

May 2023



## School Governors

Acting as critical friends and the impact of governor training

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## Executive summary

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This report focuses on important aspects of the work of governing bodies in schools across Wales. We gathered information from a range of different school types and sizes, including interviews with headteachers and governors and an online survey for governors. We analysed inspection evidence across the maintained schools sectors and considered published research. We also interviewed key partners from organisations that work with governing bodies.

From the evidence that we gathered, we found that most governors are enthusiastic and passionate about their responsibilities. They are highly committed to the role that they play in their school. Many governors talk knowledgeably about the communities that their schools serve, and they often understand the particular needs of those communities. However, the majority of governing bodies do not reflect the diverse make up of their local community well enough.

Getting the right balance of challenge and support for senior leaders is an important aspect of a governing body's role. This is often called being an effective critical friend. In most schools, governors work productively with the senior leaders and are supportive of their work. However, we found that in a majority of schools, governors do not hold leaders to account for educational performance well enough. In addition, they do not have a wide enough understanding of their role in ensuring high expectations in all aspects of the school's work. This is because they do not challenge senior leaders sufficiently well.

In many schools, governors have an overview of their school's priorities for improvement and have a broad understanding of how they have been identified through self-evaluation. Governors keep up to date with the progress that the school is making towards meeting their priorities through regular information that leaders provide for them. In most schools, following the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, governors have resumed their visits. However, in too many cases, governors do not use their school visits purposefully to gather first-hand evidence to inform their evaluations of the work of the school.

Although whole-school self-evaluation is usually embedded in schools, only a minority of governing bodies have recently undertaken any self-evaluation of their own work. The majority of governing bodies recognise that this is an area that needs to improve. In addition, only a minority of governing bodies undertake a regular audit of their members' skills so that they have a current picture of their range of skills and experiences.

High quality training is important to ensure that governors are aware of the latest developments in education. Most governors receive training from school staff and from external providers, usually local authorities and school improvement services. There are mandatory training courses that governors have to attend as well as optional sessions. Our findings suggest that the availability and quality of training varies greatly between different parts of Wales. Some local authorities and school

improvement services offer governors a rich variety of beneficial training sessions each term, whereas in other parts of the country there are far fewer sessions available. Importantly, the mandatory data training that all governors must attend is outdated and does not help governors understand current assessment practice. Only a minority of governors evaluate the training that they receive and its impact on improving their role as effective governors.

An important aspect of training is ensuring that governors have a sound understanding of educational reform, particularly the Curriculum for Wales and the changes needed to address the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act (ALNET). In most schools, governors feel that they have had sufficient information to ensure that they have a sound understanding of changes.

Governors have important statutory obligations. In most schools, governors understand their role in safeguarding pupils. However, they do not have sufficient understanding of all their obligations for example, with regard to healthy eating and drinking.

In this report, we have made recommendations for governing bodies, local authorities, school improvement services and the Welsh Government.

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## Introduction

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This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language in his remit letter to Estyn for 2022-2023. It concerns the work of governing bodies in maintained primary, secondary, all-age and special schools. We focused on what makes a governing body effective.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, governors and headteachers in schools, local authorities and school improvement services. We hope that it will also be of interest to other organisations who work with school governing bodies in Wales.

This report draws on findings from inspection evidence and interviews with headteachers and governors in a sample of 41 nursery, primary, secondary, all age and special schools across Wales. Inspectors also sent an online survey to governing bodies in 250 schools and received responses from 363 governors. In addition, inspectors consulted with a range of stakeholders, including school improvement services and local authority officers and representatives from other organisations who work with and support governing bodies in Wales. Further details of the evidence base can be found in Appendix 1. Where we use quantifiers in the report, this means that the findings were common across all school sectors involved.

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## Background

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### The legal background to governing bodies in Wales

The requirement for school governing bodies in Wales is set out in law and their roles and responsibilities are also defined in legislation. Each maintained school in Wales must have a governing body constituted in accordance with the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005. Those regulations are made under the [Education Act 2002, Part 3, Chapter 1](#), which sets out the framework for the establishment of governing bodies.

The [School Standards and Framework Act 1998 \(“the SSF Act”\), Part 2, Chapter 1](#), sets out the framework for the categories of maintained schools.

All school governors are volunteers. All school governing bodies must consist of a specific combination of appointed and elected governors of various categories. The composition of each governing body depends upon the number and age range of pupils at the school and the category of the school. The membership of each governing body will be set out in the instrument of government of the particular school, which is produced under [section 20 of the Education Act 2002](#) and regulations made under that provision.

## Governing body structure

All governing bodies have four key groups of governors:

- **Parent governors** are elected by the parents or appointed by the governing body to represent the interests of parents on the governing body.
- **Teacher governors** are elected by fellow teaching staff at the school.
- **Staff governors** are elected from and by the non-teaching staff employed to work at the school.
- **Local authority** governors are appointed by the local authority.

In addition to these, the headteacher (or acting headteacher) is a member of the governing body unless they choose not to be.

Different categories of governing bodies may also include governors of the following types:

- Community governors
- Foundation governors
- Substitute governors
- Partnerships governors
- Sponsor governors
- Non governor members
- Independent members of staff disciplinary and dismissal committees

In addition to the above, the headteacher of every maintained secondary school must ensure that the school council has the opportunity to nominate up to two pupils from Year 11 to Year 13 from its membership to act as associate pupil governors.

Each governing body determines the constitution, membership and terms of reference of any committee it decides to establish and reviews these annually. The governing body retains responsibility for policy-making and the actions of all committees. It is therefore important that committees have a clearly defined role and remit. A governing body may delegate any of its statutory functions to a committee, reviewing the delegation of functions annually.

## Governor roles and responsibilities

It is important that all school governors are aware of their role and understand the legal responsibilities that accompany it. Governors should also understand where their role sits in relation to the responsibilities of the headteacher, the local authority, the Welsh Government and other parties such as diocesan authorities and foundations, where applicable.

The governing bodies of all maintained schools are corporate bodies. This means that the governing body has a legal identity separate from that of its members. The governing body of a foundation, foundation special, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided school is a corporate body with exempt charitable status.



Individual governors, groups of governors or committees have no power or right to act on behalf of the governing body, except where the governing body, at a meeting, has agreed to delegate a specific function to that individual, group of governors or committee, or where regulations specify that a function is to be exercised in a particular way.

The governing body is expected to carry out its functions with the aim of taking a strategic role in the leadership of the school. A strategic role means the governing body decides what it wants the school to achieve and sets the strategic framework for getting there. Each governing body is expected to establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives
- reviewing progress towards achieving the aims and objectives

The school's development plan (SDP), often alternatively called the School Improvement Plan (SIP) along with the governing body's agreed policies, will generally provide the strategic framework for the school. Governing bodies are expected to monitor progress and regularly review the strategic direction of the school in light of that progress.

The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, and for advising on and implementing the governing body's strategic framework.

### **Duties and powers**

Governing bodies of maintained schools have a range of duties and powers in legislation, including all of the following:

- leading the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement and behaviour
- taking general responsibility for the conduct of the school
- managing the school's budget
- making sure that the curriculum for the school is balanced and broadly based and in particular that the Curriculum for Wales is taught in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
- providing parents with a report every year which includes information about pupils' progress and external examination results, where applicable
- appointing the headteacher and deputy headteacher and other staff, and regulating staff conduct and discipline
- drawing up an action plan following an Estyn inspection, when required

The governing body shares responsibility with the headteacher and the local authority for making sure that the Curriculum for Wales and the appropriate assessment arrangements are carried out.

Each governing body has an instrument of government. This sets out how the governing body is constituted and establishes it as a corporate body. It is the responsibility of the local authority to check that a school's draft instrument complies with the statutory requirements. Where appropriate, the instrument of government must be approved by any foundation governors, trustees and/or religious body, before it is submitted to the local authority for approval.

### Statutory functions

Every governing body of a maintained school is required to produce an annual report on its work during the academic year. The report must, as a minimum, contain certain information and may also include any other information that the governing body considers relevant [Governors' Annual Report to Parents](#). Parents can request up to three meetings in a school year with their school governing body. This replaces the previous requirement for a governing body to hold an annual parents' meeting, although the governing body may still do this if they wish.

Each year, the governing body must publish a school prospectus for parents and prospective parents. The prospectus must include a range of statutory information as outlined in Education (School Information) (Wales) Regulations 1999.

There is a [list of statutory policies and documents](#) that governing bodies should ensure that the school has in place.

### Training

Governors have an essential role to play in helping to improve school performance and a duty to promote the highest standards of educational achievement for all learners. Governors therefore need to be knowledgeable, to carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently and to contribute effectively to the school's work.

The local authority is required to provide such information and training as it considers necessary to enable governors to carry out their duties effectively. It must do so free of charge to each governor. Increasingly, many training sessions are held online.

All governors, however experienced, need up-to-date training to keep abreast of changes and to refresh their knowledge. The Education (Wales) Measure 2011 includes provisions to allow Welsh Ministers to make regulations to make governor training mandatory on specific issues. The Government of Maintained Schools (Training Requirements for Governors) (Wales) Regulations 2013 were developed for this purpose. They require governors to carry out the following training:

- Induction training
- Training for chairs of governors
- Training on understanding the role of data in supporting self-evaluation and improvement in schools
- Training for clerks

The measure also allows Welsh ministers to set the content of the required training for governors and clerks to ensure consistency in the standards of training being delivered across Wales.

In addition to the mandatory content provided in the induction training, more in-depth training is recommended for all governors in equality and safeguarding.

Other training for governors and clerks is optional, but it is strongly encouraged so that governors have a better understanding of their roles and the range of their responsibilities, which will help individual governors and ultimately the governing body, to be more effective.

There are a range of other organisations that provide training for governors in Wales. These include:

**School improvement services** – the way that local authorities and school improvement services organise training varies greatly across different parts of Wales. For example, the Education Achievement Service (EAS) assumes responsibility for governor training for all local authorities in the region. However, this is not the case in other parts of the country.

**Governors Cymru Services (GCS)** is a national commercial support service for governing bodies, providing a range of support to inspire and promote effective governance. It offers a subscription-based package, which includes access to a confidential support line, regular e-bulletins and access to members' online advice and guidance sections. Members have access to regular training opportunities led by their officers or external guest speakers.

The **Education Workforce Council (EWC)** has seen an increased demand from schools for specific training for governors. It has delivered four sessions since September 2022 on the work of the EWC to help governors understand their responsibilities to the wider education community more fully.

