we live in, and whose employees can contribute to the greener running of schools and focus on climate education.

Our governors can help schools bridge the gap between the skills provided as part of education and the skills needed for the world of work. We're committed to focusing on skills for life, and pledge to create more resources to support governors in this area of their role.

Reducing inequality

While we place more volunteers from BAME backgrounds on boards than the national average, we know we have more work to do in improving the diversity of boards across England and Wales and not just in cities.

We're committed to making remote governance work for more schools and volunteers. We want to ensure that schools in often rural locations benefit from skilled and diverse boards helping to raise the aspirations of pupils.

We're committed to recruiting volunteers from BAME backgrounds and have signed up to the Decade of Diversity pledge. We'll achieve this with targeted outreach to ensure the governor opportunity is an opportunity for everyone, breaking down barriers to access.

29% of our applicants are from a BAME background

9% of our volunteers were placed in rural locations

15% of our volunteers were placed at a "Requires Improvement" school

Good governance

The trustees meet quarterly to monitor progress and to make decisions concerning the strategic direction of the charity. The Chief Executive attends all board meetings. The board approves the annual Business Plan and detailed budget. The staff of Governors for Schools are authorised to work within the framework of the Business Plan and budget under the direction of the Chief Executive. The trustees receive reports from the Chief Executive, comprising financial, statistical and other information to enable them to measure the company's performance against budget, targets and objectives for the year.

New trustees are recruited to the board as required in order to ensure that the board membership has the proper range of skills and competencies. A skills audit is undertaken regularly to identify gaps in expertise. Once recruited, trustees have a full induction with the Chair and CEO, they also have conversations with other trustees. Gaps in knowledge or skills are identified and training is provided where necessary.

None of the trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Any connection between a trustee or senior manager of the charity must be disclosed to the full board of trustees. In the current year no such related party transactions were reported, other than as disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

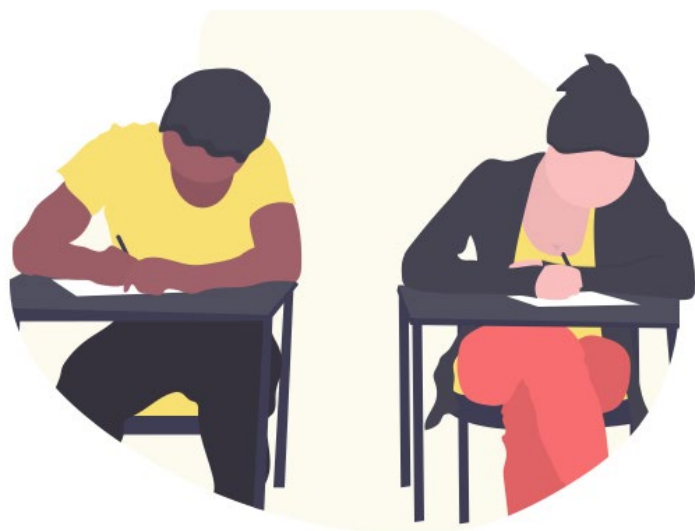
Reserve Policy

The trustees' current policy is to hold sufficient reserves to provide working capital to meet contracted commitments, 3 months operating costs, and an organised winding down of the company should this ever be required. These reserves are reflected in the designated reserve fund shown in the accounts. Donations from supporting organisations are sought early in the financial year to provide working capital for the year ahead.

Reserves at the end of the year consisted of Restricted Funds £2,500, Designated Fixed Asset Fund (to be matched against future depreciation charges) £10,446; Designated Reserve Fund £215,000; and Unrestricted Funds of £441,641.

Risk Management

The Company has a comprehensive on-going and up-to-date risk register. The board takes direct responsibility for management of risk in two business critical areas; these areas are cessation or reduction of funding and the performance of the Chief Executive. The other risks are designated as operational and the Chief Executive is responsible for monitoring changes and alerting the board.



Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of Governors for Schools for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The trustees are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



Small Company Provision

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The Report of the Trustees' was signed on behalf of the board of directors on 25th September 2021 by:

Linda Wilding

Effective Governors, Excellent Schools.