


## Shaping Governance - Newsletter

Welcome to our regular newsletter bringing you news, hints and tips from across the sectors that we work with, and some of our own news.

Warmest regards,

The Shaping Governance Team




## Interesting Governance news from across the sectors

**New Attendance Hubs announced**

As reported by Schools Week, there is now a huge focus on absence management within schools, and 18 new attendance hubs have now been launched in order to tackle the issue.

Absence reporting should form a key part of Governor Board meetings, ensuring that effective strategies are in place and working to reduce the number of absences within schools. Does your Headteacher provide you with enough information for you to monitor this effectively?

It is worth reviewing how effectively you monitor this within your board, as it is an area that will

inevitably continue to be in the spotlight. The Safeguarding Link within the Board should have a full understanding of the school policy, how effectively it is being implemented, and be able to monitor absence and challenge any trends that are apparent within the school setting.

**EYFS Changes from January 2024**
The DfE changes to EYFS have now come into force. It is important that these are understood, and a full outline of the changes can be found here. An additional two changes are set to be implemented at a later date, yet to be confirmed.

**The pressure on Governance volunteers**
A 2023 review published in Schools Week stated that Governance has reached breaking point; Exhaustion reaches the boardroom. It is true that the role of a volunteer Governor is now, more than ever, increasing in its challenges. Parental complaints are increasing, the pressure on schools and staff seems relentless at times, and there are numerous reports about the ever-changing demands and budget challenges.

However, it is worth remembering that joining a well-structured and effective team of Governors can bring many added benefits to both individuals and organisations. Despite the increasing pressure, playing a pivotal part in the delivery of education for our younger generations is hugely rewarding.

## Shaping Governance's experience on the benefits of the volunteer governor role




Here at Shaping Governance, we are often asked to help Trusts and Schools recruit governors and trustees for their Boards. There are currently hundreds of schools desperate for additional volunteer Governors. But there's hope from a recent survey which found that one in seven UK adults plan to volunteer for the first time in 2024.

So, if your school needs to recruit a new governor, what should you do? We often find that approaching local businesses and highlighting the value of encouraging their employees to volunteer as school governors, benefiting the school as well as the business and its employees, is an effective strategy.

Why?

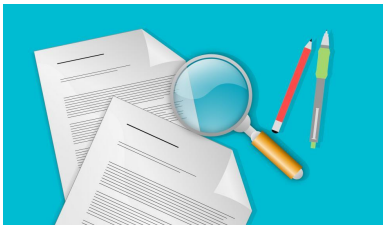
Because, encouraging employees to become school governors is an excellent way for businesses to support local communities, building links between schools and pupils' future employers. Becoming a school governor allows employees to experience board-level leadership, developing many transferable skills. Supporting employees to volunteer as governors will help them learn about areas outside of their usual role that they can bring back to benefit the business:

- Finance – budget planning, management and approval; prioritising and making tough decisions to balance the books;
- HR – governing boards are responsible for recruiting headteachers and their performance management;
- Strategy – governors make decisions that directly affect the school and children. They oversee curriculum changes, set the school's ethos and vision, and discuss and monitor how the school performs;
- Data analysis – making informed decisions based on data and ensuring the school is on track to success;

- Analytical thinking – Governors need to solve problems quickly and effectively to make sure the school runs as efficiently as possible.

One volunteer we recently spoke to said;

*"I often think people only consider the skill set from their day job and how that could benefit a school in the role of governor (and this is true). But there's so much you can learn from being a governor that is then useful to take back to your day job....I've definitely found this since being a governor."*



## How we support schools - Governance Reviews

With the time pressures on both teaching staff and volunteer governors, it is vital that your Governing Board is as efficient as it can be. An effective way of ensuring this is to undertake regular reviews. Internal skills audits are an annual requirement and help determine that you have the necessary skills sets within your team. But even if you do, how do you ensure that the Board as a whole is having an impact? The best way to determine this is through an External Review of Governance. We support hundreds of schools every year to improve their governance, ensuring it is impactful and effective. We offer two types of Governance Review;

**Standard:**
As defined by the DfE we undertake:

- Full documentation review;
- Interviews of key stakeholders and Governors;
- Delivery of a development session focussing on the 3 core roles and the effectiveness of governance;
- Provision of a detailed report and improvement plan set against the 3 core roles and important competencies;
- 3-6 month follow-up review.

**Enhanced:**
A Shaping Governance Review & Improve approach. This blends the rigour of a standard review with our unique asset-based approach to bringing the very best out of boards. Using our proven framework we help governors to:

- Be clear in strategic direction and ethos;
- Hold school leaders to account;
- Understand their responsibilities for finance;
- Learn, share and improve across 9 areas of governance;
- Be more skilled, focused and effective;
- Co-produce an improvement plan.

Further details of both our approaches can be found on our website here External Reviews of Governance by Shaping Governance.

*"We have and will continue to work with Shaping Governance for governors support. Su is extremely knowledgeable about how best to support governors, in their role of challenge and support for school leaders in providing the best education possible for the pupils."*



## Shaping Governance - here to help

Interested in finding out more about how we can help you improve your governance - get in touch using the button below

Contact us

