

## Empowering Independent Schools through Effective Governance

Strategic leadership for resilience and  
excellence in a changing landscape



**Supporting Boards is one of our big strengths – we recognise the importance of effective governance and the role it plays in ensuring schools thrive under continuous pressure. We provide tailored support and recommendations to enhance the governance of your school.**

We are a specialist search and consultancy firm committed to elevating governance standards in the independent school sector. Our comprehensive services are designed to strengthen your boards now - and prepare them for future challenges.

## Our Offerings:



### **Governance Reviews & Effectiveness Audits**

Assess your current board's structure, functionality, legal compliance and impact; providing tailored recommendations for improvement.



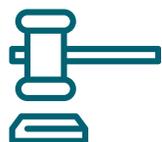
### **Targeted Recruitment & Succession Planning**

Find and attract high-calibre governors with the right skills, experiences, and perspectives to meet your strategic priorities.



### **Board Development & Governance Training**

Bespoke training programme that enhances the understanding of governance roles.



### **Regulatory Compliance Review**

We undertake a desktop exercise, ensuring adherence to statutory requirements and standards as set by the Regulator, and provide a report highlighting any improvements and risks.

## Why Partner with AQ?

- Deep sector expertise and a bespoke approach tailored to your school's unique needs
- Extensive networks within the independent school community for diverse candidate sourcing
- Confidentiality, professionalism, and commitment to your school's mission and values
- Proven track record of strengthening governance structures and supporting leadership transition
- Our approach emphasises targeted outreach, inclusive recruitment practices, and the development of a governance culture that values representation and equality.



## Governance Reviews & Effectiveness Audits



**Whether you're seeking to meet regulatory compliance requirements or a more thorough strategic review, we can support you.**

We use a structured question framework to explore:

- Understanding the school's current/future needs and strategic priorities
- Skills and expertise of the governors and diversity of the board
- Relationship dynamics with the executive team
- Identification of training and development needs
- Succession planning and future leadership considerations.

We combine comprehensive desktop reviews, with stakeholder interviews, meeting observations, surveys, and discussions, to provide comprehensive reports.

The reports provide insights on both individuals and the Board as a collective, highlighting strengths, gaps, and tailored recommendations for development and succession planning.

**We offer three options depending on your school's requirements and budget:**

- **Essential:** governance health check
- **Comprehensive:** in-depth governance assessment
- **Strategic:** strategic and transformational deep dive

## STRATEGIC REVIEW

strategic and transformational deep dive.

Ideal for schools requiring deep governance development, supporting major strategic change, or addressing post-inspection governance concerns.

### What's included?

- Extensive document review; historic board packs, risk registers, policies, and governance framework
- Board observation plus two committee observations
- Internal and external stakeholder online questionnaire
- Individual/small group interviews covering all board members, Executive Team, and Governance Lead
- Board skills audit and succession planning analysis
- Comprehensive gap analysis against all regulatory frameworks with prioritised improvement plan
- Written report with strategic recommendations
- Full board feedback workshop
- 6-month follow-up check-in.

### Average Timescale:

10-12 weeks

## COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

In-depth governance assessment.

Ideal for schools seeking detailed insight into governance effectiveness ahead of inspection or strategic change.

### What's included?

- In-depth document review; recent board papers and risk registers
- Board observation plus one committee observation
- Internal and external stakeholder online questionnaire
- Individual/small group interviews with Chair, Headteacher, Governance Lead, and up to 6 board members
- Detailed mapping against governance and regulatory requirements
- Written report with recommendations
- Detailed feedback session with Chair and governance lead.

### Average Timescale:

6-8 weeks

## ESSENTIAL REVIEW

Quick governance health check.

Ideal for schools wanting a focused assessment of core governance effectiveness or an annual compliance check.

### What's included?

- High-level document review
- Board observation only
- Internal stakeholder online questionnaire
- Group interview with key stakeholders (Chair, Headteacher, Governance Lead, Committee Chairs)
- Compliance check against regulatory requirements
- Written report with recommendations.

### Average Timescale:

5-6 weeks



## Supporting the Development of Your Board



### Board Development & Governance Training

Bespoke training programmes that enhance understanding of school governance, regulatory requirements, financial management, and strategic leadership in the skills sector.

Continuous professional development ensures your corporation remains effective, informed, and aligned with current sector standards.

We provide bespoke training covering governance roles and responsibilities, financial management and funding streams, regulatory compliance and quality assurance, strategic planning and stakeholder engagement, or crisis management and risk oversight.

### Targeted Recruitment & Succession Planning

Identify and attract high-calibre governors with relevant industry experience, financial expertise, and strategic vision to meet your school's specific challenges and community needs.

Leveraging review insights to identify:

- Key skills and expertise gaps in governance
- Industry experience required for strategic partnerships
- Diverse perspectives needed for community representation

Our comprehensive approach includes:

- Bespoke research and targeted headhunting
- Full process management from briefings to final appointments
- Comprehensive due diligence and reference checking
- Support through to successful onboarding



## Is your school ready to invest in its future?

Let's connect and explore how strong governance and making excellent appointments can become your competitive advantage.

Our dedicated schools team combines decades of sector experience with proven expertise in both.

### Governance Reviews:



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