

Being a governor responsibilities and challenges

Ben Hardy - The Key

Session overview



Share the finding of our research and consider these questions:

How to tackle the most difficult aspects of governance?

How to delegate tasks effectively across the governing board?

Where does the role of governor start and finish?

Our research



Objective - To find out who governors are, what the governance sector looks like, and what governors' key needs are

Sample size - 1,582 people in total over 1000 governors, 355 clerks and 141 Headteacher

Methodology - held face to face focus groups first with 24 governors to design the survey and then sent out the survey

Sample overview



Sample definition

This presentation draws on three separate surveys to governors, clerks and headteachers. Across the 3 surveys the sample breaks down as:

1. School type

- Maintained schools 67%
- Academies / MATs 33%

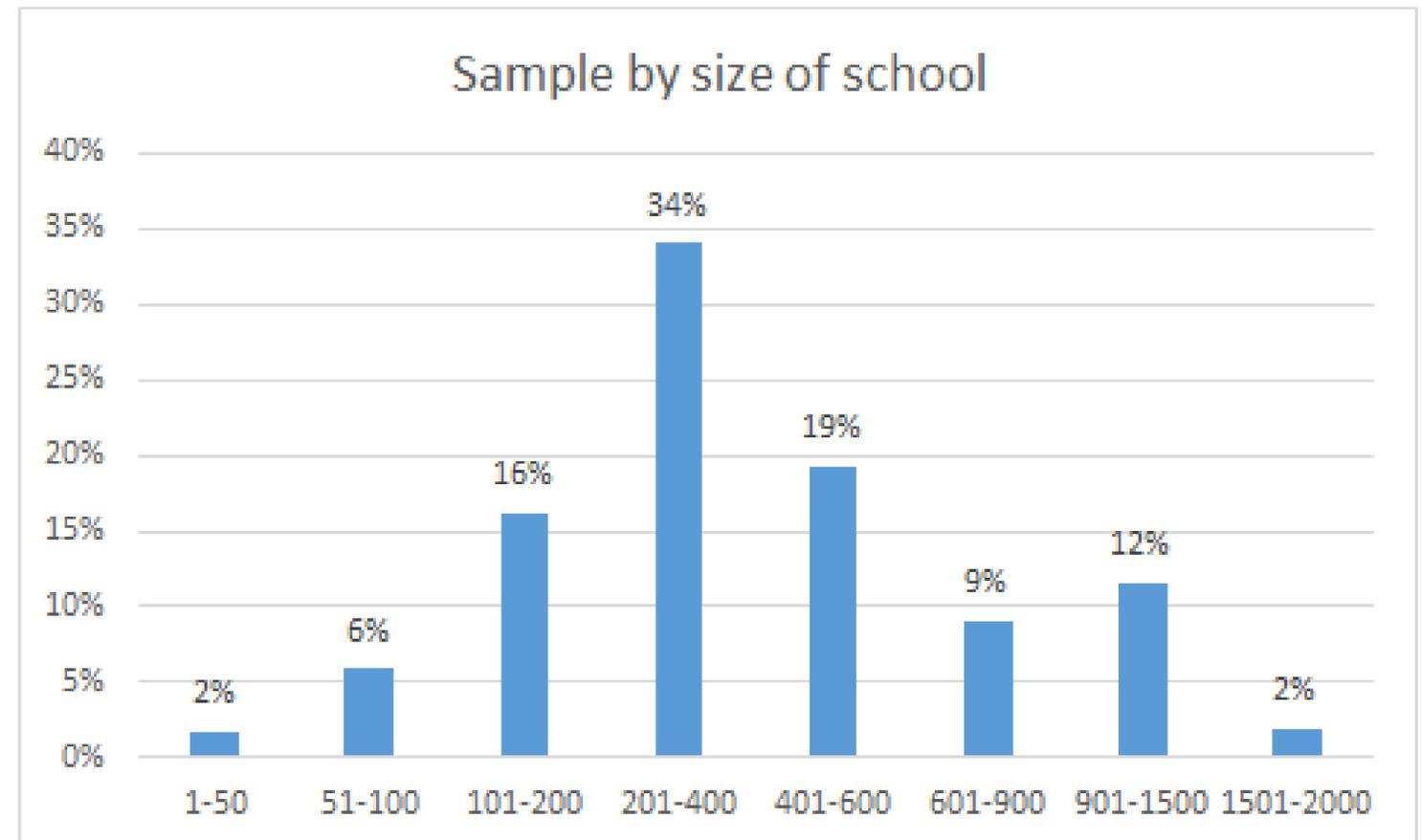
2. Phase

- Primary 77%
- Secondary 23%

3. Setting

- Urban 77%
- Rural 23%

4. Size of school



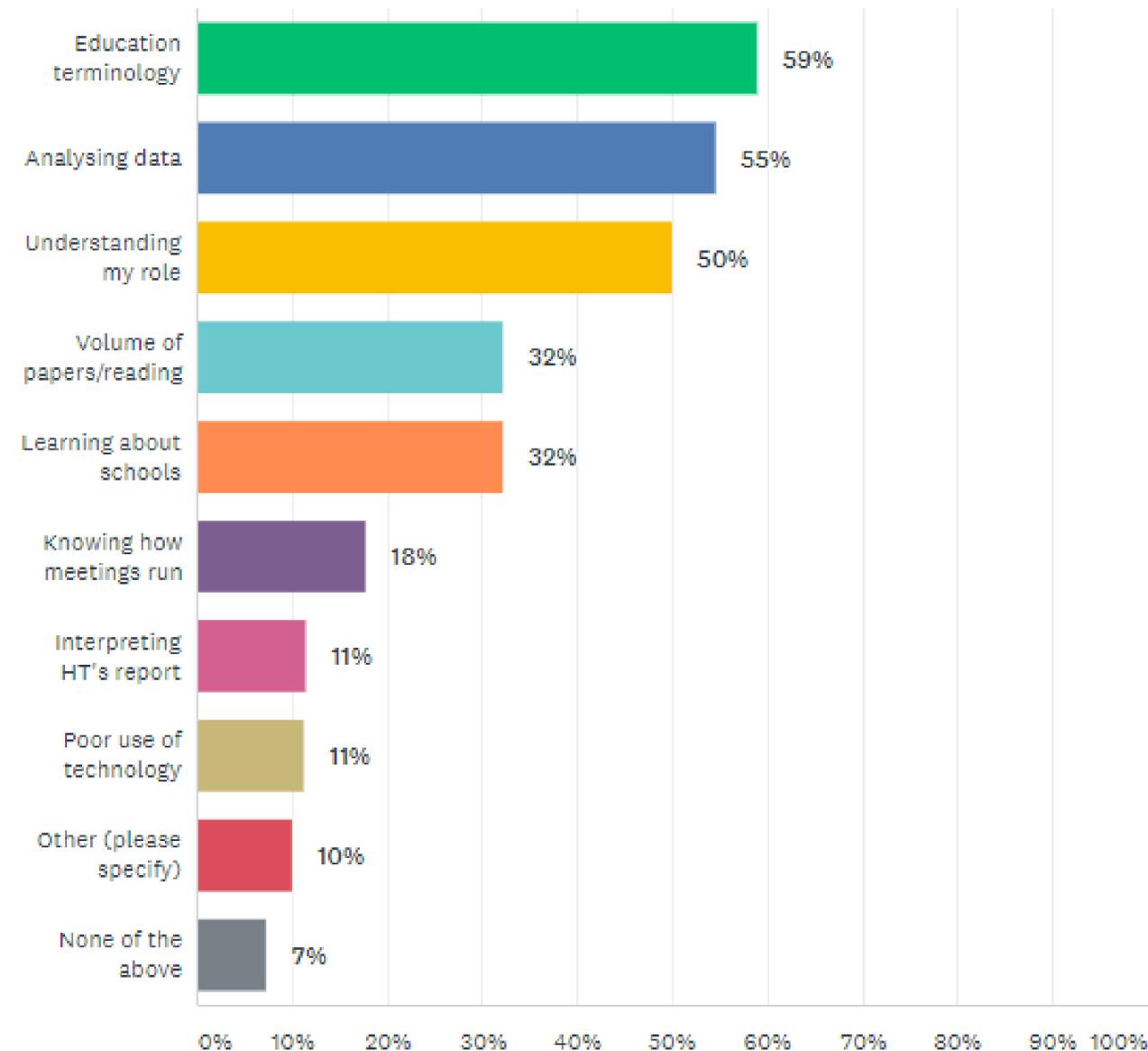
Graph 1: Sample across 3 surveys by size of school, 1,582 respondents

