

A Trusted Governance Improvement Organisation

Shaping Governance: A-Z of Governance

Breaking down key governance concepts into clear, digestible insights

J is for Joined-Up Governance: The power of aligning local insight with strategic direction

Su Turner, our CEO, shares her thinking…

In today's complex education landscape, governance can't operate in silos. Strategic decisions made at the board level must connect meaningfully with the lived realities of schools, staff, pupils, and communities. That's why *Joined-Up Governance* is more than a buzzword; it's a principle that underpins the effectiveness of school and trust governance.

The need for joined-up Governance

Too often, governance becomes fragmented. Local voices are heard but not acted upon, or central strategies are delivered without understanding their real-world impact. Joined-Up Governance ensures that **local insight informs strategic direction**, and strategic ambition is rooted in the experiences and aspirations of the school community. It's about making governance coherent, connected, and credible.

What does joined-up Governance look like in practice?

- **School Local governance feeding into Trust Boards** with real influence, not just token updates.
- **Trust-wide strategies** that reflect **local priorities**, informed by pupil voice, staff wellbeing surveys, and community engagement.
- **Leaders and governors working together** across all tiers, using consistent language, shared priorities, and a culture of mutual respect.
- **Governance conversations that link vision to implementation**, ensuring that strategic goals are tracked all the way to classroom impact.

Why it matters

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1. **Strengthens Decision-Making**
   When governance is joined-up, decisions are better informed and more relevant. Strategic plans are no longer abstract, they are lived, understood, and owned by those delivering and receiving education.
2. **Improves Communication and Collaboration**
   Clarity of purpose and shared direction help reduce duplication, miscommunication, and governance fatigue. Everyone knows what they're working towards, and why.
3. **Promotes Equity and Inclusion**
   Local voices, especially those of parents, pupils, and underrepresented groups, become part of the strategic narrative; not an afterthought.
4. **Enhances Accountability**
   With clearer lines of communication and shared understanding, it's easier to hold all parts of the system accountable for outcomes that matter.
5. **Builds Trust and Unity**
   Joined-up Governance fosters a culture of trust. It shows that governance is not "done to" schools, but "done with" them.

How Shaping Governance can help

At Shaping Governance, we've seen the power of joined-up governance through our work with Multi-Academy Trusts, local authorities, and governing bodies. Our **Locally Led, Strategically Strong** campaign champions exactly this kind of thinking; ensuring strategic ambition is grounded in real insight. Through our whole trust reviews and structure refinement, tools, development sessions, and appreciative approaches, we help governance become more aligned, strategic, and inclusive.

Final Thoughts

Joined-Up Governance is not just good practice; it's essential. It's how we turn local listening into strategic leadership. It's how we connect policy with people. And it's how we shape governance that truly makes a difference.

Let's move from isolated oversight to integrated impact; together.

Contact us: Get in touch if you want to find out more – office@shapinggovernance.co.uk

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