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 **Governors’ Monthly Update**

#### September 2018

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**Welcome to the first edition of the Governors’ Monthly Update, which will now replace the termly Governor Briefing Notes. As most governors will be aware there are ongoing changes within Children’s Services and the opportunity has been taken to improve the ways in which information is provided for all governors as part of the Local Authority’s statutory duty to provide that information.**

The Monthly Update will include similar items to the Briefing Notes but, being monthly as opposed to termly, will provide more timely updates for governors. There will also be additions, such as reminders of the training courses available and the sharing of news about schools.

Governors of schools which subscribe to the advice service will receive, in addition, Governor News, similar to Notepad, an electronic magazine with informative articles and advice on current topics which will also give governors the opportunity to share their views and experience, for the benefit of their fellow governors.

###### Governor Forums

Governor Forums will continue to be held each term in both Bradford and Keighley.

These free sessions are focussed around topics requested by governors and updates which will impact upon the work of governing boards of both academies and maintained schools. The Forums are open to all governors free of charge, irrespective of their school’s subscription to the Governor Training or advice Programme. These sessions are a great place to meet other governors and to gain insights into governance in other settings.

The dates of the Forums will continue to be advertised in the [Governor Training Programme](https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/governors/training). and in the relevant issues of this Update**.** Any governor wishing to attend the Forum is requested to reserve a place by contacting school.governor@bradford.gov.uk as this enables the School Governor Service to provide resources and refreshments for the numbers attending.

Autumn Term 2018 Forum dates are:

**Monday 8 October at Margaret McMillan Tower**

**Or**

**Tuesday 9 October at Eastwood Community Primary School, Keighley**

**Both from 6.30pm – to 8.30pm**

###### School News

In this section of the updates we will be sharing news from around the District which may be of interest to governors, such as congratulations to schools for good Ofsted outcomes.

###### Governor Training – Autumn Term 2018

All Governors should have received an email copy of the Training Programme for the Autumn Term in July 2018. Each of these updates will include reminders of courses available prior to the next edition including any new courses added to the programme.

To access the complete Training Programme and booking form please follow the link below:-

<https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/governors/training>

Courses available during September and early October include:

**At Eastwood Community School:**

**Monday 24 September, 6.00pm-8.00pm, Governance in 2018 – a Refresher Course**

In response to requests from governors this session will provide updates on the many changes to the expectations of school governors that have been put in place over recent years

**Thursday 27 September, 4.30pm– 6.30pm, Pupil Premium – The Governor’s Role**

Effectively managed pupil Premium Funding has made a difference to the outcomes of a great many children. This course aims to inform governors of their responsibilities and ways in which monitoring can be undertaken.

**Monday 1 October, 6.00pm - 8.00pm, Data: Progress and Attainment (Part 1)**

This course looks at the publicly available data that governors can access about their school including the school performance tables. It covers the level of information that the DfE and Ofsted consider that all governors should know about their school.

**Thursday 4 October 6.00pm – 8.00pm, Headteacher Performance Management**

One of the main roles of a Governing Board is to hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school and its pupils. Governors involved in performance management should ensure that they have attended this course at least once every three years.

**At Margaret McMillan Tower:**

**Tuesday 2 October, 4.30pm – 6.30pm, Engaging Stakeholders**

Governing Boards need ‘to establish mechanisms for enabling the Board to listen, understand and respond to the voices of parents/carers, pupils, staff, local communities and employers.’ This course will assist governors in devising ways to do this.

**Wednesday 3 October, 6.15pm-8.15pm, General Data Protection Regulations**

**(GDPR)** An update on this topic to inform governors of their responsibilities

**Friday 5 October 9.30am-2.30pm, Chairs and Heads Working Together**

Are you a new Chair? Have you a new Headteacher? Or do you want time to further develop your working relationship?

This course looks at the different roles of the Chair and Headteacher and the ways that they can work together effectively to ensure that governance is of the highest quality. During the session there will be opportunities for the Char and Headteacher to discuss various aspects of their work together as well as sharing ideas with other attendees.

###### Governing Board Agenda Items for the Autumn Term

This item will continue to be published in the first update of each term. The content will be reviewed to ensure that it contains any changes to items which Governing Boards need to consider.

Many Governing Boards will delegate some of the topics to committees. The items in bold are those which, at the time of publication, have to be considered by the Governing Board of a maintained school.

Academy Trust Boards will need to consider the terms of their articles and schemes of delegation in order to agree those topics which will be considered at the Trust Board and those which can be delegated to committees or to local governing Boards.

