

# Corporate Partnerships Report 2024

Celebrating our collective impact in  
the 2023/24 academic year



**GOVERNORS  
FOR SCHOOLS**





# Partnerships with business – at the heart of our mission for 25 years



On the 18th November 2024, Governors for Schools will celebrate its 25th birthday as a charity - an achievement we are rightly proud of.

If you look back to our founding memorandum documents you will find that our charitable objectives refer, in particular, to “facilitating the recruitment and placement of people with management skills who are willing to act as governors.” This sits alongside our core objective of the advancement of education and demonstrates that our work with corporate partners has always been at the heart of what we do as an organisation.

In my time in governance, and the wider world of education, many people have commented on the increasing professionalism of the school governance sector and how it functions within education. As the longest running provider of school governance recruitment to the state-funded sector, we have played a key role in creating this change through actively recruiting those with the transferable skills to help drive it. Our corporate partnerships have sat at the centre of so much of this work.

A quarter of a century on, our work with corporate partners today is more substantial and impactful than ever. The charity enjoys outstanding relationships with a wide range of organisations and our work together is increasingly varied in nature. In this report, we aim to showcase the difference we are collectively making to the sector, through providing a snapshot of our data through the 2023-24 academic year. We will also be making the case for why all employers should have a school governance volunteering programme as part of their responsible business and learning and development functions.

A huge thank you to all of our current and historic partners, and a warm welcome to anyone reading this with a view to joining our mission.

**Will Durham**

Head of Impact and Corporate Partnerships

# Corporate Partnerships as a part of our sector aspirations



In January 2024, we released our [five key aspirations](#) for the school governance sector, which aim to ensure the sector continues to be valued and viable as the largest volunteering group within education. These aspirations reflect the role we play within the sector, and areas in which we can be a voice for change; they will undoubtedly help to define the work of the charity in the years ahead.

Two of these aspirations are particularly supported by our work with corporate partners, as detailed below.

**Our third aspiration states we believe that “schools and trusts should ensure diversity of skills, backgrounds and experiences on their board.”**

On the next pages, we will begin to detail precisely how important the work with our partners is in changing the (typically homogeneous) demographic of school governance volunteers. This will be a theme throughout the report, as the diversity in the 351 corporate volunteers supported into roles last year is remarkable in comparison to the general sector.

**Our fifth aspiration states our belief “that all employers should recognise the value of their employees volunteering in school governance roles and support them to do so, creating valuable links between schools and industry.”**

We hope the snapshots of volunteer experiences captured throughout this report help demonstrate the value of school governors being supported by their employer. We are fortunate to have so many corporate partners who champion our work, and would like to increase the visibility of these partnerships moving forward. This will allow us to celebrate our collective successes and continue to encourage other employers to join us as partners and support our valuable work.

# Volunteer Voices

**Keith**

**Flanagan**

**Appointed at the  
Featherstone Academy**



“

I think there is a huge amount of value that Amazonians can add to schools. A great example for me is that within the Trust my own school is a part of there is a technical school which only caters for sixth form students. They have a strong focus on producing STEM graduates, when they found out I worked for Amazon they got in touch and I have put them in touch with people from the Amazon apprenticeship programme. In our conversation they asked me “What do you want to see in our graduates?” I was able to give them our apprentice profile information, talked through the skills we look for and this has helped them to tailor their programmes to suit what an employer like Amazon is looking for.

This is an example of how we can support through our networks and the opportunities we are able to connect with at a local and national level. Beyond this, there is such a breadth of knowledge and expertise within Amazon that I think it is great that we are supported to get involved and utilise these skills to support schools across England and Wales.

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**Creating valuable  
links with industry**

# Corporate Partner sourced volunteers



The National Governance Association conducts a valuable governance survey each year which helps us to understand the challenges facing school governors, as well as the general make-up of our governing boards.

In 2024, the National Governance Association's survey found that;

- **Only 9% of all governors who responded are aged 40 or under and that a mere 1% of governors are aged 30 or under. Additionally, the 40-49 age group fell from 22% to 17%, meaning two thirds of governors are 50+.**
- **95% of all school governors who responded identified as being White, with diversity decreasing in recent years.**

In contrast, of the 351 volunteers appointed into school governance roles via our corporate partners in 2023-24;

- **57% of volunteers were aged 34 or under, with an additional 28% aged between 35-44.**
- **45% identified as being from a global majority background with a further 10% identifying as White Other.**

We will touch on these statistics in greater depth later in the report, but these numbers demonstrate the stark difference in the diversity of volunteers taking up school governance roles through our partnerships – compared to the national picture.

