# Governors' Update
# January 2021

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## Welcome and School Governor Service (SGS) Information

All the SGS team send their good wishes for 2021. Hopefully, after the current lockdown, a more normal situation will be established which will make it easier to fulfil governance roles effectively. In the meantime, any urgent updates will be shared with Chairs during this new lockdown.

Who has received this update: all governors who have given permission for their personal emails to be used or those for whom a school email address is on the www.skills4bradford.co.uk  website. Further details are at the end of the update.

Contact the School Governor Team: The team are 'working from home' but monitor school.governor@bradford.gov.uk daily. If you wish to speak to a particular member of the team, then please send an email unless you have the mobile number for the person to whom you wish to speak. Calls to the SGS contact number 01274 439400 are automatically forwarded to the first available team member.  The SGS clerks also work from home and can be contacted by email directly. In the event of an urgent issue requiring a response from your clerk then please call SGS and contact will be made on your behalf.

## Training and Networking

The Governor Training programme and Governor Networking opportunities for the Spring and Summer Terms 2021 has been published. See www.skills4bradford.co.uk for details, costs & booking; for a print version click here. All courses will be virtually delivered. If circumstances enable it, there will be a face to face training offer developed in the future.

Training Programme for this half term:
A reminder below of upcoming courses. Book on www.skills4bradford.co.uk or email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk

### Chairing the Board
**Tue 2 February 2021, 6.00pm – 8.30pm AND Tue 9 February 2021, 6.00pm – 8.30pm**
Over this 2 x 2½ hour online course, new Chairs and potential Chairs will be introduced to the behaviours and practices 'needed by' an effective Chair. This course will also be useful to vice-chairs and chairs of committees.

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## *FREE SESSION*  Cyber Bullying-Awareness Raising & Online Protection
Thursday 11 February 2021, 6.00pm – 8.00pm (v)
West Yorkshire Police are offering this specifically designed online workshop to improve the awareness of e-safety for governors. As the sessions are updated to reflect the current risks and issues.

## Finance: An Introduction for Governors –
Tuesday 26 January 2021, 4.30pm-6.30pm (v)
This course will introduce governors to their strategic role in school finance. This is one of the core functions of Governance 'overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent'.
This introductory course is for all governors not just those appointed to the Finance committee.
It complements the termly Finance Webinar offered to all governors through the School Governor Service Training programme.

## Introduction to Governance
Friday 5 February 2021, 9.00am – 2.30pm (v)
This course is targeted at new and recently appointed or elected governors and trustees. It is a 'safe' environment to ask questions, learn about the role of governance in achieving successful outcomes for children. It also offers governors and trustees the opportunity for self-assessment and to learn from and share experiences.

This course aims to give you, as a newly appointed governor/trustee (including headteachers, staff governors and associate members), a level of knowledge of governance that you need to effectively support your school in raising standards.

## Level 6 Award - Effective School Governance
*Transcend Level 6 Award in Effective School Governance*
Tuesdays: - 2 & 23 February, 16 & 23 March, 13 April, 4 May & 25 May 2021 10am-12noon (v)
This is a vocationally related qualification regulated in England by Ofqual.
The aim of the qualification is to enhance the learner's ability to operate as a school governor and support effective strategic leadership in schools. Whilst attending the course learners will further develop the knowledge and skills to be able to:
- fulfil duties as a school governor
- drive standards as a school governor
- meet the deployment expectations of effective school governors

The delivery will include Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and Directed Study Hours (DSH).  For the GLH element learners will be required to attend 7 x 2 hour virtual delivery sessions and 2 x individual mentor calls/sessions. The DSH element refers to the hours a learner will complete through home study, research and evidence collection without supervision which would include the attendance at their governing body meetings.

**This Award includes an assessment process.**
**For more details visit https://skills4bradford.co.uk/Training**

## Parent Governor: know your role
Friday 12 February 2021, 10.00am – 12.00noon (v)
This course aims to give Parent Governors confidence and clarity about their role in Governance.
It will give the opportunity to learn about and discuss roles and responsibility and look at suitable behaviours and conduct and will explain jargon and the structure of governance and the role Parent governors play.

2

# Planning the Governance Year *Planning and Self-evaluation*
Wednesday 9 June 2021, 4.30pm – 6.30pm (v)
When did you last consider whether your board's meeting schedule both aligns sensibly with the school's management cycle and is manageable for those carrying out the role?
This course will help governors to structure their year and build in an evaluation of their effectiveness.

