



# Governors' Monthly Update December 2019

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**Welcome to the December 2019 edition of the Governors' Monthly Update. Best wishes to all schools preparing events, shows and nativities over the next two weeks.**

## School News

Congratulations to Reevy Hill Primary School, Beckfoot Heaton Primary and Worth Valley Primary Schools for their recent Good judgements

## Important Reminder for Governors

Governors are reminded that, if their school is a maintained school, then Children's Services must be informed of all vacancies and recruitment processes for Headteachers as the local authority has a role to play in the recruitment process.

## Training Courses in December and Early January

All governors will receive a copy of the Training Programme for the rest of the academic year before the end of this term. This will include additional courses for the Spring Term based upon topics that are relevant to governors at this time of year. The amended Programme will also be posted on Bradford Schools Online (BSO) and on the Skills4Bradford website.

Training dates already circulated to governors are:-

### **Monitoring: Including School visits & Effective Questions, Tuesday 10 December 2019, 4.30-6.30pm at Margaret McMillan Tower**

What information do governors need to monitor? How should this be done? What does effective questioning look like? What should be the format of school visits?

This course aims to share, with governors, examples of good practice and assist governors in setting up effective systems which ensure that no areas of school improvement are overlooked. It will provide governors with ways to improve the quality of their challenge and will look at areas highlighted by Ofsted as the responsibility of Governors.

### **Introduction to Governance - Friday 17 January 2020, 9.30am-3.00pm at**

## Margaret McMillan Tower

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), the level of knowledge of governance that you need to effectively support your school in raising standards. It provides:

- An overview of school governance, your role as a governor, the responsibilities and expectations placed on you, and the way in which you should work with the headteacher and school leadership team
- Knowledge and understanding of governors' responsibilities
- A briefing on national and local educational issues and their impact on governing boards
- Processes to assist you in using your new skills and knowledge for the benefit of pupils.
- An opportunity to meet and exchange views with other recently appointed governors, with discussion and group work in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

## Ofsted Update

Tom Fellows from the NGA has just released a blog available [here](#) looking at the confusion that has arisen in some governing boards because of Ofsted's unwillingness to look at internal data from school. The blog stresses the importance of governors still receiving and questioning that data.

'Ofsted's decision to not look at internal progress and attainment data is based on their own needs and chosen inspection approach. This is a long way from, as some commentators have suggested, schools no longer being expected to collect internal data.

In fact, in her [speech to the 2019 NGA national conference](#) Amanda Spielman, her majesty's chief inspector, said that, while any data must be collected proportionately, efficiently and sustainably, Ofsted were "certainly not prohibiting the use of data". She also said that "schools can still collect and use assessment information ... but it should be done for its value for education, not done for Ofsted".

Governing boards are not Ofsted. They have different resources at their disposal which make internal data extremely relevant...

A huge part of the governing boards role is [monitoring progress toward strategic targets](#). Some of these targets, particularly for pupil outcomes, rely on an understanding of progress and attainment for large groups of pupils. The sheer size of some of these cohorts means that it would be impossible to monitor progress toward these targets without the use of internal data.'

## Section 128 Checks

Has your school done a Section 128 check on the governing board? This is something that Ofsted are picking up. It is a simple check that takes little time to carry out and should be recorded on your Single Central Record. You are required to undertake Sect 128 checks on ALL members of your Governing Board. Although not role specific, please include any school staff who may also hold the post of governor in a maintained school, such as a head teacher. No other members of your SLT

are required to undergo these checks unless you are an Academy, Free School or Independent School.

Your school needs to carry out a 'section 128' check to see whether a person is banned from being involved in the management and governance of schools. If someone has been issued with a 'section 128 direction', they **cannot** serve on your board, and in academies, be on the senior management team.

Academies must **carry out section 128 checks, according to paragraphs 128 to 129 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#)**.

Guidance recommends that **maintained schools should** also carry out these checks for all governors **because a person subject to one is disqualified from being a governor** (paragraph 173 of KCSIE). Section 128 checks complement DBS checks by looking at the parts of someone's history that may not necessarily be criminal, but would still be worrying.

## Safeguarding

### Annual Bullying Survey 2019 (Ditch The Label)

Ditch the Label is an international anti-bullying charity who aim to tackle the root causes of bullying instead of waiting to deal with the after-effects. Their website, [DTL:ED](#), gives schools the tools and support they need to tackle bullying and the issues which surround it.