The NGA report also highlights growing recruitment challenges for the sector, with 76% of respondents reporting challenges in recruiting new governance volunteers. With the growing number of applications received, and successful appointments supported, through our corporate partnerships we are providing valuable new talent to a sector in strong need of it.

**Furthermore, these volunteers are more likely to stay in role with 100% of volunteers from corporate partners appointed in July 2023 still in post a year later. This is higher than the 89% of all our volunteers still in role a year later and is something we are delighted to see.**

## Volunteer Voices

**Harshita  
Bansal**

**Appointed at Oaklands  
School, Tower Hamlets**



“

I use my volunteering leave from Deloitte to assist my governance role. It is wonderful to have a code to use for volunteering, and I use this to go to meetings and the odd visit and charge around 3 hours of time per month to this code for my role.

I also act as the numeracy link governor at the school – and get to visit the school in this capacity. This allows me to see how things are going at school in terms of mathematics, what the homework is like, how tech is utilised and what curriculum the school is following. This is really insightful, and I got to speak to pupils about their experiences of the subject and how they felt about what they were learning at school.

It gave a great overall picture of a strong culture for numeracy at the school, and this is reflected in the fact that we have 70% of students performing at Greater Depth. Numeracy is a big skills gap for so many people, so I wanted this role and focus to be confident that we are setting our students up to be comfortable with mathematics from an early age

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**Using volunteering  
leave in role**

# Schools supported



## Locations

The 351 volunteers placed during the 2023-24 academic year were appointed into schools across 107 different local authority areas. These range from Bridgend to Bromley, and from Swindon to Sunderland; demonstrating how our partnerships deliver impact across a large part of England and Wales. This geographical spread is shown on the next page.

## Pupil numbers

In total, there are 246,192 pupils within the schools and trusts where these volunteers were appointed in 2023/24. This figure highlights the wide-ranging impact our partnerships have; with all appointed volunteers now supporting these schools to provide the best possible education and opportunities for their children and young people.

## Ofsted grading

Overall, 19% of these volunteers were appointed into schools considered Outstanding, 75% within Good schools and 6% within schools deemed to be Requires Improvement. This is broadly in line with national averages, bar a slight difference in the percentages of schools at Outstanding and Requires Improvement as we have appointed more governors in schools considered Outstanding.

## Appointments by region

Looking at this further, in 2023-24: 43% of our corporate appointments were in London, 35% within the wider South, 16% in the Midlands and the North, and 5% in Wales. The charity continues to strive to improve its impact within the North through developing both new and existing partnerships.

## Free school meal eligibility

On average, 28.2% of pupils in schools supported by a corporate volunteer appointment are eligible for free school meals. As of January 2024, 24.6% of pupils were eligible nationally. Where feasible, the charity seeks to appoint corporate volunteers in schools with higher socio-economic challenges, in line with partner wishes.

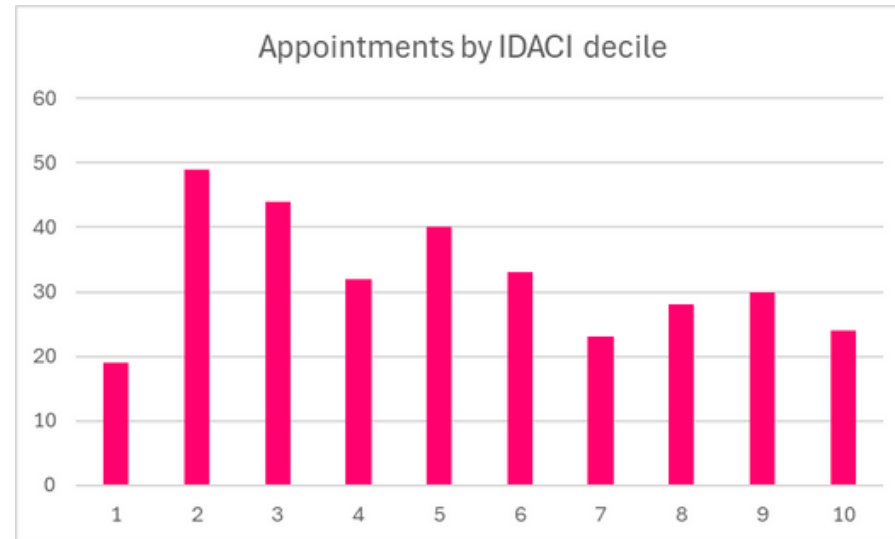


**Where our  
corporate  
volunteers  
were  
appointed in  
2023-24**





# 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 employees who apply to become governors to work in schools in disadvantaged communities; this is with the aim of supporting social mobility for the students attending these schools.

