Our Impact report for the 125,000 challenge

September 2023

GOVERNORS FOR SCHOOLS 125,000 CHALLENGE

Partnerships with business at the heart of our mission



Since the charity was formed in 1999, working in partnership with businesses has been central to our mission and the change we're aiming to help create within the school governance sector. As we approach our 25th year as an organisation, this remains as true as ever, and we're delighted to call so many wonderful organisations partners in this shared endeavour.

Governors for Schools aims to ensure all schools and trusts have access to effective governance boards, providing an outstanding governor recruitment service to help enable this. Within this drive, the charity also aims to significantly improve the diversity of those involved in school governance across a range of factors including age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, professional backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and others.

On this journey, we benefit hugely from working with organisations who believe passionately, and have invested heavily, in their own EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) and social mobility work to attract diverse talent pools of skilled, talented individuals. Across all of our partners there is a strong and genuine passion for giving back. It is our privilege to be able to work alongside CSR and talent development teams to inspire their colleagues into school governance roles across England and Wales.

As you'll see from this report into our 125,000 challenge, which ran during the 2022-23 academic year, these partnerships continue to wield wonderful results - and make a significant impact on the governance space across England and Wales.

I'd like to thank all the partners who have supported our mission this year - we genuinely could not do it without you.

Will Durham Head of Impact and Corporate Partnerships

Thank you!

What was the 125,000 challenge?



The aim of the 125,000 challenge was to appoint enough volunteers from our corporate partners into schools over the course of the 2022/23 academic year to collectively impact the education and futures of 125,000 pupils.

We view our work with corporate partners as a collaborative endeavour to continue to inspire as many of their brilliant colleagues as possible into governance roles, and to support them to flourish once appointed.

The 125,000 challenge allowed us to harness shared energies and passion for giving back, to have a focal point for our recruitment work, and to demonstrate the collective impact of our work and theirs on the governance landscape.

Over the course of the year, we held over 50 information sessions with partners, tapped into a multitude of internal communication opportunities, and utilised our passionate volunteers to help spread the word about governance to their colleagues. The end result of this was receiving 406 applications to become a governor from employees across these relationships.

We are absolutely delighted to report that by August 2023 when the challenge drew to a close, we had appointed:

- 287 volunteers into school governance roles.
- In 281 different schools.
- Across 97 different Local Authorities.
- Collectively impacting the education of 153,434 pupils within these school.

We are delighted by the result of our shared drive, and the rest of this report aims to demonstrate the impact of these numbers in strengthening and diversifying the school governance sector. Moving forward, the charity will collate the experiences of these volunteers and their schools to further demonstrate the impact they are having within the schools they are serving as well as their views on their governance role in general.

Schools supported

Locations

The 287 volunteers placed during the 125,000 challenge were appointed into 97 different Local Authorities. These ranged from Newcastle to Devon, and from Norfolk to Caerphilly, showing the excellent geographical reach of the partnerships we've developed with our corporate partners.

English as an Additional Language

The average percentage of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language is 31.4% across the schools in which these volunteers are now serving. Only 19.1% of all pupils as of 2021/22 fit within this bracket, demonstrating that these volunteers are, on average. supporting more diverse communities.

Pupil Premium

On average, 29% of pupils in these supported schools qualify for Pupil Premium funding - slightly above the national average of 25% of all primary pupils. The highest Pupil Premium percentage is 69.1%, while the lowest is 1.3%, so there is significant difference in the schools to which these volunteers have been appointed in terms of the socioeconomic profile of their pupils.

Pupil numbers

In total, there are 154,434 pupils within the schools in which these volunteers have been appointed in 2022/23. This figure highlights the wide-ranging impact our partnerships have as the appointed volunteers support these schools to provide the best possible education and opportunities for their children and young people.

Phase of education

In total, 185 of the appointed volunteers are serving in Primary schools, 65 are serving at Secondary schools, 28 in Special schools, 7 in Nurseries and 2 are at All-through schools.



