



## *LGF: Leading governance forward*

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### OVERVIEW OF THE 2024 NOVEMBER LGF CONFERENCE

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This report provides governors, trustees, and our stakeholders with a succinct overview of the recent conference's outcomes. The information is primarily based on the LGF feedback forms completed by governors and trustees attending the event.

This was the 11<sup>th</sup> half-day conference we have organised for Liverpool school governors and trustees. The focus and topic on this occasion was to explore the critical topic of **“Handling School Complaints.”**

Since the COVID pandemic, there has been a noticeable rise in complaints from parents, placing increased pressure on governors and trustees to address them effectively through complaint panels, which are time-consuming.

The interactive session was delivered by Chris Forrest of Forrest Governance, a highly regarded specialist consultant and trainer in school governance. With extensive experience working alongside schools across the North West and serving as a school governor, Chris brought deep insight into the unique challenges governing boards face.

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## 2.0 KEY AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE:

The key aim of the session was to guide delegates through the complexities of managing complaints, and how to navigate the sensitive nature of these issues while ensuring compliance with the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines.

Delegates were provided with practical strategies on how to run complaint panels that remain focused and compliant, with the aim of enhancing their ability to handle concerns efficiently.

## 3.0 ATTENDANCE AND ANALYSIS OF COMPLETED FEEDBACK FORMS:

NUMBERS ATTENDING FROM ALL SECTORS	NUMBER
Total number initially booked-in	40
Booked-in who did not attend and apologised	1
Booked-in who did not attend nor apologise	5
<b>Total attended</b>	<b>34</b>
LGF EVALUATION FORMS	
Feedback forms completed	34 (100%)
OVERALL RATING BY ATTENDEES	
Very good	32 (91%)
Good	3 (9%)
Requires improvement	0

## 4.0 SCHOOL SECTORS REPRESENTED:

SCHOOL SECTOR	NUMBER
Primary	18
Secondary	5
Special	4
Trust/MAT	7
<b>The total number of schools represented</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Additional data (Governors serving on more than one board)</b>	
Nursery & Primary	1
Primary * 3	3
Primary & Special	2
Primary & Secondary	3
<b>Total serving on more than one board in attendance</b>	<b>9</b>

NB: The full listing of the schools represented at the conference is detailed in Appendix B.

## 5.0 SYNOPSIS OF DELEGATES COMMENTS:

<b>SUMMARY OF KEY COMMENTS</b>
<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a strong endorsement from the delegates that the conference fully met its key aims.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable, and engaging speaker</li> <li>• Professionally and effectively delivered and facilitated</li> <li>• Feel more confident with some great ‘hints and tips’</li> <li>• Good opportunities to ask and discuss questions</li> <li>• Gained a much better understanding of the process</li> <li>• Excellent learning experience</li> <li>• Greater understanding between a grievance and a complaint</li> <li>• Lots of really good information and advice</li> </ul> <p><b>Quality Assurance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-organised event</li> <li>• Keep up the good work</li> <li>• Could have been slightly longer as slides at the end were a little rushed</li> <li>• Some attendees took up time pursuing personal circumstances that impacted resulting in a rush-ending</li> </ul> <p><b>Venue:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent venue and facilities, including a car park that made parking easy and stress-free</li> <li>• Venue comfortable, convenient with good accessibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Refreshments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response was positive, with the light bars breakfast remaining popular and appreciated</li> </ul>

## 6.0 SUGGESTED FUTURE CONFERENCE TOPICS:

Thank you to those governors who suggested the topics below. We will carefully take them into account when planning future LGF conferences:

- Improving attendance; Exclusions; Staff grievances; Ofsted visits; Strategic versus operational; Governor focus of headteacher reports and how to effectively hold to account; School finance; Safeguarding and SEND.

## 7.0 SUMMARY & OVERALL OUTCOMES:

The delegates undoubtedly felt Chris Forrest was an engaging speaker and facilitator with a wealth of knowledge and experience in school governance.

There was also a very strong view that the key objectives set out in Section 2 above were fully met and that they had benefitted from their attendance at the conference. Furthermore, it was another opportunity for governors/trustees from across the Liverpool educational sectors to network and learn together.

We had a total of 34 governors and trustees attending this 11<sup>th</sup> LGF conference who represented 34 schools across the city, including 3 from neighbouring councils, and Nine governors who serve on more than one board.

It was disappointing that a cohort of six governors/trustees booked in but did not attend with only one having the courtesy to apologise in advance of the event. It will be appreciated that it does have unnecessary cost implications for us not cancelling in advance.