**Governors for Schools** is an independent charity that supports schools across Wales to find highly skilled governors matching a volunteer's skill set to a school in need. It provides its volunteers with a wide range of free training opportunities

The main purpose of the **National Academy for Educational Leadership** in Wales (NAEL) is to contribute to the development of the professional capabilities of current and aspiring leaders across the education system. It provides coherence and quality assurance for the range of educational leadership development opportunities available in Wales. It helps to develop and implement a vision and strategy for educational leadership in Wales. It aims to be a respected and active member of the education middle tier and the first point of contact for the educational workforce in regard to leadership matters. NAEL recognises that governors should be included in its leadership offer and will use the findings of this report to inform its work to support governors in their role as a critical friend to the leadership team.

### Definition of effective governing bodies:

There is currently no Welsh Government document that outlines the features of an effective governing body. However, in January 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) in England published a [competency framework for governance](#) which sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance in maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trusts. The framework recognises that effective governance provides strategic direction and control to schools. It creates robust accountability, oversight and assurance for their educational and financial performance and is ambitious for all children and young people to achieve the best outcomes. The framework is made up of competencies underpinned by a foundation of important principles and personal attributes. The competencies are grouped under the headings of the six features of effective governance, which are set out in the [DfE Governance Handbook](#) (2020).



Adapted from the Department for Education 'A competency Framework for Governance' (2017) p. 6

The document notes that effective school governance is based on six key features:

Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.

Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance.

People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.

Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.

Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

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## Main findings

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- 1 Most governors are enthusiastic and committed to their role. They work collaboratively with school senior leaders and are supportive of their work.
- 2 In many schools, the governing body has been involved in establishing its school's vision. In the majority of schools, governors do not fully understand that their work needs to reflect the vision and aims of their school.
- 3 Many governors have a strong knowledge of the communities that their schools serve. However, the majority of governing bodies do not reflect the diverse make up of their local communities well enough. There are often difficulties recruiting people from different backgrounds to join governing bodies. A few schools, particularly those in rural or areas impacted by financial inequity or poverty, often have difficulty filling vacancies on their governing bodies.
- 4 In nearly all schools, governors understand that their role is to support and challenge senior leaders and to act as critical friends. In the majority of schools, governors do not hold leaders to account for educational performance effectively. Governors do not have a wide enough understanding of their role in ensuring high expectations in all aspects of the work of the school. In a minority of schools, governors challenge senior leaders effectively to help drive whole-school improvement.
- 5 In many schools, governors have a broad understanding of their school's priorities for improvement and how they link to whole school self-evaluation. In most schools, governors receive regular information on the progress that the school is making towards meeting their priorities through termly reports from the headteacher and other evidence shared with them.
- 6 In too many schools, governors do not use their school visits to gather evidence to inform their evaluation of the school well enough. As a result, they rely too heavily on information presented by school leaders.
- 7 In a majority of schools, governors have a suitable understanding of financial information presented to them by senior leaders and local authority officers. They make informed financial decisions that benefit pupils. In many schools, there are governors on the finance committee with a financial background.
- 8 In a minority of schools, governing bodies undertake a regular audit of their members' skills so that they have an accurate picture of their range of skills and experiences. In too many schools, governing bodies do not carry out this exercise frequently enough. In a majority of schools, governing bodies match the individual skills of its governors well to different roles. It appoints governors to different committees based on their background and skills.
- 9 In many schools, governors have suitable support from the local authority or school improvement service. However, the quality and availability of support and advice varies too much between local authorities. Governing Bodies also use other

organisations to help advise them when they have queries or need support recruiting governors.

- 10 When a governor is first appointed, in the majority of schools they have internal induction, but the quality of this support varies too widely. In all parts of the country, governors have access to training organised by local authorities or school improvement services. However, the availability and quality of training between different parts of Wales varies too greatly. Some regions offer governors a rich variety of training opportunities each term, whereas in other parts of the country there are far fewer sessions available. Most governors in primary, secondary and all age schools consider that mandatory training is generally useful. However, the mandatory data training is out of date and not related to current practice. Most governors in nursery and special schools find mandatory training not particularly relevant to their particular schools' circumstances.
- 11 Only a minority of governors evaluate the training that they receive and its impact on improving their role as an effective governor. This is a shortcoming in the majority of schools.
- 12 In most schools, governors revise the membership of their committees and panels every year. In a few schools they consider the structure of their non-statutory committees regularly to ensure that they meet the needs of the school. They use committees fluidly to address local and national priorities effectively.
- 13 In most schools, governors have received sufficient information to ensure that they have a sound understanding of curriculum change in their schools. However, many governors have concerns that they do not understand assessment arrangements. In most schools, governors have a suitable understanding of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) and the implications for their school. In many schools, governors have received useful presentations on changes, delivered by senior school staff.
- 14 In most schools, governors receive regular safeguarding training, and this helps them to understand their responsibilities. However, in a minority of schools, their level of challenge and understanding of what safeguarding looks like in their school and the school's procedures for dealing with child protection concerns are underdeveloped. In most schools, governing bodies are aware of their school's policy on healthy eating and drinking but have an insufficient understanding of their statutory obligations as governors in adhering to Welsh Government guidelines.
- 15 Only a minority of governing bodies have recently undertaken any self-evaluation of their work recently. The majority of governing bodies recognise that this is an area that it needs to improve.



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## Recommendations

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### **Governing bodies and schools should:**

- R1 Improve governors' ability to challenge senior leaders about all aspects of the school's work
- R2 Ensure that governors have regular and worthwhile opportunities to observe first-hand the progress that their school is making towards meeting its priorities
- R3 Undertake regular self-evaluation of the work of the governing body to identify strengths and areas to improve
- R4 Evaluate the impact of governor training on their role as effective strategic leaders and identify future training requirements

### **Local authorities and school improvement services should:**

- R5 Evaluate the quality of their governor training more rigorously to make improvements where needed
- R6 Collaborate to ensure greater coherence and consistency in high-quality training opportunities between different parts of the country
- R7 Provide more effective support and advice to governing bodies to help them in their role as effective strategic leaders

### **The Welsh Government should:**

- R8 Update the guidance for local authorities on what to include in training for school governors on understanding the role of data in supporting self-evaluation and improvement in schools in line with national changes to assessment practices
- R9 Produce information on the important role of parent governors to help encourage parents, particularly those from different ethnic minority backgrounds, to apply to become a parent governor
- R10 Create a competency framework to assist governing bodies improve their effectiveness

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## Strategic leadership including vision, ethos and strategy

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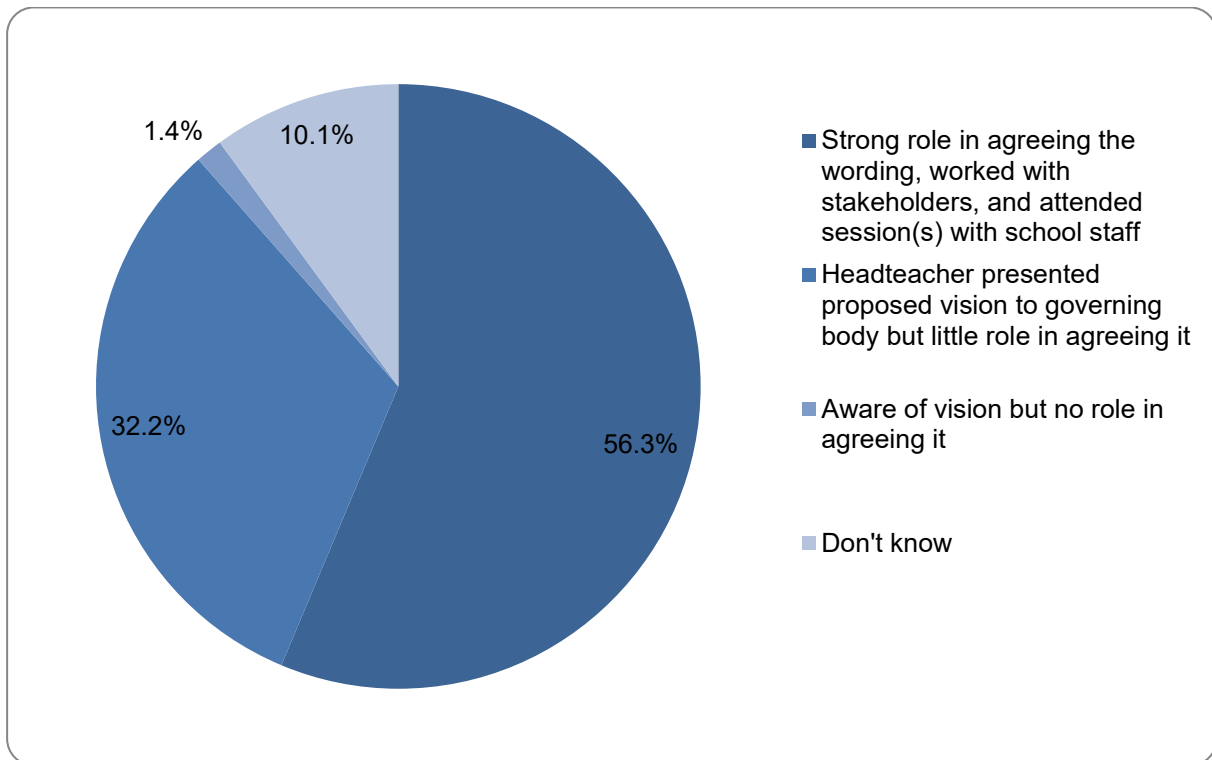
### Establishing and promoting a vision

A governing body's first core function is strategic school leadership. This involves setting the school's overall strategic framework, including its vision and strategic priorities. The governing body also has responsibility for setting and modelling its school's culture, values and ethos. Where a school has a religious character, this is agreed in conjunction with the diocesan authority.

Effective governing bodies provide confident, strategic leadership to their schools. They lead by example and set the tone for the school from the top. Most governors are enthusiastic and committed to their role. They work collaboratively with senior leaders and are supportive of their work. In particular, in the majority of schools, the chair of governors has a strong and trusting working relationship with the headteacher. They often meet regularly to discuss matters relevant to the school.

When a school establishes its vision, it is vital that governing bodies are connected with, and responsive to, the communities that they serve. However, across the country, the role that governors play in agreeing their school's aims and vision varies considerably. In many schools, governors have been involved, often as part of overall stakeholder involvement, in providing suggestions and preferences for their school's vision. Most recently this has been in line with curriculum change.

## What governors say about the role they played in agreeing the vision for their school



Percentages are based on 348 governor responses.

