

# Governors' Update

## Autumn Term 2 2022

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### Welcome and Contact Information

Governors are reminded that the School Governor Service Team are still working remotely for much of the time. Unless you have a mobile number for one of the team it is hard to contact a specific person using the office number. A team member who responds to a call is not able to transfer your call but can get someone to call you back.

If governors wish to contact their clerk then, unless the clerk has given you a mobile number, you will need to ask the team to get the clerk to ring or email you as the team cannot give out the clerks' mobile numbers.

### Training

The Governor Training Programme for the whole of the Spring Term 2022 is now available. A copy of the brochure giving details of the courses is now being circulated, has been posted on Bradford Schools Online or you can look on the [Skills4Bradford](https://www.skills4bradford.gov.uk) website to find more details.

Please email [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk) if you have any ideas for courses you would like to see provided.

**There are still three courses available before the end of this term: -**

#### **8 December 4.30pm-6.30pm - Safeguarding for Governors**

Governors are required to have Safeguarding Training as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education, both at induction and as a refresher. This course will go through the different aspects of the governors' role and remind them of the Prevent Duty.

#### **12 December 4.30pm – 6.30pm – Handling Complaints**

Governors need to be prepared to take part in Complaints hearings when they arise. This session introduces governors to their role, the guidance framework and will offer the opportunity for reflection. It will support assessment of their school's preparedness. This course is vital for experienced governors, chairs and vice chairs.

#### **13 December 4.30pm-6.30pm - Attendance – A Governor's role**

This course will go through the new statutory guidance and explain the governors' role in a whole school approach to attendance. It will include suggestions for governor actions to support and challenge the school.

All of these courses can be booked on the [Skills4Bradford](https://www.skills4bradford.gov.uk) website or by emailing [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

## Updates from the Department for Education (DfE)

### Changes to Pupil Premium Levels

The levels have now been released for 2022-23 and the funding now includes eligible children of families with no recourse to public funds who are now also entitled to free school meals.

Governors need to be aware that there is now a new claim form for schools to complete and that they must use the set pupil premium statement format on their website, including the impact it has had on disadvantaged pupils.

### Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Results

The DfE have published the results for 2021/22 with the reminder that the EYFS reforms mean that this data cannot be compared directly with earlier years.

The Percentage of children: -

- With a good level of development nationally is 65.2%
- At the expected level across all early learning goals is 63.4%

The average number of early learning goals at the expected level per child is 14.1 out of the 17 goals

- A higher percentage of girls than boys were at the expected level of development across all early learning goals (ELGs) and areas of learning.
- The physical development area of learning had the highest percentage of children at the expected level of development (85%), and the literacy area of learning had the lowest (68%).

### Times Table Test Data

The data has now been released and shows that the mean average score was 19.8 out of 25 but that the most common score was 25 (full marks) with 27% of pupils achieving that score.

Of pupils who took the check, the average score for disadvantaged pupils was 17.9, while the average score for pupils not known to be disadvantaged was 20.5.

**Pupils with a first language of English performed less well in the check than pupils with a first language other than English.** Of pupils who took the check, the average score for pupils with a first language of English was 19.4 while the average score for pupils with a first language other than English was 21.2.

### Pupil Attendance

In the week commencing 7 November absence levels were 6.5% across all schools with a cumulative figure of 6.4% for this academic year. Unauthorised absences stood at 2% for the academic year.

Absence levels in secondary schools across that week were 7.6% with 2.8% unauthorised, and 5.3% in primary schools with 1.4% unauthorised.

Governors are reminded that they should be following the latest attendance guidance published by the DfE. Working Together to Improve School Attendance came into effect from September.

## Updates from the Local Authority

### Finance - SFVS

To assist Governors and Staff of maintained schools there will be an online Webinar for Governors on the School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) process, led by Bradford Council Internal Audit. There will be a 40 minutes presentation followed by a Q7A session.

The session will explain key questions on the checklist and go through the six areas of resource management that require attention and will include insights into the pitfalls and common errors made and how to avoid them.