Education terminology, data analysis and understanding the role were particularly difficult



Which things in particular did you find difficult? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 1,086 Skipped: 0



★ *“The system feels very bureaucratic and lacks records of key elements to be tracked. In a corporation I could spend 3 hours reading key reports and quickly grasp the issues - the school system lacks structure and good management summaries and reporting” Anon*

Graph 5: Difficulty aspects of governance on starting out as a governor, 1,086 respondents

Talk in groups



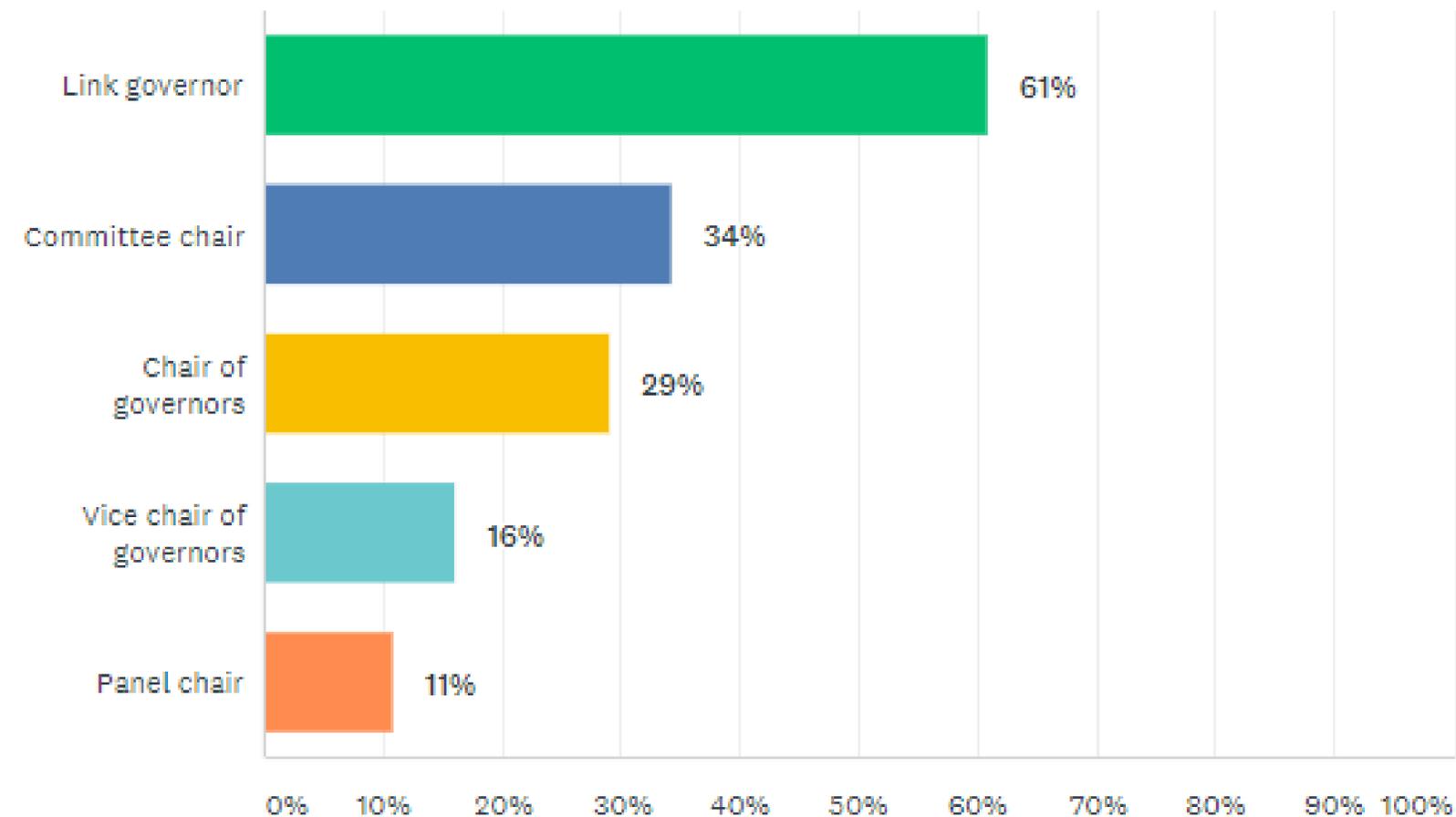
- What did you find most hard when you started out as a governor?
- Do you still struggle with it or are your challenges different now?
- Is there one education term or concept that confused you/still confuses you be honest!
- Did you have a good idea of what the role was when you volunteered to take it on?

