

Governors' Update

Spring Term 2022

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Welcome and information on the Updates

Welcome to the update for the Spring Term 2022. Hopefully, during this term there will be a return to normal meetings and that schools will be able to support their children in catching up on lost work and achieving the very best outcomes possible for them.

Many governing boards have decided to continue meeting remotely for the moment because of the increase in infections. Governors may continue to visit and hold meetings with staff, where they have a particular responsibility, in accordance with the risk assessments that governors have agreed for their school. It is important for governors to remember that they can also meet remotely with staff to gain more information about their link responsibilities.

Headline information from this Update is being made available to all governors and published both on Bradford Schools Online and the Skills4Bradford website.

A more in depth update is being provided for governors at schools which have subscribed to the Advice and Guidance service.

Links to those will be included in an email sent to all school business managers and governors who have given permission for their emails to be used or for whom school email addresses are available. The link to the more in depth version will only work for governors of subscribing schools.

Details of the training programme for this term are being published on Bradford Schools Online and Skills4Bradford and a link can be found in the relevant section of this update.

Governor Discussion Forum

All Governors with a login to the Skills4Bradford website can access the Governor Discussion Forum. This allows governors to discuss topics of interest with each other online. Access is straightforward: - When you are logged in to your Skills4bradford account please click on communication from the top menu. At the top of the communication page you will see an orange box. Click on the arrow next to the word 'Groups' to access the groups page.

A list of groups (forums) will be listed down the right hand side. Please click on the 'Governor Discussion forum' and send a request to access the group.

Once your request has been confirmed, you can access the forum by going to the communication page, clicking on groups and access to the forum will appear.

The aim of this Forum is to allow governors to discuss topics and raise questions. If there appears to be a need for information on a topic then the SGS team will use this to provide training, topics for the Updates and for Governor Briefings but there are many experienced governors across the District and so the Forum should also be a way for them to share their knowledge.

School Governor Service (SGS) Information

Currently the Systems for Contacting the School Governor Team have not changed: 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 who will not be able to transfer your call.

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 the SGS contact number and your clerk will be informed of your request.

Termly Briefings for Governors

This term's briefing was held virtually on Tuesday 1 February from 6.30pm-7.45pm and included updates from various teams, highlighting topics of current interest and importance. Please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk if you wish to raise a topic for discussion at the next session

The briefings give governors the opportunity to ask questions, reflect and analyse past activity. Future sessions will continue to be free for governors from schools subscribing to Advice and Guidance and cost £36 for other governors. The session is recorded for access on demand at a later date. Governors will need a microphone and ideally a camera on their device to access briefings. All attendees will be sent the presentations and documents used in the session.

If you wish to attend a briefing then please use the [Skills4Bradford](https://www.skills4bradford.co.uk) website to book a place or email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk

Training

The Governor Training programme for the Spring Term 2022 has been published. See www.skills4bradford.co.uk for details, costs & booking; for a print version please look [here](#). All courses will continue to be delivered virtually for this term.

Please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk if you have any ideas for courses you would like to see provided or if you would like further information on the Level 6 Course.

A reminder below of upcoming courses. Book on www.skills4bradford.co.uk or email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk

Curriculum – Governors' monitoring role

Tuesday 15 February, 4.30pm-6.30pm

The curriculum is a major part of any Ofsted inspection. This course looks at the governors' role in ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of the learners.

Effective Financial Governance

Wed 16 February, 5.30pm-7.30pm

A course for governors who want to ensure they have updated their financial skills so that they can make informed decisions on spending and monitor other spending effectively.

SEND**Thursday 17 February 6.00pm – 8.00pm**

What are the areas that governors need to consider when the education of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are discussed? This course looks at that responsibility.

Compliance**Monday 28 February 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

Governors have a statutory role in ensuring that their school is legally compliant in a range of areas from policies to finance and buildings to staffing. This course looks at governor responsibilities.

Introduction to Governance**Wednesdays 2 and 9 March 2022 10am - 12.30pm**

Training for governors new to the role, explaining the duties and responsibilities.

Chairing the Board**Tuesdays 8 March and 26 April, 4.30pm - 7.00pm**

For new chairs or those aspiring to be chairs; this looks at the requirements of the role and considers best practice.

Early Years**Tuesday 15 March, 10.30am–12.30pm**

There are several new initiatives in Early Years and governors need to understand what is needed for effective delivery of this provision.

Well-Being and Mental Health**Tuesday 16 March 2022, 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

Another area of focus for Boards; this course looks at the requirements and ways in which governors can monitor the well-being of staff and learners.

Asking the Right Questions**Monday 21 March, 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

Much of the work of governors is in the form of questioning so that leaders are challenged and held to account and the Board members can be assured that they are well informed about all aspects of the provision.

Safeguarding**Tuesday 22 March, 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

All governors need to be trained and understand the latest requirements.

