

Annual Report 2022-23

We placed 2,046 volunteers onto 1,654 school boards across England and Wales

4% increase in volunteers appointed

31% of volunteers are from an ethnic minority

68% are under 45

53% are female, 46% are male,
and 1% are non-binary, transgender, or preferred not to say



2,029 eLearning course completions by volunteers

Our three most popular modules were

An Introduction to School Governance
Finance for School Governors
Driving School Improvement

Over 7,000 governors watched or attended our webinars

Our three most popular webinars were

Is your governance ready for Ofsted?
Monitoring the impact of Pupil Premium funding
Safeguarding: 2022 update



Legal and administrative information

Board of Trustees	Dominic McGonigal (Chair) Ian Armitage Jane Higgins Adrian McLean Anne Punter Anita Ralli David Rowsell Mark Twigg Linda Wilding (resigned 31st January 2023)
Company Secretary	Tara Hill
Chief Executive	Hannah Stolton
Registered Office	Sycamore House Sutton Quays Business Park Sutton Weaver Runcorn England WA7 3EH
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

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, allowing them to bring their knowledge to school and trust boards – and make a difference to how schools are run.

We're part of our volunteers' journeys and are committed to playing an active role in their development as governors. We believe that placing skilled volunteers from diverse backgrounds on governing boards contributes to effective governance. A strong and diverse board enables schools and trusts 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 governance appointments with the best governor and trustee recruitment service in the sector.

Our vision

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

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, finding creative and efficient ways to get things done.

Annual report foreword

There are how many vacancies? 20,000 on school boards across England alone. With so many gaps around the board table, headteachers and other staff members lack the board-level support necessary to help them drive pupil success.

To help fill these gaps, we've been encouraging a diverse range of people to take on governance roles in their communities. While we understand that pro bono volunteering can be tricky for busy professionals, we also know that governance can generate fantastic benefits for both volunteers and schools.

In fact, after 15 years as a governor – mostly as a chair – I can safely say it's one of the most rewarding things I do. There's a real joy in knowing you've played a part in brightening thousands of children's futures. If that weren't enough, governance also allows volunteers to develop sought-after professional skills and apply their business know-how and life skills to an educational context.

We estimate that the added value of each governor is around £1,500 every year in terms of freely given professional expertise. However, I can attest that the real value is far greater when a good governing board is able to provide vision, integrity, and drive to bring the best out of the headteacher and school staff.

This year, we exceeded our targets by placing more high-quality governors in schools. This achievement was only possible because more and more volunteers are signing up. We are also actively recruiting and training governors from under-represented groups to fill existing gaps and increase much-needed diversity in our governing boards. We launched our Pathway To Governance programme, supported by Amazon, and started the process of training young governors in this important role.

We also launched our Trustee Recruitment Service, following the closure of Academy Ambassadors. More than half the schools in England are academies and need good trustees for their boards, as well as strong governors at local level.

I know from personal experience that the chair is often responsible for recruiting governors and trustees and, in many cases, their successors. Finding skilled and enthusiastic non-execs is no small feat, and I would like to thank all those who dedicate their time to the job and make it seem easy – the staff at Governors for Schools, our corporate partners, and the many individuals, trusts, councils, and organisations who support us in the sector.

But my biggest thanks is reserved for the 3,800 volunteers who have put themselves forward in the past year. You offer time out of your busy professional lives for the future of our children and we see the difference this makes every day in schools across the country.



Dominic McGonigal

Chair of Trustee
Board, Governors for
Schools

CEO report

It has been an absolute privilege to lead the Governors for Schools team over the last 12 months. It's been a time of rapid growth and change, and we are delighted with what we have achieved. Thanks to the dedication of my team and trustees, we have continued to deliver on our central aim of recruiting and placing a diverse group of volunteers into governance roles.

Our primary ambition for the year was to successfully match over 2,000 of our volunteers with schools and see them appointed onto boards. The governor recruitment team fulfilled this goal by working diligently with the thousands of volunteers who applied to give their time and skills to support schools.

We could not have achieved such a fantastic result without the enthusiasm of each volunteer. Thank you for taking up this essential role and encouraging others to do the same. Our outreach events have been well-attended and continued to develop the diversity of volunteers stepping up.

Our employer partners have also played a vital role in supporting us to achieve our goal. By encouraging their staff to volunteer as governors, we have seen an increase in the skilled professionals coming forward. What's more, we could not continue to function without their financial support. We have been delighted to welcome several new partners this year, including Atkins, Citi, and Admiral, and to continue building on the foundations set with current supporters.

We continue to receive huge financial support from the 80:20 Foundation, and have been able to run our conference, campaigns, and development of eLearning thanks to sponsorship and promotion from a variety of organisations. Thank you for recognising the value of our work and for enabling us to provide our service.