Our survey shows that more governors have additional responsibilities than we know about



What additional roles do you have on the governing body?

Answered: 944 Skipped: 142



Graph 3: Governors who have additional roles on the GB, 944 respondents

In addition to carrying out their governor role, many are volunteering time in school too - and find it all manageable

Some were taking on more **operational** roles in the school:

- DPO
- Reviewing school websites
- Staff exit interviews

Lots were **volunteering** in the school:

- Supporting with displays
- Assisting with Maths Planning and intervention training

And some seem to be taking their **governor role to the next level** :

- Chairing regional governance forums
- NLG supporting other chairs
- Preparing training for governors across a MAT

Where does the role of governor start and end?

Strategic vs operational

Some examples:

- School policies
- Pupil premium
- School budget
- Teacher pay
- Parent surveys
- Departmental improvement plans
- School newsletter
- Health and safety inspections

Time on governance

- Governors are most likely to spend around 2 -4 hours a week on their role, in addition to attending meetings
- Chairs spend a day a week
- Heads spend roughly 2 -4 hours a week on their governance role - and think this is about right
- Most governors go into school to meet with SLT once or twice a term - but chairs are likely to go weekly

Time efficiency tips



- Effective use of committees and committees chairs
- Use all governors, seek to replace those who don't have capacity and/or relevant skills
- Co Chairs
- Planning a successful school visit

Ofsted Questions for governors



- Your role in the school
- Strengths and Weaknesses and strategies used to improve
- Finance
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Curriculum
- The role of data in an inspection

Top tips for governors

- 1 Familiarise yourself with the inspection handbook
- 2 Prepare your evidence
- 3 Address weaknesses identified in previous inspections
- 4 Decide who will meet the inspectors
- 5 Make sure the school website is inspection -ready
- 6 Use governing body minutes to show your impact
- 7 Multi -academy trusts (MATs) must be clear on how the governance works
- 8 Don't panic

Tips for other governance challenges



Interpreting performance data articles on The Key explaining how to use Analyse School

Performance and practical module you can work through here:

<https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/e-learning/>

School funding you can find information from the basics of how schools are funded, through to the specifics of SEND and Academy funding.

Headteachers and governance - getting to grips with the role

Governor recruitment - Governors for schools

In summary



- Being new to school governance is difficult
- Governors and clerks are doing a lot of additional work
- Governors find analysing progress data, school finance and preparing for Ofsted the most challenging tasks
- Clerks find it most difficult to keep on top of statutory requirements and compliance, government legislation and policies, and review dates for policies
- Heads find it challenging to ensure governors are ready for Ofsted, to produce data on progress and attainment that can be interpreted by governors, to recruit governors, and to work with governors on the school improvement plan.