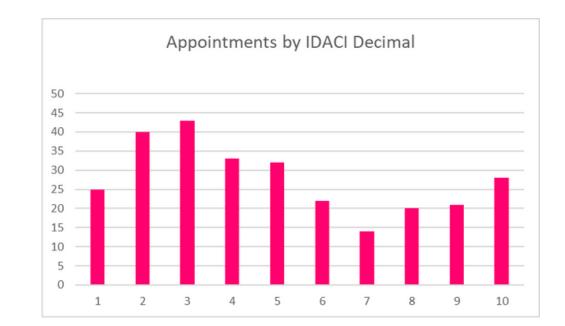
Where volunteers were appointed as part of the challenge.





Supporting schools in communities facing higher deprivation.





The bar graph above shows the number of schools within the different Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) deciles that volunteers appointed as part of the challenge are serving in..

The IDACI measures the percentage of children and young people under the age of 15 living in income deprived households within small postcode areas.

An IDACI ranking of 1 represents postcodes with the highest percentages of income deprived households with children, while 10 represents those with the lowest percentage. It is a common motivation for both our partners and their volunteers who apply to be governors to work in schools in disadvantaged communities and contribute to improving social mobility for the students attending these schools.

While there is some variation, it's positive to see that 62% of placements were made in communities facing higher levels of deprivation, while only 38% were made in communities facing lower levels. We're pleased that these skilled, committed and well supported governors are supporting schools and pupils in areas of greater need.

125,000 volunteers in profile

Supporting our aim to ensure schools have skilled, diverse boards.



Adding skills to the sector

77% of volunteers appointed during the challenge possessed an extensive or moderate background in Finance. This is important as Finance remains the most requested skill schools are looking for in new volunteers. The volunteers also add considerable strength in other skills frequently requested by schools such as Strategic Leadership, Data Analysis and HR.

Improving diversity

44% of the appointed volunteers come from an ethnic minority background hugely above known national averages for the school governance sector. We talk about the importance of this in more detail on the following page.

Younger people in governance roles

83% of volunteers placed in schools are under the age of 44 - with 53% of all volunteers being 34 or younger. We know nationally that the majority of governors are aged 50 and above. It highlights the impact of our corporate partnerships to see the volume of volunteers who are much younger than this getting involved in school governance and adding different voices and experiences to the conversations happening on boards.

The amount of time given

Governors for Schools research shows that, on average, our volunteers, commit 6.7 hours a month to their governance roles. Over a four year period, these 287 volunteers will provide over 92,000 hours of challenge and support to the schools they are serving at.

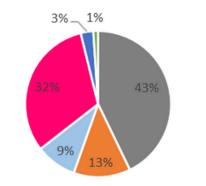
Desirable people

On average, it took 21 weeks for volunteers to progress from application to appointment into roles, with many taking 3 months or less. With around 40% of these placements in London, where appointments can be competitive, this is particularly impressive and reflects the calibre of candidates appointed as part of the 125,000 challenge.

An outstanding contribution to diversifying the governance landscape.



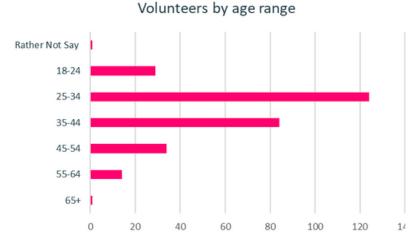
Ethnicity of appointed volunteers



White British

- Other White Background
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British Asian/Asian British
- Other Ethnic Group

Mixed/Multiple Ethnic group:



Changing the governance landscape

The National Governance Association 2022 found that there are more governors over the age of 80 than under 30. We know that as well as the skills these volunteers bring, increasing the different perspectives around board tables across the country is key. Volunteers from our corporate partners are helping us do this, increasing the number of younger and more ethnically diverse applicants available for schools.

What inspired the volunteers to apply?