We have also been working behind the scenes to improve our procedures and tech platforms. Over the coming year, service users will see improvements in how they access our services, which we hope will be more intuitive and enable a more streamlined navigation process.

Finally, we set up our Trustee Recruitment Service this year. Following the closure of Academy Ambassadors, we recognised the need for trustee recruitment support within the sector, quickly recruiting from their talented staff to set up a team to support trusts in finding the volunteers they need at board level. We've already made placements across England and have set ambitious targets for the year ahead. We very much look forward to seeing this area of our business grow over 2023-24.



Hannah Stoltson

Chief Executive
Officer, Governors
for Schools

Testimonials

"The team were super supportive and communicative through the entire process and helped me land a governor position at a local school that aligned with my personal values."

Frank de Souza (and Daisy)

Appointed at the Bridge Short Stay School, Cheshire



"I am pleased that I took a chance on contacting Governors for Schools, as I was feeling pretty strange in the early months of my retirement. I feel really excited about the prospect of supporting in my new role."



Alison Campbell

Appointed at Lodge Farm Education, Leicestershire

"A really great service - I was surprised at how quickly I was matched with a local secondary school (considering there aren't as many as primary!) and the communication has been fantastic.

I was a bit nervous when I first started as a governor, but I have felt supported all the way. There are many useful resources and training modules available online and I've definitely grown in confidence in my role as a school governor."



Annie Wong

Placed at Cleeve Park School, South East London

Key achievements of the year

We supported

- 32% more volunteers, receiving the highest number of applications in five years.
- Over 2,000 people onto boards in 2022-23, supporting 1,654 different schools.
- 25% more volunteers from our corporate partners onto boards, supporting schools with their skills.

We reached

- Our conference saw 3,600 total session views.
- 7,000 people accessed our training webinars.
- 2,029 people completed one of our eLearning modules.

We launched

- Governor Induction training, providing a comprehensive induction for governors.
- Our Welsh Language eLearning module in conjunction with Cardiff University and Governors Cymru.
- Headteacher recruitment training materials.
- Our Boards against Bullying campaign, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of governing boards.
- National School Governors' Awareness Day, helping to deliver the programme and elevate the importance of the governor role.

Our work in Wales

In 2022-23, we have continued to build on our impact in Wales.

Some key highlights from the past 12 months include:

- 93 governors appointed, representing a 22% increase on 2021-22.
- 191 volunteers recruited across 20 Local Authority areas.
- One new corporate partnership in Wales.

The charity has also:

- Launched a bilingual eLearning module for new and prospective governors in Wales, co-produced with Governors Cymru Services and funded by Cardiff University.
- Hosted a successful university event with attendees from five Welsh universities.
- Successfully engaged with more schools in Wales through a concerted school engagement effort, leading to more co-opted governor placements.

Our work on the Trustee Recruitment Service (TRS)

In 2022-23, we successfully launched our Trustee Recruitment Service (TRS) and laid the foundations for growth in 2023-24 and beyond. Our TRS provides a dedicated, high-quality service for the academy trustee sector. The service launched in September and, in its first phase, focused on generating interest, demonstrating 'proof of concept', and refining processes.

The service was provided free of charge on a pilot basis to a number of trusts to demonstrate effectiveness and help identify areas for adjustment or improvement. The service received strong endorsements, including:

"We used Governors for Schools' Trustee Recruitment Service as it was recommended to us by a chair who had had success in using the service. We had exhausted our other recruitment initiatives and found the service easy to use. The process started with a conversation with a TRS team member to outline our requirements, who subsequently contacted us with a list of potential trustees. All communication with the team has been prompt and clear. The service identified two potential trustees who fit our requirements in a relatively short period of time."

Great Learners Trust, Buckinghamshire, 9 schools

"We had been looking for a trustee with financial experience who could join our Finance Committee. We had tried routes such as contacting local companies but had had no success. The Governors for Schools' TRS came along at the right time, assessing our requirements and discussing them with the Chair of Trustees. TRS rapidly provided the CV of a potential trustee with relevant skills and we were able to meet him soon after. The outcome is that we have a keen new trustee with expertise which will be valuable to our board."