# Pupil Premium and other Additional Funds/Grants
Friday 22 January 10:00am - 12:00 noon (v)
Schools receive grants and funds and governors have a role in understanding the funding and how they can monitor and influence the spending. There are also conditions of grants governors must adhere to. This course will reflect the current climate of temporary additional grants allocated to schools.

# Safeguarding for Governors
Wednesday 10 February 2021, 4.30pm-6.30pm (v)
This course will enable governors to be aware of their role in monitoring the effectiveness of schools in keeping children safe from harm and will take account of the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

# SEND
Monday 8 February 2021, 5.00pm-7.00pm (v)
This course will support Governors and Named Governors in gaining understanding of the subject & their responsibilities through practical exercises and discussions.
SEND is the term used for children who need some form of additional support to enable them to progress in their learning. All governors need to have an understanding of SEND to ensure that they can effectively monitor the progress and achievement of SEND children in their school and the impact of spending.

# Well-being & Mental Health - A Governor's Role
Tuesday 9 February 2021, 10.00am – 12.00noon  (v)
Governors will be aware that mental health and wellbeing in schools is now more prominent.
This course will give details about the extent of their role; it supports governors in their understanding of the subject and where to find further information related to schools and Ofsted.
The course will give practical examples of how governors can be involved without straying into operational activities.

**BOOKING**: Please visit **www.skills4bradford.co.uk** to reserve a place on any SGS courses or email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk with requests or queries.

## Updates from the Department for Education

**Provision for children of Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children**
The list of Critical Workers and Vulnerable children who can access learning in school has been expanded. Full details can be accessed here.
This has resulted in larger numbers of children attending school settings, which places additional stress on the staffing of schools, especially as nurseries have remained open, and governors will want to monitor the impact of this on staff and leadership well-being and on the remote provision that is also provided. There is information from some areas that reductions in these numbers may be brought in and governors will need to be aware that this will require additional work from the SLT and may result in complaints from families. No confirmation of any changes has yet been received.

**New Turing scheme to support thousands of students to study and work abroad**
Governors from secondary schools will be interested to hear of 'The Turing Scheme,' a new scheme announced in Dec 2020, which provides funding for students in schools as well as colleges and universities. More details available [here](#)

**Secretary of State's Announcement on 6 January Concerning Plans to Support Young People**
During the period of national lockdown strengthened remote education expectations will be put in place, with schools expected to provide a set number of hours of high-quality remote education for pupils, supported by further deliveries of laptops and tablets for the most disadvantaged.

As it currently stands with GCSEs and A Levels not going ahead as planned, the exams regulator Ofqual will launch a consultation – alongside the department – on the options for alternatives to the exams to ensure every young person gets a fair grade for their work, with the expectation that teacher assessment will be used.

Families entitled to free school meals will also be offered food parcels or vouchers, funded by the government.

The full package of measures set out by the Education Secretary (Sections in brackets are from his speech to parliament) in parliament includes:

- Strengthened minimum standards of remote learning: schools will be expected to offer pupils online lessons and a set number of hours of remote education for pupils – increased from the government's previous minimum expectations. (Between 3 and 5 hours teaching hours a day depending on a child's age). Ofsted will play an important role in holding schools to account for the quality of remote education. (If parents feel their child's school is not providing suitable remote education they should first raise their concerns with the teacher or headteacher and failing that, report the matter to Ofsted. If there are serious concerns then Ofsted will inspect the school)

- Next steps on exam alternatives arrangements: students will not be asked to sit GCSE, AS and A level exams this summer. The Education Secretary expects Ofqual to consider a teacher assessed system as a replacement for GCSEs, AS and A levels. A consultation will be launched next week and conclude swiftly to give certainty to schools, colleges and students, while also giving them the opportunity to have their say.

- Free school meals: extra funding will be provided to support schools to provide food parcels or meals to eligible students. The national voucher scheme will also re-open so that in the event schools cannot offer food parcels or provide an alternative local solution, every child can access free school meals while they are learning at home.