**Autumn Term**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **First Meeting:** |
| 1 | **Maintained schools: Elect Chair and Vice Chair and agree end date of term of office** (as and when their term of office has expired, usually one year but can be up to four years)**Academies**: Elect or minute appointment of local governing board Chair and Vice Chair in accordance with scheme of delegation.  |
| **2** | **Declarations of Pecuniary and Other Interests (signed originals to be retained in school for audit purposes)** |
| **3** | **Review and Update Statutory Information to be published on-line including governor attendance at meetings during the previous academic year and financial and other interests** |
| **4** | **Agree Governance structure including committees if appropriate** |
| **5** | **Review delegation of responsibilities including financial delegation e.g. to Head teacher** |
| **6** | **Review Membership and Terms of Reference (Remits) of Committees and Working Parties, including Appeal Committees together with Admissions Committee (if the school is an admissions authority) and Head Teacher’s Performance Management. Appoint Chairs or agree to delegate this to each committee.**  |
| **7** | **Appoint Clerk to Governing Body and Committees if used** |
| 8 | Agree and sign Governing Body Code of Conduct |
| 9 | Identify any 'named' and/or 'link' Governors (SEN, Safeguarding including Child Protection, LAC, GDPR) |
| 10 | Headteacher’s Update including review of internal and external examination results / standardised tests and progress towards targets e.g. GLD in EYFS, Year 1 Phonics check, KS1, KS2, KS4 and KS5 results and progress. |
| 11 | Review and agree school development plan priorities including plans for school improvement linked performance management and CPD and agree monitoring schedule |
| 12 | Pupil Premium: Impact and Use of Funding updated report to end of previous academic year including agreement of report for website. **Agree current Pupil Premium plan for year including strategy for school website** |
| 13 | Review previous year’s work of Governors and set objectives for governing body for the year including a schedule of monitoring and evaluation visits |
| 14 | Agree programme of meetings (including committees) for the coming year, if not already undertaken in the Summer term. |
| 15 | Receive Quarterly financial return (unless delegated to committee) **Academies:** Prepare end of Year accounts.Ensure all governors are aware of any updates to the Academies Financial Handbook and that the land and building collection tool is submitted to the ESFA by 31 October  |
| **16** | **If the school is an admissions authority consult on admissions policy for next school year.** |
| **17** | **Review and ratify Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy & Procedures** |
|  |  |  |
|  | **Second Meeting:** |
| 1 | Staff presentation linked to a development plan target |
| 2 | Receive and consider the report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead |
| 3 | Review quality and appropriateness of the curriculum |
| 4 | Receive Headteacher’s Report including update on behaviour and attendance if not a school development plan priority |
| 5 | Agree arrangements for Headteacher Performance Management **and, in maintained schools,** **appoint an external adviser** |
| 5 | Monitor the impact of school development and Pupil Premium Plan strategies |
| 6 | Receive report on the operation, outcomes and impact of performance management reviews and continuous professional development within the school |
| **5** | **Review the Pay of all Staff (not statutory for academies)** |
| **6** | **Set holidays for next academic year**  |
| 7 | Receive update on General Data Protection Regulation compliance |
| 8 | Identify future work including succession planning for staff and governors  |
| 9 | Academies: Agree end of Year accounts and update website and Companies House as appropriate |
| 10 | **Agree Charging and Remissions Policy (maintained Schools)** |
| 11 | **Set up review of SFVS (maintained Schools)** |

**Other items which should be discussed on a regular/planned basis:**

* Write/review policies (include assessing for adverse impact on equality with regard to race, gender and protected characteristics)
* Consider school improvement reports and presentations- including from external consultants
* Reports from Committees
* Reports from ‘named’ governors (e.g. SEN, Safeguarding, Action plan links)
* Governors’ visits to school
* Governor development and training ( include succession planning for governors whose term is nearing an end)
* Reports from governors who have attended training or a conference
* Induction of new governors
* Update school Self Evaluation Form (SEF)
* Evaluate external data e.g. School Performance Tables and Analyse School Performance (Raise) and School Comparison Tool (Financial Benchmarking Site

**Monitoring Actions for Governors outside of meetings e.g.:**

* Meet with School Council
* Visit link classes
* Learning walks focussing on aspects of School Development Plan
* Classroom visits linked to School Development plan priorities
* Staff input on lead priorities
* Head Teacher’s Performance Management
* Community and parental links – review
* Named Governors actions e.g. Safeguarding - checking Single Central Record

###### Update from the Secretary of State for Education in July

###### on SEND and Other Topics

Education Secretary Damian Hinds addressed the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) at their Manchester conference. The speech covered a range of areas, including:

•       Safeguarding children

•       SEND

•       Alternative provision and exclusions

•       Care leavers

You can access a transcript of the speech [Here](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-makes-inaugural-speech-to-childrens-services-sector)

In relation to SEND there were a number of key messages for schools:-

‘Ultimately, the gap in outcomes between children with SEND and other children is still far too wide. In particular, when they leave school, young people with an EHC plan are still twice as likely to be out of education, employment and training.