In a few schools, leaders have engaged well with governors to provide them with the opportunity for a more detailed input into developing the school's vision and aims. For example, in these schools, senior leaders ask governors for their views on the curriculum, what skills they should learn or how the school could best enhance learning experiences through experiences, trips and visitors.

In many schools, governors have a basic understanding of their school's vision for learning and teaching. In most schools, governors understand that it is important to take account of pupils' well-being and where this sits within their overall vision and aims. In one primary school in Anglesey, for example, during the pandemic, governors saw the increased value of supporting pupils' well-being and advocated for the creation of a school well-being garden. However, in most schools, governors do not fully understand the important link between their work and the achievement of the school's vision and aims. Governors often struggle to explain how they actively promote the school's vision through their work and priorities.

In one recently established primary school, governors started with their vision for the new school before interviewing prospective headteacher candidates.

**Jubilee Park Primary School** in Newport was established in September 2017. When the local authority was planning the new school, the shadow governing body considered it important to ask prospective headteacher candidates about their vision for the school at the interview. They recognised that this was one of the most important parts of the interview.

Since the appointment of the headteacher, the governing body has been fully involved in agreeing the vision for the school and has supported the headteacher fully through the school's journey. Governors have been involved in how the vision has evolved through the years but have had a strong desire to hold on to the core values of the school. They feel that having continuity of membership of the governing body has been important to support this work.

Governors know the school and the community well and this helps them to develop and promote vision in all aspects of their work. They revisit the school vision at each annual developmental day to ensure that it is fresh in governors' minds and also to obtain governors' views on whether they feel it is still appropriate for the school or needs to be reviewed.

### Understanding the needs of, and serving the local community

Effective governing bodies are well-informed about, and respond to, the views and needs of key stakeholders, particularly parents. Many governing bodies have a strong knowledge of the communities that their schools serve. They have members who talk knowledgeably about the particular needs of the local community and appreciate the important role that the school plays in supporting their pupils and their families.

In these two primary schools, governors are committed to serving the needs of their school communities in the best ways that they can.

In the **Federation of Eveswell and Somerton Primary Schools** in Newport, governors know the communities that the two schools serve well. There is a strong focus on supporting pupils and their families in need, for example young carers. Governors are committed to support families that are struggling and are constantly challenging leaders to increase their support. They work with senior leaders to ensure that they make a difference and support every child as well as they can. Governors have a high profile in both schools and are well-known to parents.

In **Pembroke Dock Primary School**, the governing body has appointed governors as 'poverty champions'. These governors seek out available grants to help them to support the local community. The poverty champion governors regularly canvas parents to find out how best they can help them. They organise fundraising events and use grants to buy things that parents need. For example, they have recently purchased blankets to add to their 'help yourself' trolley as this was something that parents had asked for.

## Supporting improvements

If, following an inspection, Estyn places a school in a statutory category, it is important that the governing body has the capacity to provide the school with strong strategic leadership to make important improvements quickly.

In **Ysgol Bryn Alyn** in Wrexham, a key development in the school's journey out of the statutory category of special measures has been the role of governors in building a revived sense of community.

Governors now engage more fully with all stakeholders, especially pupils and parents. This has helped rebuild trust and confidence in the school. Governors take an active role in ensuring that leaders consider the views of pupils and parents carefully as part of the school's improvement journey.

Governors value the opportunity to speak with pupils and parents. They use these opportunities to gather first-hand evidence on various aspects of the work of the school. This has led to governors being more informed about the day-to-day life of the school and the experiences of pupils, which enables them to question senior leaders with increased rigour.

A local authority has the power to intervene in a maintained school where they have concerns over its effectiveness. In these circumstances, local authorities may exercise their powers of intervention to require the governing body to secure advice or collaborate, appoint additional governors, suspend the delegated authority for the school's budget, appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB) give directions to the governing body or headteacher or take any other steps.

When schools are in difficulty, local authorities often appoint additional, experienced governors with a range of skills to benefit the school on its improvement journey. The additional members help increase the skills of existing members and strengthen the governing body overall. They are usually handpicked, experienced people with a wide range of different skills to help move the school forward. Usually, they have been a member of a successful governing body in another local school. In addition, the local authority often appoints a chair of governors to help guide the school through its improvement journey.

The additional governors usually remain on the governing body until such time as the school no longer needs them. In one Cardiff primary school in particular, the additional governors were highly effective in supporting the school on its improvement journey.

In October 2018, following an inspection, Estyn placed **St Peter's Catholic Primary School** in Cardiff in special measures. Cardiff local authority intervened quickly to support the school. The inspection team had noted some very serious weaknesses in the work of the governing body and the new members had skills to help the school address the issues. Historically the school had had difficulties attracting people with the right skills to become governors to help move the school forward.

The local authority appointed an additional three governors to the school's governing body to strengthen its membership. They were hand-picked as experienced governors with a range of different skills. They were all practising Catholics so understood the nature of faith education. The local authority also took control of appointing the chair of governors and oversight of the school's budget.

In addition to this, senior local authority officers attended governing body meetings to model challenge to leaders and to support the setting of the budget. The local authority organised bespoke training for governors, particularly on scrutiny of school data and to strengthen their role as effective critical friends to challenge and support senior leaders more effectively. They created a bespoke governor development plan which included a range of training that governors were expected to attend.

In May 2022, when Estyn removed the school from special measures, the local authority withdrew its support and governors were able to appoint their own chair. They now feel that they are in a position to attract governors with the appropriate skills. They regularly audit governors' skills. They have governors with a wide range of different backgrounds, including those with education backgrounds, lawyers, financial managers and local business people. The school feels that all members of the governing body now contribute to meetings and decisions and have the skills to be effective strategic leaders.

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## Accountability: Holding leaders to account and acting as a critical friend

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In addition to strategic leadership, another core function of a governing body is creating a culture of robust accountability for senior leaders. This means holding them to account for educational performance, the well-being of pupils and staff and for effective and efficient use of the school's financial resources, including ensuring that money is spent wisely and for the benefit of pupils. The role of governors in holding leaders to account is essentially about monitoring improvement. This should involve establishing clear expectations, ensuring defined lines of responsibility, putting in place systems for monitoring appropriately and ensuring that evaluation leads to actions that secure improvement.

### Setting high expectations

The governing body should set an ethos of high expectations of everyone in the school community. This includes high expectations for the behaviour, progress and attainment of all pupils and for the conduct and professionalism of staff and the governing body.

In nearly all schools, governors say that they set high expectations for all members of the school community. They often link this to looking at pupil data and target setting and ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they can and attend school regularly. However, in a majority of schools, governors do not have a wide enough understanding of their role in ensuring high expectations in all aspects of the school's work. In only a minority of schools do governors challenge senior leaders effectively to help drive whole-school improvement.

In most schools, the headteacher and other staff provide governors with a wide range of regular information, for example about pupils' standards. Although in most schools governors report that they understand information presented to them, there is too much variation in the way that they use this evidence to hold leaders to account for pupil performance. In the few schools where practice is strongest, governors use questions to probe for further information and to help them understand the performance of different groups of pupils. In only a few schools do governors ask leaders for additional information to help them understand pupils' progress.

### Challenging senior school leaders

In many schools, governors say that they challenge school leaders effectively, however only in a minority of instances is there sufficient evidence to suggest that this challenge is effective in holding leaders to account and is making a difference to school performance. In a few schools where challenge is strongest, governors read, understand, and digest information presented to them by leaders and use their own experiences and first-hand evidence to formulate questions to challenge leaders on different aspects of the school's work.

In **Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel** in Carmarthenshire, only 5% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. Governors were aware that many of their pupils would not be exposed to Welsh regularly during periods of school closure during the pandemic. They challenged leaders about what the school was doing to improve these pupils' Welsh language skills post-Covid-19. In response, the headteacher submitted a plan to the governors about how they were developing language patterns, verbs, and investing in additional resources and support.

In too many schools, governors have a more positive picture about their level of challenge than headteachers report. Challenge appears to be most effective when there are governors with an educational background or experienced governors who have a very good understanding of a successful school.









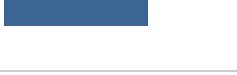

In **Tremorfa Nursery School** in Cardiff, leaders wanted to send teachers to Reggio Emilia in Italy to observe effective early years practice. Members of the governing body asked the headteacher to complete a business case before they agreed to the spending.

### Governors' role in school improvement

In many schools, governors have a broad understanding of the school's priorities for improvement and how they link to whole school self-evaluation. In most schools, at the start of each school year, the headteacher explains the school improvement priorities for that year and there are opportunities for governors to ask questions about why these aspects of the school's work have been prioritised. In a minority of schools, governors clearly understand the link between priorities for improvement and self-evaluation and monitoring findings.



## The view of governors on how they know what is happening in their school

			Response Percent
1	Headteacher reports		98%
2	Visits to the school		82%
3	Data shared with them		79%
4	School development or improvement plan		83%
5	School self-evaluation report		63%
6	Presentations and reports from school leaders and other staff		81%
7	Reports from the local authority or school improvement services		33%
8	Talking to stakeholders (e.g. pupils or parents)		57%
9	Estyn reports		54%
10	Other (please specify):		6%

Percentages are based on 352 governor responses.

In a few schools, the headteacher invites governors to the school every year to work alongside school staff on self-evaluation and improvement planning days. In these schools, governors often have a more secure understanding of the links between the findings of school self-evaluation and the targets for improvement as they have first-hand experience of contributing to this process. Governors value the opportunity that these schools provide them with. In these two schools, governors take part in beneficial annual self-evaluation days.

In **Pontnewydd Primary School** in Torfaen, each year senior leaders invite governors to attend an INSET day on self-evaluation. Governors work in teams with staff members to look at progress on an aspect of the school development plan and this information is used to support the self-evaluation report. The chair of governors presents at these meetings as there is an annual governors' action plan included in the school improvement plan. Governors judge the progress that they have made on meeting their targets.

In **Penygawsi Primary school** in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the headteacher has established 'Improvement in Action Days'. These are days where governors are invited to spend a day at the school to participate in self-evaluation activities linked to the school's improvement priorities. Governors support the initiative well and value the opportunity it provides. During the days, governors receive presentations from staff, especially those who are leading improvement priorities. They then look at pupils' work, take part in learning walks and listen to pupils in a range of activities. The governors then use the information they have gathered when reviewing the school's progress against its improvement priorities.

In most schools, governors obtain information on the progress that the school is making towards meeting their priorities through the termly reports from their headteacher and other information shared with them. This often includes presentations by members of staff. In the strongest schools, when they are presented with the information, governors ask targeted questions, particularly when the school is not making at least expected progress towards meeting their targets for improvement.