- The Oak National Academy continues to provide video lessons for all ages across all subjects and yesterday the BBC announced it will be delivering the biggest push on education in its history, bringing 14 weeks of educational programmes and lessons to every household in the country.
- Our delivery of laptops and tablets continues apace. We have purchased more than one million laptops and tablets and have already delivered over 560,000 of these to schools and local authorities, with an extra 100,000 this week alone. By the end of next week we will have delivered three quarters of a million devices.
- We are also working with all the UK's leading mobile network operators, to provide free data for key educational sites. We are very grateful to EE, Three, Tesco Mobile, Smarty, Sky

Mobile, Virgin Mobile, O2 and Vodaphone for supporting this offer. We have also been delivering 4G routers to families who need to access the internet.

Governors will wish to be assured that the new standards are being followed by their setting, that support with electronic equipment is being accessed where possible, but also that the systems in place in school for this provision are effective and that the impact on staffing is manageable.

## New Guidance on the Provision of Free School Meals During the Covid-19 outbreak – 13 January 2021

The new guidance, available [here](#) outlines the type of meals that should be provided to children, including eligible children at home, during the lockdown. It includes information on the additional funding available and makes clear that all food provided should meet the school food standards. An option to provide vouchers is also included.
Governors will wish to discuss food provision in the relevant meeting to confirm that all the relevant criteria are being met.

## New Institute of Teaching set to be established - published 2 January 2021
A new Institute of Teaching is set to be established in England to provide teachers and school leaders with prestigious training and development throughout their career.
Training will be delivered through at least four regional campuses, launching in September 2022, with the Institute being the first of its kind in the world.
The national initiative will deliver evidence-based approaches to teacher training, and also include mentoring and early career support, alongside leadership courses and continued professional development, building on existing high-quality provision.
It will be funded as part of £22 million for teacher quality agreed at the Spending Review, which also includes funding for mentor time for early career teachers as part of the Early Career Framework reforms.
A reformed suite of NPQs, previously announced in 2019 as part of the Teacher Recruitment & Retention Strategy, will also be launched from September 2021. They will offer valuable professional development for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to improve teaching practice to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

Governors will wish to consider the possibility of using this provision to further develop the skills of staff in school.

## Updates from the Local Authority

**Safeguarding Audit**
The [Safeguarding audit](#) should have been completed and submitted to the Local Authority by 10 January2021. Safeguarding governors will wish to discuss this with the relevant staff in school and report that any necessary actions have been taken.

**Safeguarding Considerations for remote learning – from a safeguarding specialist**
• No 1:1s, groups only; 1:1s may be possible, subject to a risk assessment and SLT permissions
• Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
• Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
• The live class should be recorded and backed up elsewhere, so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed; access and retention policies need to be in place
• Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day – subject to statutory minimums
• Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background

• Schools should risk assess the use of live learning using webcams
• Data Controllers need to reassure themselves that any teaching/learning software and/or platforms are suitable and raise no privacy issues; or use cases against the provider's terms and conditions (for example, no business use of consumer products)
• Consent is needed for the live-streaming or recording of children and adults in the images

**Weekly Updates from Marium Haque – Deputy Director of Bradford Children's Services**
Updates are circulated to all headteachers every week. Chairs may wish to request that these are shared by their headteachers as this is a practice which is taking place in some settings already and it ensures that the information relevant to governors can then be circulated more widely without placing an additional burden upon senior leadership.

## Updates from Ofsted

**12 January 2021 News Release**
We have reviewed our plans for the inspections of schools, early years and further education, which were due to begin next week. In light of a change in emphasis from the government and clear advice to 'act as if you have the virus' over the next few weeks, we have decided that all planned inspection activity will be carried out remotely until after the February half term.

We have sought regular advice from Public Health England and we remain satisfied that our planned on-site activity would be safe and appropriate under current restrictions. However, the new government messages and the practical challenges of deploying inspectors across England have prompted this change.

Remote inspections of schools and further education providers will begin from 25 January, with a particular focus on how well children and learners are being educated remotely. We will inspect schools rated 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' as planned, but we will also follow up on complaints raised by parents across all grades of school in order to resolve issues. As these inspections will not involve an on-site visit, they will be unable to cover the full scope of a monitoring inspection. We will publish details of the inspection process shortly.

We will continue to undertake on-site inspections if we have immediate concerns – for example about safeguarding, the leadership of a school or a failure to provide education to children.

It is not possible to provide the necessary level of assurance of early years providers without an on-site inspection of the premises, so early years assurance visits will be paused until after the February half term.

We will continue with our vital regulatory work in early years and children's social care. This work will sometimes require on-site visits, which will be risk-assessed based on the nature of the premises and the urgency of the work.