For the last seven years, Ditch the Label, has documented the true extent and nature of bullying behaviours across the UK from the real and often unheard voices of the young people who experience it.

About half the report benchmarks bullying behaviours, with the remainder of the survey this year exploring the climate and rates of prejudice-based attitudes, with an emphasis on racism, sexism, homophobia, disablism and transphobia.

Included in the report is the following:

- Key bullying statistics in the UK
- The motivations of bullying
- Frequency and nature of bullying experienced
- The impact of bullying
- Rates of young people bullying others
- The rate and climate of prejudice
- Real stories and experiences

Anne Longfield, the children's commissioner for England, 'It is worrying that one in five children are experiencing some form of bullying. The impact bullying has on children can be enormous, affecting a child's confidence, self-esteem and their mental health. Ditch the Label's survey shows how bullying is blighting the lives of hundreds of thousands of children'.

You can download the report here: <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2019-1.pdf>

Website: <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/>

### Cyber Security Readiness Exercises (National Cyber Security Centre)

Some schools have been affected by cyber attacks as result of phishing emails or other security breaches, for example, revealing parent emails by inadvertently failing to use bcc. Other schools have been the victim of a financial attack.

The National Cyber Security Centre has created a free 'Exercise in a box' to help organisations, including schools, test out their cyber security response, including:

- A phishing attack that leads to a ransomware infection
- Mobile phone theft and response
- Insider Threat resulting in a Data Breach
- Third Party Software Compromise

You can find out more [here](#)

## Free Posters

**Booklife** a children's and educational publisher, have a range of free downloadable posters that cover all kinds of topics including Bullying, Feelings and Online Safety but also resource posters for a range of subjects of interest to schools such as faith, reading, languages. Access the full range of free posters [here](#)

## Guide for governing boards | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF

School governors and trustees play a crucial role in improving school performance by providing support and challenge to the headteacher and their leadership team. It is essential, therefore, that you can access and use the best available evidence-based resources.

This can sometimes be difficult as many governors and trustees do not have a background in education and also have time pressures.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has now launched the [EEF guide to becoming an evidence-informed school governor and trustee](#) . This is designed to offer you a quick way into the evidence they make freely available to all schools. It will help promote more informed discussion in governing boards around school improvement.

The guide goes through the different ways in which EEF support schools – including funding for those which take part in an EEF trial. Trials are launched regularly and the EEF look for schools in different regions to contribute. Schools selected for a trial receive funding to enable them to take part.

## Inspection Data Summary Reports

The inspection data summary report (IDSR) has been updated for secondary schools following the update for primary schools last month. The IDSR contains the data that Ofsted inspectors will see before visiting a school to help them understand the demographics of school cohorts and assess the progress and attainment of pupils.

The Department for Education (DfE) has released guidance for both primary and secondary IDSRs around what the new updates contain. The documents are available for school leaders, including governors and trustees, through their schools' Analyse School Performance (ASP) dashboard under the "further resources" tab.

This is a valuable resource for those governing as it is an independent assessment of the strengths and weakness within their school which can be used in addition to other sources of information such as reports from the executive, other data dashboards and feedback from stakeholders. All governors and trustees should be given access to ASP.

## The Importance of Breakfasts

Skipping breakfast has been linked to lower GCSE grades in a study by Leeds University which was released in November. Researchers have for the first time demonstrated a link between eating breakfast and GCSE performance for secondary school students in the UK.

Adding together all of a student's exam results, they found that students who said they rarely ate breakfast achieved nearly two grades lower than those who rarely missed their morning meal.

The research has been published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*.

Lead researcher Dr Katie Adolphus, from the University of Leeds' School of Psychology, said: "Our study suggests that secondary school students are at a disadvantage if they are not getting a morning meal to fuel their brains for the start of the school day.

"The UK has a growing problem of food poverty, with an estimated half a million children arriving at school each day too hungry to learn. Previously we have shown that eating breakfast has a positive impact on children's cognition. This research suggests that poor nutrition is associated with worse results at school."

The researchers surveyed 294 students from schools and colleges in West Yorkshire in 2011, and found that 29% rarely or never ate breakfast on school days, whilst 18% ate breakfast occasionally, and 53% frequently. Their figures are similar to the latest national data for England in 2019, which found that more than 16% of secondary school children miss breakfast.