In **St Helen's Catholic Primary School** in Swansea, governors receive quarterly reports from the headteacher and other members of staff who contribute with updates on what is happening in their class and how this links to school improvement priorities. They feel this is an excellent way to keep them up to date with what is happening in the school and help them to challenge leaders with questions about developments.

### Gathering first-hand information

The majority of governors visit their schools regularly for informal reasons. They attend events, such as assemblies and school concerts, and are often involved in presenting school awards. In primary schools in particular, governors occasionally help with school trips and, in a minority of schools, volunteer in classrooms, for example to listen to pupils read. Through this work, governors gain an important insight into the day-to-day work of the school and become familiar faces to staff, pupils and parents.

Over recent years, due to restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, opportunities for governors to visit schools for formal monitoring and informal reasons have been limited. This has had a major effect on the ability of governors to gain first-hand information. In one school in Caerphilly local authority, the headteacher used

innovative ways of ensuring that governors had regular opportunities to gain an insight into the work of the school.

At the start of the pandemic, the headteacher of **Lewis Girls School** in Caerphilly started adding links to documents and videos to her termly headteacher's report. She linked this to something thematic that was happening in the school. For example, she included links to summaries of work that the school had undertaken regarding curriculum change, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform or any quality assurance activities that the school had undertaken. She also provided links to recordings of student voice panels. Governors looked at the evidence in advance of a governing body meeting and then posted questions for leaders to challenge them at the meeting. This was particularly effective when governors were unable to visit school due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Governors have now resumed their regular visits to the school. For example governors meet with the headteacher and the school improvement partner, and regularly talk to pupils. Not all governors are able to attend the school regularly, however and so the links attached to the headteacher's report to governors ensure that they still gain some first-hand evidence.

In many schools, governors are linked to specific aspects of the school's work including departments, Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) or individual classes. Governors often visit the school to meet, for example, with an AoLE lead teacher or to spend time in classrooms. These activities are useful in helping them to understand aspects of a particular subject. However, in the majority of schools, these visits are not planned well enough with a clear focus to ensure that governors can use them to make judgements about the work of the school.

### Activities governors say that they undertake during their visits to the school

			Response Percent
1	Spend time in individual classrooms		45%
2	Undertake learning walks to visit lots of classrooms		55%
3	Talk to pupils about their work		56%
4	Talk to staff		71%
5	Look at pupils' work on their own or with other governors		42%
6	Look at pupils' work with members of staff to guide them on what to look for		38%
7	Meet local authority or consortium staff		23%
8	Meet with the headteacher or other leaders		80%
9	Attend school events such as concerts, assemblies, or sports day		76%
10	Other (included hearing pupils read and community activities)		9%

Percentages are based on 310 governor responses.

Overall, the time that governors spend in their schools gathering first-hand evidence varies too much. In only a few schools do governors use their visits to gain high quality information to help them judge progress that the school is making towards meeting their priorities for improvement. In nearly all schools, governors are appropriately aware that it is not their role to make judgements about the quality of teaching. In the following schools, governors use the information gathered during school visits well to triangulate information that senior leaders provide for them.

**Abererch Primary School** is a small Welsh medium primary school in Gwynedd. Since restrictions due to COVID-19 have been lifted, governors have resumed their regular visits to the school. There is a timetable to help plan their visits and to allow them opportunities to undertake learning walks, chat to pupils and look at pupils' work. The school provides samples of work so that governors can see the expected standards for different year groups. Each visit has a specific focus that aligns with a school priority, for example improving the learning environment.

Governors also receive regular reports from members of staff, for example, about pupils' standards. They use the information gained from visits alongside reports from senior leaders to help them to challenge and question aspects of the school's work. For example, they have recently asked for an explanation of why pupils' standards in literacy are below that in numeracy.

**Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn** is the regional centre of autism education in North Wales. There is a clear link between visits that governors make to the school and their ability to evaluate progress in the school improvement plan. Link governors make visits that are targeted to enable them to evaluate specific priorities. They use guidance provided to them by senior leaders to support them in asking relevant questions. Link governors take part in a range of activities and record their findings. They then share a written report with other governors at the next full governing body meeting so that all governors have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about their findings.

In **Pembroke Dock Primary School** in Pembrokeshire, governors are regular visitors to the school. They undertake regular learning walks, led either by staff or pupils to look at progress that the school is making in addressing school improvement priorities. For example, there has been a recent whole-school focus on improving mathematics, so governors have observed mathematics lessons to look at the changes in practice, talking to pupils and looking at their work. They ask pupils questions about new school initiatives to gain their views

Link governors make learning walks linked to progress that the school is making towards introducing areas of learning and experience, also linked with improvement priorities. They meet leaders and spend time in classrooms.

Following each visit, governors complete a questionnaire on their findings, outlining any strengths and areas that they think need improving. They are mindful of their role as governors and that they are not there to make judgements on, for example, standards of teaching. There are other aspects of the school's work, however, that they are in a place to judge.

For example, governors had concerns over the learning environment in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) as it needed painting. They reported this at the next governing body meeting, the concern was actioned, and they then revisited the classroom again to see what changes had been made.

In too many schools, governors do not use their school visits to gather first-hand evidence to inform their evaluations of school performance well enough. Only in a

minority of schools do governors regularly use first-hand evidence to help them challenge leaders and to ensure that they have an accurate first-hand picture of aspects of the school's work.

In this school in Llanelli, a newly appointed headteacher had concerns that governors well not fulfilling their role well enough. Soon after his arrival, Estyn placed the school in special measures with a recommendation to develop the governing body's ability to support the school strategically.

In **Bryn Primary School** in Carmarthenshire, when the headteacher was first appointed, he realised that governors did not have a strong relationship with school leaders and had very little engagement with day-to-day school life. To help address this he arranged regular opportunities for governors to visit the school to help build relationships with staff and to enable them to get to know about primary education in Wales. He invited governors to attend monitoring activities led by school leaders and provided them with a range of prompts and questions to help them ask staff relevant questions. As time progressed and governors became more confident in their role, he withdrew prompts and model questions. This process has continued with governors regularly making focused visits to the school to meet with members of staff to discuss school improvement priorities. Following each visit, the governor completes an evaluation form outlining strengths and they discuss targets that the teacher wishes to address before the next visit. Governors then present their findings at the next governing body meeting.

This process has allowed governors to have a more secure understanding of the work of the school and to ensure that they use the findings of their visits beneficially to help the school meet school improvement priorities.

### Supporting pupils' well-being

In nearly all schools, governors agree that the well-being of pupils and staff is at the forefront of their work. They feel that this has been strengthened since the start of the pandemic. In particular, governors understand their role in supporting the well-being of the headteacher. A majority of schools have established a well-being committee dedicated to discussing the school's role in supporting the well-being of all members of the school community.

## Financial management

Governors must have the skills and knowledge to be able to make informed and effective decisions about the use of resources and allocation of funds to improve outcomes for pupils. This helps to ensure that public money is used efficiently and in the best interest of the school. In a majority of schools, governors have a suitable understanding of financial information presented to them by school leaders and local authority officers. They are able to make informed decisions to benefit pupils.

It was clear from our discussions with governors and senior leaders that in many schools, there are governors on the finance committee with a financial background, for example accountants and finance managers. In schools without a governor with such a background, they often look for new governors with financial knowledge as they appreciate the advantages that this brings when dealing with financial matters. These skills help the setting and monitoring of the school budget. In other schools, many governors have been members of the governing body for many years and have developed their knowledge and understanding of financial matters throughout their tenure in a way that supports the school successfully. In a few schools, however, governors report that financial information is presented in a format that is difficult to understand. As a result, they have to ask many questions before understanding the figures that they have been asked to scrutinise.

In most schools, governors understand the need to align school spending with school improvement priorities and understand their role in monitoring this. In a majority of schools, governors find it difficult to plan and monitor spending when money appears in the school budget unexpectedly, for example grants from the Welsh Government. They are often under pressure to explain it at short notice, including how they will spend surplus money when they have not planned strategically for it. In a few schools, governors report that they find it hard to plan staffing levels when they cannot accurately project the school's finances. In the most serious of cases, staff members have lost their jobs when in reality, due to late grants, the school could have kept their positions open.

In a majority of schools, governors would welcome more specific training on how to manage their budget. In Powys local authority, governors appreciate the support they receive by attending the local authority finance surgeries.

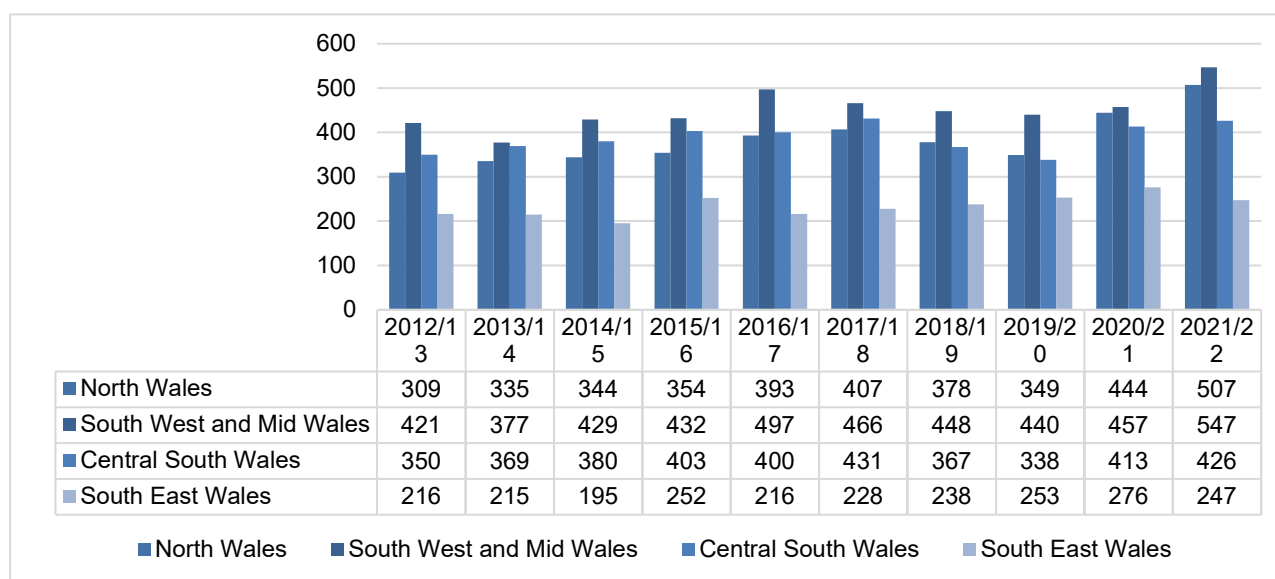
## People – Including building a strong team

### Building an effective team

The effectiveness of a governing body in delivering its strategic objectives usually depends on the quality of its governors and how productively they work with school leaders. The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the governing body are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable board members to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team and make an active contribution to effective governance.