**What's Working Well in Remote Education (published 11 January 2021)**
This looks at some of the common myths surrounding remote education and highlights some areas of good practice. Parts of the report are outlined but the full report can be found here

**1: Remote education is a way of delivering the curriculum**
Remote education is a means, not an end. The aim of education is to deliver a high-quality curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more. Remote education is one way of doing so.

This means that everything we know about what a quality curriculum looks like still applies. The remote education curriculum needs to be aligned to the classroom curriculum as much as possible.

And, just like the classroom curriculum, it needs to be carefully sequenced and ensure that pupils obtain the building blocks they need to move on to the next step. Curricular goals should be made as explicit remotely as they would be in the classroom.

## 2: Keep it simple
Our brains don't learn differently using remote education, so everything we know about cognitive science and learning still applies. We don't have to make huge changes to the way we teach We also don't need to overcomplicate resources with too many graphics and illustrations that don't add to content. When using digital remote education, the platform we use shouldn't be too complicated to use. Just as we don't need 'all-singing, all-dancing' lessons in the classroom, remote education often benefits from a straightforward and easy-to-use interface. Simple graphics that highlight the key concepts and features we want to teach can be most effective.

More important is attention to the key elements of effective teaching. For example, it's useful to provide pupils with an overview of the bigger picture and where a specific lesson or activity sits within a sequence of lessons or activities. It's also vital to have clear and high expectations and to communicate these to pupils. Just as in the classroom, most pupils will be novices in what we are teaching them. We can't expect them to be able to discover new content for themselves through tasks, projects and internet searching.

As it's harder for pupils to concentrate when being taught remotely, it's often a good idea to divide content into smaller chunks. Short presentations or modelling of new content can be followed by exercises or retrieval practice.

## 3: When adapting the curriculum, focus on the basics
We will often need to adapt our subject curriculum when moving to remote education, for example because some topics are hard to teach remotely. When we do this, we need to focus on the basics:

Beware of offering too much new subject matter at once. Make sure key building blocks have been understood fully first. We need to assess pupils' knowledge to determine this.

## 4: Feedback, retrieval practice and assessment are more important than ever
Learning isn't fundamentally different when done remotely. Feedback and assessment are still as important as in the classroom. It can be harder to deliver immediate feedback to pupils remotely than in the classroom, but teachers have found some clever ways to do this.

> This immediate feedback can be given through:
> - chatroom discussions,
> - 1-to-1 interaction tools
> - interactive touch-screen questioning in live recorded lessons
> - adaptive learning software

Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes. It's therefore worth considering enabling these through, for example, chat groups or video-linking functions. They will also help pupils maintain their social skills.

It is important for teachers to stay in regular contact with pupils. If necessary, they can even do this by using technology to automate communication. Some teachers have set up automated check-in emails to pupils to identify where they are with set tasks. This also gives a perception that teachers are 'watching' while pupils learning remotely.

## 5: The medium matters (a bit)
Quality of teaching is far more important than how lessons are delivered. But there is some evidence that the medium does matter, especially in digital remote education. Pupils tend to spend longer

accessing a remote lesson when they are using a laptop than when using a phone (tablets are in between).

This means that we need to think carefully about whether pupils have access to the right kind of device when we're using digital remote education. If they don't, and we can't provide enough devices, it might be better to consider non-digital approaches as well.

When using digital remote education, we often rely on internet access. Again, we need to consider whether pupils have this and what we can provide if they don't. The Department for Education provides support on internet access, and on setting up a digital education platform.

**6:  Live lessons aren't always best**

Some think that a live lesson is the 'gold standard' of remote education. This isn't necessarily the case. Live lessons have a lot of advantages. They can make curriculum alignment easier, and can keep pupils' attention, not least as the teacher has more control over the learning environment. But live lessons are not always more effective than asynchronous approaches.

There are some specific difficulties in doing live lessons. It can be hard to build in interaction and flexibility. This means that giving feedback can actually be less effective than when we use recorded lesson segments followed by interactive chats, or tasks and feedback. Using recorded lessons produced externally can allow you to easily draw on high-quality lessons taught by expert subject teachers. The challenge here can be to make sure they are integrated with the curriculum. Because evidence suggests that concentration online is shorter than the length of a typical lesson, filming a classroom lesson may be ineffective.