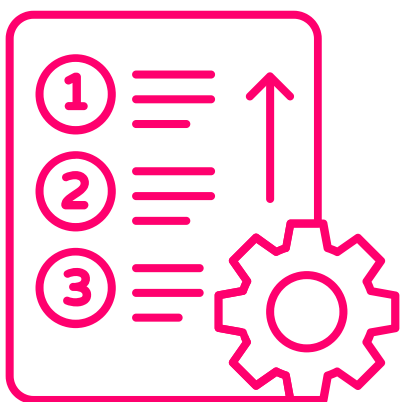
The Mead Educational Trust, Leicester, 13 schools

"The Trustee Recruitment Service was very easy to use and our requirements were considered at every step. We are very happy with the quality of the trustee found for our board, who will fill a skills gap in HR. This is an excellent service allowing us to address gaps on the board and think strategically about succession planning. The appointed person is keen, committed, and has a broad range of skills that will enhance our work across the trust. We highly recommend this service and will certainly use it again in the future – thank you."

InMAT, Northampton, 11 schools

Our work on the Trustee Recruitment Service (TRS) continued...

Onboarding of key personnel, establishment of processes, practices, and principles, as well as the initial promotion of the programme has led to a steady first period for TRS. The service commenced active promotion, marketing, and business development in the final quarter of 2022-23 to help meet ambitious targets for 2023-24.



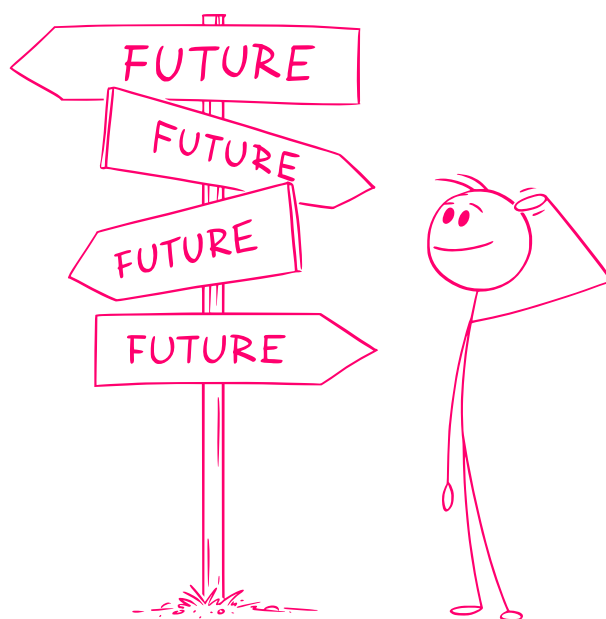
The key priorities for 2023-24 include growing the service to allow us to serve more trusts and better promote the programme, increasing awareness of TRS, and boosting market penetration to meet our revenue targets and make the programme self-sustaining over the medium- and longer-term.

We are also committed to positioning the service as a market leader known for high-calibre candidate recruitment and rigorous processes.

The year ahead

Next year we plan to:

- Place 2,350 governors and 100 trustees.
- Launch a bespoke Chair Recruitment Service for both trustee and governing boards.
- Develop our website and tech further to support busy chairs and clerks who recruit governors.
- Conduct a survey and review our impact, five years after our last report.
- Run our conference, campaigns, and outreach events to support the sector, and introduce governor and trustee roles to more volunteers.
- Collaborate with more partners across industry and our sectors to enhance our impact.
- Grow our sources of income to sustain our work.



“

It is an absolute pleasure to work with the Governors for Schools team. We couldn't ask for a higher level of service. They are proactive, insightful, and engaging, and are a big part of the reason we've been able to grow trust and credibility in the Atkins STEM Governors programme across such a large and complex organisation – as well as being able to inspire our clients.

Jess Bates

**Atkins UK Governors for Schools Programme
Lead and a school governor**



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

Our corporate partnerships are integral to our work as a charity. We are fortunate to work with over 20 organisations that recognise the value their employees can bring to school governance roles by supporting strategic change in schools, academies, and trusts. Our partners also recognise the development opportunities these roles afford to their colleagues.

In 2022-23, we were delighted to see 266 volunteers from our partners appointed into governance roles, marking a 25% increase on the previous year.

These volunteers typically possess the skillsets schools most commonly request. Of the 468 applications received in 2022-23:

- 74% bring a strong knowledge of finance
- 35% bring HR skills
- 32% bring previous knowledge of the education sector

Our corporate partners are also diverse employers and, across all applications in 2022-23, 45% were from an ethnic minority, helping us diversify the governance landscape.

More partners joined us to promote school governance roles in 2022-23, including Admiral, Atkins, and Citi. These partnerships have already proved highly successful and, more recently, we've started working with British Land and Heathrow. With more partnerships set to launch in the coming months, we're looking forward to another impactful year ahead.

Thanks to the generous support of Allen & Overy LLP, we created valuable resources and an eLearning module for our 'Boards Against Bullying' campaign in the Autumn term. Many of our employees have benefitted from the Deloitte Digital Connect programme throughout the year and Deloitte kindly donated a number of laptops to our growing team.