**SFVS Webinar 17 January 6pm – 7.15pm or later on demand on the Skills4Bradford website.**

A Two Hour face to face session for School Staff on SFVS will also be held on **18 January 10.00am – 12 noon in Bradford** – currently booked in City Hall the venue to be confirmed nearer the date.

This session is aimed at Business managers, finance staff and Headteachers but governors may also attend. It is also suitable for officers from maintained schools outside the District Anyone with a particular interest in the inclusion of a specific area is asked to email [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

These sessions can also be booked on the [Skills4Bradford](https://www.skills4bradford.org.uk) website or by emailing [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

### **Energy Audits and Alternative Energy Provision**

The Energy Team are able to offer your school free energy audits and advice on energy efficiency helping to reducing your schools energy costs further if you are part of the councils building services SLA contract.

To request an energy audit email [eccu@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:eccu@bradford.gov.uk)

Many schools are turning to renewable energy to cut energy bills, by installing technologies such as solar panels, wind turbines, heat pumps and biomass boilers. Renewable energy will help reduce energy costs, benefit the environment by reducing carbon emissions and may even help generate an income.

Certain technologies are eligible for government incentives such as Feed in Tariffs or Renewable Heat Incentives.

All schools must inform the Energy Team of any renewable technologies they have installed.

Always contact the Energy Team, Asset Management or Facilities Management before considering the installation of any Renewable Technology, as permission for such installations maybe required.

## **Updates from Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)**

### **Socio-Economic Attainment Gap remains wide with Reading Skills Particularly Affected**

The EEF have published the findings of research tracking the long term impact of Covid-19 on younger pupils' reading and maths skills. This NFER study investigated how 6000 pupils in Reception and Y1 in March 2020 were impacted by disruptions to learning and how well they had caught up on their learning by Spring 2022. On average those in Y3 in Spring 2022 had caught up but Y2 pupils were still about three months behind in their reading.

The researchers, however, found an increase in the proportion of very low attaining pupils, particularly for reading.

For Year 2 pupils, the proportion of very low attainers in reading more than tripled from 2.6 per cent before the pandemic to 9.1 percent in spring 2022. For Year 3 pupils, the proportion more than doubled from 2.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent.

For maths, the proportion of very low attainment in Year 2 more than doubled from 2.6 per cent before the pandemic to 5.5 per cent in spring 2022. For Year 3 pupils, the increase was less pronounced, rising from 2.5 per cent to 3.9 per cent.

The attainment gap between socio-economically deprived pupils is wider than before the pandemic and is not narrowing. In Y2, the disadvantage gap in Spring 2022 was around six months' progress for reading, and around five months' progress for maths. For Y3 pupils, the gap was even wider, at around nine months' progress for reading and around eight months' progress for maths.

Social skills and wellbeing have also been impacted with headteacher surveys reporting that they were concerned about Y2 and Y3 pupils' wellbeing, with many introducing interventions to tackle this, adding to teachers' workload. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of schools surveyed said they were redeploying staff to support social skills and wellbeing, while a slightly smaller proportion (63 per cent) said they were running small-group wellbeing sessions.

### Secondary School English Trial

Schools are now being asked to sign up for a Key Stage 3 English trial, funded by the EEF, to test the impact of a knowledge rich KS3 English curriculum delivered by Ark Curriculum Plus. Called English Mastery, this is a two-year intervention aiming to support KS3 English teachers to be more effective by implementing a coherent and cumulative approach to curriculum design including bespoke assessments. In this trial, Years 7 and 8 pupils will receive the curriculum with the aim of improving achievement in the subject of English. There is a traditional pathway for children reaching age-related expectations and a foundational pathway for those working below expectations.