Firstly, on the role of mainstream schools in meeting special educational needs. We know there has been a steady movement of children with special educational needs out of mainstream schools and into specialist provision, alternative provision and home education. .. At the same time, rates of exclusion have begun to rise after a period of having calmed down.

And I hear too many stories about off-rolling, with schools finding ways to remove pupils, outside of the formal exclusions system. And of what is, essentially, pre-emptive exclusion, where parents looking at secondary schools are actively or in some way subtly discouraged from applying to a particular school for their child.

And I want to be clear right now: this is not okay. SEND pupils are not someone else’s problem. Every school is a school for pupils with SEND; and every teacher is a teacher of SEND pupils. And all schools and colleges – alongside central and local government – have a level of responsibility here, it cannot just be left to a few...

Children, young people and parents should – and do – have a strong say in all of this, and I am clear that specialist provision can be the right choice for those with more complex needs. But mainstream schools and colleges – with the right support and training – should also be able to offer strong support for many more children and young people with EHC plans, as well as high quality SEN Support for those without plans. So I want to both equip and incentivise schools to do better for children and young people with SEND.

This includes working with Ofsted to make sure our accountability system sufficiently rewards schools for their work with pupils who need extra support, and to encourage schools to focus on all pupils, not just the highest achievers.’

The speech has been followed by a blog from Neil Whittaker, DfE Specialist Adviser, SEND on 10 September, reiterating this message. The blog can be found [here](https://educayioninspection.blog.gov.uk/2018/09/10/inspecting-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-provision/)

###### Send Governance Review Guide Launched

The guide was commissioned by Whole School SEND and co-funded by the DfE and [Driver Youth Trust](http://driveryouthtrust.com/) in partnership with governance leaders.

The guide focusses on how the governing board can secure high quality outcomes for learners with SEND.

Speaking at the launch, Gillian Allcroft, NGA’s Deputy Chief Executive said:-

“A school in which the governing board has values that are inclusive and welcoming of all children is a huge step in the right direction. It drives a culture in which the provision for children with SEND is a key priority and not an afterthought.

Though one governor may have specific SEND responsibilities, all the governing board should know what the provision is and whether it is achieving desired outcomes. A diverse board will make better decisions and a diverse, inclusive school will help make our children and young people more rounded individuals. The *SEND Governance Review Guide* can help boards to set the right direction.”

Chris Rossiter, chief executive of Driver Youth Trust and lead author of the *SEND Governance Review Guide*, said: “This guide provides a blueprint from which governors and academy trustees can acquire and reflect upon their strategic view of SEND for the benefit of these young people, who rightly should be central to our decision-making.”

The *SEND Governance Review Guide*can be downloaded for free [here](https://sendgov.co.uk/).

Information on the use of the Guide will be included in the School Governor Service SEND training this October.

###### Ruling on exclusions of SEND pupils

In a landmark case a ruling from the Upper Tribunal, found in favour of the case of ‘L’, a 13 year old boy excluded from school due to aggressive behaviour linked to his autism.

The judge found the treatment of ‘L’, and of others excluded, was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights due to discrimination against those with a recognised condition.

This ruling will make it harder for schools to exclude children with special educational needs and disabilities on the grounds that they have a ‘tendency to physically abuse’ and means that schools will have to make appropriate adjustments for pupils with a violence linked condition before looking towards exclusion.

Jane Harris, director of external affairs at the NAS, described the prior policy as a “legal loophole” for schools which had made “no adjustments to meet their needs”.

Melanie Field, executive director of the EHRC, has welcomed the verdict, stating “this is a positive step towards ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential through education and increasing the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream education”.

Governing boards need to consider this carefully and ensure appropriate provisions are in place for SEND pupils.

###### Keeping Children Safe in Education

The New Statutory Guidance came into force on 3 September 2018.

The guidance can be accessed [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) .

Approval of Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies needs to be completed annually and governing boards will need to ensure that these comply with the new guidance and confirm that all staff and governors have been updated as necessary.

###### Literacy and Numeracy catch-up strategies

This publication came out in August 2018 and is aimed at assisting those providing strategies and interventions aimed at children in Year 7 with low levels of attainment in Key Stage 2.