“

Our work with corporate partners truly is at the heart of what we do as an organisation, and we're so pleased with the level of interest shown in developing thriving school governor networks by our wonderful partners. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about the valuable work we do together and how you can get involved.

Will Durham

Head of Impact and Corporate Partnerships
Governors for Schools

Training

Throughout 2022-23, our training team has developed a number of additional resources to support those in governance roles, primarily focusing on helping those newly appointed to hit the ground running.

In the past year, we've developed and released [eLearning](#) modules covering:

- Anti-bullying and the role governors play
- Headteacher recruitment – a guide for governors
- The English school system
- An introduction to governance in Wales (English and Welsh language versions)

We've developed a more intensive governor induction course for governors in academies and maintained schools, which is now available to purchase on our [website](#).

We have updated and refreshed a number of our most popular courses such as 'Driving school improvement' and 'Finance for new governors'.

Our ever popular Better Governor webinar series continues to grow in popularity, with over 3,000 attendees this year, and more than 4,100 watching the recordings back on our YouTube channel.

Conference

The annual Governors for Schools Conference proved to be a popular event with the sector in 2022. Kindly sponsored by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), the virtual, CPD-certified conference attracted over 7,000 session event registrations and 3,600 live session views over two days. In fact, we gained approximately 1,400 more live views than the 2021 event. We delivered 15 sessions with the support of 19 external organisations, and curated over 10 hours of on-demand content. We also created downloadable written resources, which are available on our website.

The event received an impressive 98% recommendation rate from delegates, with average session ratings being 4.3 out of 5.

Feedback

“

"Overall, this conference is proving indispensable for both new and experienced governors."

"This conference has been excellent."

"Really very well managed and with quality presentations."

“

Great service, thank you. I also point my governors (I clerk for multiple boards) towards your training resources and webinars and make use of them myself. For small schools with tight budgets where only a limited number of subscriptions are possible, it is fantastic to have some free supplementary resources.

Mhairi Campbell, Clerk to Governors

Working in collaboration with the sector

We actively collaborate with a wide range of organisations within the educational and charitable sectors to enrich our learning and campaign resources, reach new audiences, and enhance brand recognition.

We have long-standing relationships with other governance organisations, including Better Governor, GovernorHub, and The Hoot. Each of these organisations has played a vital role in promoting our work and enriching our resources through, for example, our Better Governor Webinars. As such, we look forward to continue nurturing these relationships and collaborating on more exciting projects.



We are grateful for the many ways in which partner organisations have contributed to this year's campaigns. For example, we teamed up with anti-bullying charity Kidscape to produce our [Boards Against Bullying campaign](#) in November, as well as a range of contributors including ParentKind and Place2Be.



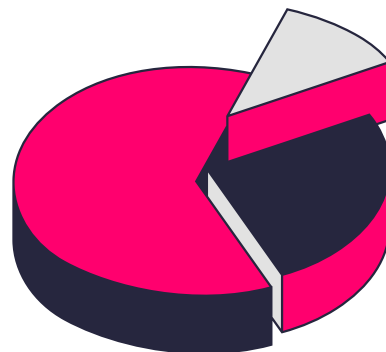
We sparked a range of fresh working relationships while securing speakers for the Governors for Schools Conference 2022. We were delighted to hear from a range of organisations, including Teach First, Education Support, The Difference, and many more. Other fruitful collaborative projects this year included Strictly Education's National School Governors' Awareness Day and a joint webinar event with Now Teach and Action Tutoring. We look forward to developing our existing collaborative relationships in 2023-24, as well as beginning to work with new partners.

Our work to improve diverse representation on governing boards

We closely monitor ethnic minority data about our volunteers to guide our diversity efforts. We follow government guidelines and include 'White, other' as a category on our monitoring forms to ensure our findings are accurate.

Over the past year, our placed volunteers were:

- 58% White
- 17% Asian/Asian British
- 11% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
- 7% White Other
- 4% Other or Undefined
- 3% from a Mixed Ethnic Background



This year we also started to capture sexual orientation as part of our monitoring. Of all applicants in 2022-23:

- 85% identified as Heterosexual/Straight
- 4% Bisexual
- 4% Gay Male
- 1% Gay Female
- 1% defined themselves in another way
- 6% declined to say

We will start reporting on sexual orientation as a percentage of successful appointments in 2023-24. We were not able to provide this figure for 2022-23, as we only have a single year of data, which cannot provide an accurate representation given the time it may take to appoint any given volunteer.

While we're delighted at the diversity of our governance volunteers, we know there's more work to be done to improve diversity on governing boards and improve outcomes for all children. We're continuing to work hard to increase recruitment rates amongst under-represented groups through our work with partners, professional networks, and community groups.





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