**While there is some variation, it's positive to see that 57% of placements were made in communities facing higher levels of deprivation, while only 43% 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.**

## Volunteer Voices

**Hemanth  
Kelva**

**Appointed at Plaistow  
Primary**



“

Plaistow Primary is in a highly diverse part of East London and the school population reflects the wider community and consists of students from a wide range of backgrounds. It has lots of students from South Asia in particular, as well as from other countries within Europe

I am quite new to the United Kingdom having moved here five years ago and so have had very little exposure to the English education system in my life. I am a pretty active volunteer in other areas of my life and have done so previously for the council and with religious organisations as part of my faith. All these roles have focused on causes relating to people from my own country and religion, and I wanted a role that would allow me to give back to a more varied part of society.

The role is really helping my personal development. I am getting lots of experience that I simply would not have had if I was not a school governor, and I genuinely enjoy reading about the sector and seeing what is coming down the line for the school and its pupils.”

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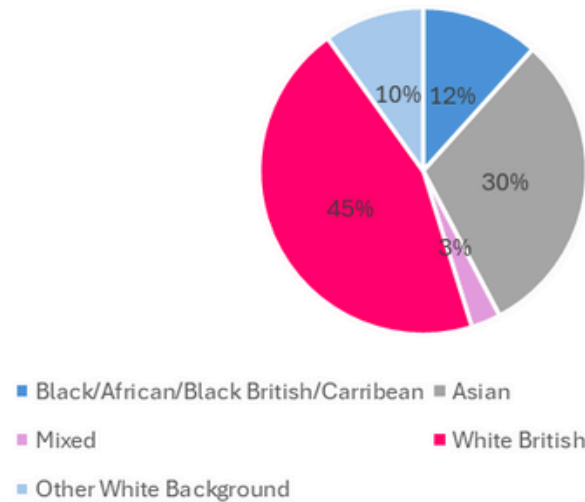
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**Supporting our wider  
communities**

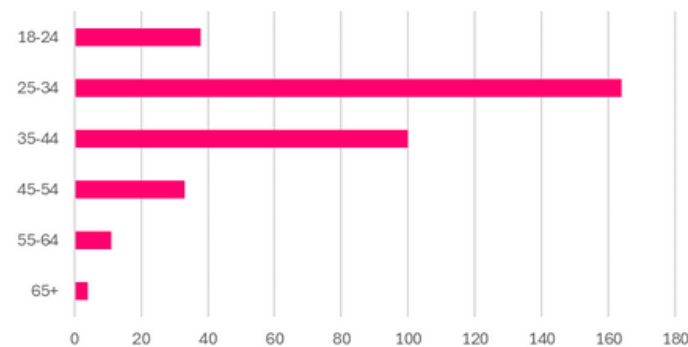
# An outstanding contribution to diversifying the governance landscape...



Ethnicity of appointed volunteers



Appointed volunteers by age range



## Changing the governance landscape

The data we see for our appointments in 2023/24 is replicated in the data we see from our corporate partners in general.

Our 25 years of working in partnership with businesses has brought thousands of volunteers - and their invaluable perspectives - into governance roles; helping to grow the diversity and expertise of the sector.

We look forward to even greater successes ahead with current and future partners. Keep reading to learn more about how to get involved.



