



Governors' Monthly Update December 2018

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

[Tel: 01274 439400](tel:01274439400) [e-mail: school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

Welcome to the Fourth edition of the Governors' Monthly Update.

The end of November sees the Governor Service bid farewell to Linda Thompson who has left us for pastures new. Jo Sunley is now running the clerking service and will be dealing with any queries or concerns about clerks. Please use the governor service email address and mark it for her attention.

School News

Congratulations to Low Moor Primary School governors and leaders for the maintenance of their Outstanding designation and to the governors and leaders of Sandy Lane Primary and TRACKs Education for their Good judgements.

December Training Courses

To book on any course please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk. There are no additional charges for all governors or associate members at schools which subscribe to the training programme but they are charged on a course by course basis for other governors.

Courses available during early December include:

Tuesday 11 December 2018, 6.00pm - 8.00pm at Lawcroft House Police Station

Cyberbullying – Awareness raising and online protection workshop West Yorkshire Police are offering these specifically designed workshops to improve the awareness of e-safety for governors in the constantly changing online world. They will look at social media and its misuse and the need for effective online protection for children. Feedback from governors attending these courses are that they are really useful.

Courses at Margaret McMillan Tower, Bradford:

Monday 3 December 2018, 6.15pm-8.15pm, Broad and Balanced Curriculum

'does the school's vision for its curriculum facilitate a rich and ambitious programme for all pupils?' (school inspection update July 2018). As the new Ofsted framework draws nearer this course gives governors an opportunity to think about the breadth of curriculum needed to prepare children for the next phase of their education as well as identifying the compulsory areas of study.

Tuesday 4 December 2018, 6.15pm – 7.45pm Chairs' Updates

Aimed at Chairs of Governing Boards or Committees (although other governors are welcome to attend on behalf of their schools) these sessions look at new developments that can or may impact on the work of schools in the near future. Each session has a main theme based on a new initiative or an identified area of concern. This session will be a repeat of the one held in Keighley.

Tuesday 11 December 2018, 6.15pm-8.15pm, Data Progress and Attainment (Part 2)

For Chairs, governors on School Improvement Committees or those looking at attainment data in more depth, this course includes ways to study the information available from the Analyse School Performance Tables.

Ofsted Framework 2019 - update

The latest information from Ofsted is that the new framework – including handbooks - will be released early in 2019.

In a recent speech to the 2018 AoC Annual Conference Amanda Spielman confirmed that the change in focus under the new framework 'is intended to remove any measures that do not genuinely assess quality of education ... with less emphasis on data and qualification achievement rates and more on the real substance of education, the curriculum (and) the design and content of learning programmes.' She also announced that there will be a further research study on the curriculum released in the near future.

The School Governor Service will be delivering training next term on the new framework which will be aimed at ensuring governors are familiar with the requirements and can use them to feed into both strategic planning and monitoring. The emphasis on the curriculum is clear and governors need to look at the curriculum and the way that it is being delivered across all year groups to ensure that it allows learning and skills

National Governors Association (NGA) Report on School Governance in 2018

The NGA surveys governing boards annually and produces a report based on the findings. The report for 2018 had 5218 respondents and has just been produced. It makes interesting, if rather depressing, reading.

Key findings from the 2018 report were:

1. 75% of governors and trustees have a negative view of the government's performance in education over the past year, and called for more funding and more stability in education policy.
2. Funding is the biggest issue for governing boards, especially for secondary schools, sixth forms and early years.

Only 20% are confident that the budget constraints can be managed without compromising the quality of education.

Only 50% said that they were balancing income and expenditure

Almost 33% were drawing on reserves and 75% of those said these would be exhausted within two years.