It is concerning to look at the figures for governor vacancies in schools across Wales at present. Schools are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit governors. In 2021-2022 there were 1727 vacancies on governing bodies in schools in Wales. There has been a rising trend in vacancies over the past 10 years.

### Number of Vacancies on the School Governing body on Census Day in Primary, Middle, Secondary and Special schools by Local Authority and Year



The challenge to recruit governors varies greatly across the country. In parts of Wales, schools have little difficulty in recruiting governors. These schools tend to be in more affluent urban areas where there is a larger pool of willing volunteers to work with schools. However, in other parts of the country, recruitment is more difficult. These schools are concerned that they regularly have vacancies on their governing body and that they struggle to attract parents to apply when there is a vacancy for a parent governor. More successful schools also appear to find it easier to attract governors than those who have been placed in a statutory category.



**Governors for Schools** is a well-established independent charity. In 2020 it launched **Governors for Schools Cymru** to support schools across Wales to run effectively by finding high calibre governors to bring their skills and expertise to the table. It finds and places volunteers on school governing bodies across Wales. The service is completely free to schools and local authorities.

Schools and local authorities contact the organisation when they need support filling a vacancy on a governing body, including specifying any expertise that they need. In addition, the charity also recruits general volunteers and then matches them to schools. It plays a role on improving diversity on governing bodies, for example through its partnership work with universities and businesses. It encourages people to become governors. It also offers range of e-learning modules and seminars with a few focused on the Curriculum for Wales.

So far, take-up in Wales has been largely local authority led, particularly in South Wales. It recognises that it needs to increase awareness amongst schools and in other parts of the country.

Cardiff University is a good example of an organisation that actively encourages staff to apply to become school governors. Leaders in the university recognise the benefits that this can bring for an individual.

In 2019 **Cardiff University** introduced a programme as part of its civic mission with an aim to encourage university staff to become school governors. The university worked with other partners, including local authorities and **Governors for Schools** and established that there was a lack of skilled governors in schools. The scheme supports and encourages staff to become school governors. To date, around 100 staff have signed up to be school governors. The university regularly organises sessions to recruit new staff, including sharing training clips and case studies.

As well as providing a beneficial service for local schools, it feels that university staff benefit immensely from the scheme. Once a member of staff becomes a governor, the university supports them through regular training and meetings to share their experiences.

In a minority of schools, governors are fortunate that, when a vacancy arises, they are usually able to recruit a new governor from within their local community to fill any gaps in skills that they have identified. However, that is not the case in all schools, particularly those in areas impacted by financial inequity or poverty, rural parts of the country and in Welsh-medium schools.

In **Whitmore High School** in the Vale of Glamorgan, the school regularly encourages applications from individuals to become community and parent governors in order to ensure that the governing body has an appropriate range of skills and expertise. This has greatly enhanced the work of the body and allows senior leaders to call on governors for appropriate advice and support where necessary.

In addition, there are a few schools that appoint or co-opt non-voting governors effectively to join the governing body for short periods of time to help fill gaps in skills or to support the school with specific projects.

In **Argoed High School** in Flintshire, governors use their annual skills audit to identify specific areas where there is a lack of expertise on the governing body. There have been issues in the past in recruiting governors and the headteacher feels that the regulations around types of governor and terms of office are too rigid. The school has started to co-opt non-voting governors who come with specific expertise. For example, during the pandemic the school wanted to develop its online presence and co-opted a local web designer to support them.

In a majority of schools, governing bodies match the individual skills of their governors well to different roles. For example, they appoint governors to different committees based on their backgrounds and skills. Governors and headteachers appreciate how beneficial this can be for their schools.

In a minority of schools, governing bodies undertake a regular skills audit of their members so that they have an up-to-date picture of their range of skills and experiences. However, in too many schools, governing bodies do not carry out this exercise regularly enough. They cannot therefore always identify where they could strengthen their collective skills and knowledge when vacancies occur

Many governing bodies have members with an educational background. This is in addition to the statutory staff governors. In these schools, governors appreciate the experience that these members bring in relation to understanding educational matters and modelling effective questions for other governors. Staff members also appreciate it when governors use their skills to support them in their work. For example, in one school in Pembrokeshire, a governor who is an ex-headteacher provides the school with beneficial help each week by working with pupils who require additional support voluntarily.

Only a minority of governing bodies reflect the diverse makeup of their local community well enough. In a few schools, governors and leaders see this as a major issue and they cite difficulties they have in recruiting people from different backgrounds to join their governing body. Many English-medium governing bodies lack Welsh speaking governors and often lack the viewpoint and expertise that they can bring, for example on developing bilingualism.

Headteachers often support parents from different minority ethnic backgrounds to apply to become parent governors, but they are not always successful in being appointed.

**St Helen's Catholic Primary School** in Swansea serves a very diverse local community. Leaders appreciate the importance of their governing body reflecting the local community. As a result, governors come from a wide range of different ethnic minority backgrounds. They bring different viewpoints and life experiences to the school. In addition, governors are often prominent members of the local community, and this helps the school understand the community's needs. Members of the governing body lead anti-racism projects in the school to help with community cohesion. They also encourage parents to get more involved in the school, particularly dads from ethnic minority backgrounds. Governors and senior leaders are aware of the anti-social hours that many of these people work as they are involved in catering and are involved in organising projects to encourage them to be more involved in the school at times when they are available.

Governors and staff work closely with parents to help encourage them to apply to become parent governors. For example, they have daily sessions where parents can come into school to meet with staff informally in a relaxed way. Through these meetings parents gain the confidence to become more involved with the school.

One member of the governing body is particularly committed to encouraging people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to be more involved generally in schools. He works with the School and Governor Unit at the City and County of Swansea local authority on a project to improve this and has launched a school governor programme specifically aimed at increasing the number of governors from black, Asian and minority backgrounds.

The local authority has created a video on 'Diversifying Swansea's Governing Bodies' that includes interviews that reflect real-life experiences from four Swansea governors from diverse backgrounds.

In many schools, governors feel that they receive suitable support and advice from the local authority or school improvement service. This includes the school improvement partner attending governing body meetings at least once a year to discuss the school's performance report, support with the appointment of senior staff, training opportunities, and bespoke support if the school faces difficulties. Governors value advice that is available to them via governor support services if needed, for example if they need to deal with capability, difficult complaints or recruitment matters. However, the quality and availability of support and advice that local authorities offer governors vary too much across Wales.

In local authorities where they issue regular newsletters to governing bodies, governors appreciate this way of sharing important information.

### The role of the clerk

The clerk to the governing body should work effectively with the chair of governors, other governors and the headteacher to support the governing body. The clerk should have the necessary skills and expertise to be able to give impartial advice and guidance to the governing body on constitutional and procedural matters, duties and powers. The clerk is accountable to the governing body.

In most schools, governors are satisfied with the service that their clerk provides for them. Most clerks have received specific training to help them in their role. They distribute papers for meetings within the stipulated time period and write accurate minutes. Many schools take advantage of the local authority's clerking service which is available in most local authorities. Where clerking is less effective, it is generally because clerks have had little training and support to help them fulfil their role successfully. A very few schools struggle to appoint a permanent clerk to the role. In only a minority of schools do clerks attend committee meetings and as a result, a member of the governing body usually takes the minutes of these meetings.

In a few schools where clerking arrangements are not so efficient, governors do not receive papers in advance of meetings and therefore time is taken up during the meeting to allow them to read and digest information. In addition, minutes are not always an accurate representation of the meeting.

In **Bryn Primary School** in Carmarthenshire, the clerk to the governor had not received any training to support her with the role and, as a result, was not providing the governing body with an appropriate level of support. To help improve her work, she attended a range of beneficial training sessions, which included guidance on how to take accurate minutes and manage meetings more successfully.

She joined a network of clerks from other local schools, and this gave her the opportunity to learn from more experienced clerks and to share good practice. She attended governing body meetings at a partner school to see how their clerk organises meetings. As a result of this support, she now provides a more effective clerking service, including writing accurate and useful minutes, and has a greater understanding of her role within the governing body structure.










### Training and support

When a governor is first appointed, the majority of schools offer an internal induction programme, but the quality of this professional development varies too much. This can include an induction day organised by the school where they experience a range of activities to help them understand their role as a governor and get to know the school quickly. In addition, in many schools, newly appointed governors have face-to-face meetings with the headteacher and chair of governors.

In most schools, governors have access to training delivered by members of staff, and sometimes by pupils. In many cases, school staff attend governing body meetings to present information to governors about the schools work and to provide them with bespoke training, for example on the use of Hwb and school initiatives. In a minority of schools, senior leaders provide governors with training on safeguarding arrangements in their school.

The availability and quality of external training on offer for governors across Wales vary too much. Most local authorities and school improvement services that deliver training revise the content of their sessions in line with national and local priorities and feedback from attendees. However, there is no organisation that oversees training on offer or monitors the quality of delivery or content. There are no accredited training or courses for governors in Wales.

### Training that governors say that they have received in the past 5 years

			Response Percent
1	Head Teacher Performance Management		22%
2	Safeguarding		78%
3	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)		49%
4	Equality		26%
5	Managing the budget		24%
6	Curriculum for Wales		60%
7	Additional Learning Needs Reform		52%
8	Support and Challenge - being a critical friend		20%
9	Other ( included disciplinaries, recruitment, wellbeing and health and safety)		11%

Percentages are based on 315 governor responses.

Governors in nearly all schools attend the mandatory training organised by the local authority or school improvement service. This includes induction training, training for chairs of governors and data training. In a very few schools, governors are expected to refresh their mandatory training every three years.

Overall, the quality of delivery and content of most mandatory training is good. Most staff who deliver mandatory training are professional and well informed and provide governors with a good range of information. However, mandatory data training is now out-of-date and not relevant to assessment changes. In schools where senior leaders have also delivered in-house data and accountability training sessions, these sessions are more relevant to governors' roles.

Across Wales, most training for governors is now delivered online. Generally, governors are happy with this as they are able to access it at times more convenient for them and it reduces travel time and costs. However, in a majority of schools,

governors report that they would like the option of face-to-face training at least annually as they miss the opportunity to engage with other governors and professionals during these sessions. They see this as an important opportunity to network and share good practice.