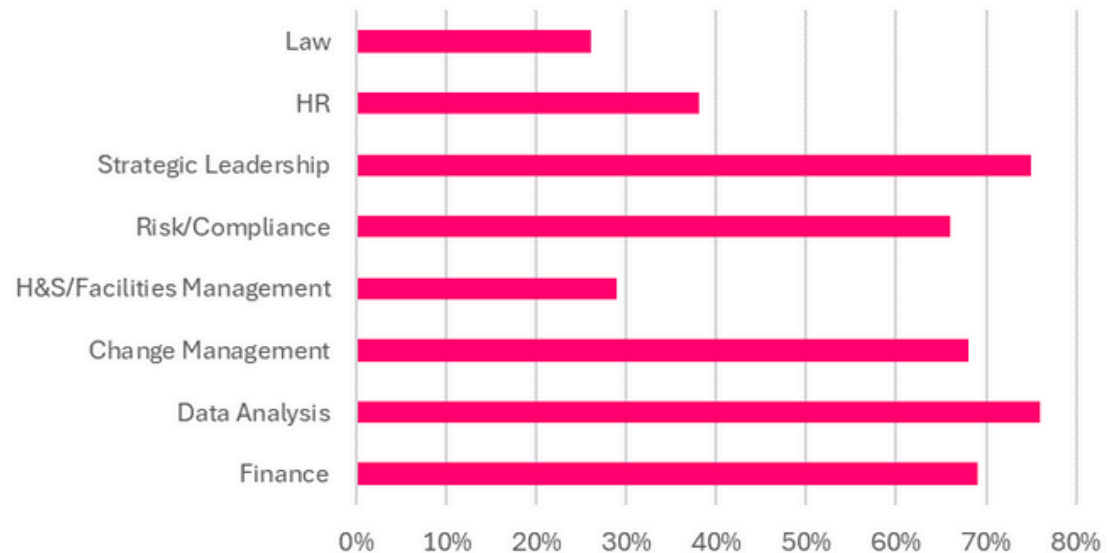
# Supporting our aspiration to ensure schools have skilled, diverse boards

## Adding skills to the sector

The chart below shows the core business skills provided by our corporate volunteers appointed into school governance roles across the 2023-24 academic year.

Thinking back to our founding documents, the charity has been at the forefront of promoting governance as a skilled volunteering opportunity since its inception. The skills listed below that our corporate partner volunteers have contributed to schools and trusts in large numbers this year show the value of our collaborative partnerships with the business sector.

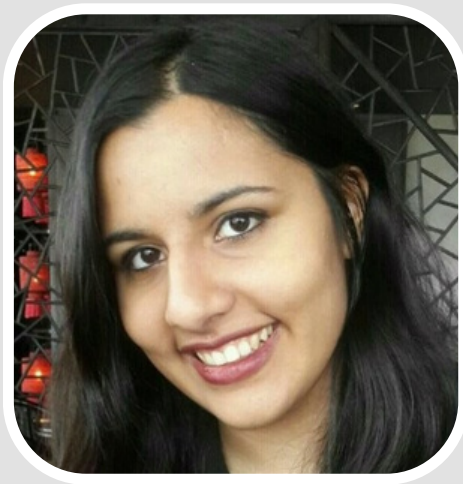
Skills brought by volunteers



## Volunteer Voices

**Aanchel  
Bhabuta**

**Appointed at Knebworth  
Primary and Nursery School**



“

I was fortunate enough to benefit from a fantastic education. I went to an excellent primary, and my secondary school was an all-girls school which had a strong girl power culture. It was not until I went to University that I learnt how prevalent things like sexism are, and how few girls studied subjects like Maths and Physics. As someone who works in Accountancy, and for whom these skills are essential, I am aware that I am lucky to have faced so few barriers in my own education and to have been given many opportunities. I have a strong desire to see how I could give back in that way, and help ensure others have the same opportunities that I did.

My accounting background definitely helps with understanding finances, budgets and what is going on at the school as it is quite technical language that is used and so my training and experience allows me to contribute effectively.

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**Being a voice for  
change**

# Interested in **working** **with us?**



With 25 years of experience under our belt, we're not sitting still; adapting to provide schools with the increasing range of skills they need around the board table. We've continued to broaden the range of employers that we partner with, so that we can tap into the expertise of many sectors to best support schools.

Our [STEM Governor Programme](#) is a great example this; developed in collaboration with global engineering firm, AtkinsRealis, with the ambition of placing STEM champions onto boards. STEM governors champion STEM at a strategic level, tapping into employer-led enrichment opportunities, building long-term, collaborative partnerships between industry and education. We're delighted to have implemented this programme across engineering, aviation, transportation and military partners, and look forward to expanding our impact even further.

With many of us being governors ourselves, we also understand the needs of governing boards and the skills gaps that become apparent as new risks present themselves, or new guidance is issued. With that in mind, our [Cyber Governor Programme](#) aims to take those with an understanding of Cyber and Technology into school governor roles to support in areas such as meeting Cyber Security Standards and developing a Digital Strategy. Employers don't have to be solely working in technology and cyber security to support this work, with most businesses having individuals skilled in these areas who could support schools effectively.

**Our partnerships with employers have developed and evolved into true collaborations and we look forward to building on this over the next 25 years. If you're interested in finding out how you - as an employer - can work with us to support schools and your employees, you can contact me on [emma.harris@governorsforschools.org.uk](mailto:emma.harris@governorsforschools.org.uk)**

**Emma Harris**

Head of Partnerships Development



## Partner Voice

**Amazon**

**Launched a new  
volunteering agreement  
in September 2023**



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At Amazon, we believe success and scale brings broad responsibility and we offer our employees a broad range of volunteering opportunities.

