Neil Pringle, Chair of Governors, shares his thoughts on how GVO has been a key enabler for demonstrating effective governance at Upper Beeding Primary School in West Sussex.

“Before we adopted the GVO there was no simple way of managing our governance process, documents were stored in multiple locations and it was incredibly time consuming to piece together everything we needed, whether it be for a meeting or for an external inspection. By contrast, since we implemented GVO, we now have one place where everything is stored and there is a clear and transparent evidence trail of decision making, discussion and monitoring. Being prepared to produce evidence was a key priority for us as a governing board team, and GVO really does enable us to confidently achieve this.”

‘We are converts, we love it and couldn’t live without it’

“Not only is the GVO a simple to use system for us to manage our governance work, it enables me, as Chair, to be able to see at a glance the status of actions and decisions agreed without having to chase others for the information. I believe transparency and a ‘paper trail’ is vital to good governance – in the past my regular one-to-one sessions with the Headteacher would have been a ‘closed event’, however we now share notes of our discussion and key points on the GVO for others to see, leading to a far more inclusive and informed culture.”

New governors joining Upper Beeding have found the GVO invaluable to their induction process, finding everything they need to help bring them up to speed as quickly as possible. “The GVO system is easy and intuitive to use, regardless of an individual’s background or experience – at Upper Beeding it is the one-stop shop!”

“When it comes to monitoring we use GVO to complete, store and share our visit reports – again demonstrating transparency and recorded evidence along with a log of actions and next steps – for me, as a Chair, this is invaluable in demonstrating the effectiveness of our governing board. The same is true of our training records, where governors use the GVO to create a record of the training they have attended, and more importantly the impact this has had on their role.”

By using GVO to manage a significant amount of the ‘on-going’ workload, for example keeping a record of statutory documents that have been read and signed, we can focus the time we have together in meetings on our strategic responsibilities. “This, for me, is where GVO makes the greatest difference – by allowing us to be well organised with a clearly documented evidence base we can become more effective in our roles and have the greatest impact.”