Introduction to Governance (1 Day)**Wed 23 March 2022, 9.00am – 2.30pm**

A course for new governors.

Vulnerable Groups and Pupil Premium**Monday 28 March, 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

Governors have specific duties to monitor this provision and to approve the strategic planning. There is now a new format that all schools have to use for reporting and governors need to be familiar with the requirements.

Data**Tuesday 29 March, 6.00pm – 8.00pm**

As schools return to the exam and testing systems governors need to understand data and how it is presented. This course also looks at progress data and ways this can be presented across the curriculum.

Parent Governor Role**Wednesday 30 March, 10.00am – 12 noon**

A course to explain the governance role for parents and how it differs from their role as parents.

Ofsted**Monday 4 April, 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

Particularly of interest to governors whose schools are expecting an inspection this course provides updates on the latest foci of inspections and the role of governors in preparing for and taking part in an inspection. This course is led by an Achievement Officer.

Academy Overview**Tuesday 5 April 2022, 4.30pm – 6.30pm**

This course looks at the specific responsibilities of governors of an Academy Trust or those on a local governing board or council.

Monitoring School Improvement**Wednesday 6 April, 10.30am – 12.30pm**

Schools are not just about results and data; they are about making progress towards becoming the best provision possible for the learners. This course looks at the overall picture and then at ways to effectively monitor progress against those aims.

FREE SESSION Cyber Awareness**Wednesday 18 May 2022 -6.00pm – 8.00pm**

The police Cyber Team regularly update the content of this course so that governors can be made aware of the latest concerns.

Level 6 Governor Training – please contact school.governor@bradford.gov.uk for dates as these are arranged to suit the members of the group attending the sessions.

Updates from the Department for Education (DfE)

Consultation on Proposed Revisions to Keeping Children Safe in Education in 2022

The DfE is seeking views on changes to this statutory guidance and has requested that governing boards consider contributing to the consultation. Safeguarding governors may wish to contribute and the consultation closes on 11 March 2022. Some details are on the DfE website.

Consultation on School Attendance Support

The DfE is also seeking views on what should be included in measures to improve the consistency of school attendance support and management. Based on existing good practice of schools, academy trusts and local authorities in managing school attendance, they are seeking views on the following possible measures:

- requiring schools to have an attendance policy, and have regard to statutory guidance on the expectations of schools, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools
- guidance on the expectations of local authority attendance services
- a national framework for attendance legal intervention
- bringing the rules for granting leaves of absence in academies in line with other state-funded schools

These are intended to deliver consistent support for families across England and focus better, targeted, multi-agency support on pupils who need it most. This consultation closes on 28 February 2022 and details are on the DfE website.

Support for Schools in Educational Investment Areas

The DfE has announced that any local authority in an Opportunity Area will be designated as an Education Investment Area. There will be 55 of these areas and the government has explained that:-

‘In these new ‘Education Investment Areas’, the Department for Education will offer retention payments to help schools keep the best teachers in the highest priority subjects. These areas will be prioritised as the location for new specialist sixth-form free schools where there is limited provision to

ensure talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the highest standard of education this country offers. Schools in these areas that have been judged less than Good in successive Ofsted inspections could be moved into strong multi-academy trusts, to attract more support and the best teachers. This will be subject to a consultation in the spring.

The paper will set a new national mission to ensure that 90% of children leaving primary school in England are reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths by 2030. In 2019, just 65% of pupils met all 3 standards, with the proportion substantially varying across the country. Schools in the Education Investment Areas will also be given support to address wider issues. For instance, schools struggling with attendance will be encouraged to join a new pilot programme to tackle the issue.'

'In direct response to the activities young people said they want outside of school; the government has announced a National Youth Guarantee. Backed by £560 million worth of investment, plans set to be outlined in the Levelling Up white paper will mean that every young person in England will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities by 2025'

Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts

Information from a Webinar delivered by the executive principal of North Shore Academy is available on the DfE website including a recording of the session which took place in December. There are also downloadable case studies and Resources for schools including guidance on developing an effective school attendance strategy and on how to use text messages to share attendance information with parents.

Catch Up Funding – continued monitoring

This funding was a one-off, but governors should continue to monitor it where the school has carried forward any unspent funding from the 2020/21 academic year. Make sure the school continues to:

- Spend the funding in line with its catch-up priorities
- Be transparent with parents on the use of the funding

Ofsted will be looking at:

- The level of funding the school received
- How school leaders and governors have spent the funding, the rationale for this spending and its intended impact

Gender Pay Gap information

This only applies to Trusts or schools with 250 or more employees. In that case the report must be made by 30 March 2022 for a 'snapshot date' of 30 March 2021.