3. 74% of respondents did not agree that current High Needs funding is sufficient; secondary schools especially reported they were particularly badly hit.
4. One major concern expressed was the diversity of governing boards, including when the chair is elected. Not enough boards were actively considering this as an issue.
5. Almost 50% of responding schools are providing additional services for families in need, including:-
 - washing school uniforms,
 - providing meals outside of term time
 - food banks
 - emergency loans.
 - 38% of the schools were providing financial help to buy school uniforms.

The NGA's Spotlight on Disadvantage research report (June 2018) found that 46% of schools still allocated more funds for disadvantaged pupils than the amount of the Pupil Premium received.

6. The majority of governors and trustees who were working were still not getting paid time off for governance, even though the role is a form of professional development.
7. The time commitment needed for governors was considered a possible barrier for some volunteers taking on or continuing governance roles, particularly that of chair.
8. Recruiting volunteers to govern schools remains challenging. The number of schools reporting two or more vacancies rose to 38% in 2018.
9. Despite the recent publicity given to the need for effective clerking, 9% of respondents did not have – or did not know if they had – a clerk who could provide the board with advice on governance, constitutional and procedural matters.
10. Staff recruitment continues to be challenging in regions surrounding London and in schools with lower Ofsted grades; with many secondary schools struggling to recruit teachers of core subjects.
11. Only just over 33% of standalone schools are currently considering or are in the process of forming or joining a multi-academy trust or federation. This means that, unless there is some clear direction from government, maintained schools will still be a significant proportion of the schools sector for the foreseeable future.
12. The majority of multi academy trust governors responding reported that significant responsibilities were delegated to their academy committees; appearing to contradict other reports in the sector which have stated that local governance was increasingly being overlooked by MATs.
13. Most MATS had instances of the same people acting at different layers of governance. This means that effective governance was at risk of being compromised because those people were actually holding themselves to account.
14. The NGA's proposal to add a fourth core function for governing boards - ensuring effective engagement with stakeholders - when the next edition of the Governance Handbook is produced had the support of a majority with only 17% failing to support the proposal.

To read the report in full, visit <http://www.nga.org.uk/schoolgovernancein2018>.

New Media Campaign 'Big Little Moments'

The Better Start Bradford campaign: Big Little Moments, which will be running from February, aims to promote public understanding of early brain and biological development and outlines simple, achievable ways for caregivers to interact with children during everyday situations. We know that:

- 0 to 4 years is the biggest and most rapid period of development in a human life.
- There is strong evidence that the first few years of life build foundations for future health and wellbeing.
- Taking a preventative approach can improve the life chances of babies and children.
- Social, emotional and language capabilities are essential aspects of early brain development. Built through rich interactions with caregivers and their environment.
- Specific behaviours have been identified that caregivers can adopt to improve the early social, emotional and language development of young children.

These messages are vital in building resilient communities for the future and governors are asked to check if their schools are joining in passing on these messages.

Department for Education updates

1) Updated guidance has been published on what schools maintained schools must publish online. The amendments are to reflect changes in SEND regulations. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

2) Key stage 4 and Key stage 5 provisional results have now been published by the DfE. the data shows that:

- The average attainment 8 score for GCSE pupils in state-funded schools across England was 46.4, up by 0.4 compared to 2017
- The average grade at A-level remains the same as last year (at C+), whereas the numbers taking level 2 technical or vocational qualifications increased by nearly 10%
- The numbers of pupils in "sustained destinations" following key stage 4 and 5 remains stable (at 94% and 89% respectively) compared to last year, although the data shows that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are 5% less likely to stay in sustained education (such as University) after key stage 5

Governors need to remember that these statistics may be changed when the final results are published.

The data also showed that only 43.0% of pupils in state-funded schools achieved a so-called "strong pass" (grade 5 or above) in GCSE English and maths, prompting the Association of Schools and Colleges (ASCL) to launch a commission looking at the impact of messaging around "standard" (grade 4) or "strong" (grade 5) pass rates at GCSE which, it is argued, have a negative impact on those achieving a standard pass.

ASCL will also look at the effect of making pupils who struggle to attain the standard pass in their maths and English GCSEs sit continuous resits post-16.