It includes evidence on what does and does not work, including some interventions that are used in Primary Schools. The cost per student and the benefits of each of these interventions are listed.

In addition the review looks at Transfer from Primary to Secondary and identifies six general principles to facilitate transitions which are summarised in the report and identified as effective.

The report can be accessed [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/literacy-and-numeracy-catch-up-strategies)

###### Disadvantaged Pupils

The DfE has published a report on Research into the **Impact of School Culture and Practice** in supporting disadvantaged pupils. The performance of disadvantaged pupils in London has been comparatively higher than in other areas since the 1990s and the DfE has undertaken research into

this phenomenon and the report contains information on cultures and practices that perform both well and less well for disadvantaged pupils inside and outside of London,

It gives insights that will be useful for governors when looking at practices used within school to improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils.

The report can be downloaded [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-culture-and-practice-supporting-disadvantaged-pupils).

The report concludes that pupil performance was a better indicator of cultures and practices than where a school was located geographically.

High-performing schools tended to:-

* “hold particularly high expectations”,
* “engender positive relationships” across the school community and
* “responded positively to pupils’ aspirational goals” regardless of location.

High-performing schools were also more likely to:-

* React quickly when pupils fell behind,
* Match teaching to each pupil’s ability
* Push higher attainers further.

Some evidence of cultural traits unique to schools in the capital were identified with an emphasis in some London schools of building stronger relationships with parents, staff, pupils, other schools and the wider community. These relationships were often centered on creating a shared vision and ethos, having high aspirations and promoting high behavioural expectations.

High-performing schools tended to be those where, for disadvantaged pupils,

* “strategies were used consistently within each school” and where
* they were “frequently and regularly employed… and … embedded”.

Approaches to boosting disadvantaged pupil attainment included:-

* working with local schools to manage transitions between phases
* engaging in a variety of “community partnerships to deliver extra-curricular activities” and
* “work experience opportunities”.

High-performing schools were more likely to evaluate the impact of interventions and ensure that all staff were “confident in handling data and using data to inform their practice”.

Governing boards are responsible for ensuring that culture and practices match the school’s vision and values and are also responsible for overseeing and monitoring practices funded by the pupil premium for supporting disadvantaged pupils. The information contained in the report should assist with this.

###### Hygiene Poverty

While governors are considering their Pupil Premium provision the following item may be of interest.

In July, charity In Kind Direct [published the findings of a survey](https://www.inkinddirect.org/primary-school-children-in-hygiene-poverty/) which involved a representative sample of 2,000 parents of primary school children and 100 teachers. The survey highlighted the prevalence of hygiene poverty across the UK.

Headline figures included the fact that 43% of parents said that they had to go without basic hygiene or cleaning products because they couldn’t afford them. As a result, 26% said that their child had to wear the same shirt or blouse for at least a week, while nearly one in five (18%) said that their child wears the same underwear for at least two days in a row.

 Among teachers, 63% said that they see children turning up for schools in dirty clothes. Nearly half (47%) said that children came to school without having cleaned their teeth, while 80% said that they had seen an increase in the number of pupils coming to school unwashed. Worryingly in light of these figures, 46% of teachers also said that they see children being bullied due to hygiene issues, while 54% had observed hygiene problems causing low self-esteem.

Some schools are having to take action to combat these problems. A primary school in Stoke provides toiletries, washing powder and toothpaste, and is considering installing a washing machine. According to the survey, some teachers put their hands into their own pockets too. 36% of respondents said that they had provided toothpaste to pupils, while 29% had bought soap.

Governing boards may want to consider this information including the links of hygiene poverty to bullying, which emphasises the importance of the governing board leading the way in establishing a whole school ethos of inclusiveness and kindness.

###### Pupil Premium

The NGA has launched a campaign ‘Spotlight on Disadvantage’ and, in order to inform that campaign, have commissioned a report looking at the role of Governors and Trustees in spending, monitoring and evaluating the use of Pupil Premium.

The key findings from the report are:-

Characteristics of the most effective pupil premium strategies (i.e. those that most strongly correlate with good outcomes for pupils) include:

* accounting for how every pound of the pupil premium budget is spent;
* having clear monitoring and success criterion for each initiative;
* and clarifying which group of pupils will receive funding.

Analysis uncovered a 'disconnect' between the pastoral barriers to educational achievement facing pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the teaching and learning initiatives which schools are funding through the pupil premium.

Governing boards view internal data and the opinions of senior members of staff more favourably than external data, academic research and the EEF toolkit when considering how to spend the pupil premium.