When governors use recorded sessions for training, although it is useful to be able to access this at any time of day, they miss the interaction with other governors that live training events bring. This contact is important to give governors the opportunity to share ideas and good practice.

In **Ceredigion**, the local authority uses e-learning modules to deliver mandatory training. The authority has also developed a suitably wide-ranging offer of supplementary training to support the effectiveness of governors and chairs of governors. This additional professional learning is primarily delivered via the local Governors' Forum and Chairs of Governors' forum but can also be tailored to the needs of a particular school where required. Both forums meet regularly, are well attended and always include an element of professional learning.

The additional training has a strong focus on national and local priorities, such as the implementation of Curriculum for Wales and ALN reform and is designed specifically to support governors in understanding their role in the transformation agenda.

Governors have also benefited from specific training on self-evaluation and improvement planning. For example, the local authority has delivered professional learning on undertaking learning walks with members of staff and work scrutiny, which clarifies how governors can work effectively with school leaders to gather first-hand evidence.

The authority draws on the expertise of its own officers and school leaders to deliver training and is starting to share good practice with Powys County Council through the Mid-Wales Education Partnership.

As well as the mandatory training across Wales, local authorities and school improvement services offer governors a range of other training opportunities. This includes aspects of their work, such as curriculum change, dealing with complaints, and well-being. However, the availability and quality of this training vary too much between different parts of the country. There are regions that offer governors a rich variety of training session each term, whereas in other parts of the country there are far fewer sessions available.

In most local authorities, schools can request bespoke training for their school or a cluster of schools from local authority officers. For example, to make the mandatory data training more engaging and relevant, one governing body asked local authority officers to attend the school and deliver it face to face.

Many local authorities and school improvement services publish details of their annual programme of training for governors in advance. Governors appreciate this as it helps them plan their attendance.

One function of the **Education Achievement Service (EAS)** is to provide a Governor Support Service to all schools in the five local authorities that it serves. It also offers a clerking service to all schools across the region. It views governors as important strategic school leaders who should have access to high quality leadership training opportunities.

Its Governor Support Service provides advice and guidance to school governing bodies, headteachers and to individual governors to support them in delivering their responsibilities and to help them comply with statutory requirements.

The EAS provides different levels of professional learning for governors within the region. All governing bodies and governors have access to their 'universal professional learning programme for governors'. The professional discussion with the school improvement partner and governing body report are part of the universal provision but bespoke to the individual school. Governors can access targeted support, including customised training sessions for their school. The region also offers intensive governing body support, including brokering mentoring for chairs of governors and organising school to school support.

The support service publishes an annual governor professional learning programme and share monthly updates with governors. Each term, the region offers governors a range of training sessions, including mandatory training and other sessions to cover the core role of a governor, for example how to deal with complaints, and headteachers' performance management.

The region organises regular workshops to help governors understand their role and contribution to school development processes. For example, in the autumn term 2022, they facilitated sessions on developing an innovative curriculum and creating a great team.

In addition to the support from the EAS, individual local authorities in the region offer an annual training programme for their areas of responsibility, for example safeguarding, finance, additional learning needs, and exclusions.

In addition to training on offer from local authorities and the regions, governors in a minority of schools access training from other providers.

**Governors Cymru Services** currently works with nine local authorities and 447 schools that subscribe to their service. It offers regular online training events for governors in these schools and local authorities. Training covers subjects such as safeguarding, GDPR and how to be an effective governor. It regularly invites consultants to speak to groups of governors, for example. HMI from Estyn have delivered sessions on well-being and changes to the inspection framework. It also provides mandatory training in parts of North Wales. They are currently working with Gwynedd local authority (Gwasanaeth Dysgu Digidol) to promote the e digital self-review toolkit for governing bodies, based on the GCS self-evaluation template. In addition, officers provide bespoke training to individual governing bodies and clusters of schools.

In a minority of schools, there is a designated training governor whose responsibility it is to encourage other governors to attend relevant training. In these schools, training is often a standing item on the agenda for full governing body meetings. In a few schools, governors are given a list of training most relevant to their role in the governing body, for example linked to the work of committees or to enhance their existing skills.

In many schools, governors provide verbal feedback on recent training at full governing body meetings. They use this as an opportunity to promote effective training with other governors and to share their experiences. In a few schools, there is a governing body handbook that includes important information about the role of a governor. Within the handbook there is a link to relevant courses to other governors that would benefit them and the school. A few governing bodies require all governors to refresh their training at least every three years. They keep spreadsheets of training that governors have attended, and governors are reminded when they need to refresh their training. Governors in nursery schools and special schools often find that the mandatory and other optional training is not relevant to them as it does not take into account the specific challenges of their sectors as it is too generic. They would value having specific training with an early years or ALN focus to help support them in their role.

### **Appointing staff**

When governors are called upon to appoint senior staff, they are usually supported by representatives from the local authority or school improvement service. In the majority of schools, governors play a leading role in agreeing the person specification and job description for all staff vacancy advertisements. They are involved fully in agreeing the structure of the interview and the interviewed questions. Most headteachers are complimentary about the role that governors played in the appointment process overall. They feel that the nominated governors who undertake the role have, with support from the local authority or school improvement service, sufficient knowledge and understanding to enable them to carry out the process competently.



## What governors say about their expertise in carrying out the following work when appointing school leaders

	Yes	No
Agree a job description and person specification	84%	16%
Design interview activities to ensure that you should appoint the correct candidate	80%	20%
Shortlist the strongest candidates	94%	6%
Collect and analyse information from the interview process to ensure that the strongest candidate was selected	94%	6%

Percentages are based on 338 governor responses.

### Working with other schools

Each local authority has a governor association representative body. They provide an opportunity for governors from every school in their local authority to form a professional network and share good practice from their own governing bodies and schools. They act as a vehicle for discussion of the latest education developments in their region and the education sector nationally. The associations are often used as advisers by local authorities, school improvement services and the Welsh Government to consult on strategic and policy issues affecting schools. The associations also provide a mechanism for governors to become fully engaged with local education officers. However, in the majority of schools governors do not take advantage of the opportunity to become involved with their local governor association well enough.

In addition, in a few schools governors have the opportunity to meet with governors from other schools through cluster governing body meetings.

In the **Afon Taf cluster** of schools in Merthyr, governors value the opportunity to work together as a cluster. The arrangement provides a valuable forum for governors to network and learn from each other. They receive training within the group, often directed and led by headteachers. For example, recently they had a session on improving attendance. Sometimes they invite external speakers to address the group. This helps governors to challenge school leaders more effectively. The main impact of the cluster working is an improved sharing of good practice and knowledge at governor level. It also helped to develop effective working relationships between chairs of governors to support more effective transition arrangement

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## Structures including roles and responsibilities

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### Structures of governing bodies

In Wales, governing bodies must meet at least once per term but may decide to meet more often. It is for each governing body to agree how often to meet, where meetings should take place and at what time. Decisions of this kind are mostly for the governing body to take, but some rules for meetings are laid down in regulations. Each governing body may regulate its own procedures and those of its committees and the delegation of its functions. When establishing committees or delegating functions to them or individuals, the governing body sets out the role and responsibilities expected of each one.

Nearly all school governing bodies hold full governing body meeting regularly, either termly or half termly. In most schools, meetings are well attended. If governors do not commit to attending meetings regularly, governing bodies are usually proactive in removing them from the body.

In a few schools, the school separates its full governing body meetings, and each term has one business meeting and another learning and teaching meeting for all governors. This ensures that all governors are involved in regular discussions on learning and teaching as this is the core business of the school. This structure helps all governors to have an understanding of the progress that the school is making in meeting its improvement targets.

In all schools, there is an annual general meeting at which the governing body appoints the chair of governors for the coming year and agrees membership of their various committees and panels. This includes the statutory panels and committees along with other committees that the school wishes to have. In nearly all schools, committees have appropriate terms of reference, which outline their delegated responsibilities and aspects that need to be agreed by the full governing body. In most schools, governors update these terms of reference annually.

Although in most schools, governors revise the membership of their committees every year, in only a very few schools do they consider the structure of their non-statutory committees to ensure that they meet the needs of the school for the coming year.

In a very few schools, governors use the findings from their annual self-evaluation to consider their committee structure to ensure that is aligned with school and national priorities. They address the issues through a governor action plan and establish new committees. The new structure aligns with school priorities and works efficiently to enable governors to develop expertise and become more effective strategic leaders of the school.

In only a very few schools do governors have a more fluid approach to their use of committees. In these schools, governors often establish committees for a short period of time to address a specific aspect of their work.

In **Lewis Girls Secondary School** in Caerphilly, the governing body uses committees and panels in a fluid and beneficial way. Members establish panels for short periods in response to particular aspects that the schools needs to address. For instance, they have recently set up an ALN panel where selected governors meet with school leaders to discuss changes at the school. These governors then share important information with other members at a full governing body. They have also established an attendance committee in response to current concerns over pupils' attendance. Governors support the school with attendance by meeting the parents and attending attendance panel meetings. This has resulted in improved attendance for many pupils.

To help encourage attendance at their meetings, they hold meetings virtually and usually at 8am, a convenient time for most governors who work and also enables school staff to attend and present before school starts.

