



THINKING
governance

Governance Newsletter

Autumn | 2026 Edition



Welcome to the Autumn 2026 edition of our Governance Newsletter.

I feel privileged to have been appointed as our Chief Executive Officer and to lead a Trust that serves communities and shares a clear commitment to Transforming Life Chances through education.

My journey has been shaped by a belief that barriers should never define us. After missing out on a grammar school place following my 11+ results, I was determined to create opportunities through hard work, reflection and continuous improvement. Those values remain central to my leadership and closely align with the ethos of Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

I joined The Portsmouth Academy in 2009 as School Business Manager, later teaching Key Stage 3 Mathematics and moving into senior leadership. Since then, I have worked across schools and trusts to support improvement and create better outcomes for the communities we serve. Being awarded an MBE in 2020 for services to education was a proud personal milestone, but my greatest achievement is working alongside dedicated colleagues and governors such as yourself - committed to making a difference.

As Chief Executive, I will remain focused on three principles: building systems that add value, empowering people to contribute and lead, and ensuring transparency and accountability in all we do.

I look forward to working closely with governors across our Trust. Their support, challenge and stewardship are vital to our success, and together we will continue to strengthen our schools, champion our values and deliver the best possible outcomes for the communities we serve.

Lee Miller, MBE
CEO Thinking Schools Academy Trust





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TRUST BOARD UPDATE

Following many years of dedicated service, **Derek Morrison** stepped down from the Board. We extend our sincere thanks for his contribution to the Trust.

We would like to offer our congratulations to Trustee **Krysia Butwilwoska** who received an MBE for services to education on the 7th October.

We are delighted to welcome back **Kaye Bettley** as a returning Trustee, who will return to her position as Estates & Health and Safety Trustee.

We are pleased to welcome **Natalie Gillings** as a new Trustee and look forward to the experience and insight she brings from her wealth of experience in leading HR both inside and outside the education sector.

GOVERNANCE TEAM UPDATES

The team welcomes **Juliet Woolman** to the role of **Regional Governance Professional for the South** region. Juliet will be providing direct support to our South Schools for all things Governance and GDCs. Juliet is also the Clerk to our Board of Directors and its sub-committees.

The team also recognises the promotion of **Kirsty Hughes** to the position of **Regional Governance Professional for our South East and East** Schools.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 15TH OCTOBER 2026

Topics

- Strategic priorities for the Trust for the academic year 2026/2027
- The 5-year Trust Strategy
- The co-creation of the Trust's Mission, Vision and Values
- 2025/2026 Trust Wide academic performance
- Review of the Trust Scheme of Delegation
- Academy Trust Handbook compliance
- Executive appointments

Policies

- Trust Safeguarding Policy 2026/2027
- Trust Complaints Policy 2026/2027
- Trust Privacy Notice

Communication

- **Thank you** to Governors at New Horizons Childrens Academy & The Portsmouth Academy for supporting their schools with recent Ofsted inspections
- **Congratulations** to Michelle Smith & Jay Davenport on their successful appointments to the position of Deputy CEO

Key Governance Dates

- Term 2 AGB Meeting/Events - to take place by 18th Dec 2026
- Board of Directors Meeting - 16th Dec 2026
- Term 3 AGB Meetings - 18th Jan - 29th Jan 2027



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SCRIBA

As you may be aware, last academic year we introduced Scriba, our new governance platform, which includes AI-supported minute writing.

For governors, this will not change the structure or flow of meetings. However, it will make a significant difference behind the scenes, supporting Clerks to work more efficiently and focus more fully on the discussion.

Following a successful pilot and feedback from Clerks, we will be using Scriba from this academic year onwards.

SCRIBA

NEW GOVERNOR INDUCTION



New and existing Governors are welcome to join our central team to run through the essentials of being an Academy Governor, best practice and an opportunity to ask us any questions.

Recent joiners will be automatically invited to the session. If you have not had an invite but would like to join, contact us on governance@tsatrust.org.uk.

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The date of the next session is the 18th November 2026 at 5pm.

AGB CHAIRS' FORUM



We are continuing to host the Chairs Forum this academic year.

The latest forum saw presentations from Deputy CEO Jay Davenport on high level Trust updates and Head of HR Dan Matthews on the new Trust approach to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging.

The forum is open to **Chairs, Vice Chairs** and **aspiring Chairs**. If you are interested in attending, please speak to your Clerk.

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The date of the next forum is the 12th January 2027 at 6pm.

MULTI FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

This is a new **essential** requirement for Governors to access their accounts to ensure compliance with required security standards and protect our staff, students and your own data. The deadline to have this in place is the **31st October 2026**.

Links to resources are available to support you with setting this up below. These include a helpline to our fantastic Technology team who are on hand to support:



[Governor MFA Information Sheet](#)



[Multi Factor Authentication Guide - How to Set Up MFA](#)



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SPOTLIGHT: CHILDREN'S WELLBEING AND SCHOOLS ACT 2026

Key points from 1 September 2026:

1. Pupils banned from using mobile phones in school during the school day: schools must have a policy prohibiting pupils from having mobile phones during the school day.
2. A limit on compulsory branded school uniform items: Primary schools can only require up to 3 branded items across the whole school year including items for PE or school clubs. Secondary schools can require 3 branded items plus a school tie.
3. New statutory duty to support pupils with allergies (Benedict's Law): schools must have a dedicated allergy safety policy overseen by a named senior leader and reviewed annually; regular allergy awareness training for staff; spare adrenaline devices for use in an emergency; and keep a record of serious incidents and near misses. *Allergy safety is the responsibility of the full Governing Body, but more specifics will be included in our link roles updates coming in Term 3!*

GOVERNANCE AWARDS 25/26

Choosing winners is never an easy task and we would like to take this opportunity to recognise the incredible contribution of all our governors and volunteers, whose dedication is truly invaluable to our Trust community. Congratulations to all those who have been nominated and selected!



Governor of the Year

Ann-Marie - Goodwin Academy
Sam - Curledge Street Academy
Matt - Kings Ash/Paignton Academy
Alex - Rochester Grammar School
Lynda - The Victory Academy

Lifetime Achievement Award

Roger - Plymouth High School for Girls
Richard - The Victory Academy

Board of the Year

Colchester Royal Grammar School

Staff Governor of the Year

Andrew - Paignton Academy
George - The Portsmouth Academy
Gemma - Cedar Childrens Academy

GOVERNOR MANDATORY TRAINING 25/26

Governors are required to complete the following annual training as soon as possible to ensure their schools are compliant with the statutory requirements:

- **Safeguarding Training for Governors 26/27** (Ihasco online training system)
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1** (Ihasco online training system)
- **TSAT Cyber Security Training 26/27** (Ihasco online training system)
- Confirm you have read **Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 2** to your clerk

We'd love to hear your thoughts on this edition and your suggestions for future topics.

💬 Send your feedback to: governance@tsatrust.org.uk