GCSE grades were converted to point scores using the Department for Education's 2012 system, where A\* = 58, A = 52, B = 46, and so on. Adding up students' scores across all subjects gave students an aggregated score. Those who rarely ate breakfast scored on average 10.25 points lower than those who frequently ate breakfast, a difference of nearly two grades, after accounting for other important factors including socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, sex and BMI.

Looking at performance for each individual GCSE, they found that students who rarely ate breakfast scored on average 1.20 points lower than those who frequently ate breakfast, after accounting for other factors. Each grade equates to six points, so the difference accounted for a drop of a fifth of a grade for every GCSE an individual achieved.

## Annual Teacher Wellbeing Index

This annual survey has revealed that almost three quarters of those who responded are stressed with more than half considering leaving education because of mental health and wellbeing pressures. The survey, which can be accessed [here](#) states:

'It is time to address the current high levels of unproductive stress experienced by those working in education....

Good teaching requires the highest levels of physical, social and emotional energy. That is why the mental health and wellbeing of this workforce is so critical; and why the trends we are seeing in the Teacher Wellbeing Index present such a concerning picture. For all that our understanding of mental health and emotional development has grown over recent decades, we do not yet widely and openly acknowledge the extent of the emotional work inherent in education.

The disproportionately high levels of stress reported by the workforce impede their ability to effectively nurture children and young people, including an increasing number who are vulnerable.



The interaction in the classroom of a stressed, overwhelmed, tired and unsupported teacher will be different to that of a supported teacher with a strong sense of professional autonomy, self-efficacy and balance between personal and professional life.'

As governors are responsible for the work life balance of staff this is an important report for all.

## DfE Updates

### Guidance for Schools on Character Development for pupils

The DfE has published a non-statutory Character Education Framework which can be found [here](#). It includes the six 'Character Benchmarks' which summarise the most important features for provision for character education and are intended to assist schools in evaluating their own work and planning for development.

'School leaders will want to consider character education in the context of their own school against these benchmarks so that they can evaluate the nature and quality of their current provision and determine their aspirations for future development. It is for individual schools or trusts to decide what constitutes good provision and to be accountable for it. It is important for school leaders to reflect on practice in their institutions and seek to develop and improve it as effectively as possible.'

When considering these questions and the wider character provision in schools, the capacity and work-life balance of school staff should be taken into account. The responsibilities and demands placed on staff need to be proportionate and should not lead to additional workload. Considerations of use of directed time, remuneration, personnel and resources should be made before embarking on any course of action. School leaders may wish to consider using the workload reduction toolkit to review current practices in their schools. The toolkit was developed by school leaders, teachers and other sector experts. It provides accessible materials, including practical advice, tools and case studies that school leaders, teachers and other staff can use to address workload issues in their school.

### Updated Guidance on Statutory Policies for Schools and Academies

The DfE have produced updated guidance on policy requirements which make it much easier for schools to access the information. Although there are no new requirements the format is much more user friendly. It can be accessed [here](#)

### Updated Guidance on Flexible working in Schools

This guidance is intended to assist in making arrangements for flexible working which enable schools to retain staff who might otherwise leave education. The guidance is available [here](#)

### Guidance on using an integrated curriculum and financial planning process.

Integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP) is a management process that helps schools plan the best curriculum for their pupils with the funding they have available. It can be used at any phase or type of school.

ICFP involves measuring your current curriculum, staffing structure and finances, and using the data to create a 3 to 5 year plan.

#### **ICFP is not new**

The idea of linking curriculum and financial planning is not new. Most schools probably use some ICFP processes already or use another name for it.

Other names for ICFP include:

- curriculum led financial planning
- education centred strategic financial planning
- curriculum analysis linked to finances

- strategic financial and curriculum planning
- staff deployment analysis linked to finances

### The benefits of ICFP

Linking curriculum and financial planning can help you:

- achieve educational success and financial sustainability
- deliver the best curriculum your school can afford that meets the needs of your pupils
- maximise the [financial efficiency](#) of your school
- maximise the curriculum efficiency of your school
- manage unexpected costs, challenges or opportunities
- assess risks
- decide what money you need to keep in reserve

The guidance is available [here](#)

## 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](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