Different approaches to remote education suit different types of content and pupils. Mixed models may be effective in some cases. For example, you could use the so-called 'flipped learning' model. In this, new content is taught through an asynchronous recorded lesson. Practice, tutoring and feedback are then done synchronously.

**7: Engagement matters, but is only the start**

While it is important to engage pupils, this is only a precondition for learning, not the thing itself. There is only so much a teacher can do to engage pupils remotely. We therefore need to make sure that efforts to engage don't distract us from teaching the curriculum. We also need to check whether pupils have actually learned the content we want them to through assessment.

**Engagement increases when pupils feel part of the school or college community. Whole-school digital assemblies and feedback, for example through newsletters to pupils and parents, can help them feel part of the community even when learning remotely.**

**More resources on remote education**

There are a number of useful resources to help you with remote education, including:

- the Department for Education's guidance, resources and support for teachers
- the Education Endowment Foundation's overview of evidence on remote learning

Governors will wish to consider how best to monitor engagement and progress of remote learning as well as that taking place within school and which aspects of this provision work most effectively with the children in their setting. It may also be helpful to receive confirmation that good practice has been shared among staff.

## National Governor Association Updates

The NGA has provided revised guidance for schools as a result of the latest lockdown. This includes updated monitoring advice. The information is available to all school which subscribe as the NGA is no longer making its coronavirus advice free to all schools.

## Education Endowment Foundation

The EEF has published a report entitled:

**Best evidence on supporting students to learn remotely**, which is available [here](#). Their key findings are:-

1**. Teaching quality is more important than how lessons are delivered**
Pupils can learn through remote teaching.
Ensuring the elements of effective teaching are present – for example clear explanations, scaffolding and feedback – is more important than how or when they are provided. There was no clear difference between teaching in real time ("synchronous teaching") and alternatives ("asynchronous teaching").
For example, teachers might explain a new idea live or in a pre-recorded video. But what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on pupils' prior learning or how pupils' understanding is subsequently assessed.

**2. Ensuring access to technology is key, particularly for disadvantaged pupils**
Almost all remote learning uses digital technology, typically requiring access to both computers and the internet.
Many reviews identify lack of technology as a barrier to successful remote instruction. It is important that support is provided to ensure that disadvantaged pupils – who are more likely to face these barriers – have access to technology.
In addition to providing access to technology, ensuring that teachers and pupils are provided with support and guidance to use specific platforms is essential, particularly if new forms of technology are being implemented.

**3. Peer interactions can provide motivation and improve learning outcomes**
Multiple reviews highlight the importance of peer interaction during remote learning, as a way to motivate pupils and improve outcomes.
Across the studies reviewed, a range of strategies to support peer interaction were explored, including peer marking and feedback, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for live discussions of content.
The value of collaborative approaches was emphasised in many reviews, although notably many studies involved older learners.
Different approaches to peer interaction are likely to be better suited to different age groups.

**4. Supporting pupils to work independently can improve learning outcomes**
Pupils learning at home will often need to work independently.
Multiple reviews identify the value of strategies that help pupils work independently with success.
For example, prompting pupils to reflect on their work or to consider the strategies they will use if they get stuck have been highlighted as valuable.
Wider evidence related to metacognition and self-regulation suggests that disadvantaged pupils are likely to particularly benefit from explicit support to help them work independently, for example, by providing checklists or daily plans.

**5. Different approaches to remote learning suit different types of content and pupils**
Approaches to remote learning vary widely and have different strengths and weaknesses. Teachers should be supported to consider which approaches are best suited to the content they are teaching and the age of their pupils.
For example, games for learning were found to have a high impact on vocabulary learning in foreign languages, but there is less evidence related to their use in other subjects.

Likewise, using technology to support retrieval practice and self-quizzing can help pupils retain key ideas and knowledge, but is not a replacement for other forms of assessment.

## Afterword

The School Governor Service team are still available to support governing boards of all types with website checks, bespoke training and additional support to assist you in ensuring that the work you do to support schools is as effective as possible. Please get in touch to discuss any support you would wish to arrange, using the School Governor Service email address below.

Circulation of this document is to all governors who have given permission for their personal emails to be used or those for whom a school email address is on the www.skills4bradford.co.uk  website. If you are a governor/trustee but have not received a link to this document please contact school.governor@bradford.gov.uk to ensure that an up to date email address and permission for its use is recorded.
This is currently a free resource from the Bradford School Governor Service.