This was suspended in 2020 because of Covid-19 and the reporting date for 2020 was October 2021 but it has now reverted to the normal timeframe. Governors are responsible for verifying that the deadline is met and the report posted on the website. Governors should be prepared to challenge leaders if necessary asking how the report compares with the wider sector and what actions are being taken to close any gender pay gap.

School Equality Information

All schools are required to publish equality information and objectives under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The information must be updated at least annually and the objectives must be published at least once every 4 years This had to first be published by **30 March** in 2018 so this will probably need to be done this year if not already completed.

School leaders will do this – governors need to ensure the updates are done and properly published and will want to be familiar with the contents of the report to help evaluate the impact of the equality policies.

Updates from the Local Authority

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

A reminder that this needs to be emailed to the School Funding Team as soon as possible, the final date for submissions is 31 March. There is an updated template and an additional report to complete for the first time, which is about related party transactions. The checklist includes questions for the governing board to discuss with the headteacher and senior staff.

Your school might delegate detailed scrutiny of the SFVS to a relevant committee but, if it does, it should provide a detailed report to the full board as the full board needs to agree it. The chair of governors must sign the completed form.

The SFVS gives your board the opportunity to consider the strength of financial knowledge on your board and Finance Committee and there are questions included related to this aspect of governance

Academies

Audited accounts should have been submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 31 December but there have been two more recent deadlines:-

- 25 January 2022 for the submission of the 2020/21 accounts return – which is a separate document from the accounts
- 31 January 2022 which is the latest date when accounts should have been published on the Trust's website

The accounts have to be filed with Companies House by 31 May 2022

Admission Arrangements

Governors of **voluntary aided** or **foundation** schools, or trustees of an **academy**, are part of a board which is responsible for determining the school's admission arrangements. Anyone sitting on a local governing body in a **multi-academy trust**, needs to check the scheme of delegation to see who is responsible for this. There must be a formal consultation process at least every seven years or when changes are made.

The agreed arrangements must be published on the school's website for the whole 'offer year'

For example, you must publish your admissions arrangements for the 2022/23 school year for all of the 2021/22 school year. Every LA is required to publish the admissions arrangements for every state-funded school in their area, including academies. The statutory information must be sent to the local authority no later than 8 August during the determination year.

Any objections to the determined arrangements must be passed to the schools' adjudicator by 15 May of the determination year.

Updates from Ofsted

Guidance on Requesting Deferrals of Inspections

Ofsted updated this guidance on 2 December 2021 to allow for requests for deferral of an inspection where school staffing is affected by Covid-19.

Schools adapt teaching to help children catch up but COVID-related absence remains a concern

A new series of reports from Ofsted looks at the effect of the pandemic on children and how education providers are helping them catch up. Despite the disruption to their education, inspectors found that many schools are effectively helping children recover from missed learning.

Catch-up strategies include regular, informal assessments; identifying pupils who need additional, one-to-one support; prioritising practical work that wasn't possible via remote learning; and recapping on the previous year's curriculum to cover what had been missed. Some schools have also extended their hours to offer after-school, before-school or Saturday sessions for those who needed extra support. However, despite positive progress, it is clear from Ofsted's inspections that low attendance remains a stubborn concern.

Many Early Years' providers reported that young children are behind with their communication, language and social skills, as well as their physical development. This was particularly true for children born during the pandemic, or who had spent most of their lives in it, which staff attributed to their lack of opportunity to socialise with other children.

What to Expect on a Primary Deep Dive

A blog has just been released giving guidance for subject leaders on what to expect on a primary deep dive. Governors, especially where schools are preparing for Ofsted, may wish to discuss the way this information can be used by the school when monitoring the curriculum.

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

Approach to Pupil Premium Spending

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) recommends a 'tiered approach', where school leaders target spending on:

1. High-quality teaching (through things like staff training and CPD)
2. Targeted academic support (such as 1-to-1 or small group interventions)
3. Wider approaches (like breakfast and after-school clubs and help with the cost of school trips)

Building the EEF's pipeline of evidence-informed programmes through the Accelerator Fund

The EEF is working with the Department for Education (DfE) in 2021–2022 to expand its work supporting schools to access evidence-informed programmes. Funded through the DfE's Accelerator Fund, the activity will build on the EEF's work to create a pipeline of evidence-based programmes available to schools. Activity will focus on three areas which have been selected by the DfE: the Regional School Commissioner regions of the North, East Midlands and Humber, and the West Midlands.

As part of this work, eight projects are now recruiting early years, primary, secondary and post-16 settings. These include trials of educational approaches showing promise, as well widening access to existing effective programmes so that more schools can access them.

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.

There are two versions of this document. One is sent to all governors from schools which subscribe to the advice and guidance service, 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. A less detailed version is sent to all other governors for whom we have such emails or have received the permissions.

If you are a governor/trustee but have not received a link to either document please contact school.governor@bradford.gov.uk to ensure that an up to date email address and permission for its use is recorded.