



Schools Governors Update



As the new academic year gathers pace, and we look towards the end of the first term, it is evident that governing bodies are navigating a landscape full of change and opportunity.

From the ongoing special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms and funding challenges, to the growing role of technology and AI in schools. This term has brought a renewed focus on safeguarding, cyber security, and the new Ofsted inspection framework which has now been launched. We appreciate that boards are being asked to think strategically while keeping pupils' needs at the centre of decision-making. The Schools White Paper is now expected early next year, but some of the proposals are already being introduced, such as the new expectations around school uniform.

We continue to keep you informed of forthcoming activities and events delivered by the Local Authority (LA) Schools' Governance Service, as well as highlighting some of the recent issues impacting education and governance.

Hillingdon Council training and updates: Thank you to all those who attended the governor training sessions that we delivered this term as part of our ongoing commitment to support governing boards in Hillingdon schools. We have further training planned for the spring term.

Upcoming events

Understanding governor responsibilities to handling complaints.

Monday 26 January 2026 at 6pm.

This online training session will be delivered by Richard Woodfin, School Improvement Adviser. It will provide an overview of the practical steps boards can take when handling complaints outlining the essential knowledge and skills needed to effectively understand the role of a Governor in regards to dealing with complaints.

[Book a place](#)

Understanding the governor responsibilities for SEND and Inclusion provision within schools.

Tuesday 24 February 2026 at 6pm.

This online training session will be delivered by Caroline Ryder, SEND Education Improvement Advisor and Hannah Sheridan, Senior SEND Advisor.

This training, outlines the responsibilities governors have for championing effective SEND and Inclusion provision in schools. It will increase confidence and provide the knowledge needed to participate in conversations with leaders surrounding provision.

It will highlight the local and national picture whilst allowing reflection on your own setting, and provides an insight into what an inclusive classroom may look like during school visits. It will also outline how the council supports schools with SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy.

[Book a place](#)

Understanding school performance data for governors.

Monday 23 March 2026 at 6pm.

This online training session will be delivered by Jason Hughes, School Improvement Adviser. The training will develop governors' understanding of the school's data and how to interpret data to enable governors to prepare for and participate in data-driven meetings.

It will also cover using data to give governors the confidence to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and school leadership team in order to improve performance and pupil attainment.

Being able to analyse school performance data and drill down to the core information will enable governors to make comparisons and benchmark how their school is performing compared to other schools in similar circumstances.

[Book a place](#)

Previous events

Details of all previous events can be found here:

[LA Training for School Governors - Leap](#)

Governor vacancies

We appreciate that it can sometimes be difficult to fill vacancies on governing boards, and to find volunteers with the right mix of skills, time to give, and ability to both support and challenge your school. To assist with this we have an active governor recruitment programme. Please do contact us and we will look to find you the right candidate.

National agenda for governance

Ofsted

Since the release of new inspection framework it is clear that raising the standards for disadvantaged groups is a key aim of Ofsted reform, through the addition of a new standalone 'inclusion' area and as a prominent theme across other evaluation areas.

Inspectors will consider how schools are supporting:

- Socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for the pupil premium)
- Pupils with SEND (pupils receiving additional support and those with those with an EHCP)
- Pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care
- Pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, which may include pupils who share a protected characteristic.

Governors are now explicitly mentioned under the leadership and governance evaluation areas, inspectors will consider the extent to which governors/trustees:

- are knowledgeable about their statutory duties and carry them out effectively
- support and challenge the school's leaders effectively
- understand their role in considering and addressing leaders' workload and wellbeing
- assure themselves that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's context and are prioritising the right actions for improvement
- ensure that systems for monitoring and quality assurance are fair, valid and constructive, and inform continuous improvement
- hold leaders to account for the impact of the school's professional learning programme for staff
- hold leaders to account for the school's support and provision for disadvantaged pupils who may face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

For further information and to attend the webinars that Ofsted are holding, please click the link below.

[Ofsted - GOV.UK Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

NGA Complaints webinar

With the increase in parental complaints. The NGA have a webinar that talks through the key issues and

provides practical advice to ensure parent/carer voices are heard, whilst balancing staff wellbeing.

[Click Here](#)

Attendance

Attendance remains a significant focus for schools and the government has recently announced that schools will be given an individual 'minimum attendance improvement target'. This will come into effect for the 2026/27 academic year, and your school will receive its official attendance baseline improvement expectation (ABIE) in September 2026.

There is no intention to publish the targets, or share the information with Ofsted, but the ABIE will be used to help target support through the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellent (RISE) behaviour and attendance hubs. There are plans to have 90 hubs across the country, with 57 currently in operation.

[Monitor your school attendance: user guide - GOV.UK](#)

School uniform policy update

Governors are to be aware that the Department for Education (DfE) has updated the guidance on school uniform, and the statutory guidance on the cost of school uniform, to reflect the changes which are due to be introduced from September 2026. The DfE has urged schools to begin limiting the number of branded items they require. From September 2026: Schools should limit the number of compulsory branded items of uniform and PE kit to three or fewer.

Please review your School Uniform Policies to ensure they are compliant.

[Developing school uniform policy - GOV.UK](#)

Update to DfE governance documents

A reminder that the DfE published at the start of this academic year new updates for governance professionals and governing boards.

[Effective governance resources - GOV.UK](#)

The resources covers five areas: Working with governance professionals (clerks), governing strategically in your school or academy trust, producing effective board reports for strong governance, creating an effective and agile governance structure and recruiting governors and trustees.

Governance Services would like to express our thanks to all governors for your continued commitment and support to the schools in Hillingdon and we are grateful for the many ways in which you contribute to their success. We hope you enjoy a well-deserved break over the festive season and wish you a happy, healthy New Year.

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Please access education information via [LEAP](#)