

Governors' Update

Autumn Term 2023

School Governor Service, Education and Learning, Department of Children's Services, Margaret McMillan Tower, Prince's Way, Bradford BD1 1NN

[e-mail: school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

Welcome

This update gives governors up to date information about areas of interest that they need to consider for various aspects of their role.

As the School Governor Team is mainly working from home it will be more effective if you email either a named person or the school governor service inbox if you have a query.

Chairs and Governors Development Group

The next meeting of this group will be on Monday 6 November at Margaret McMillan Tower from 6-7.30pm but it is also possible to attend virtually.

These sessions are aimed at governors who are Chairs or committee chairs or who are experienced in their governance role and who wish both to hear updates and to share discussions about effective ways to govern schools. The meetings are held termly

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

Training

There are still some upcoming courses available before the Christmas break and the team are currently arranging the courses for the Spring Term. If you have any ideas for courses, then please email the team at the above address and every effort will be made to set up a suitable course. Please remember that the team are happy to deliver online or face to face training that is bespoke for your school or trust.

The remaining sessions for this term are: -

Tue 31 Oct 18.00-20.30 Gov: Introduction to Governance Part 1 (v) (Part 2, 21 Nov)

This course gives new governors an overview of the role of governor and the areas that this role includes.

Tue 7 Nov 18.00-20.00 Gov: Finance – an introduction for governors (v)

All new governors are recommended to attend this course, which gives information about the finance systems of both maintained schools and academies.

Wed 8 Nov 18.00- 20.00 Gov: SEND for Governors (v)

The education of children with special educational needs and disabilities is an important requirement for all settings. This course explains the topic and the monitoring requirements for governors.

Mon 13 Nov 18.00-20.00 Gov: Early Years – Governor Focus and Update (v)

If your setting includes Early Years, then this course will be helpful in explaining the specific requirements placed on schools to deliver the curriculum and the ways in which provision is measured.

Mon 20 Nov 16.30-18.30 Gov: Pupil Exclusions and Suspensions – a Governor's role (v)

The number of children who are suspended or excluded is increasing around the country and governors need to understand the role they are expected to play in these systems. If this role is not performed correctly then schools can be requested to attend independent panel hearings where the validity of the original decision made by governors will be reviewed.

Wed 22 Nov 16.30-18.30 Gov: Handling Complaints – be prepared (v)

All schools and academies receive a complaint at some point. This can be dealt with internally, but governors also have a role to play in the event of an appeal being made. Handled effectively, complaints can be viewed as a way to ensure families and the community have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's systems and also to improve practice. This course assists governors in ensuring their process is effective.

Tue 28 Nov 18.00-20.00 or Thurs 7 Dec 10.00-12.00 Gov: Safeguarding for Governors (v)

All governors are legally required to attend Safeguarding Training when they begin their work as governors and to update it regularly. This course is regularly adapted to ensure that it gives governors the latest information on the topic and is delivered at different times of day so that it is available for all.

Wed 29 Nov 17.00-19.00 Gov: Prevent Introduction/Refresher for Governors (v)

This area is particularly relevant at the moment as it outlines the governors' role and the legal requirements placed on schools and academies to ensure that children are prevented from becoming radicalised. It is presented by a member of the Council's Prevent Team so governors can be confident that it has the most relevant and up to date information available.

Wed 6 Dec 16.30-18.30 Gov: Preparation for Ofsted (v)

This session is particularly relevant for schools which are moving into the Ofsted window as it briefs governors on the current foci and explains how schools need to ensure that all the necessary preparations have been made. Attending the course is also useful for governors from settings where an inspection is due within the next few years as it gives an overview of the process and enables governors to consider developments that might need to be made before the inspection.

Updates from the Department for Education (DfE)

Changes to Statutory Policies

Guidance on what schools must publish online

There were no updates in September this year, but governors are reminded that, in April 2023, guidance was added on the need to collect and publish governing board diversity data.

School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

Updated guidance came into effect on 1 September 2023 which applies to all types of school. Governors need to ensure that their setting's policies and procedures have been amended to take account of the changes and that they understand the processes which need to be followed.

PE and Sports Premium allocations and guidance

The conditions of grant for 2023-24 make it clear that the funding must not be used for capital expenditure, apart from goods within the de minimis value.

Planned Changes to Post 16 Education

A report on the planned changes to post 16 education, has been presented to parliament. This proposes a change to one qualification which will replace both A levels and technical qualifications. This qualification will be known as the Advanced British Standard and will allow a combination of technical and academic subjects to be taken. The aim is that this will give learners more flexibility in their career options in a rapidly changing world of employment and will broaden the range of subjects studied.

There will be a white paper on these reforms in 2024 and it is noted that the complete introduction of the changes will take up to ten years but increased funding in some areas will be provided over the next two years.