The full text of the report and the executive summary are both available [Here](https://www.nga.org.uk/About-Us/Campaigning/Spotlight-on-Disadvantage.aspx)

###### ESFA Understanding Your Data - Guidance

In June the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) published a guide for governing boards on [*Understanding your Data*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-your-data-a-guide-for-school-governors-and-academy-trustees). The guide, aimed at both maintained schools and academies, sets out the broad range of information governing boards might consider when fulfilling their core functions of setting the right strategic direction for the school or trust, holding school leaders to account for educational performance and ensuring value for money.

The guidance also features optional templates and explanations on how to use exceptions reports, comparisons to key benchmarking data and features a list of useful resources.

In the foreword of the guide, EFSA chief executive Eileen Milner wrote: “this is not about collecting more data, but collecting the right information, understanding it, discussing it and using it to inform your actions. You can use this resource to refine your board reporting and to actually reduce the amount of data collection and associated work.’

‘Your evidence base will support you to develop, monitor and deliver your school or trust strategy, inform discussions about the curriculum, education standards and ensure probity in the deployment of resources. Any information collected should align with the strategic improvement priorities of the school or trust and agreed on at the beginning of the year in partnership with executive leaders to avoid excessive workload and duplication.’

NGA recommends that governors and trustees read the new guidance alongside the NGA/Wellcome Trust guide to *Being Strategic: A Guide for governing boards*, which is available [here](https://www.nga.org.uk/BeingStrategic).

###### Analyse School Performance – changes to sign in process

Analyse School Performance (ASP) is the DfE data dashboard provided free for all schools. It gives school leaders a comprehensive overview of performance against headline measures and goes into depth concerning the attainment and progress of different groups. Governors and trustees are entitled to access the service and it is an essential resource for holding a school to account and monitoring performance.

While those governing may be familiar with the Secure Access login portal, the log-in page for ASP is changing. Users of ASP will now need to set up an account with the DfE sign-in service, details of how to do this can be found [here](https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/structures-inspection-and-accountability-news/analyse-school-performance-asp-access-to-the-service-is-changing/)

Information on the use of Analyse School Performance is included in Part 2 of the Data Training this term.

###### Academies Financial Planning Calendar

ESFA has updated the calendar of important dates for the academic year 2018-19, which includes information and guidance and details of the actions the Trust Board must undertake during the year. This is an important document for all those involved in governing in academy trusts and for clerks to those trusts.

 [Click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-planning-calendar) to access the document.

###### Academy Trust Finances

A DfE Report, available [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/academy-trusts-with-a-revenue-surplus-or-deficit-2016-to-2017), shows that, at the end of the academic year 2016-17, 6·1% of academy trusts had a cumulative deficit totalling £65 million an increase from the 5.5% that had a net deficit in 2015/16. The report notes that smaller trusts were more likely to be in deficit.

93.9% of academies had a cumulative surplus or zero balance, with the cumulative surplus totalling £2.5 billion.

The 2018 edition of the [Academies Financial Handbook (AFH)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714474/Academies_Financial_Handbook_2018.pdf) came into effect from 1 September 2018 and includes changes in relation to executive pay and related party transactions, to which trustees should have regard when managing school spending and resources.

###### Financial information for all schools

The DfE has published a [school resources management top tips guide](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-resource-management-top-10-planning-checks-for-governors), which can be used to establish whether a school is managing its resources and money effectively.

The DfE recommends that governors use these checks early in the annual budget planning cycle and when looking ahead at the 3 to 5 year position. It also recommends that the schools financial benchmarking service is used to compare school’s spending with others in similar circumstances.

The benchmarking service information is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-efficiency-financial-benchmarking)

There has also been an announcement that in 2018-19 a 3.5% rise will apply to the main pay range for classroom teachers, a 2% rise will apply to the upper pay band for teachers and a 1.5% rise will apply for school leaders.

To cover the increases in pay at school level, the DfE will provide a teachers’ pay grant of £187 million in 2018-19 and £321 million to all schools in England in 2019-20. This will cover the difference between the pay award and the cost of the 1% award that schools would have expected under the previous public sector pay cap. No additional money from the Treasury has been announced and the increase in pay will be funded from within the existing Department for Education budget

###### School Website - Updated requirements

Details of the information that schools must publish on their websites has again been updated by the DfE. There are specific new statutory requirements relating to careers guidance and access for education and training providers and information about the school’s careers programme. The statutory guidance can be accessed [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools)

Follow the link [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online) for maintained schools and [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online) for academies to check the complete list of information that must be published online. .

###### Afterword

The next edition of the update will be sent out during the first week of October.