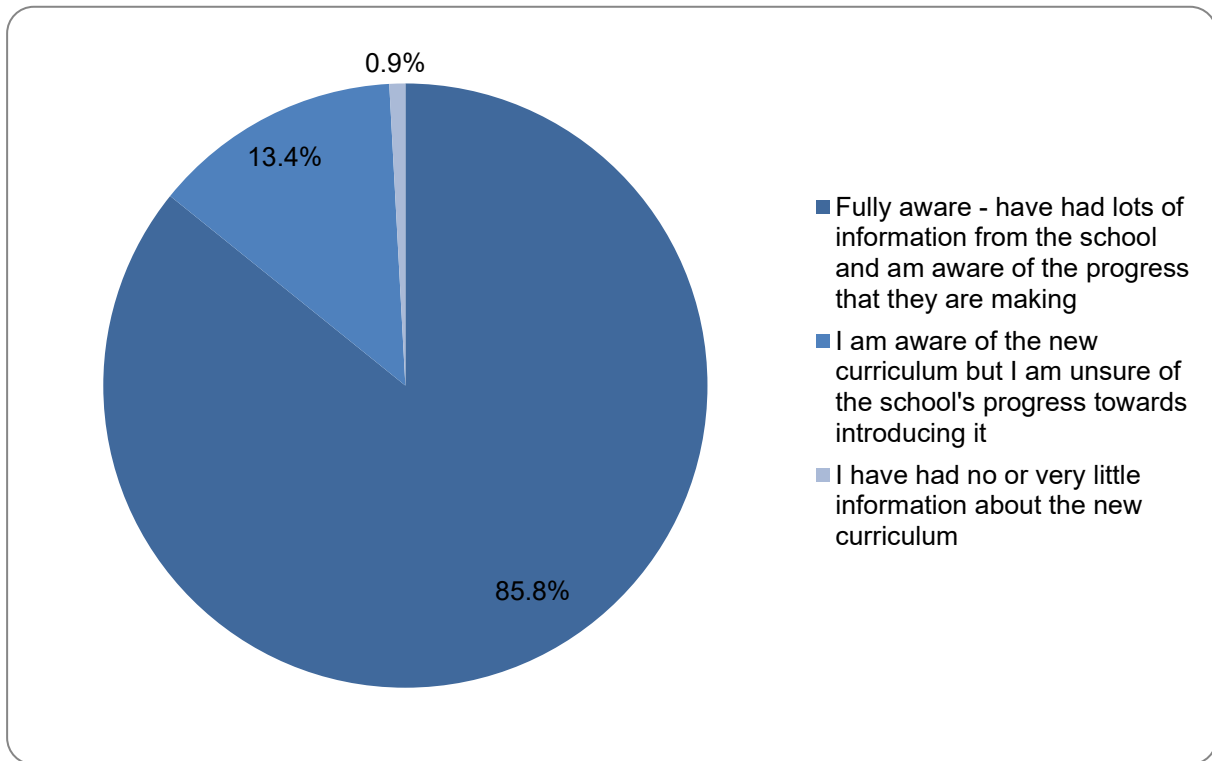
In too many schools, committees have been in place for too long. Governors do not discuss regularly whether or not the structure is effective in helping the school address important aspects of its work. In a few schools, governors have changed the structure of their committees and combined them, to help ensure that meetings are quorate and not for strategic reasons linked to school improvement priorities. Having fewer committees has usually resulted in better attendance which has enabled decisions to be agreed.

### **Understanding curriculum and Additional Learning Needs legislation changes**

In most schools, governors have had sufficient information to give them a sound understanding of curriculum change in their schools. In nearly all of these schools, staff have provided governors with a range of presentations and information about curriculum change and the impact on their school. In a few schools governors have received presentations from pupils on how they are learning in line with curriculum change. They have found these sessions very informative and 'real'.

A few schools have had dedicated governing body meetings or training specifically on implementing the Curriculum for Wales. In a few schools governors have had beneficial meetings with local authority consultants for curriculum development. However, many governors report that they have concerns that they do not have a secure understanding about accountability measures that schools will be using and feel that the mandatory data training that they have received is out of date and not helpful to them.

## How governors feel about their awareness of the Curriculum for Wales and the progress that their school is making towards introducing it



*Percentages are based on 352 governor responses.*

In most schools, governors have a suitable understanding of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) and the implications for their school. They receive regular information from school staff, particularly the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) and a few gain first-hand information through visits to the school to look at changes to the ALN process and paperwork.

In a minority of schools, governors have also attended external training for curriculum change and ALN reform. For example, governors in Flintshire have access to a beneficial online course specifically for governors on ALN changes. In a minority of nursery schools, governors are not confident about understanding the policy and legislation of the ALN reform bill.

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## Compliance with statutory requirements

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There are a wide range of [statutory requirements](#) that governing bodies have to have in place in Wales. An effective governing body ensures that they are fully compliant with all requirements.

In most schools, governors receive regular safeguarding training, and this helps them understand their role as strategic leaders. However, their level of challenge and understanding of what safeguarding looks like in their school and their school's procedures for dealing with any child protection concerns are often underdeveloped.

In a minority of successful schools, as well as generic safeguarding training, governors receive training that is specific to the school. In these schools they have a more secure understanding of how school responds to concerns. Governors in these schools are in a stronger position to question information that senior leaders share with them.

Nearly all governors have safeguarding as a standing item on their full governing body meeting agendas. This is an opportunity for leaders to share with them anonymised safeguarding information and gives them the chance to ask questions. However, in only a minority of schools do leaders feel that governors challenge them effectively when they share information with them.

In most schools, governing bodies are aware of their school's policy on healthy eating and drinking. However, they often rely too heavily on receiving information from school leaders to ensure that they meet their statutory obligations.

In nearly all schools, leaders share a range of policies with governors either in the full governing body meetings or through their committees. In the few strongest schools, as well as reviewing statutory policies every year, there is a strategic programme for the reviewing of all other policies of which governors are fully aware.

In only a minority of schools do governors scrutinise and add value when policies are updated or written. In these schools, governors read policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose for their school. They often add different perspectives to policies and this support is valued by headteachers. However, in many schools, there is little evidence to suggest that governors read and challenge policies. It is not uncommon for minutes of the meetings to record that policies were shared with governors and that they were agreed with no mention of any questions or challenge.

Every governing body of a maintained school is required each year to produce a report on its work during the previous academic year. In most schools, headteachers write nearly all of the annual governors' report to parents, with very little input from most governors, apart from the chair of governors who usually writes the foreword. In a very few schools, governors contribute to their report by writing sections or working alongside the headteacher to contribute more fully to the writing process.

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## Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governing bodies

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### Self-evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating a governing body's effectiveness is a key element of good governance. Governors should assess their effectiveness and efficiency and ensure ongoing compliance with their statutory and legal duties. Individual governors should also reflect on their own contribution in helping to create a stronger and more motivated body.

Highly effective governing bodies self-evaluate their effectiveness regularly. There are tools available to assist governing bodies with a formal evaluation of their work. In a few local authorities, governing bodies often have the option of requesting a self-evaluation by the local authority.

However, only a minority of governing bodies have undertaken any self-evaluation of their work in the last three years. The majority of governors recognise that this is an area that they need to improve. In a few schools, governors have plans to introduce a self-evaluation exercise during this academic year. A minority of governing bodies are aware of audit tools that are available for them either from school improvement services, for example Central South Consortium (CSC) and EAS, or Governors Cymru Services.

Only a few governing bodies have a current action plan containing targets for improvement.

**Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn** in Denbighshire is the regional centre of autism education in North Wales. The governing body has a well-established system in place to self-evaluate its effectiveness. Each year governors complete self-evaluation activity, which allows them to identify areas for improvement. They use the results of the self-evaluation to establish priorities for the governing body for the following year. For example, last year they identified the need to develop further opportunities to gather first-hand evidence and have a stronger presence in the school. This evaluation led to them revising and expanding the role of their link governors.

### Evaluating training

A few local authorities offer an evaluation of the effectiveness of the governing body. This usually includes officers attending governing body meetings to assess the effectiveness of the meeting and to judge the quality of questions. Officers then provide feedback to governors on strengths and ways in which they can improve. In Pembrokeshire, for example when local authority officers undertook a recent evaluation of governing bodies, they left governors with strengths and areas to improve relating to how well they conduct their full governing body meetings.

Only a minority of governors evaluate the training that they receive and its impact on improving their role as an effective governor. This is a shortcoming in the majority of schools. In a few schools where practice is strongest, governors keep a log of all training that they have attended. Governors are expected to report back following any training they have received with details of what they have learnt and how they think it will help them in their role. They also complete an impact log to judge the impact of their training on their role over time.

## Methods and evidence base

To inform our evidence base we interviewed headteachers and governors in the following schools

School	Sector	Local authority
Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn	Special	Denbighshire
Greenhill	Special	Cardiff
Tremorfa	Nursery	Cardiff
Ysgol Feithrin Rhydaman/ Ammanford	Nursery	Carmarthenshire
Bedwas Infant	Infant	Caerphilly
All Saints RC	Primary	Blaenau Gwent
Bryn	Primary	Carmarthenshire
Bryn Celyn	Primary	Cardiff
Bryncoch CIW	Primary	Neath Port Talbot
Eveswell and Somerton Federation	Primary	Newport
Hay-On-Wye	Primary	Powys
Jubilee Park	Primary	Newport
Libanus	Primary	Caerphilly
Maes Y Bryn	Primary	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Model C.I.W.	Primary	Carmarthenshire
Pembroke Dock	Primary	Pembrokeshire
Penygawsi	Primary	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Pontnewydd	Primary	Torfaen
Pontybrenin	Primary	Swansea
St Athan	Primary	Vale of Glamorgan
St Helen's	Primary	Swansea
St Michael's RC	Primary	Rhondda Cynon Taf
St Peter's RC	Primary	Cardiff
Tremains	Primary	Bridgend
Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Cystennin Federation	Primary	Conwy
Ysgol Glannau Gwaun	Primary	Pembrokeshire
Ysgol Gynradd Aberaeron	Primary	Ceredigion
Ysgol Gynradd Abererch	Primary	Gwynedd
Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel	Primary	Carmarthenshire
Ysgol Llanfairpwllgwyngyll	Primary	Isle of Anglesey
Ysgol Maesglas Greenfield	Primary	Flintshire
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	All age	Powys
Afon Taf High	Secondary	Merthyr Tydfil
Argoed High	Secondary	Flintshire
Greenhill	Secondary	Pembrokeshire
Whitmore High	Secondary	Vale of Glamorgan
Ysgol Bryn Alyn	Secondary	Wrexham
Ysgol Brynrefail	Secondary	Gwynedd



Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf	Secondary	Cardiff
Lewis Girls	Secondary	Caerphilly

In most schools, an HMI conducted two separate online interviews. One with the headteacher (and, in a few cases, other senior leaders) and another with a group of between two and eight governors who were available to attend. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. In a few schools, we conducted one interview with the headteacher and chair of governors. We asked the same set of questions in each school. We selected providers to give us information from a cross section of different school types, sizes, language medium, location, number of pupils eligible for free school meal and number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

### Online interviews with representatives from the following organisations





Cardiff University
Ceredigion local authority
Conwy local authority
Denbighshire Governors Association
Governors Cymru Services
Governors for Schools
Swansea local authority
The Education Achievement Service (EAS)
The Education Workforce Council (EWC)
The National Education Leadership Academy (NAEL)

We chose a sample of local authorities and school improvement services as well as other organisations who work with governing bodies in Wales. We prepared relevant questions in advance of each interview, pertinent to the work of that organisation. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. All organisations that we approached, took part in the online interviews.

### Sent an online survey to 250 schools and received completed surveys from 363 governors

The survey was open for completion between 7 November and 22 December 2022. We analysed the survey responses and grouped open response into common themes.