Our collaboration with Governors for Schools is a great way for Amazonians to invest their time and skills - while deepening their leadership experience - into their local school communities and future generations.

**Eugenie Teasley**  
Head of Impact

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**38 governance appointments since  
launch in September 2023**



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**57 volunteers under consideration  
with schools**

**More ways than  
ever to deliver  
a meaningful  
volunteering  
programme  
for all**



## **Trustee Recruitment Service**

In September 2022, we launched our [Trustee Recruitment Service](#) to provide top-tier support to Single and Multi-Academy Trusts looking for new Trustees to support their academy or academies.

With strong growth in the service over the past twelve months, we can provide your senior colleagues with opportunities to shape education across multiple schools.

In the data recorded as part of this report, 5 of our successful corporate partner appointments were as Trustees within Multi-Academy Trusts. As the service grows, there are a number of further volunteers under consideration for trustee roles.

These roles are suitable for more senior colleagues, likely at partner or similar level, and provide an opportunity to engage those at higher levels in your organisation.

**We would be pleased to talk about the Trustee Recruitment Service further with any current or prospective partners. Please do reach out to [David.Ardill@governorsforschools.org.uk](mailto:David.Ardill@governorsforschools.org.uk) who is Head of Recruitment Services at the charity to discuss this opportunity.**

# Our Pathway programmes

We also run two development and support programmes aimed to inspire – and support – people to take on school governance roles.

[Pathway to Governance](#) was piloted with great success in Spring 2023 – in partnership with Amazon – and has now been rolled out to a wider audience with further success. It is a development programme aimed to inspire those from under-represented demographics to gain the confidence to take on school governance roles. It has a particular focus on those aged under 30, as only 1% of school governors are currently in this age group.

We work with employer partners to run the programme for apprentices and early career professionals, as well as with funders to roll the programme out more generally on a regional basis. It forms part of our commitment to help build skilled, diverse governing boards by removing the age barrier that seems to exist within the sector.

[Pathway to Trusteeship](#) is a sibling programme to Pathway to Governance that aims to support and develop those with more career experience to take on trustee-level roles within Multi-Academy Trusts.

Both programmes blend CPD certified eLearning and practical mock board sessions to build a solid knowledge base, as well as 1:1 application support and prioritised appointment into roles.

**You can learn more about both programmes through the links on this page or by emailing [Will Durham](mailto:william.durham@governorsforschools.org.uk) at [william.durham@governorsforschools.org.uk](mailto:william.durham@governorsforschools.org.uk) to arrange a meeting to discuss the opportunity further.**



**DEVELOPMENT  
AND SUPPORT SERVICE**  
GOVERNORS FOR SCHOOLS



# Moving forward

## Hannah Stolton

CEO of Governors for Schools  
Chair of Governors at Nazeing  
School



“

As this report demonstrates, our corporate partnerships enable us to support schools across England and Wales to access the skilled volunteers they need for their governing boards. At a time of ongoing change within the education sector, it's key that schools have the advantage of fresh perspectives and thought around their board tables. Working with partners allows us to introduce more people to the role, bringing benefit to the individual, the employer and their communities.

Through financial support and sponsorship, our partners part-fund our work with schools. Through growing our partnerships, we'll be able to continue and extend our service, meaning more schools will benefit from the support of an effective governing board.

Through our work together, employers foster relationships with their communities, and support their future workforce. Thank you to all those who do so already, and hello to those of you are considering it - we'd love to hear from you.

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The Governors for Schools offer for all new partners includes:

**Prioritised placement of staff**

**Recruitment focused support, including webinars and presentations**

**Impact Reports**

**Monitoring reports to show progress against KPIs**

**Dedicated landing page on our website for your employees**

**Bespoke targeting in line with agreed KPIs**

**Promotion and profiling of your education sector initiatives**

**Facilitated termly bespoke training sessions for your governor network**

**£6,000pa**

up to 20

4 hours

Annual summary of key achievements

Quarterly

**£12,000pa**

up to 40

8 hours

Annual report including case studies regarding your employees impact

Quarterly

Yes

Yes

**£18,000pa**

Unlimited

12 hours

Annual report including case studies and data. Tailored and adjustable to your needs

Monthly

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes



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Building exceptional boards



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