The pressures of accountability measures sometimes lead schools to adapt their curriculum to ensure higher pass rates but Governors should remember their duty to protect pupil wellbeing and to ensure that they receive a broad and balanced curriculum. The new Ofsted framework is intended to address these issues.

3) The DfE statistics on Pupil Absence show that this had increased slightly in the first two terms of the last academic year from 4.5 to 4.7%

There were higher levels of absence among those eligible for Free School Meals and SEND children. To view the report visit:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term-2017-and-spring-term-2018>

Governors are reminded of the need to look specifically at vulnerable groups when considering absence and consider whether Pupil Premium funding could be used to good effect in this area.

4) Health and safety

Guidance on educational visits <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

And on the responsibilities and duties for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>

have just been released. Governors with responsibility for Health and Safety may wish to discuss these with their schools.

National Federation for Educational Research (NFER) Research

The NFER has published a [report](#) 'Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England'. The research particularly focused on teacher retention, identifying key factors causing teachers to leave the profession and making recommendations for policy makers and school leaders.

The report showed that since 2010, the rate of teachers both leaving the profession and moving jobs has increased. These factors combine to mean schools have to fill more vacancies every year, increasing uncertainty and recruitment costs. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that pupil numbers are forecast to rise by 19% over the next decade, meaning that additional teachers will need to be recruited to meet the new demand.

The report identified low job satisfaction as a key reason why teachers were leaving the profession. This appeared to stem from the profession's long hours, with teachers working over 50 hours per week on average during term-time, far higher than nurses and police officers in a normal working week. Teachers blamed high workload for these long hours. The report claimed that satisfaction was far more important than pay in persuading teachers to leave the profession, as those taking a new job took a 10% pay cut on average.

The report argued that measures to improve satisfaction may be more effective than pay increases in increasing retention. Governors will be particularly interested in the recommendations for school leaders which proposed regular monitoring of job satisfaction via staff surveys and interventions to increase support and reduce pressures where workload issues were identified.

Governing boards have a responsibility for the work-life balance of all their teaching staff and should be asking for information on workload and staff retention in their schools, and the steps which senior

leaders are taking to resolve any problems. Recommendations, such as those contained in the report, can act as a valuable basis for challenge during these discussions.

On the same topic the DfE Workload Advisory Group has published a [report](#) including recommendations for governing boards.

The report was accompanied by a [letter](#) to all school leaders from the Secretary of State for Education accepting all of the report's recommendations and committing to take action. NGA was pleased to be a signatory to this letter, which set out encouragement and support for school leaders in adopting the recommendations in their own context.

The report's recommendations concerning governing boards, all of which the DfE have accepted, are:

- The DfE should revise the Governance Handbook, competency framework and other guidance to reflect the principles of the report and speak to governors and trustees to test what guidance and training they need
- The DfE should also incorporate myth busting for governing boards into the teacher workload toolkit or other guidance, to address misconceptions of what is required by the DfE or Ofsted and where policy has changed
- The DfE should also continue to improve the content and usability of Analyse School Performance based on feedback from school leaders and governing boards, and place emphasis on supporting governor needs. The DfE should ensure schools are able to access comparative performance information as soon as possible

The report says governing boards “should normally be prepared to receive information in whatever form it is currently being used in the school. They should agree with school and trust leaders what high-quality data they need, and when, in order to fulfil their role effectively and to avoid making unreasonable, ad hoc data requests during the course of the school year. This includes consideration of any in-year data they receive, how meaningful this is and whether this can be reduced”.

As the DfE is currently preparing an new Governance Handbook governors need to consider how effective their systems are in reducing staff workload.

Afterword

Best wishes to all governors and school leaders for a happy and restful break over the holidays. The next edition of the update will be sent out during the first week of the January term. If you have a topic about which you would like information included then please email school.governor@bradford.gov.uk