It was also interesting to note that 21 (65%) females were present as opposed to only 12 (35%) males. This was a similar trend to our 2023 conference.

For information, a summary of all 11 conferences arranged since 2015 by the LGF is listed in Appendix C.

We would also like to thank all the delegates who supported and attended the conference and for their important contribution in raising appropriate questions which helped to make this 11<sup>th</sup> conference another successful LGF event.

Finally, a special thanks to Hope School for hosting the event, and their important contribution to ensuring the event was a success.

### **Circulation:**

- Reena Bhogal-Welsh, Director of Education
- Chairs of the three Liverpool Headteacher Associations (LASH, LPHA & ALSSH)
- Ajay Sethi, CEO, School Improvement Liverpool
- Jane Holmes, Principal Officer: Schools, School Improvement Liverpool
- Liverpool Learning Partnership
- Chris Forrest
- Maxine O'Neill, Headteacher, Hope School
- LGF Committee Members
- LGF Website

## **APPENDIX A**

### **BIOGRAPHY OF CHRIS FORREST**

Chris is the owner and lead consultant at Forrest Governance, which offers training, consultancy, and support to local authorities, multi-academy trusts (MATs), and individual schools across the country.

Chris is a qualified accountant, project manager, and leadership coach. He has previously worked at a senior level across the NHS and public sector, including roles as a management accountant, senior organisational development manager, and Head of Workforce for an NHS trust.

Chris has been a governor at a maintained school for 11 years and chair for six years. He has also been co-opted to the boards of maintained schools that were sponsored conversions to academy status, sat on academy committees within a MAT, and is Chair of trustees at a primary MAT.

Chris is committed to helping governors support and challenge their schools effectively so they can play their part in improving children's outcomes. He does this by simplifying, demystifying, and clarifying their governor role and showing how they can make a positive difference to children's education.

## APPENDIX B

## NAMES OF SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

JUNIOR / PRIMARY SCHOOLS	SPECIAL SCHOOLS
Blackmoor Park Juniors	Clifford Holroyde
Corinthian Community Primary	Ernest Cookson
Fazakerley Primary	Hope
Greenbank Primary	Palmerston
Kensington Community Primary (*2)	<b>(Total = 4)</b>
Kirkdale St. Lawrence CE Primary	<b>TRUST/MAT</b>
Lawrence Community Primary	Faith Primary ( <i>All Saints Multi Academy Trust</i> )
Mosspsits Lane Primary (*2)	St Silas Primary ( <i>Rainbow Trust</i> )
Northcote Primary	Belvedere Academy
Our Lady Bishop Eton	St Margaret's CE ( <i>All Saints Multi Academy Trust</i> )
Phoenix Primary	Liverpool College
Ranworth Square Primary	Trustee/Rainbow Trust
Rice Lane Primary (*2)	Sacred Hearts Catholic Academy (Sefton)
Smithdown Primary	<b>(Total 7)</b>
Springwood Heath Primary (*3)	
St Aidan's Catholic Primary	
St Austin's Catholic Primary	
Woolton Primary	
<b>(Total = 18)</b>	
<b>SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>	
Archbishops Blanch Girls High	
Gateacre	
St John Bosco Catholic Girls	
St Julies Catholic High	
<b>(Total = 5)</b>	
<b>A total of 34 schools/academies participated in this 11<sup>th</sup> LGF Conference.</b>	

## APPENDIX C

### SUMMARY OF LGF CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE NUMBER	CONFERENCE DATE	NUMBER ATTENDED	CONFERENCE SUBJECTS / TOPICS
1	October 2015	46	Headteacher Wellbeing
2	October 2016	20	Headteacher Appraisals and Philosophy for Children
3	March 2017	41	Budget Reductions; LLP Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing project and Improving Children's Wellbeing through Yoga
4	October 2017	31	Mental Health: The touch that matters and Attachment Friendly Principles
5	April 2018	41	Online Safety and Liverpool Promise
6	November 2018	64	Governing Body Self-Assessment and Liverpool's Education Vision
7	May 2019	51	The effective governance of SEND and SEND provision in Liverpool
8	November 2019	47	Headteacher and Staff wellbeing; how can Governing Bodies ease the pressure
9	July 2022	20	Sleep and its Importance in Education
10	May 2023	50	Attachment & Trauma- Informed Friendly Practices
11	November 2024	34	Effectively Handling School Complaints
<b>AVERAGE ATTENDANCE</b>		<b>40</b>	-

**Note:**

- We did not hold any conferences during the years 2020 and 2021 due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.
- There are currently about 2,000 governors/trustees across all educational sectors in Liverpool, and thus on average, only approximately 2 % attend our conferences.