The trial is open to any non-academically selective, state secondary school in England, which has not delivered English Mastery previously and has three or more hours of timetabled English lessons for Year 7 in 2023–24 and for Year 8 in 2024–25. For more information

## Updates from Ofsted

### Good Practice in Governance – ensuring effective monitoring

In its report on [good practice in governance](#), Ofsted described how effective governing boards developed systematic processes to monitor progress that:

- Link teams of staff and governors to each priority in the improvement plan
- Keep 'monitoring progress' as a regular item at committee meetings
- Ask for more information where it was needed (for example, before agreeing to a proposal presented by senior leaders)
- Consistently ask "what difference is this going to make for the pupils, and how will we know?"
- Have 'review of the school improvement plan' as a standing agenda item for every meeting
- Receive regular progress reports from the headteacher and staff on specific targets

Ofsted's report profiled one governing board (page 22) with a well-managed and efficient committee structure that made the best use of time by:

- Delegating specific monitoring responsibilities to working groups and individual governors
- Aligning that delegation with the school's improvement priorities
- Keeping focused minutes that identified precise actions and monitoring arrangements to inform further improvement planning

Although this report is not a recent one it contains good reminders of the way that governing boards need to have effective systems in place to ensure they perform their role in the best way possible.

### Latest Ofsted findings show over 80% of outstanding schools downgraded

Ofsted have reported that 308 schools that were previously graded as outstanding and exempt from inspection have been downgraded. A fifth of the schools were reinspected and graded as requiring

improvement and 4% were found to be inadequate. The report published this week also states that around 370 schools (previously graded as outstanding) had been inspected in 2021/22 and found that on average, their last inspection was over 13 years earlier.

While the exemption on inspections was in place, inspected because of concerns,

- 71% were no longer judged outstanding
- 51% became good
- 16% required improvement
- 4% were inadequate

Since the exemption was removed 371 schools were inspected in 2021/22 and on average they had not been inspected for over 13 years which meant that they had been risk assessed many times but their data had not raised sufficient concerns to lead to an inspection.

When inspected.

- 17% remained outstanding,
- 62% became good
- 21% were judged requires improvement or inadequate.

Most schools that that did not remain outstanding were graded less than outstanding for both quality of education and for leadership and management. A higher proportion of schools were judged outstanding for behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

The Education Select Committee questioned HMCI Amanda Spielman on the role of Ofsted and the publication of the commentary on outstanding schools. Spielman highlighted the importance of keeping parents and young people informed about the school that they are or will be a part of and said that the target for all previously exempt schools to be inspected by 2025 will be met.

## Other Information

### Cost of Living Support

Governors can encourage their schools to share information on the support available for families and individuals as this can have a very positive impact on the wellbeing of the school pupils.

The government's cost-of-living payment is available for those receiving certain benefits or tax credits. Those who are eligible can get up to 3 different types of payment depending on their situation:

- A cost-of-living payment, for people receiving a qualifying low income benefit or tax credits
- A disability cost-of-living payment, for people receiving a qualifying disability benefit
- A pensioner cost-of-living payment, for people entitled to a winter fuel payment for winter 2022 to 2023

Citizens Advice has guidance for people who need help with school costs. This includes getting:

- Free school meals
- Help to pay for activities and uniform
- Help for transports to and from school

Governors will also realise the importance of schools providing as much support as possible. The following are some ideas that can be helpful: -

Magic Breakfast works with schools to offer healthy breakfasts to pupils in the UK. Your leaders will need to submit an 'Expression of Interest form' – if your school meets the eligibility criteria, Magic Breakfast will get in touch when it has sufficient funding.

The breakfast club programme run by the Greggs Foundation is open to all primary schools in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland if you meet the following criteria (there's a waiting list for new clubs but there's no application deadline):

- At least 40% of pupils at your school are eligible for free school meals
- You can demonstrate a commitment to engaging parents or other volunteers
- Your breakfast club will be offered for free to make sure all pupils can attend

Child Poverty Action Group has published a 'cost of the school day' toolkit to help schools identify where pupils might face cost barriers to participation in school activities across the academic year. It also suggests alternative activities and provides examples of best practice from other schools.

### **Afterword**

The School Governor Service team are available to support governing boards of all types with website checks, policy checks, bespoke training for your governing board or Trust and additional support to assist you in ensuring that the work you do to support schools is as effective as possible. The team are happy to deliver bespoke sessions either virtually or face to face at a time to suit your governing board. Please get in touch to discuss any support you would wish to arrange, using the School Governor Service email address [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

There will be another Update during the first half of the Spring Term. Please get in touch if there are topics it would be helpful to have covered in the update.