

Last summer, Solihull arranged for all its schools to have access to both The Key and Ten Governor from the start of September.

We interviewed Chris Palmer, Service Director for Learning and Achievement at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to find out more.



Strengthening school leadership and governance in Solihull

What led your authority to sign up for both services?

Chris explained that he was searching for a service to complement the work of the local authority in supporting schools day to day.

“In the changing education landscape, the local authority wants to encourage its school leaders and governors to take responsibility for their own needs. Having services like The Key and Ten Governor means they have an efficient way to access the answers to their queries, and they have a support line as and when they need it”.

So how do you feel school leaders have benefited from the deal?

Chris said, “Having The Key has raised the confidence of our senior leaders, as they know that they have this added support when dealing with a specific issue. It also gives them an interesting insight into what others around the country have been asking, and makes them question whether they should be looking at similar issues.

What about school governors?

Solihull has been encouraging its governors to use Ten Governor frequently.

Chris said, “Going forwards, I see an increasing role for governors in scrutinising the data given to them by the senior leadership team, and finding out the story behind that data.”

Chris believes that Ten Governor helps governors understand their role and fulfil it correctly.

“It is important for them to find things out for themselves from an independent source, rather than just relying on what the school tells them. Often, governors don’t offer enough of a challenge; they just accept the information that they have been given by the senior leadership team”.



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When we work in partnership with local authorities, we can provide data on how their schools use our services.

How has the authority used this data?

Chris said, “Data provided by The Key and Ten Governor about how Solihull schools have been using the services is useful in checking my own understanding of their concerns – it is a great needs analysis. If a given subject has been particularly popular, the local authority might put on a briefing session to further support schools and discuss it collectively”.

“Both services complement the local authority’s work. They give me peace of mind that our school leaders are getting the support that they need to lead and manage the school, whilst our governors have the tools at their disposal to provide an effective challenge to the leadership.”

If you would like any further information on becoming a member of both of our services through your local authority please email partnershipsadmin@tengroup.com or call **0845 020 0497**.