The demographics of responses were as follows

Type of School			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Primary/Nursery		83%	293
2	Secondary		13%	45
3	All Age		3%	12
4	Special		1%	2

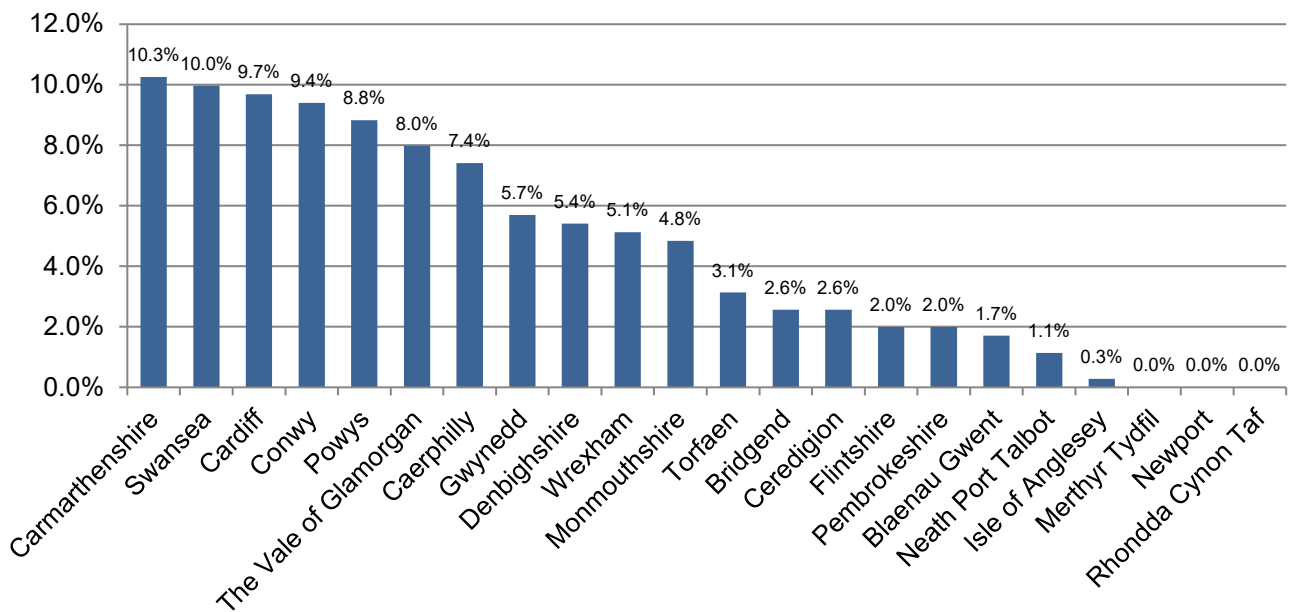
14% of governors who responded were from schools that are part of a federation.

Type of governor			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Headteacher		8%	28
2	Staff		15%	53
3	Parent		27%	93
4	Community		25%	86
5	Local Authority		21%	75
6	Diocese		4%	15

Length of time as a governor at the school			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Less than 6 months		8%	28
2	6 months to 1 year		13%	47
3	1 to 4 years		31%	109
4	More than 4 years		48%	168

We received responses from 19 of the 22 local authorities.

**Which local authority is your school situated in?**



Percentages are based on 351 governor responses.

### Used evidence from inspections from September 2018 onwards

We analysed a sample of inspection reports from September 2018 to December 2022 to consider the evidence that inspectors had gathered on the main strengths and shortcomings in the work of governing bodies in maintained, nursery, primary, secondary, all-age and special schools.

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## Questions used in online survey

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### Questions about you and your school

1. Which of the following best describes your school?

- Primary/Nursery
- Secondary
- All Age
- Special

2. Is your school part of a federation?

- Yes
- No

3. What type of governor are you?

- Headteacher
- Staff
- Parent
- Community
- Local Authority
- Diocese

4. How long have you been a governor at your current school?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 to 4 years
- More than 4 years

5. Which local authority is your school situated in?

**6. Which of the following positions do you currently hold as a governor? Please tick all that apply.**

- Chair of governors
- Vice chair of governors
- Chair of a sub-committee
- Safeguarding
- Additional Learning Needs
- Training
- Wellbeing
- Other (please specify):

### **Questions about training**

**7. Which of the following have you used to provide training for governors in your school? Please tick all that apply.**

- Local authority
- School improvement service
- School staff
- Governors Cymru Services
- Other (please specify):

**8. How would you rate the quality of the following mandatory training available for your governing body?**

**Think about the content of the training and its impact, if any, on helping you to become an effective governor, rather than the quality of the delivery.**

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Understanding Data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Induction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**9. What other training have you received in the past 5 years? Please tick all that apply.**

- Head Teacher Performance Management

- Safeguarding
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Equality
- Managing the budget
- Curriculum for Wales
- Additional Learning Needs Reform
- Support and Challenge - being a critical friend
- Other (please specify):

**10. How would you rate the quality of training provided by the following training providers?**

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School improvement service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify:

**11. How would you rate your level of access to training that is relevant to your needs?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor
- Very poor

**12. Do you ever attend either of the following?**

	Yes	No
Face-to-face training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**13. Do you have any issues accessing training at convenient times or locations?** Yes No

If yes, why do you say this?

**14. How has training helped you to undertake your role as a governor?****15. Are you expected to formally evaluate the impact of your training on improving your role as a governor?****Questions about strategic leadership****16. How do you know what is happening in your school? Please tick all that apply.** Headteacher reports Visits to the school Data shared with you School development or improvement plan School self-evaluation report Presentations and reports from school leaders and other staff Reports from the local authority or school improvement service Talking to stakeholders (e.g. pupils or parents) Estyn reports Other (please specify):**17. What role did the governing body play in agreeing the vision for your school?** Strong role in agreeing the wording, worked with stakeholders, and attended session(s) with school staff Headteacher presented proposed vision to governing body but little role in agreeing it Aware of vision but no role in agreeing it Don't know

**18. How aware are you of the Curriculum for Wales and the progress that your school is making towards introducing it?**

- Fully aware - have had lots of information from the school and am aware of the progress that they are making
- I am aware of the new curriculum but I am unsure of the school's progress towards introducing it
- I have had no or very little information about the new curriculum

**19. How would you rate your understanding of data presented to you by school leaders?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor
- Very poor

**20. Did the mandatory data training that you received improve your understanding?**

- Very much so
- In some respects
- Not at all

**21. How would you rate your understanding of Additional Learning Needs reform and the changes that will take place in your school?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor
- Very poor



### **Questions about gaining first-hand evidence**

**22. Prior to the restrictions imposed in March 2020, on how many occasions did you visit the school to gain first-hand evidence of its performance?**

- At least once a month
- Once a term
- Once a year
- Not at all
- Not applicable - I was not a governor prior to March 2020

**23. During the last academic year (2021-2022), on how many occasions did you visit the school to gain first-hand evidence of its performance?**

- At least once a month
- Once a term
- Once a year
- Not at all

**24. What sort of activities did you undertake on your visits? Please tick all that apply.**

- Spend time in individual classrooms
- Undertake learning walks to visit lots of classrooms
- Talk to pupils about their work
- Talk to staff
- Look at pupils' work on your own or with other governors
- Look at pupils' work with members of staff to guide you on what to look for
- Meet local authority or consortium staff
- Meet with the headteacher or other leaders
- Attend school events such as concerts, assemblies or sports day
- Other (please specify):

**25. What do you focus on when you visit? Please tick all that apply.**

- Individual subject areas e.g. literacy, numeracy, ICT, science
- Aspects such as behaviour, learning environment, outdoor facilities, marking
- Specific aspects from the school improvement plan
- Pupils' standards of achievement
- Standards of teaching
- The impact of spending decisions
- Other (please specify):

**26. In what ways do you use information that you gather from your visits? Please tick all that apply.**

- Write a formal report to share with other governors
- Report back verbally to the headteacher or other leaders
- Make a verbal report to other governors
- Identify strengths and areas to improve
- Nothing - I just keep the information to myself
- Other (please specify):

**Questions about appointing senior staff****27. Have you ever been involved in appointing senior members of staff (headteachers, deputy headteachers or assistant headteachers)?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, did you get effective support and guidance from local authority or school improvement service staff?

**28. Do you feel that a panel of governors have the skills and experiences to carry out the following work?**

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Yes                      | No                       |
| Agree a job description and person specification | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

	Yes	No
Design interview activities to ensure that you should appoint the correct candidate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shortlist the strongest candidates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect and analyse information from the interview process to ensure that the strongest candidate was selected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Questions about self-evaluation**

**29. Have you ever been involved in any self-evaluation activities to identify your governing bodies' strengths and areas for improvement?**

- Yes
- No

**30. How often does your governing body undertake self-evaluation of their work?**

- Annually
- Ongoing - we look at aspects each term
- On an ad hoc basis
- Once every 2 to 5 years
- No more than once every 5 to 10 years
- Don't know

**31. What were the main strengths and areas for improvement that you identified during your most recent self-evaluation work?**

## Glossary

<b>Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (ALNET)</b>	This Act establishes the statutory system in Wales for meeting the additional learning needs of children and young people.
<b>Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo)</b>	A staff member responsible for co-ordinating additional learning provision for pupils or students with additional learning needs
<b>Areas of learning and experience (AoLE)</b>	Successful Futures refers to the development of six areas of learning and experience as a way of organising curriculum subjects. These are expressive arts, health and wellbeing, humanities, languages, literacy and communication, mathematics and numeracy, and science and technology.
<b>Cluster of schools</b>	School clusters are groups of schools that are geographically close and accessible to one another.
<b>Education Workforce Council (EWC)</b>	The Education Workforce Council (EWC) is the independent regulator for the education workforce in Wales, covering teachers and learning support staff in school and further education settings, youth support workers and work-based learning practitioners.
<b>Hwb</b>	The digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales provided by Welsh Government to all maintained schools
<b>School improvement services</b>	The provision set up by local authorities to deliver school improvement services as set out in the Welsh Government's National Model for Regional Working
<b>School Development Plan (SDP) or School Improvement Plan (SIP)</b>	The central document in which school leaders map out their strategic plans for the development of their school
<b>Specialist Resource Base</b>	A specialist resource base within a mainstream school provides bespoke support to enable pupils to continue to access the curriculum while being provided with a specialist intervention programme.
<b>Statutory Category</b>	Special measures and significant improvement are statutory categories that apply to schools and PRUs causing concern as defined by the Education Act 2005 and any associated circulars.

## Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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