- All teachers in the first five years of their career, who teach in shortage subjects and work in disadvantaged schools will be paid up to £6000 per year tax free.
- There will be additional investment to support the teaching of English and Maths to those not attaining GCSE level 4 passes to support those working at level 2 or below.

Changes to PREVENT Guidance from December 2023

Schools should designate someone to oversee prevent and this person should be in a leadership position. They will be responsible for ensuring staff have the appropriate Prevent training and induction. This is probably already done by your Safeguarding lead, but there is a need for this person to attend more in-depth training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies.

Primary Results Nationally

The published Phonics Screening results show 79% of five and six year olds met the standards this year, an increase from 75% last year.

Key Stage 1 Maths showed 70% of pupils met the expected standards, up from 68% in 2022.

Reading improved from 67% to 68%, writing from 58% to 60% and science from 77% to 79%.

The provisional results for KS2 SATS show that pupils meeting the expected standards in Reading, Writing and Maths remained at 59% but those achieving greater depth increased from 7% to 8% Reading was at 73% which, was a reduction from 75%, writing increased to 71% from 69% and Maths increased from 71% to 73%. Final information will be published in December.

Get Help Buying for Schools

All state funded schools and Trusts can access this free service from the DfE which helps schools to buy goods and services and get value for money. This includes energy, ICT, goods and furniture, legal services and many other areas. The procurement route used meets all compliance requirements and advice and guidance is provided by procurement experts.

Updates from the Local Authority

Additional Support with Attendance

A core offer of support, free of charge, is now available to all schools in Bradford. This will provide communication and advice, termly attendance support meetings, advice to schools on providing or accessing multi-disciplinary support for families and legal intervention.

Schools Joining Multi Academy Trusts (MAT)

If your school is joining or planning to join a MAT, then your Governing Board will be the Trust Board of the MAT. If you are retaining a local governing board, sometimes known as an academy committee or academy council, then you will need to familiarise yourselves with the scheme of delegation that will apply to your school so that you will understand which responsibilities have been delegated and which will be retained by the Trust Board. This needs to be put in place and explained to all members of the local governing board.

The NGA have produced a guide for developing a scheme of delegation which will be of interest to schools considering joining a MAT as it shows the proposed levels of delegation and where the statutory responsibilities lie.

The DfE has now published model articles of association to be used for new Church of England academies or when existing trusts are updating their articles.

Updates from Ofsted

Subject Reports

Music

This report considered that most primary schools were ensuring pupils had adequate time to learn music but that this was a much more varied picture for KS3 provision. Governors of secondary and through schools could consider this in their monitoring.

PE

This found that, overall, most schools have time to provide a broad and ambitious PE curriculum and that many pupils understand the social and mental health benefits of exercise.

Geography

This report considers that teaching of geography has improved since the previous report and that knowledge was better sequenced, but that opportunities for learning from fieldwork were still lacking.

Careers Review

This review makes several recommendations for improvement.

Other Updates

Section 48 Inspections

These are for schools and academies with a designated religious character and are in addition to the standard Ofsted monitoring inspections. Governors need to ensure that they understand their responsibilities and their monitoring role.

Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 covers the inspection of the denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character.

Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook, paragraphs 139 – 144, explains this further, including the responsibility of a maintained school Governing Board, to appoint an independent body to carry out the inspection. This needs to be done in consultation with the relevant faith body.

In an academy this will be included in the articles of association and funding agreement.

For Church of England schools and academies this is known as a SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). From September 2023 the inspectors are evaluating schools using six questions with an additional question for voluntary aided schools.

There is more information on inspections, and on the requirements on Trust Boards as the accountable body, on the Church of England website, where there is also a list of schools likely to be inspected in 2023-24 – please note that this list is organised by diocese – and a SIAMS information document for schools.

For Roman Catholic Schools the inspections are carried out by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate which uses the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic Schools, Colleges and Academies.

As all these inspections were suspended because of Covid-19 the first inspection after September 2021 will be within 8 years of the last inspection but they will still be within 2 to 3 years of the opening of a new voluntary aided school or academy/free school.

New Guide on Children Looked After

BECOME, the charity for children in care and young care leavers has published a new guide which presents recent data and questions to ask at governing body meetings.

The NGA also encourages governing boards to consider other groups of children, beyond those eligible for Pupil Premium, as disadvantaged.

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)

The Foundation is inviting schools and early years settings to sign up to deliver subsidised educational programmes with a proven record of improving children's maths and literacy skills. The programmes involved are Maths Mastery, Embedding Formative Assessment and Maths Champions. Governors are aware of the financial implications of investment in resources to improve outcomes so may wish to see if their setting would find this information helpful.

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