The word cloud below is formed from the personal statements submitted as part of their application by the 287 volunteers successfully appointed as part of the 125,000 challenge. It highlights the wide ranging reasons an individual is inspired to become a governor but centres on the common themes of believing in the power of schools and education to be a force for good in the lives of children, a passion to give back to local communities, and share the experiences we have gained to help the next generation.

On the next three pages, we hear from three of the volunteers placed as part of the challenge in a little further detail about the reasons they decided to take on a governance role - and their early experiences in post.



Volunteer Voices



Grace Osborne

Appointed at Wellesley Park Primary School, Somerset, in December 2022.





As an ex-teacher, I've always wanted to take on a school governance role; to share my perspectives having been in the classroom and the corporate world. I'm a passionate advocate for social mobility and knew that working with a school which doesn't have the same support and resources as those in affluent areas could really impact students' lives; Governors for Schools was aligned to that mission.

Governors for Schools came and did a "lunch and learn" for colleagues at PwC to understand what they could get out of governance. Hearing from those in the firm who had taken on a role helped me feel comfortable to apply again.

My experience so far has been such a positive one; I feel more connected to my community and that I am making a tangible impact. I've used PwC volunteering days to support the school with SATs and do school tours. The training accessible through Governors for Schools has given me expertise in more challenging aspects of the role. It supported my professional life too developing skills like critical analysis. I'm really proud of Wellesley Park, the staff and other governors - it feels great to be an advocate for them.







Volunteer Voices



Farzana Hampshire

Appointed at Redwood and Park View Primary federation in Derby, December 2022.





Being in Derby, STEM is an incredibly important priority as it's a big engineering city. Almost everyone in Derby will have a friend or family member who works in these industries so it's a huge part of local communities.

As an engineer myself, I'm highly interested in STEM subjects and a key desire is to work with STEM coordinators in our office and the schools to put together a longer term, coherent strategy across the two schools in my federation.

Both are really interested in STEM and they want the role modelling for younger people to encourage them to recognise STEM industries as a career choice for them.

99



Volunteer Voices



Omar Koshin

Appointed at Oaklands School, Tower Hamlets, in March 2023.





I am passionate about education, having realised its potential to affect the path I took. I went to secondary school in a low-income community, spoke English as a second language, and was on free school meals. Having been the beneficiary of a good education, I would like to help improve outcomes for other kids that went to similar schools such as mine.

I also believe in the importance of board diversity. Not only would this help to avoid 'group-thinking' on the board, but my representation on the board as a black male would bring with it a strong signal for BAME kids, as it would help them to see that they could follow a similar trajectory to mine.

99



What's next for our work with our corporate partners?



There is an exciting future for our work with corporate partners as more and more organisations are joining forces with us to add the skills, expertise and passion of their workforces to the school governance talent pool.

In recent years, this sense of being on a shared mission to support strong and sustainable school leadership has really begun to flourish. The charity plans to continue building wide ranging partnerships that help add value to the governance sector, as well as leveraging industry expertise in key areas to support those in role be as effective as possible. Our partnerships have fantastic potential to help inspire young people, at the heart of all we do, about the future directions their lives can take while also helping ensure their schools are delivering the standard of education, and support that will enable them to get there.

If this sounds like a mission you and your organisation would like to be a part of, we'd love to hear from you.

To discuss joining forces and becoming a corporate partner please reach out to Julie Thiberg, Head of Charity Development, at julie.thiberg@governorsforschools.org.uk who'll be delighted to discuss this with you.



A thank you to our supporting partners.

Governors for Schools would like to thank those organisations who we were working in partnership with at the beginning of the 125,000 challenge, shown below. We'd also like to place on record our thanks to those who have joined our mission during the past year including Admiral Group, British Land, Heathrow Airport, and IG Group. To those in the process of partnering with us currently, we can't wait to add your talented colleagues to the governance sector and look forward to our very many successes to come.







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